

ICEC

Independent
Commission for
Equity in Cricket

HOLDING UP A MIRROR TO CRICKET

A Report by the
Independent Commission
for Equity in Cricket

June 2023



Chair and Commissioners of the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket.

Left to right: Michelle Moore, Sir Brendan Barber, Cindy Butts (Chair), Dr Michael Collins and Zafar Ansari.

Commissioner Biographies are set out at Appendix 2.

Disclaimer

This Report has been prepared by the Chair and Commissioners of the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket. The views expressed are those of the authors alone.

Some of the information and language used in this Report is potentially distressing.

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Foreword by The Right Honourable Sir John Major KG CH

I warmly welcomed the decision to establish The Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket. Although I have no prior knowledge of what the Commission's Report will recommend, it is timely to examine how to increase equity, diversity and inclusion in one of our great national games.

As our world is changing at pace, it is not surprising that cricket is doing so too. The game most likely began - although no-one can be certain - in the 16th Century, as a pastime in rural Kent. Over the years, it became one of Britain's greatest exports and is now a near global phenomenon.

Cricket was born to become a game for everyone, and that must be our ambition. As a boy I lived in Brixton, during the years of high immigration from the West Indies, and my impromptu games of street and park cricket were - more often than not - with young migrants. It brought us together, when the impulse of the time might have kept us apart.

I still remember those days, and the joy we all gained from our games together, with a warm glow. Much has changed since then. In those days, few girls joined in whereas, in recent years, the growth in women's cricket is truly remarkable, albeit long overdue. But, for girls especially, access to cricket still has a long way to go.

As State school cricket continues to be sparse, and local Clubs struggle financially, many young people find it a challenge to gain any experience of playing at all - especially if they live in our urban conurbations. It is vital that access is widened to admit them to the game.

If we fail to do this, how much talent will we lose and - even more important - how much joy will we deny to those who remain excluded? The joy of cricket, once instilled, is life-long for player or spectator, and making it available to everyone must be made a priority.

I can say, with perfect truth, that my own life has been immeasurably enhanced by cricket - both as a young player and now an avid spectator.

I hope this Report will recommend a path towards opening up cricket to all those currently excluded - children and adults of both sexes, from all backgrounds, and all income groups - so that everyone may be able to experience the same enjoyment - and sheer delight - that, for over 70 years, the game has gifted to me.

THE RT HON SIR JOHN MAJOR KG CH

May 2023



Foreword by Cindy Butts, Chair of the ICEC

It has been a great privilege and honour to have chaired the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC). The role has brought together two of the greatest passions in my life – the sport of cricket itself and the advancement of equity, diversity, and inclusion within society. I have had a deep connection to cricket from the youngest age; raised in a family devoted to the sport over several generations. My Grandfather was an avid recreational player and various family members played professionally at both County and International level in England and the Caribbean. From a personal perspective, however, my own interest was ignited and nurtured by my mother’s love of cricket, a sentiment expressed by her singing the great calypso serenade “Cricket, lovely cricket”¹ as she prepared for a summer’s day in the garden spectating on the television or in the event of a rare pilgrimage to The Oval or Lord’s to form part of the crowd cheering the West Indies to victory during their years of glory.

My parents migrated to London in the 1960s from Guyana and the Caribbean. Growing up in the 1970s and 1980s in the working class areas of West London, I have always been aware of the conflicts at the very heart of cricket’s identity as well as its unique capacity for reconciliation and resolution.

The Commission’s work was instigated as a consequence of the broad reactive introspection generated by the public outcry following the tragic murder of George Floyd. Readers will no doubt recall their own personal response to witnessing such inhumane actions undertaken by the very members of society entrusted with the role of protection. There was a spontaneous extension of this visceral response into collective protests for a renewed scrutiny of society’s institutions to ensure that they represented the highest principles of our beliefs in fairness, equity, meritocratic process and fair competition.

As our work progressed, and closer to home, cricket was faced with its own indication that “something is rotten in the state of cricket” when in November 2021, Azeem Rafiq publicly revealed the shocking levels of racism he experienced during his cricket career whilst giving evidence to the then Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Select Committee. This resulted in significantly increased media and public interest in our work and a response to our Call for Evidence that was so large it had the unfortunate but inevitable consequence that our work took far longer to complete than was expected.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06P0RdZyjT4>

This Report is the culmination of the Commission's work. For many involved in the sport (including the ECB) the revelations and recommendations of this Report will make for uncomfortable reading. It feels all the more uncomfortable given that the sirens of concern were sounding over two decades ago when the 'Clean Bowl Racism' report identified racism as a problem in cricket. At the time, the ECB's response was to say *"We must put the research which has been undertaken into context. There are no great revelations here. We were always aware that some element of racism existed and we have not sat around idly and let it fester."*² If there were no great revelations then it is a source of great disappointment that, 24 years on, we make a number of wide-ranging findings that point to the fact that deeply rooted and widespread forms of structural and institutional racism continue to exist across the game. But this is not just about racism; as importantly, our work on gender and class also starkly highlights deeply rooted and widespread forms of structural and institutional sexism and class-based discrimination across the game.

In light of those findings, we make a number of ambitious recommendations to enable an urgent and radical overhaul of the policies, practices, systems and structures that currently exist in cricket, some of which will necessarily require significant investment in time and financial resources in order to bring about much needed change in all of the areas we examined, and in all areas of the game.

The focus of this Report is about whole systems institutional change and not about finding fault with individuals; it is for this reason we have taken a 'game-wide' approach to optimise the opportunity for achieving systemic change. We are not saying that every individual or even every individual institution within cricket is rife with discrimination. On the contrary, throughout our work we encountered many people in the game (players, staff and volunteers alike) who work tirelessly for the genuine betterment of cricket. We also don't believe that the ECB and cricket need to embark on the process of change with a blank sheet of paper. Green shoots are emerging. The recent gains which have been made in elements of the women's game serve as a powerful testament to what can be achieved with a clearly defined vision, supported by institutional will and a significant investment of resources; the challenge is to build significantly on these changes in respect of the women's game and apply them to all the areas we identify throughout our Report. We were encouraged by progress in relation to South Asian cricket as well as a number of other initiatives aimed at improving participation and inclusion.

But there remains a stark reality that cricket is not a 'game for everyone' and it is absolutely essential that the work required to achieve that ambition must begin immediately. The building of a truly equitable sport will not follow passively from the reading of this Report itself; rather, the game will need to apply a steadfast commitment and relentless vigilance to ensure that the policies, practices and systems are reformed and embedded into all aspects of cricket in England and Wales.

Importantly, however, equity will not be achieved solely on the basis of changes to policies and systems. A fundamental change in culture and attitudes is required, along with a recognition of the impact of the game's history and an acceptance of the widespread discrimination and structural barriers which have existed and continue to exist within cricket.

Be in no doubt, what is needed now is leadership. I very much hope that the recommendations we make in this Report will be adopted and driven forward by the ECB and all others in leadership positions, across the full spectrum of cricket, in both the professional and recreational game. It is the leaders who will ultimately effect change, emboldening and empowering others within the game to get behind our recommendations to ensure that cricket can truly represent the best values and principles of our nation and which everyone can be truly proud to call our national summer sport.

² <https://www.sportcal.com/pressreleases/ecb-welcomes-plans-to-improve-racial-equality/>

The list of acknowledgements must, rightly, begin with the testimonies we received from those who have suffered discrimination over the years, which were often overwhelming in their depth and insight. The evidence they provided has given us a powerful sense of responsibility to represent their personal narratives and attempt to crystallise the learning from their experiences, and from the wider body of evidence we have gathered, into the recommendations we have made to improve the sport we love.

The ECB deserves praise for initiating this process, devoting both time and resources as well as courageously opening themselves up to prolonged, rigorous and at times uncomfortable independent scrutiny. A great many organisations would not have been brave enough to relinquish control in the manner in which they have in establishing a truly independent Commission, and I wish to put on record my admiration for them in this regard.

I am also grateful to the County Cricket organisations and a number of other individuals and organisations who gave their time and support to the Commission, enabling us to have far reaching insight into how cricket is working.

I am fortunate to have had the benefit of four incredibly supportive Commissioners with extensive experience (including deep cricket knowledge) without whom this work would not have been possible. We have all, from the very outset, shared one collective and abiding desire: to see cricket emerge as the most equitable and inclusive sport in the country. As Commissioners, their commitment to realise this ambition was unwavering - they provided me with expertise, sage counsel and time, all of which they gave most generously. I am indebted to them.

My final words of thanks must necessarily be reserved for the Commission's Secretariat; they have played an essential role in enabling the completion of this momentous task, and I extend my sincere gratitude to them all for their hard work and support. The quality of advice and support I received from the Commission's Head of Secretariat, Nazia Mirza, deserves particular recognition.

I do not underestimate the challenges that lie ahead but if cricket is to become a game that is truly for everyone, work on the issues we raise in this Report cannot wait. Now is the time for cricket to show its mettle. To those who don't recognise there is a problem, those who think cricket's problems are isolated, those who mistakenly believe focusing on issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion is distracting cricket from cricket, I have one clear message: if cricket is to survive and thrive, and become a game genuinely for all, it has to grip the opportunities I truly believe our recommendations represent.

I remain optimistic that cricket will respond to this challenge with passion, creativity, and commitment.

CINDY BUTTS, CHAIR OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION FOR EQUITY IN CRICKET

June 2023



Chapter 1: Executive Summary

1.1 Overview and introduction

- 1.1.1 Cricket has the power to change lives. Loved by millions across the planet, it is a sport of connection: to friends and family, to team, club, community, and to the whole cricketing world. It inspires, thrills, and brings joy to anyone who picks up a bat and ball, be it on the street, the beach, in a back garden, or on the village green. It offers a myriad of opportunities both personally and professionally, from building leadership and teamwork skills to making lifelong friendships and improving health. Careers in coaching, umpiring and administration sit alongside the chance to play professionally in multiple formats at home and abroad. For the lucky and talented few, there is also the chance to represent their country on an international stage. A game **for** everyone that belongs **to** everyone – or at least that is what it should be.
- 1.1.2 In reality, however, racism, sexism, elitism and class-based discrimination have a long history within the culture and institutions of English and Welsh cricket. Alongside the images of tradition and fairness that many love about cricket sits a history of tensions and social conflicts. This is why our Report, somewhat unusually, begins with a chapter that sets out the historical context for cricket in England and Wales. Engaging with this history is critical as it reveals many unspoken assumptions, inherited from the past, that continue to shape the game, explaining why some have had the opportunities to succeed and thrive with others left behind at the margins. Indeed, our evidence shows that elitism alongside deeply rooted and widespread forms of structural and institutional racism, sexism and class-based discrimination **continue** to exist across the game.
- 1.1.3 We would emphasise the fact that this does not mean that we consider that every individual, and every individual institution, involved in the sport discriminates, nor that the discrimination we have identified is necessarily deliberate. Far from it. Many people – players, volunteers, leaders and staff alike – are already deeply committed to improving equity in cricket. What we are saying is that, in our view, there remain collective failures within the sport of cricket in England and Wales to ensure equality of treatment and/or opportunity, which tend to disadvantage certain people based on their race, gender and/or class.
- 1.1.4 In the last two years, confidence in the game, and in those who run it, has been severely undermined following public revelations of racism and wider discrimination. There have also been widespread concerns both within the game, and externally, about how these matters have been handled by those in leadership positions.
- 1.1.5 In November 2020, the ECB announced its intention to establish a Commission “*to assist the ECB Board in assessing the evidence of inequalities and discrimination of all forms within cricket, and the actions needed to tackle these issues.*”¹ The Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC) was subsequently established in March 2021.

¹ <https://www.ecb.co.uk/news/1914696/ecb-commits-to-further-action-to-drive-out-discrimination-and-increase-diversity-across-cricket>

- 1.1.6 The problems we identify are not, sadly, unique to cricket. In many instances they are indicative of equally deeply rooted societal problems and so whilst our headline finding is necessarily blunt, we consider the fact that the ECB proactively initiated this process and opened itself up to independent scrutiny is both positive and brave. Change does not happen without understanding the issues that need to be addressed and so we believe the ECB is worthy of praise for undertaking this exercise. It is also clear that there have been sizeable improvements in the ECB's, and sections of the wider game's, approach, particularly since 2018 when the ECB introduced its independent Board. It is our view that the ECB's new leadership brings with it a renewed drive to achieve meaningful change, and it is deserving of ongoing support from within cricket and from its partners more widely as it continues on what we acknowledge will be a long term journey towards achieving equity in cricket.
- 1.1.7 Discrimination, whether along the lines of gender, class or race, is devastating. Alongside the economic and social cost of missed opportunities to individuals, organisations and wider society, it has also been shown to seriously impact mental and physical health.² This must be addressed and those who lead cricket have a responsibility to do everything within their power to create a culture that eliminates discrimination and inequity in the game.
- 1.1.8 Based on preliminary work to identify the most commonly called for actions to improve equity in cricket, we considered that focusing on race, gender and class would give us the best opportunity to effect sustained change in some of the most pressing problem areas for English and Welsh cricket. We hope, however, that our findings will be relevant to, and have beneficial consequences for, other marginalised groups throughout the game. Our Terms of Reference are set out at Appendix 1.
- 1.1.9 Taken in the round, the evidence we received demonstrated that people's experiences within the sport tend to be structured by their socio-demographic and socio-economic profile, undermining the idea that cricket is 'a game for everyone'. Our research also shows that disadvantages linked to gender, race and class can have a cumulative impact, exacerbating any detriment experienced as a result of those individual factors alone. Achieving equity in cricket requires us to think clearly through an intersectional lens about how discrimination can be experienced in order to design effective interventions to combat it.
- 1.1.10 The evidence also drew our attention to the prevalence of an elitist and exclusionary culture within English and Welsh cricket. This culture is, in part, enforced through the dominance of private school networks within cricket's talent pathway, together with sexist, racist and other discriminatory practices and policies that lead to discriminatory outcomes across the game. We heard, for example, extensive, often shocking, evidence of interpersonal racism and sexism, which gave rise to a concern about prevailing social norms within English and Welsh cricket. It is our assessment that the extent, frequency and seriousness of some of the behaviours described to us reveal a culture in which overt discrimination often goes without serious challenge. These behaviours include, but are not limited to: racist, misogynistic, homophobic and ableist comments and actions, and a 'laddish' drinking culture that can sometimes make women vulnerable and at risk of unwanted or unwelcome behaviour, as well as alienating others due to religious and/or cultural beliefs.
- 1.1.11 Chapter 4 on the State of Equity in Cricket provides a powerful statistical context for our findings around the game's culture and for the Report more generally. Our hope is that the Chapter can act as a benchmark for cricket, aiding its leaders in reflecting on how equitable the game is today and what decisions are needed to eliminate discrimination and advance equity. Some of the data will be familiar to those close to the game, other data may be surprising. Many need concerted action in response. One of our recommendations is that the ECB carries out an equivalent assessment of equity in cricket every three years, to properly monitor progress and, ideally, demonstrate improvement.

² <https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-020-09792-1> & <https://europepmc.org/article/MED/31497985>

- 1.1.12 The Commission of course recognises that different parts of England and Wales will have different challenges in terms of the barriers that exist. Counties are at different stages when it comes to recognising and challenging discrimination in the game. Some have more resources than others, some are making progress, others lag behind. We have adopted a game-wide approach to our work and so have not examined regional differences in detail. We acknowledge, therefore, that our conclusions may not always resonate with the experience in every part of the country. One academic told us that *“you need specific interventions to help specific communities in specific areas.”* We agree, and would urge the ECB and the wider game to consider this as they implement our recommendations.

1.2 How does discrimination show itself?

Racism



All the stories that Azeem Rafiq talks about, that all happened to me. All the abuse, the isolation, the hatred. [Teammates] poured alcohol on me. They threw bacon sandwiches at me. I have lived with all that and never spoke to anyone about it.

Asian (Pakistani) man, state school, former player

A deep-seated issue of racism continues to exist in cricket

- 1.2.1 During our hearings with the ECB, we asked its leadership if they agreed with the conclusion reached by the DCMS Select Committee in January 2022 *“that there is a deep-seated issue of racism in cricket”* and that, more pertinently, *“it is evident to [...] the England and Wales Cricket Board that there is an issue of racism in cricket.”*³ The responses were mixed. Some Board members acknowledged that there was *“a history of racism in the game”* but that it was not *“deep-seated in that broad sense”* but instead existed in *“pockets”*. Others, however, were clear that *“without doubt the way cricket has been structured and led historically has created the conditions for racism or racist incidents to be perpetuated”* and that it was in fact *“probably”* deep-seated in part.
- 1.2.2 The evidence is unequivocal: racism is a serious issue in cricket. We are clear, as a Commission, that racism in cricket is not confined to ‘pockets’ or ‘a few bad apples’, nor is it limited to individual incidents of misconduct (i.e. interpersonal racism). In our opinion, the cumulative picture of evidence demonstrates that racism, in all its forms, continues to shape the experience of, and opportunities for, many in the game. We hope that our Report enables the ECB, and importantly the wider game, to move to a more realistic view of the extent and nature of racism in English and Welsh cricket.

A culture where racism is normalised and authorities aren’t always trusted to act

- 1.2.3 The qualitative responses to our lived experiences survey included many examples of overt racism and abuse from club officials, team members and supporters directed, in particular, at Black and South Asian players including derogatory and inappropriate language, racist stereotyping and assumptions being made about them.

³ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/8470/documents/86256/default/>

- 1.2.4 Whilst 50% of all respondents described experiencing discrimination in the previous five years, the figures were substantially higher for people from ethnically diverse communities: 87% of people with Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage, 82% of people with Indian heritage and 75% of all Black respondents.
- 1.2.5 Despite this high prevalence, three quarters of those who experienced racism (and wider discrimination) did not report it to cricketing authorities. Our evidence suggests that the most common reason for low reporting is the significant trust deficit that exists between victims of discrimination and cricketing authorities: many victims told us that they lack confidence that appropriate action will be taken if they do raise concerns, as well as finding systems inadequate and outcomes unsatisfactory. By contrast, many of those in authority consider the systems they operate to be effective. This gulf in perceptions needs to be addressed as a priority.

A lack of representation, unequal outcomes and structural barriers

- 1.2.6 In cricket's most senior leadership,⁴ South Asian representation is limited to 2.8% despite South Asians making up 26-29% of the game's adult recreational population and 6.9%⁵ of the population of England and Wales. In addition, with the exception of a single Black woman on the ECB Board (who is shortly to depart)⁶, Black people are entirely absent from the game's most senior leadership.
- 1.2.7 The ethnicity of male and female players at professional level does not reflect the ethnicity of the adult recreational playing base, nor the wider population of England and Wales. Asian British and Black British players comprised 8.1% of all male professional players in 2021,⁷ compared with 30-35% of the game's adult recreational population being from ethnically diverse backgrounds and 10.9% of the population in England and Wales being South Asian or Black.⁸ Indeed, there were more male players from White Other backgrounds (55) than Asian British players (21) or Black British players (12) in 2021. A widely quoted statistic is that there has been a decline in Black British male professional players of around 75%.⁹ Female cricketers playing at domestic professional level are disproportionately White: in 2021, there were only two Black British, four Mixed/Multiple ethnicity and eight South Asian female players, out of a total of 161.¹⁰
- 1.2.8 In addition to this quantitative evidence, we identified structures in existence that lead to racial disparities and discrimination in terms of talent selection and progression, such as the lack of cricket in state schools and in our inner cities, the absence of diverse role models, and the use of talent selection criteria that increase the vulnerability of South Asian and Black players to bias. The evidence points to the fact that often those from ethnically diverse communities are not afforded the same opportunities, the same recognition and the same support as their White counterparts.
- 1.2.9 We also saw many examples of stereotyping, exclusion and other forms of racism directed towards South Asian and Black players and officials, with individuals from both groups feeling like they need to be overqualified to succeed.

⁴ In our Chapter 4 on the State of Equity in Cricket, we consider the game's most senior leadership to include the 12 members of the ECB Board, the Chairs of the 41 Members of the ECB, and the CEOs of the 18 First Class Counties and MCC, bringing the total in the most senior leadership group to 72.

⁵ Total figure for 'Asian' in the Census 2021 is 9.3%. South Asian figure calculated using raw data from ONS, Census 2021.

⁶ Correct as at 31 December 2022.

⁷ Based on ICEC historical player research.

⁸ See Figure 2 under paragraph 4.2.5.

⁹ ACE Programme, 'About Us'. <https://aceprogramme.com/about/>

¹⁰ Based on ICEC historical player research.

Cricket has failed Black communities



We know we have lost a generation of Black cricketers to our sport. We accept that the ECB could have done more historically to own that challenge and come up with a comprehensive programme sooner.

The ECB

- 1.2.10 The decline in Black cricket in England and Wales has been well documented and subject to much public debate for many years. Many have described, including many of the witnesses we spoke to, the closure of Haringey Cricket College in 1997 as a pivotal moment in this decline. We agree, and reflecting on the tremendous success of the College during its lifetime, consider it regrettable that the ECB at the time did not use its power and influence to prevent its closure.
- 1.2.11 This decline is also mirrored in participation where Black adults are not playing cricket in sufficient numbers to even be picked up by surveys that measure participation in cricket: a 2020 report by Sport England found that Black participation was so low as to be statistically irrelevant, apparently lower than in golf and tennis.
- 1.2.12 Whilst there has been some recent and welcome recognition by the ECB that Black communities need targeted interventions, we found it deeply concerning and surprising that we could identify no evidence of direct ECB-led activity to understand, halt or reverse this decline since the ECB's formation in 1997. There is no reference to Black communities in the ECB's Inspiring Generations strategy, despite their central role in English cricket in the recent past. For a 'strategy for cricket' described as placing 'diversity and inclusion' at its core, we view this as a striking omission.

The ECB has been slow to respond

- 1.2.13 It appears to us that the ECB's efforts to address the challenges of equity, diversity and inclusion in cricket only gained real momentum following the introduction of its independent¹¹ Board in 2018, nearly 19 years after the 1999 'Clean Bowl Racism' report concluded that racism existed in cricket. Whilst the South Asian Action Plan (SAAP) published in 2018 has begun to address some of the barriers faced by South Asian players, it fails to directly acknowledge that specifically **racism** needs addressing in the recreational and professional game, beyond references to unconscious bias training.
- 1.2.14 It is concerning and regrettable that there appears to be little evidence of **effective** game-wide action to tackle racism and wider discrimination before 2018, despite clear evidence that racism was a serious problem in the game. The persistence of interpersonal and structural racism in cricket is due, we believe, in part to a failure by the ECB to specifically and unambiguously name racism as a concern, at least until the recent crisis (and only then generally in reference to interpersonal and overt forms of racism). As such, racism remains a widespread and serious problem in cricket across England and Wales and something that the ECB and the wider game should address with urgency.

¹¹ By independent Board, we are referring to the fact that, since 2018, individuals on the Board do not (and cannot) also hold relevant posts in the County cricket network or at MCC.

Sexism



[I have been] told: A lady cannot be a good umpire. I should go back home. Get off the field. Women's cricket is sh*t. Women can't make decisions. Women shouldn't even umpire.

Unattributed to protect confidentiality

Women are still seen as an 'add on' to the men's game

- 1.2.15 It has been 278 years since the first recorded women's cricket match, 133 years since the first group of women cricketers toured the UK, and 97 years since the foundation of the Women's Cricket Association,¹² yet women are not even nearly on an equal footing with men within the sport today. Our evidence shows that women continue to be treated as subordinate to men within, and at all levels of, cricket. This is evident both from the lived experience of professional and recreational women cricketers and from the structural barriers that women continue to face.
- 1.2.16 The women's game lacks proper representation amongst the highest level of decision-makers within cricket. Only 12.7% of cricket's most senior leadership are women. All current 18 FCC Chairs are men. All but two of those men - one of whom is shortly to depart¹³ - are White.
- 1.2.17 Cricket's decision-making and governance structures overwhelmingly represent the men's game. Even with the welcome recent growth of professional women's cricket, Women's Regional Teams (WRTs) are not members of the ECB and so do not have a voice at the highest levels of the game when important decisions are being made.

Unequal treatment

- 1.2.18 Regarding pay and investment, women receive an embarrassingly small amount compared to men. We received credible evidence that the average salary for England Women is 20.6%¹⁴ of the average salary for England Men for playing white ball cricket, although the ECB has indicated that they consider this figure to be up to 30%. England Women's match fees are 25% of England Men's for white ball matches and only 15% for Test Matches.¹⁵ The England Women's white ball captain's allowance is 31% of the allowance awarded to the England Men's white ball captain.¹⁶ There is still a significant disparity, although less so, in the domestic game. For example, the average domestic salary for women is just less than half of that for the average domestic men's player. Investment in the talent pathway is significantly greater for boys than for girls: in 2021 the total funding for boys' Academies alone was equivalent to 40% of the total funding for the entire Women's Regional Structure.
- 1.2.19 There are significant levels of inequity in the availability of kit for women and girls and in the number of grounds and facilities for women and girls to use, often meaning greater time and cost spent on travel.
- 1.2.20 There is less media exposure and fewer opportunities to play at the premier grounds: the England Women's team has never played a Test Match at Lord's, a fact that alarmed the Commission. The 'home of cricket' is still a home principally for men.

¹² <https://www.lords.org/lords/our-history/evolution-of-women-s-cricket>

¹³ Correct as at 31 December 2022.

¹⁴ Based on figures for the 2022/2023 contract year.

¹⁵ As of February 2022.

¹⁶ As of February 2022.

- 1.2.21 There is, in our view, credible evidence that some within the sport hold the view that women should be grateful for the gains that they have recently made. This is not only wrong, it also fails to acknowledge the game's legacy of actively excluding women or to recognise that the progress of women's cricket in recent years represents merely the first small step in making up for those many years of exclusion.

A prevalent culture of sexism

- 1.2.22 In terms of behaviours, we heard evidence of a widespread culture of sexism and misogyny, and unacceptable behaviour towards women in both the recreational and professional game. Women and women's teams are frequently demeaned, stereotyped and treated as second-class. This included misogynistic and derogatory comments about women and girls, and everyday sexism. On top of this, some described being ostracised and ridiculed either for not participating in, or for objecting to, sexism directed towards female players and umpires or the women's game more generally. There was evidence of unwanted and uninvited advances from men towards women.

The TWGCP is having a positive impact but there is still much to do

- 1.2.23 We recognise that women's cricket has made many positive strides since the launch of Inspiring Generations and its underlying action plan known as the Transforming Women's and Girls' Cricket Action Plan (TWGCP). It is clear that the plan is having a significant impact, including on lived experiences, although there remain serious issues of discrimination, both interpersonal and structural, that must be addressed with urgency.

Class-based discrimination



The size of your wallet determines if your children progress or not, which is a clear indication that it's not a sport for everyone but for a privileged few.

Parent/guardian, county age group player

An elitist culture prevails, largely to the exclusion of those from lower socio-economic backgrounds

- 1.2.24 Our evidence points to the prevalence of elitism and class-based discrimination in cricket. Much of this is, we believe, structural and institutional in nature, driven partly by the lack of access to cricket in state schools and the way in which the talent pathway is structurally bound up with private schools. This makes it much harder for talented young people to progress if they are **not** at so-called 'cricketing' schools - which are overwhelmingly private schools - and do not have alternative means to access the sport. Private school and 'old boys' networks' and cliques permeate the game to the exclusion of many.
- 1.2.25 The percentage of male England players who were privately educated was 57% in 2012, and was similar at 58% in 2021¹⁷ - significantly higher than the 7% of the general population who are privately educated. Of the 4,156 people involved or recently involved in cricket who responded to the lived experience survey commissioned by the ICEC, 42% attended private school.¹⁸ We are confident that this broadly reflects the overrepresentation throughout the game of those who have been privately educated.

¹⁷ Based on ICEC historical player research.

¹⁸ Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket.

- 1.2.26 In the talent pathway, the scholarships that are provided to talented state school pupils, whilst generally beneficial to those individuals who receive them, perpetuate the gulf between state and private school provision and reinforce the significantly greater prospects of success of privately educated children. We believe that, for many, cricket in England and Wales does not currently offer a viable state school pathway to elite, professional cricket.

There is an urgent need to recognise and tackle cricket's class problem

- 1.2.27 According to the evidence we reviewed there appears to have been neither the focus on, nor sufficient will to address, class barriers in cricket. To date, the ECB has not developed a specific, holistic strategy to address inequity based on class, schooling or socio-economic background. Our view as a Commission is that an immediate sea change in attitudes is required: a recognition of the barriers and a systematic, proactive and country-wide change in approach to break them down.
- 1.2.28 Cricket must ensure that, along with their ethnically diverse counterparts, White working class cricketers do not miss out on the opportunity to play and progress. This applies beyond just playing cricket: strategies need to target the diversification of the socio-economic demographic of cricket's leaders, members, coaches and umpires. Moreover, plans that target women, and Black and South Asian communities, need considerations of class at their heart.

Schools and the talent pathway



This [private schools' connections to professional cricket] in itself, is alienating a huge proportion of the population from having a viable entry into professional cricket and this applies to the white working classes in addition to those from an ethnically diverse background.

Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities

- 1.2.29 We recognise and commend the fact that the ethnic diversity in both the boys' and girls' talent pathways is growing, although it still lags behind ethnic diversity in the adult recreational game overall and there has been limited growth in the number of young players from Black communities.

Significant barriers to equity exist on the cricket talent pathway

- 1.2.30 The structure and operation of the talent pathway remains a barrier to equity and inclusion across gender, class and race. As such, it repeats and reinforces wider structural inequalities that exist across cricket in England and Wales. The scarce provision of cricket in state schools, the widespread links between cricket and private schools, the cost and time associated with playing youth cricket, the lack of a systematic, contextual process for talent identification, and the relative absence of diversity amongst coaches on the talent pathway: these are all important factors which present significant barriers to an equitable system. The way that the pathway is structured creates even greater obstacles for girls than boys: for example, the smaller number of County/WRT Academies for girls (8 compared with 18 for boys) mean that girls are much more likely to have to travel further to training and matches (with all the associated costs).
- 1.2.31 Our evidence shows that ethnicity has a significant influence on a child's prospects of entering and progressing through the pathway; that class, schooling and socio-economic background have, arguably, even more of an impact; and that the intersection of ethnicity plus class can make a dramatic difference. Inequity permeates every aspect of the pathway and, whilst we saw evidence of pockets of good practice, much more needs to be done.

Private schools dominate the talent pathway

1.2.32 Despite having some awareness of the issue before we started our work, the starkness of the class divide and the gulf between state and private school provision in the talent pathway shocked us. For as long as the system relies as heavily as it does on its links to private schools, there will never be meaningful equity in either the talent pathway or English and Welsh cricket more broadly, regardless of any EDI programmes or initiatives. Of the 5,072 private and state secondary schools in England and Wales, private schools make up 28.2% and yet they represent 70.9% of the secondary schools that are connected with the Counties.¹⁹ Research in 2017 into a group of nine private schools known as the Clarendon schools found that *“the alumni of these nine elite schools are 94 times more likely to reach the British elite”* compared with all those who had been to all other schools.²⁰ County talent pathways are connected to eight out of these nine schools.

Costs are prohibitive

1.2.33 We believe very strongly that the costs associated with participation in the talent pathway are one of the most significant barriers to equity in cricket. It will never be ‘a game for all’ at County level and above when large parts of society simply cannot afford to get their foot on the ladder and progress, no matter how talented they may be. If an appeal to equity and fairness isn’t enough on its own, we are clear that cricket in England and Wales is losing talented - potentially great - players simply because of the financial barriers the game puts in their way.

Talent ID and selection processes reinforce inequities

1.2.34 In terms of talent identification (and whilst not making allegations against any particular individuals) there is clear evidence that coaches’ conflicts of interest and biases (conscious or otherwise) are operating to the detriment of those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and Black and South Asian players. This compounds the structural inequalities produced by the private school advantage. The level of ‘cultural competency’ and understanding of bias, so important for ensuring equitable selection, varies between the Counties. The impact is exacerbated by a talent identification framework that in our view does not adequately promote the idea of selectors taking a holistic and contextual view of a player’s potential and merit, thus mitigating against the biases that tend to predominate on the pathway.

¹⁹ Detailed in Chapter 4, State of Equity in Cricket. Although private schools make up approximately 28% of the secondary schools in England and Wales, as noted elsewhere in this Report (e.g. paragraph 4.4.16), only about 7% of all pupils attend private schools, albeit that percentage increases for those aged 17 and 18. One possible reason for this difference could be that the average number of students attending each private secondary school is lower than the equivalent number attending state secondary schools.

²⁰ Flemmen Friedman, ‘The Decline and Persistence of the Old Boy: Private Schools and Elite Recruitment 1897 to 2016’, *American Sociological Review* (2017), p. 16. <https://www.pepf.co.uk/research/the-decline-and-persistence-of-the-old-boy/>

1.3 How did this happen?

EDI strategy

- 1.3.1 As we describe in Chapter 6, Approach to EDI in Cricket, the ECB's approach to EDI appears, to date, to have been heavily influenced by its commercial considerations, including maximising the growth of the game and its revenues, and emphasising the protection of its and the game's reputation. This has inevitably resulted in a strategy that has delivered mixed results, at times without sufficient focus on what is right for fairness and equity. Whilst there have been important and notable successes that should be commended, in particular the development of the women's game and emerging evidence of progress in relation to South Asian communities on the talent pathway, there have also been serious failures for which there must be both acknowledgement and remedy. These failures include, in particular, the failure to adequately support cricket in Black communities and lack of any specific steps to address the significant underrepresentation in professional cricket of those who attend state schools.

Failure to name racism and other forms of discrimination

- 1.3.2 It is notable that in its various EDI strategy documents and in the language that it uses, the ECB often fails to name structural and/or institutional forms of racism, sexism or class-based discrimination as problems in the sport, despite the overwhelming evidence that they exist. There has been a failure, for example, to expressly recognise that a person's ethnicity (either on its own or in conjunction with their socio-economic status and/or gender) is likely to limit their opportunities to enjoy and progress within the sport. This, we believe, prevents meaningful action being taken to address these structural and institutional barriers.
- 1.3.3 Our evidence shows that discrimination is often only seen through the lens of deliberate interpersonal abuse. There appears to be a failure to recognise, or at least clearly acknowledge, that it can also be structural and/or institutional in nature and can manifest itself in systems and decision-making processes that disproportionately disadvantage one group over another. There is a vital need for the ECB Board (and, indeed, cricket as a whole) to build its competency on how racism, sexism and class-based discrimination intersect, operate within institutions and social structures (such as our school system), and in so doing compound disadvantages.

Cricket needs to have a clear set of values

- 1.3.4 At the core of the ECB's 'Inspiring Generations' strategy is the ambition to make cricket 'a game for everyone'. The ECB described the strategy to us as "*timeless*". Whether or not this is the case, it is, at present, misaligned with large parts of the sport's culture, which, as we have concluded, does not promote cricket as a game for everyone. In our view, for culture and strategy to become better aligned, cricket in general, and the ECB in particular, must articulate far more clearly the values that it believes will enable Inspiring Generations to be delivered.

Governance and leadership

Lack of diversity in leadership

- 1.3.5 Despite some progress recently in diversifying the Boards of the ECB, FCCs and County Cricket Boards (CCBs), the way in which cricket has developed over time in England (in particular) has created structures that mean power is concentrated in the hands of, mainly, White, middle class men (largely captured by what we have referred to in the Report as Type K).²¹
- 1.3.6 A clear gulf exists between the perceptions of Type K and other respondents on almost every measure in our lived experiences survey. Type K mostly believed cricket to be an inclusive sport in which everyone has the same sense of belonging and opportunities to be themselves regardless of their backgrounds, yet that positive outlook was not shared by many women and people from ethnically diverse communities and/or lower socio-economic backgrounds.²² The extent of the disconnect between the views of Type K and marginalised groups in cricket is a theme that runs throughout our Report.

Delivery of EDI should be formalised in the ECB's constitution

- 1.3.7 The ECB's purpose, role and responsibilities are set out in their Articles of Association.²³ They include leading, administering and regulating the game, encouraging participation, improving playing standards, and marketing, promoting and developing the sport. The ECB meets these responsibilities through developing a strategic game-wide plan, implementing a governance framework, generating income, organising competitions and administering officials alongside a wide range of other activities. As the sport's national governing body, the ECB's role is key in leading the game's progress on EDI through guidance, regulation, enforcement and, of course, by example. Critically, at present, the ECB's purpose, as set out in its Articles of Association, does not include any specific obligation to promote and deliver EDI in the game. We believe it should.

The importance of diversity in the membership model

- 1.3.8 Most of the FCCs operate by way of a membership model. Many are owned by and are accountable to their members. Throughout the course of our work we have seen reports of members exercising their rights and powers in various ways including having the opportunity to accept or reject key decisions about how the game is run.
- 1.3.9 We recognise there are some important benefits to this model and that members make a substantial contribution to the game. However, it also results in a range of implications for the ability of cricketing organisations to comply with requirements in the Sport England Governance Code and for EDI. Whilst we agree that it is right and proper that there is a line of accountability to members, there is also, in our view, a credible risk that the leadership of cricketing organisations can become beholden to small but powerful cliques within the memberships that are resistant to the changes needed both for good governance and in relation to EDI.

²¹ To measure intersectional advantage and discrimination, the research company that conducted our online lived experiences survey created a number of 'personas' or 'types' of which Type K was intended to reflect, broadly speaking, the experience of White, middle class men. A full definition is set out at Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket, in section 1.2.2.

²² Ibid.

²³ Available at <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/03251364/filing-history>

- 1.3.10 These issues are further compounded by the lack of diversity within County membership demographics, which our evidence suggests are often not representative of their local communities, nor of the recreational playing population, remaining dominated by older, White and often (but not exclusively) middle class men. We want to be clear that we are not saying members should not have influence, rights and powers. That would be undemocratic and risk the sport's legitimacy amongst the grassroots. However, it is also our view that memberships that do not represent the diversity of the game also lack legitimacy.
- 1.3.11 For all of these reasons, diversifying memberships is an essential component of ensuring progress towards a more equitable and inclusive game and the ECB, Counties and MCC should be taking all possible steps to make this happen.

Cricket's systems for regulating EDI need significant improvement

- 1.3.12 We recognise that the ECB has been taking action to improve the game's systems for regulating EDI over time, particularly since 2018 when the ECB set up its own Legal and Integrity Team and its Regulatory Committee, and with the introduction of collective minimum standards under the County Partnership Agreement in 2020.²⁴ We recognise that these changes have not had sufficient time to bed in and that there is evidence of improving performance. We also note the outcome of the recent ECB investigation and subsequent disciplinary process regarding Azeem Rafiq's allegations against Yorkshire County Cricket Club and several individuals, which resulted in one or more charges being proved against seven of the eight participants charged. Notwithstanding this, it is our view that failures of the regulatory processes have contributed significantly to the crisis that the game is currently facing. The current systems are not yet working as well as they need to: we consider them to lack clarity and, especially in the formal regulatory system, sufficient levels of independence. The phrase 'marking your own homework' was often used in evidence to us.
- 1.3.13 It is our assessment that there needs to be much greater independence of the regulatory function in cricket than exists or even than is currently envisaged by the governance review recently commissioned by the ECB, which recommended that "*the role of, and perceived and real level of independence of the Regulatory function*" should be enhanced.²⁵ To provide greater clarity, regulations should be focused solely on matters of discipline and integrity, including anti-discrimination rules. All rules, codes, standards, guidance etc covering issues not related to discipline and integrity should be part of the game's non-regulatory collective minimum standards. The EDI-related regulations and standards need to be stronger and more robust than they are at present.
- 1.3.14 In our opinion, the ECB's dual roles of promoter and regulator have the potential to give rise to conflicts of interest that are irreconcilable under the game's current and proposed regulatory and compliance structure. 'Commercial' considerations, understandably, require the ECB to be focused on, amongst other things, growing the sport's revenue and protecting its reputation. Those considerations may at times, however, be (or appear to be) in conflict with the need to take concerted and effective regulatory action.
- 1.3.15 We heard evidence of disquiet in the game that this dual responsibility could lead to poor conduct not being tackled appropriately if perpetrators are high performing and/or considered too valuable to lose. This is a particular risk in relation to discrimination, where the potential commercial and/or reputational damage may be significant if poor behaviour comes to light. As a result, the temptation to look the other way can be hard to ignore. In saying that, we acknowledge that regulatory action has been taken by the ECB against some high profile individuals in recent years, including England players. Nonetheless, our evidence is that there is still concern across the game about the ECB's dual role of promoter and regulator, which needs to be addressed.

²⁴ When we talk about 'regulating' EDI in cricket, we are referring to all the ways in which EDI-related rules and standards are set and enforced, including through the formal regulatory process and non-regulatory collective minimum standards.

²⁵ A review by Portas Consulting (a specialist sports management consultancy) of governance and regulation in cricket to identify opportunities to strengthen the structures and processes across the game.

- 1.3.16 The solution is to ensure that the body responsible for the investigation of regulatory breaches, and the decision about whether to bring charges for them, is separated from the organisation responsible for the promotion of the game – and is clearly understood to be separate. Accordingly, we believe that there should be a newly-established, independent regulatory body.

Complaints

An effective complaints process is part of advancing EDI

- 1.3.17 A clear and effective process for addressing and resolving complaints is essential for any organisation. The approach taken can reveal an organisation's culture and values: whether there is a genuine commitment to fairness and to learning from mistakes, or simply a desire to protect reputations and maintain the status quo. This is doubly true when it comes to promoting fairness and equity. Effective handling of discrimination allegations is a key component of a genuinely inclusive culture, confronting behaviours that enable and reproduce discrimination.

An ineffective complaints process is detrimental to EDI

- 1.3.18 We found that the general attitude towards complaints often appears to be overly defensive, regarding them as a problem to be solved as quickly and quietly as possible. There is a tendency to 'go legal' as soon as a complaint is received, which often entrenches positions and prevents any opportunity to explore early resolution. A low number of complaints is seen by some as a good thing, without any appreciation that people might have reason to complain but choose not to. We heard a great deal of evidence that most instances of discrimination go unreported for a variety of reasons, including confusion about the process, a perception that nothing will be done and, most concerningly, a fear of victimisation.
- 1.3.19 Many within cricket do not yet seem to appreciate that complaints can be a source of valuable feedback and insight. Proper collation of information, both about the complaints themselves and the underlying issues they might reveal, should be regarded as essential for the game to learn lessons, share best practice and help everyone in cricket to improve.
- 1.3.20 Our evidence indicates that the systems that cricket has in place for handling allegations of discrimination are unfit for purpose and require urgent reform. Many of those seeking to raise concerns find the complaints process difficult to navigate, poorly explained and stressful, as do many of those who are the subjects of complaints.
- 1.3.21 The process of handling complaints needs to be further professionalised, not only in the recreational game but also in professional cricket. Some of the FCCs we spoke to were eager for greater help and support from the ECB, particularly with responding to discrimination complaints.
- 1.3.22 There needs to be a greater focus on achieving appropriate outcomes. The ECB and the wider game seem to regard formal complaints as the only (or at least the principal) route to follow. Insufficient attention is paid to other means of raising concerns that could lead to quick, proportionate and informal resolution (where appropriate). We are concerned that categorising all discrimination allegations as 'whistleblowing' may be unhelpful and counter-productive, often leading to only the most serious complaints being raised. Sometimes, an individual who has experienced more minor forms of discrimination just wants it to stop, with the person responsible acknowledging that their behaviour is wrong. A genuine apology and willingness to change can go a long way.
- 1.3.23 There is not enough focus on individuals as potential victims who need support. Similarly, there does not appear to be enough support provided for others involved in complaints, primarily the subject of the complaint but also witnesses and those who are responsible for handling and investigating complaints, which can often be stressful and emotionally draining.

- 1.3.24 Complaints handling and resolution should be overseen by senior leaders in an organisation, not just left to those responsible for managing and investigating complaints. Senior leaders, on and off the pitch, should be under a duty to ‘call out’ discrimination whenever they see it, as well as leading by example through maintaining their own high standards of personal conduct.

Cricket Discipline Commission resources and support are inadequate

- 1.3.25 As well as the regulatory reforms we mentioned in the previous section, the Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) needs to be given the resources and support to enable it to function as an effective independent tribunal, with specialist expertise in discrimination cases, diversity among its Panel Members and its own website providing the means to share lessons learned from its cases directly with the game and through which it can publish all of its decisions in full (except in the most limited of circumstances).
- 1.3.26 The ECB and the wider game should adopt our principles of good practice in handling discrimination complaints, set out in Chapter 8, Complaints.

1.4 Impact

Cricket is not ‘a game for everyone’

- 1.4.1 Having outlined our findings, our inevitable conclusion is that, for many, cricket remains elitist and exclusionary. Some will thrive in an environment in which they possess the ‘right’ characteristics, whereas those who do not are often faced with barriers that they cannot overcome, denied opportunities to progress or, worse, are emotionally or mentally harmed by their time in the game.
- 1.4.2 The trust deficit in cricket is also significant. We heard repeatedly, particularly from those from marginalised and excluded groups, about a lack of trust: in cricket’s ability to regulate itself on EDI matters; in selection processes for entry into and progress within the talent pathway, which are seen as being opaque and unfair; and in the way that cricketing organisations handle complaints of discrimination.
- 1.4.3 Our view is, therefore, clear: unless the culture and structures of cricket are transformed, the sport will fail to attract and retain the best cricketers from the widest possible pool of talent. Perhaps more importantly, many people from different demographics, however talented they are, will continue to feel that cricket is just not a game for them.

1.5 Addressing the issues

- 1.5.1 Taking all of our findings into account, what would, and should, **equity in English and Welsh cricket** look like?
- 1.5.2 ‘Equity’ means the intentional and continuous practice of changing policies, practices, systems and structures to reduce (and ultimately eliminate) inequalities and injustices faced by the people or groups we have identified in this Report who have been disproportionately marginalised and discriminated against within the sport due to their background or identity. To achieve equity, cricket must broaden its appeal, remove barriers faced by marginalised groups and become more representative of society at all levels of the game, on and off the field. The recommendations we make in this Report aim to achieve exactly that. Making cricket more equitable is not only the right thing to do, it should significantly widen the pool of talent available to cricket. It is an opportunity to blaze a trail for other sports, setting the standard for a truly equitable, diverse and inclusive sport in this country and around the world.

Urgent and radical action is required

- 1.5.3 It should, therefore, come as no surprise that we are recommending an urgent and radical overhaul of the policies, practices, systems and structures that currently exist in cricket, with significant investment towards advancing EDI in all areas of the game.
- 1.5.4 Importantly, however, equity isn't going to be achieved with changes to policies and systems alone. A fundamental change in attitudes is required, along with an acceptance of the game's history and the widespread barriers that exist within it. This must lead to a systematic, proactive and game-wide change in the approach to breaking down those barriers. We hope that readers will accept the invitation we extend in the Introduction to our Report to keep an open mind and accept the reality that thousands of people who participated in this review have **actually experienced** discrimination – as much as it may be uncomfortable to read about it.
- 1.5.5 History has played a significant part in the attitudes that have shaped the discriminatory behaviours and structures that we have identified. Whilst it is, of course, important to look forward, the Commission is in no doubt that it is only by 'staying with' the game's history, and truly understanding and acknowledging people's experiences, alongside implementing and embracing the structural changes that need to be made, that we can be confident that history won't repeat itself.
- 1.5.6 Our recommendations are set out in relevant places, and with the relevant background and evidence provided, throughout the Report and are brought together in Chapter 10, Recommendations. We summarise below the key points that the Commission intends to address with those recommendations. They are bold and stretching. They will require significant investment and we recognise that this will require prioritisation on the part of the ECB. Our Report serves as a road map to fundamental and permanent change and so we acknowledge that, whilst an urgent and radical overhaul is required, some recommendations may only be capable of implementation over the longer term.

Apology

- 1.5.7 **As an essential first step, our first recommendation is that the ECB makes an unqualified public apology for its own failings and those of the game it governs. The apology should acknowledge that racism, sexism, elitism and class-based discrimination have existed, and still exist, in the game, and recognise the impact on victims of discrimination. It should include, in particular, a direct apology for the ECB's and the wider game's historic failures in relation to women's and girls' cricket and its failure to adequately support Black cricket in England and Wales.**
- 1.5.8 While some may say that words don't count for much, we believe that a full, frank and public recognition of discrimination in cricket, past and present, can help to rebuild trust and signal a clear future direction.

Purpose and Values

- 1.5.9 An apology is only a starting point for a considered and well-articulated approach to EDI, one where EDI actions aren't words on a page but become integral to everything that cricket does. It must become a core purpose of the ECB as the governing body to promote and deliver EDI in the game. We recommend that this can be further enabled by the ECB, in conjunction with its stakeholders, developing a set of game-wide values that go beyond the 'Spirit of Cricket' and are intended to guide anyone participating in cricket, on or off the field, in everything that they do.
- 1.5.10 By including an obligation to promote and deliver EDI as an integral part of the ECB's purpose, and in developing a clear set of values and behaviours to underpin how cricket is intended to operate, the ECB should be able to create a behavioural framework to support its strategic aims, centring both EDI and the culture required for delivering it. This should be further demonstrated in decision-making, for example, with the use of equality impact assessments or clear evidence that EDI has been contemplated in all strategic decision-making by the ECB and all cricketing organisations.

EDI strategy

- 1.5.11 Having a purpose-led framework should then help inform the creation of an overarching EDI strategy, as part of which the ECB commits to being an anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-elitist/classist organisation and encourage all other cricketing organisations to do the same. The strategy urgently needs to focus on reversing the decline of cricket in Black communities and the prevalence of class barriers in the game, and ensuring high levels of EDI competency across cricket.

Diversity in cricket

- 1.5.12 As we have described, there is a significant and widespread disconnect between the Type K perception of EDI challenges in the game, and the perceptions of women, ethnically diverse communities and, to an extent, White, state educated men. Breaking this disconnect is essential and needs to be achieved by increasing diversity at all levels within the game across race, gender and class: not only from a governance perspective by addressing the ECB's and Counties' Board representation, but also by diversifying Counties' memberships, as well as increasing diversity among coaches and other members of staff across the sport.
- 1.5.13 We believe the appointment of an ECB Executive-level Chief EDI Officer, with a seat on the Board and appropriate resources to enable a singular focus on EDI, is required to support the changes we are proposing.

Women's game

- 1.5.14 We are clear: there should be equal representation within the governance structure for the women's game.
- 1.5.15 In addition, there needs to be a fundamental overhaul of the women's pay structure in order to achieve parity with the men's game. This must be combined with an increase, at pace, in the levels of investment in the core infrastructure and operations of the women's and girls' game, reflecting the outcome of gender-based budgeting. We have set out in the Report how we believe this should be achieved.

Governance generally

- 1.5.16 We acknowledge that the ECB has been taking action to improve the game's regulatory and governance systems, particularly since 2018 when it set up its own Legal and Integrity team and its Regulatory Committee to advise on regulatory matters. This was followed in 2020 by the launch of the non-regulatory County Partnership Agreement (CPA) Standards and the County Governance Framework. We recognise that these initiatives have not had sufficient time to fully bed in and that there is emerging evidence of improving performance. However, given the nature and scale of the issues we identified, across all levels of the game, we have concluded that greater independence is the only way for the game to move forward from, and out of, the current crisis. We have, therefore, made a series of recommendations regarding the establishment of a single set of regulations, focused on issues of discipline and integrity, and crucially a greater separation of functions, with the establishment of a new independent regulatory body responsible for investigating and bringing charges for alleged regulatory breaches, including the power to investigate and bring charges relating to complaints about the ECB itself.
- 1.5.17 To help bring about the changes we recommend and improve accountability, the CPA Standards, which structure the EDI obligations of Counties, will need to be updated and we make recommendations as to what should be included. The available sanctions for non-compliance with those standards should be widened and strengthened, and the game should report publicly on its performance against them. Incentives should also be included for those that perform well.
- 1.5.18 There is clear evidence that being allocated the right to host high profile matches, or having that right withdrawn, is a powerful tool to encourage compliance with EDI. The current process for match allocation (via a tender process against six criteria) expires in 2024 and we have not identified any formal process for deciding to suspend matches. We have recommended that the ECB revises its processes and criteria for allocating, suspending, cancelling and reinstating high profile matches to place greater emphasis on EDI.

Complaints

- 1.5.19 With respect to complaints handling, the game needs to ensure there are high standards that are clearly understood, an open and supportive environment in which individuals feel that concerns can be raised without fear of being victimised, a willingness to learn and improve, and alternative means of resolving issues without requiring individuals to make a formal complaint (where appropriate). Where formal complaints are made, there needs to be proper enforcement, accountability, monitoring and the dissemination of lessons learned to achieve change.
- 1.5.20 We have made a series of recommendations to address these issues including revisions to the game's regulations to ensure they are capable of adequately addressing complaints, the provision of training and specialist support to all cricketing organisations to properly equip them to deal with complaints, and the introduction of mechanisms to enable the informal resolution of complaints in appropriate circumstances.
- 1.5.21 We have also recommended changes to properly resource the CDC, to strengthen the sanctions available to it, and to ensure that everyone working in the professional game is subject to the jurisdiction of the CDC, including those working at the ECB.
- 1.5.22 Anyone who is accused of discrimination should be presumed to be innocent until proven guilty, which should be the bedrock of any complaints system. It is, therefore, essential that organisations provide appropriate support to both complainants and those who are the subject of complaints, particularly in light of research highlighting the impact on individuals of being accused of discrimination, including negative effects on their health and wellbeing.

Schools and the talent pathway

- 1.5.23 A radical change in approach, underpinned by proper investment in routes into and through the talent pathway for the vast majority of our population that only attends state school, is required if the system is to become genuinely fair and equitable. We have made a number of recommendations with regard to schools and the talent pathway aimed at breaking down the significant barriers we identified. They include the implementation of a State Schools Action Plan, more robust guidelines around talent identification and selection, and recommendations to the Government to assist in the process of 'levelling the playing field'.
- 1.5.24 We strongly believe that participation in the talent pathway should be made entirely free of direct costs, so that as of the 2024-25 pathway no player trialling for or participating in the talent pathway needs to pay to participate.
- 1.5.25 We believe that selection for representative, *inter*-County cricket should begin at the Under 14 level and not before. This recommendation will mean that the widely documented challenges associated with talent ID in younger children are removed for the first three years of a typical pathway programme. Placing less emphasis on selection and deselection from Under 10 age groups onwards mitigates the very significant structural advantages that private school children have over their state school counterparts. Coaches, children and parents will be relieved of the pressures and liabilities associated with the current system. Importantly, indirect costs such as travel and parental time will be further reduced, enabling more children to play a high standard of cricket locally, lowering the barriers to participation.

1.6 Good practice

There are some good practices, and progress is being made

- 1.6.1 We have spent a lot of time in our Report focusing on the problems that exist and we recognise that many people who devote a significant amount of time to making the game better may feel demoralised or disheartened reading our Report. As we have already outlined, we do not consider that every individual, and every individual institution, discriminates, or that the discrimination that we have identified is necessarily deliberate. We also readily acknowledge the areas of good practice and signs of improvement that we have seen, with the pace of change increasing during the course of our work. There have been sizeable improvements in the ECB's approach to EDI, particularly since 2018. Inspiring Generations and its underlying plans, including the SAAP and the TWGCP, deserve real credit, and have had a positive impact across the game.
- 1.6.2 As we have mentioned already, the ECB has been taking action to improve the game's regulatory and governance systems, particularly since 2018 when it set up its own Legal and Integrity Team and its Regulatory Committee.
- 1.6.3 Whilst neither are the ECB's initiatives, the ACE Programme, designed, at least in its original formulation, to address the lack of Black representation in cricket, and the South Asian Cricket Academy, are both producing impressive results. The hubs run by the MCC Foundation have also received widespread praise, providing a welcome focus on developing talented state school cricketers.
- 1.6.4 There are some wonderful grassroots initiatives that we refer to in section 7 of Chapter 9 on Schools and the Talent Pathway run by a number of different organisations, including, in many cases, the ECB. We have seen encouraging signs in some Counties of an improved understanding of the challenges and that efforts are being made to improve access to the talent pathway, in particular. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list and there is more evidence of good practice throughout the Report and in the reports we commissioned at Annex 1 and Annex 2.

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the ECB makes an unqualified public apology for its own failings and those of the game it governs. The apology should acknowledge that racism, sexism, elitism and class-based discrimination have existed, and still exist, in the game, and recognise the impact on victims of discrimination. It should include, in particular, a direct apology for the ECB's and the wider game's historic failures in relation to women's and girls' cricket and its failure to adequately support Black cricket in England and Wales.

Chapter 2: Introduction

2.1 Cricket, lovely cricket

- 2.1.1 This Report is intended to help transform a game that so many of us love and support.
- 2.1.2 Many more erudite than we are have written about their love of cricket: the gentle hum of the crowd, batters' eyes focused, umpires listening intently to the thud of the bowler running in, a clear summer day, trees gently swaying, each ground with its own charm. In which other sport, after up to five days of endurance, balls whipping past, sometimes at 90mph, and with the threat of mental disintegration or torrential rain looming, can you still be left satisfied with no team winning?
- 2.1.3 Whether playing for your country or as part of a wandering Sunday team, it is the same desire to play the game you love, engage in healthy competition, be connected to others, and be able to do so without fear of reprisal or humiliation.
- 2.1.4 To millions of fans, cricket symbolises elation, rituals, good health and belonging. It provides people with careers and community, it can be frivolous or serious, and most of the time it is just great fun. However, we found that too many are deterred from accessing its full benefits in England and Wales because of obstacles they cannot overcome, discrimination and, in some cases, shocking harm.
-

2.2 Before we begin

- 2.2.1 Advancing equity in cricket is vital, challenging and sensitive. This is particularly so given that those with the most power in the game predominantly share personal characteristics that have self-replicated throughout its history. Society requires a different approach now, and it can be uncomfortable and difficult to lead change in directions broadly uninformed by your data and/or personal experiences.



I think we're clear [...] who cricket used to be for, and who ran it, and in some cases still run it, some of the elitism of cricket's past in terms of attitudes and behaviours. We know that isn't unpicked quickly [...] the attitudes and behaviours that it is hard for cricket to move on from [...] is encapsulated within all of that. I'm sure you've heard evidence that some of those attitudes remain. You've heard first hand where attitudes of elitism or sexism or whatever they may be are holding the game back.

ECB

- 2.2.2 The Commission is acutely aware of the strength of feeling that can be invoked when the questions of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and culture are raised. It is a depressingly polarising topic which has led to some incredibly toxic behaviour and commentary, both in relation to cricket and more broadly in society.

- 2.2.3 Whilst many in cricket are committed to creating a more equitable culture and inclusive environment, it seems to us that others are resistant to change and may even feel like victims in response to the drive towards greater diversity and inclusion. This was evidenced in some of the responses to our online survey where we were encouraged not to “*bow to the scourge of wokeness. Yes, there are isolated cases that need to be dealt with, but 99.9% of people couldn't care less about a person's gender, sexual orientation, skin colour etc.*” Similarly we were urged to “*Avoid discrimination against White men or positive discrimination towards non-White men*” and not to “*start with positive discrimination e.g. making a point of penalising middle class White boys for the sake of appeasing someone else.*”
- 2.2.4 So we begin this Report with a request: that people who hold views like these keep an open mind and accept the reality that thousands of people who participated in this review, and many more who didn't, have experienced discrimination in cricket – as much as it may be uncomfortable to read about it, and as much as we might not want to believe it. This reflects a system that can permit such behaviour by many more than 0.1% of people.
- 2.2.5 Some people may roll their eyes at the perceived ‘wokeness’ of this work. However, as much as the word may have been weaponized in recent years, taking on a pejorative meaning, we consider – and it is often defined as such – that being ‘woke’ or doing ‘woke work’ simply means being alive to injustice. Such an awareness of injustice is a good thing, reflecting how we want society to operate, and our children to behave. We urge you, as you read this, to ask yourself if wanting to create equality of opportunity for people from different genders, ethnicities or socio-economic backgrounds really does constitute discrimination against, for example, “*middle class White boys*”? Or is it creating the level playing field that should always have existed?
- 2.2.6 We recognise that this process may feel confronting because it involves changing or challenging a system and structure of power that has existed for a very long time. Our ask of you, though, is to recognise that (quite apart from the historical injustices that are laid bare in the following Chapter), injustices continue to happen in cricket **today** – both directly via the behaviour of some individuals, or indirectly given the way cricket is structured. These have the effect of disadvantaging a number of different groups in society – and need to change.
- 2.2.7 Cricket is a game with fairness written into its laws²⁶ and ‘fairness’ is what ultimately underpins EDI work. Whilst we acknowledge that change can, at times, be painful in cricket, both at a private and collective level, as the first Black cricketer to play for the England Women's team, Ebony Rainford-Brent, has rightly said, responding to these injustices has to be “*everyone's problem*”.²⁷ The only way that cricket can bring about the sort of change that is needed is if a deeper and expanded commitment to fairness is now developed, with accountability, transparency and ambition.



A friend of mine – an ex-friend actually, because I no longer seek his counsel – said to me after I had made my Sky speech: ‘Why do you want to punish White people?’ Wow I don't. Black people don't. We just want to be treated the same way.

Michael Holding²⁸

²⁶ <https://www.lords.org/mcc/the-laws-of-cricket/preamble-to-the-laws-spirit-of-cricket>

²⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaJff0Dq8Q>

²⁸ Holding, M (2021) Why We Kneel, How We Rise. Simon & Schuster UK Ltd.

2.3 Context

- 2.3.1 In the wake of global movements such as Black Lives Matter, and with MeToo having gained momentum, organisations across the globe have been prompted to rethink their role in upholding equity. Both within the world of cricket and wider society, the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 was especially pivotal in sparking mass conversations and action.²⁹ Enduring discussions about elitism and gender bias in cricket were refreshed.³⁰
- 2.3.2 In March 2021, the UK Parliament discussed underrepresentation of African, Caribbean and Asian coaches, umpires and match officials at all levels of cricket in England and Wales.³¹ Long-standing structures and behaviours across the game were brought into question as several individuals formerly and currently engaged in the game publicly opened up about their experiences of discrimination and racism. Media attention intensified.³² Across the summer of 2021, The Hundred launched, elevating the women's game and publicly revealing wide differences of opinion about the future shape of domestic competitions.
- 2.3.3 In November 2021, Azeem Rafiq publicly called out racist behaviour in cricket and its consequences, in front of the then Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Select Committee, posing a persuasive challenge to leaders to take more meaningful action. Those in power within the sport and beyond were called upon to act. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) had already intervened.³³ The ECB brought the game together to respond to the crisis, having already temporarily stripped Yorkshire CCC of its ability to host international matches. The country and the cricketing world looked to those leading English and Welsh cricket to provide meaningful redress. There was clearly much to do.

2.4 Formation of the Commission

- 2.4.1 On 25 November 2020, the ECB announced its intention to establish a Commission *“to assist the ECB Board in assessing the evidence of inequalities and discrimination of all forms within cricket, and the actions needed to tackle these issues.”*³⁴
- 2.4.2 In March 2021, Cindy Butts was appointed Commission Chair, and plans took shape to evaluate the current state of equity in cricket, and to deepen understanding and learning from the realities of people's experiences of the game.
- 2.4.3 Then, in July 2021, following the appointment of four Commissioners, we set out our Terms of Reference and began planning research and evidence gathering around five main themes: governance and leadership, culture, good practice, the talent pathway and progression, and complaints, discipline and whistleblowing. Full details of how the Commission was established are set out in Appendix 3, Methodology.

²⁹ Simon Hughes, 'English cricket and diversity: What has gone wrong, and how do we fix it?' The Cricketer, 22 June, 2020. https://www.thecricketer.com/Topics/news/english_cricket_diversity_what_has_gone_wrong_how_do_we_fix_it_simon_hughes_the_cricketer.html

³⁰ James Wallance, 'The class ceiling: does the England cricket team suffer for its elitism?' The Guardian, 8 October, 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2020/oct/08/the-class-ceiling-does-england-cricket-team-suffer-elitism>

³¹ <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58224/representation-within-cricket>

³² Sean Ingle, 'Human rights commission asked to examine racism in English cricket,' The Guardian, 10 March 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2021/mar/10/human-rights-commission-asked-to-examine-racism-in-english-cricket>

³³ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/our-response-incidents-racism-yorkshire-county-cricket-club>

³⁴ <https://www.ecb.co.uk/news/1914696/ecb-commits-to-further-action-to-drive-out-discrimination-and-increase-diversity-across-cricket>

2.5 Our approach

- 2.5.1 Early discussions with key stakeholders, a review of the literature covering EDI in sport and initial examinations of the ECB's EDI practice led the Commission to decide to focus our attention on race, gender and class. We believed that focusing on these three issues would give us the best opportunity to effect sustained change in some of the most pressing problem areas for English and Welsh cricket. We intend our findings to have beneficial application for advancing other marginalised groups throughout the game.
- 2.5.2 Across November and December 2021, we published an online survey seeking lived experiences in cricket. 4,156 people responded. One in two reported experiencing discrimination in the past five years. The quality and quantity of information provided within these courageous accounts provided us with a vast array of insights from marginalised voices, on which we placed significant weight as we compiled this Report and developed our recommendations.
- 2.5.3 The survey was complemented by a separate Call for Written Evidence launched in the spring of 2022 targeted at cricket and equalities organisations, and by a County and Regional Cricket Survey sent to all Women's Regional Teams (WRT), First Class Counties (FCCs) and County Cricket Boards (CCBs).
- 2.5.4 We also undertook primary research into the ethnicity and schooling backgrounds of male and female professional cricketers, and investigated connections between county cricket and schools across England and Wales. We met 48 people and organisations to collect oral evidence and reviewed hundreds of documents from the ECB and Counties. We also conducted detailed work with a cohort of nine representative FCCs. We held two days of formal hearings with the ECB, at which members of the Board and Executive Management Team gave evidence. This was coordinated alongside informal meetings and other formal evidence requests.
- 2.5.5 Cricket is a rapidly changing space. Since we began our work there has been a great deal of activity in an attempt to promote positive change. The evidence presented in our Report is accurate as at 31 December 2022, except where otherwise stated.

Reluctance to give evidence

- 2.5.6 Unsurprisingly, we encountered reluctance to contribute from many people, in particular Black and South Asian current or former players. This was frequently expressed as arising from a distrust of governing organisations, concerns about confidentiality or suspicion about our true independence from the ECB. We also came across a reluctance to contribute from some senior leaders of the game. Time building trust and confidence through extensive stakeholder engagement overcame many of these barriers. Operational and strategic autonomy was crucial to our success and we are grateful for the distance and support that we received from the ECB to maintain this.

Approach to naming

- 2.5.7 We considered it paramount to identify accountability and learnings for the game as a whole, as opposed to focusing on specific individuals or organisations. Our view was that this enabled fulsome and open sharing of in-depth insights, ensuring that the Commission's work was genuinely systemic in both its scope and, we hope, in its impact. We established an aligned naming policy whereby individuals and specific county cricket organisations would not be named, or linked, to evidence or research gathered by the Commission. This was communicated to FCCs and CCBs. The policy allows for naming individuals and organisations linked to publicly available information. The ECB and MCC were also excluded from anonymisation, for obvious reasons due to their unique nature and presence in the game. The ECB in particular, as the national governing body for cricket in England and Wales, is named extensively in our Report. That should not be taken to mean that the ECB is the only organisation that is responsible for the state of equity in cricket, nor the only one that needs to take steps to improve based on our findings and recommendations. Our work has been game-wide, and it is only through a game-wide response that cricket will achieve the changes we believe are necessary.
- 2.5.8 Where we make any criticisms of named organisations (such as the ECB), we wish to make clear that our criticism is directed at the organisation itself, and not at any individual, even those in positions of power in the periods when we have reached the view that there are serious failings. The ECB is a large organisation and many people have been involved in its management and direction since it was established in 1997. It is the approach of organisations that we are concerned with, not the actions of specific individuals.
- 2.5.9 A high percentage of people who spoke to us wished to have their names on record, next to their evidence in this Report. We fully understand the strength of commitment demonstrated by taking this step to advance the game. However, as our work went on the impact of media reporting on those discussing discrimination in cricket in the public domain was often alarming and profound. As the process of evidence gathering drew to a close we therefore decided it was unwise to link individuals to evidence quoted in this Report. We realise this will frustrate some. It is a risk-based decision on safety and wellbeing grounds. We have listed all evidence givers who agreed to be named in our Report in Appendix 4, Contributors.
- 2.5.10 Therefore, rather than using names of organisations (apart from the ECB and MCC) or individuals, we have used various descriptors for those who provided evidence, especially when using their direct quotes. Some of those descriptors are carried across from the two reports at Annex 1 and Annex 2, others apply to those who gave evidence to us directly.
- 2.5.11 More broadly, terminology used by our research agencies, The Foundation and TONIC, was decided by them and it differs in places from terms we use; for example, we refer to 'ethnically diverse communities'³⁵ and The Foundation refers to 'ethnic minority groups' and TONIC refers to 'ethnic minority backgrounds'.

Out of scope

- 2.5.12 We were not tasked with investigating or passing judgement on individual allegations or cases. Our purpose was to look at the game as a whole and draw out overall lessons, including from the experiences of those involved in raising and handling complaints.

³⁵ Defined within Appendix 7, Key Terms.

Report structure

- 2.5.13 The Report is divided into 10 Chapters, many of which include recommendations. Chapter 10 contains a comprehensive list of all our recommendations. In order to aid action, where appropriate, we have included time frames against recommendations, within which we believe they should be carried out.
- 2.5.14 Unusually for a report of this nature, we have chosen to include a Chapter on the historical development of cricket in England and Wales in order to describe how the game has excluded or unfairly treated women and particular socio-economic and ethnically diverse groups. This approach anchors our conclusions and recommendations for action, and provides essential context for many of those who are currently reflecting on the realities of the game in 2023.
- 2.5.15 For those that find it helpful, we include details of the current structure of cricket in England and Wales in Appendix 7, Key Terms.

Commission's ambition

- 2.5.16 This Report makes a range of findings and, as noted above, sets out various recommendations. These go beyond merely addressing gaps and weaknesses. Many are stretching and ambitious, and we make no apology for this. This Report has been written to spur meaningful, sustained action.
- 2.5.17 The reputation of English and Welsh cricket has been seriously damaged by the racism crisis over the past 24 months. At times during our work there were almost daily revelations in the local, national and international media about racism and the failures of cricket's leadership in handling the crisis. These issues do not just matter to the game and those who work, play, follow and volunteer for it, but also to the UK's standing in the cricketing world.
- 2.5.18 We share the view of many of our interviewees that significant and wide-ranging changes are needed, and needed quickly. Our ambition is for English and Welsh cricket to become the gold standard, 'best in class', world leading sport when it comes to delivering a fair, inclusive and equitable experience for all. Our Report reflects this aim.

2.6 Definitions

- 2.6.1 The language of EDI evolves quickly, which can cause uncertainty about what is, or is not, inclusive and/or appropriate. With that in mind, we have set out an explanation of some key terms used in our Report.

EDI

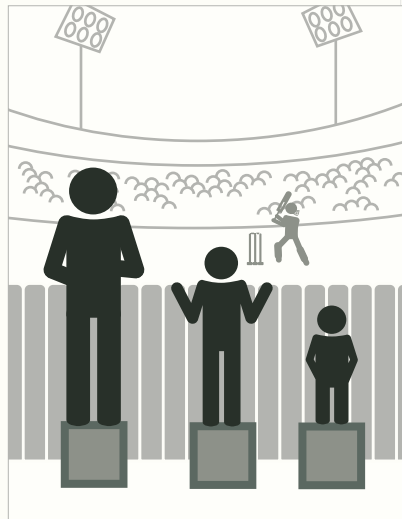
- 2.6.2 We define EDI by the three distinct elements: equity, diversity and inclusion. Success results from specific action on each. Conflating them causes problems for organisations. For example, it is possible to create a more inclusive organisation without it becoming more diverse or equitable, and vice versa. Although they may seem complex and have some overlap, the distinct features of each component of EDI are briefly set out below. In Chapter 6 we consider the approach to EDI by the ECB.
- 2.6.3 **Equity:** Equity relates to the use of targeted and differentiated strategies to redress current and historic unfairness, inequality and injustice. In the context of cricket and this Report, 'equity' means the intentional and continuous practice of changing policies, practices, systems and structures to reduce (and ultimately eliminate) inequalities and injustices faced by people who have been marginalised and discriminated against within the sport due to their background or identity.

2.6.4 The 'E' in EDI is sometimes understood as standing for 'equality' rather than 'equity'. Whilst equality can mean different things, the main distinction is that equality involves treating everyone in the **same** way regardless of different circumstances and needs, whilst equity recognises that people's circumstances and needs are **different** and that these differences must be taken seriously when seeking to promote true equality of opportunity and treatment.



Reality

One gets **more than** needed, while the other gets **less than** needed. Thus, a huge disparity is created.



Equality

The assumption is that **everyone benefits from the same support**. This is considered to be equal treatment.



Equity

Everyone gets the support they need, which produces equity.

2.6.5 **Diversity:** At one level, diversity describes the extent to which an organisation is composed of individuals with different backgrounds and identities. When we refer to diversity in this Report, it is also used as an expression of the priorities, values and commitments of an organisation – a 'diverse' organisation reflects the diversity of society. In this sense, diversity commits organisations to accepting and including people from all backgrounds, and is therefore about fairness.

2.6.6 While achieving or increasing diversity is a vital objective, there are occasions when diversity is used as an alternative to equity and anti-discrimination strategies. An overemphasis on diversity can prioritise the appearance of difference without addressing the underlying inequity within an organisation. Diversity work, if approached in this narrow way, can become about 'branding' instead of making genuine change.

2.6.7 **Inclusion:** Actions taken to include people who are excluded because of their background or identity, both currently and historically. It involves creating and sustaining an environment where each individual can be themselves fully and feel welcome and safe, regardless of differences.

What we mean by race, gender and class

2.6.8 These were the terms most commonly used by the people we spoke with and the terms we considered to be most likely to be used and understood by those wanting to contribute to our work.

2.6.9 Despite their common usage, the actual definitions of the terms can be complex, are contested and can shift over time. It is also important to note that the bulk of data available for analysis is usually broken down by 'ethnicity', 'sex' and 'socio-economic status'. 'Race and ethnicity', 'gender and sex', and 'class and socio-economic status' are also used interchangeably. They are however all distinct concepts, with shared commonalities.

2.6.10 We set out brief definitions of race, gender and class in Chapter 4 on the State of Equity in Cricket.

Intersectionality

2.6.11 Taking an intersectional approach to EDI work is essential if the aim is to produce equitable outcomes. The EHRC use it in their 'Measurement Framework' and describe it as "*an analytical tool that we use for the purpose of equality and human rights monitoring to show the distinct forms of harm, abuse, discrimination and disadvantage experienced by people when multiple categories of social identity interact with each other.*"³⁶

2.6.12 An intersectional approach to equity recognises that people's qualitative experiences in cricket are unique, shaped by their multiple identities (e.g. their race, class and gender), and that the combination of these identities impacts how individuals interact with those who hold power in cricket, often compounding disadvantage. Recognising, understanding and reflecting on inequality of power³⁷ is essential because we believe that many of the structural inequities in cricket are likely to exist, and/or their impact is made greater, because of these interactions.

2.6.13 In simple terms, using only a 'single lens' to assess equity issues will not provide a complete picture of what is really happening and will often result in solutions that are ineffective. For example, improving racial equity in cricket will require action on both race and class (and other characteristics) simultaneously if outcomes are to be improved.

Discrimination

Explaining discrimination

2.6.14 Discrimination means treating someone badly or unfairly because of a characteristic they share with others. It is important to be clear that unlawful discrimination is specifically defined in the Equality Act 2010 and applies to nine protected characteristics (including race and sex).³⁸ Class (or socio-economic status) is not a protected characteristic and so discrimination on the basis of class would not be unlawful. However, organisations can go further than the legal framework and put in place policies or initiatives that address any other aspects of a person's identity or background, including class or socio-economic status.

2.6.15 The Equality Act defines direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment. A breakdown of these legal definitions can be found in Appendix 7, Key Terms. These definitions provide the context for investigations of discrimination by employers or those who provide services to the public, since they can face claims under the Equality Act. However, the nature of how discrimination is experienced and understood goes beyond this legal framework. For example, many of the witnesses we spoke to discussed institutional discrimination. Whilst there is no formal legal definition of this type of discrimination, the concept of 'institutional racism' adopted by the Macpherson Inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence is often cited when examining discrimination at an institutional level.

2.6.16 There is also substantial research into discrimination that explores a range of other concepts such as structural discrimination. There is increased public awareness of these concepts, although an in-depth understanding of what these terms mean remains limited. Unsurprisingly, both awareness and understanding is higher for ethnically diverse groups.³⁹

³⁶ https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/measurement-framework-interactive_pdf.pdf

³⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/using-intersectionality-understand-structural-inequality-scotland-evidence-synthesis/pages/>

³⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights>

³⁹ IPSO Mori public perceptions institutional racism.

- 2.6.17 For the purposes of this Report, we have used the Macpherson Inquiry definition⁴⁰ of institutional racism, adapting it to apply to institutional discrimination, as set out below. We have also set out our definitions of two other forms of discrimination that are relevant to our work.
- 2.6.18 Interpersonal discrimination: This form of discrimination can be directly experienced or witnessed in personal interactions. It is more likely to be overt and can manifest through, for example, name calling, jokes, stereotyping, exclusion or assumptions being made about a person based on their gender, skin colour, faith, sexual orientation, etc. It can vary in seriousness from microaggressions⁴¹ to harassment or verbal or physical abuse, which in some cases could meet a criminal threshold if proven.
- 2.6.19 Institutional discrimination: This is the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of a characteristic they share. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviours which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and/or stereotyping which disadvantage people who share that characteristic.
- 2.6.20 Structural discrimination: This involves the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of factors, including the history, cultural norms, ideology and interactions of institutions and policies that systematically advantage some groups over others. Structural discrimination is not necessarily intentional but it creates conditions that make it more difficult for some groups to progress and be fairly rewarded than others.
- 2.6.21 It is important to note that there is not an easy or simple read across between the legal framework and these broader definitions. It is critical that cricketing organisations, especially their leaders, have a sound understanding of the legal background and develop a broader understanding of how discrimination is experienced and understood.

Determining if something is discriminatory

- 2.6.22 The question of whether something 'is or is not racist' (or sexist, classist, homophobic, ableist etc.) often sparks intense disagreement and debate. It is important to note that the Equality Act does not define racism (or sexism etc.), instead defining race discrimination and racial harassment. The legal definition of racial harassment makes clear the perception of the person experiencing it (alongside other factors) is of key relevance.
- 2.6.23 Disagreement about whether something is or is not discrimination should not affect or form the basis of how organisations determine whether a person's conduct or a policy/process is discriminatory. This should be done on the basis of the cumulative picture of evidence and should recognise that intent is often irrelevant when determining if something is discriminatory - impact is what matters.

⁴⁰ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277111/4262.pdf

⁴¹ A microaggression is a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalised group. Examples include asking a person of colour "where are you really from?" or assuming someone is heterosexual when you first meet them.

Chapter 3: Historical Context

3.1 Introduction



What do they know of cricket, who only cricket know?

C. L. R. James

- 3.1.1 Cricket venerates both its history and its literary culture. English cricket's long period of development establishes cricket as a link to the nation's past. But insofar as all history is narrative, and historians are in the business of selecting topics and information out of which they fashion those narratives, our game is also highly selective in what it chooses to recall. Nostalgic visions of Lord's as the 'home of cricket', MCC as the originator and arbiter of the game's rules, and the English as the original cricket nation are symbols of prestige. They mix in the national imaginary with picture-postcards of cricket played in white flannels on pristine village greens; a link to an earlier and 'simpler' time.
- 3.1.2 Furthermore, when looking beyond England,⁴² to the fact that cricket is a global game played by a diverse range of people, we perhaps too easily trade on the notion that 'cricket brings people together'. The 'Spirit of Cricket' set out in the Preamble to the Laws of the game states that cricket "*brings together people from different nationalities, cultures and religions.*"⁴³ Whilst undoubtedly true – cricket is a shared heritage and shared language that crosses boundaries of nation, religion and ethnicity – it is also too simplistic.
- 3.1.3 By way of example consider the Barbados Cricket Buckle, an engraved belt buckle from the 1780s that depicts a slave, unmistakably in bondage, with bat in hand, in front of a set of stumps.⁴⁴ The buckle was found in a riverbed in the north of England in the 1970s. How it got there is unknown, but the artefact reminds us – despite the overwhelming emphasis in public discourse still being on the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 – of Britain's long history as one of the world's biggest slave empires.⁴⁵ It is also a striking depiction of how cricket was passed on and adopted often in the most unequal of contexts. Cricket 'bringing people together' takes on a different meaning when looked at from this perspective.
- 3.1.4 As such, we believe that cricket needs to engage more frankly with the fact that, despite conjuring images of tradition, continuity, and togetherness, cricket's history is also replete with tensions and social conflicts, even histories of brutality and oppression.
- 3.1.5 Struggles have been waged between the rural and the urban; social classes; 'gentlemen' and 'players'; North and South; private and state educated; men and women; and between White colonisers and 'non-White'⁴⁶ peoples, dating from the age of the British slave trade and imperialism but resonating far beyond, into the postcolonial age.

⁴² This Chapter focuses primarily on the history of cricket in England, rather than England and Wales, because it considers concepts of 'Englishness' and the role of Empire in the development of the game.

⁴³ <https://www.lords.org/mcc/the-laws-of-cricket/preamble-to-the-laws-spirit-of-cricket>

⁴⁴ Clem Seecharan, *Muscular Learning: Cricket and Education in the Making of the British West Indies at the end of the 19th Century*. (Kingston Jm: Ian Randle, 2006).

⁴⁵ Scanlan, Padraic X. *Slave empire: How slavery built modern Britain*. Hachette UK, 2020.

⁴⁶ We would not ordinarily use the term 'non-White' because it centres whiteness, but have used it at appropriate points in the context of this Chapter to reflect – and highlight – the language and attitudes of the time.

- 3.1.6 Most often, these conflicts have revolved around questions of power and control by an elite group. In this respect, cricket has often operated on the basis of barriers to access. Historically-excluded groups have been forced to go to extraordinary lengths to gain admittance to the privileged spaces of the playing field, the club, the dressing room, and the management committee. Importantly, these problems are far from being isolated in a distant past. Stereotypes about ‘racial characteristics’, the ‘proper’ role of men and women in the game, as well as tropes about class and regional differences, have all been handed down over the generations.
- 3.1.7 We believe that it is vital for the game to develop a more critical and self-aware approach, to be more cognisant of the ways in which both its past and present are imbued with social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions.
- 3.1.8 We approach this task in the spirit of the great Trinidadian writer C. L. R. James, who famously prefaced his treatise on Caribbean cricket and colonialism – *Beyond a Boundary* (1963) – by asking “*What do they know of cricket, who only cricket know?*”⁴⁷ If we are to understand the nature and extent of (in)equity in cricket, our sense of what cricket history is must go beyond ‘the game’: dates, scorecards, names and numbers. Developing a better sense of cricket history reveals many of the unspoken assumptions, inherited from the past, that have enabled particular groups of people to dominate the game in terms of power and access to resources, whilst others have remained at the margins. It can also help everyone in the game gain a better understanding of where contemporary injustices have come from.
- 3.1.9 We offer a historical context for the key themes that underpin the Commission’s Terms of Reference, and in doing so develop three central arguments:
- Cricket has not simply ‘reflected’ conflicts in wider society, it has frequently been central to fostering or reproducing those conflicts.
 - Typically, elite social groups have commanded most of the power and control within cricket, and have resisted change.
 - Although cricket has a long history, the period after about 1860 up to World War I was pivotal in terms of establishing the idea that cricket exemplified a specific version of Englishness that was White, middle to upper class, and profoundly male-dominated. This image was exported throughout Britain’s empire.

3.2 Rural origins

- 3.2.1 The historical origins of cricket lie in rural southern England, where it was widely played by both peasantry and aristocracy in the 17th and 18th century, with vibrant local traditions and rivalries. The game rose in popularity through the 18th century, becoming a spectator sport drawing large crowds.
- 3.2.2 Rural cricket in the 18th century saw widespread female participation. One of the earliest recorded women’s matches took place in 1745 “*between 11 maids of Bramley and 11 maids of Hambleden.*” According to the Reading Mercury, there was “*of bothe sexes the greatest number that ever was seen on such an occasion. The girls involved, batted, ran and caught as well as most men could do in that game.*”⁴⁸
- 3.2.3 Broadly speaking, cricket in the 18th century was more of a recreation, less codified and regulated, more diverse, and – according to later Victorian sensibilities – more unruly. Money was a big factor in cricket from the start. In rural areas, charging ‘gate money’ was difficult since cricket was mostly played on open common land. The main sources of income were derived from selling food and beverages, but betting on the outcome of the game, or on players’ individual exploits, was central to the charm of cricket for English landed elites. Gambling was also the cause of violence at cricket matches, both rural and urban.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1963), preface.

⁴⁸ Isabelle Duncan, *Skirting the Boundary: A History of Women’s Cricket* (London: Biteback, 2013).

⁴⁹ Dominic Malcolm, *Globalizing Cricket: Englishness, Empire and Identity* (London, 2014), p. 20.

- 3.2.4 Among the first to recognise the further commercial opportunities of cricket were pub landlords, men such as George Smith who charged admission to the Artillery Ground in Finsbury as early as the 1740s. This model would be copied by other cricket entrepreneurs like Thomas Lord, of the eponymous Lord's ground in London, opened on its present site in 1814.
- 3.2.5 The balance of cricket between urban and rural would ebb and flow during the 18th century, and the development of clubs was part of this process. The London Cricket Club was founded in 1722, a club for 'noblemen' and 'gentlemen', based out of the Star and Garter Inn in the centre of London. Most of their games were played at the Artillery Ground in Finsbury. The club was multi-functional, but both socialising and gambling cultures were key to its success.
- 3.2.6 Disbanded during the Seven Years' War (1756–63), many patrons retreated to the countryside and gathered around the renowned Hambledon cricket club in Hampshire. This became perhaps the main centre of cricket from about 1765 for the next 30 years. By the early 1780s, leading figures from the old London club were looking to relocate back to the city, commissioning Thomas Lord to find a private venue. He opened Lord's Old Ground in 1787 in Marylebone, where, in the same year, the London Cricket Club reinvented itself as Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC). It would become the most famous, and undoubtedly the most powerful, cricket club in the world.
- 3.2.7 By the late 18th century, the 'great aristocrats' and 'gentlemen' were threatening the vitality of the rural game by poaching the best players for urban matches, particularly for their new Marylebone club. Although the peasant and lower middle class game continued to be popular, by about 1815 the centre of gravity shifted decisively towards London and the emerging industrial cities in the English Midlands and the North. This North–South element in turn created a tension between geography and class, initiating a long-running battle with the aristocratic establishment at MCC.⁵⁰

3.3 The making of a national sport

- 3.3.1 Perhaps the most significant catalyst for the transformation of cricket as a rambunctious and diverse Georgian game into a Victorian national sport was the Industrial Revolution. Between roughly 1750 and 1900, technological and economic change had a big impact on leisure and games in England generally, particularly so for cricket.
- 3.3.2 The social impacts were multiple and complex, but industrialisation created significant new wealth for a growing middle class of industrialists who sat well above the peasantry and working classes in terms of wealth and power, yet below the aristocracy in terms of land ownership and political power. To ingratiate themselves with their social superiors and partly to displace them – no doubt also to enjoy themselves – newly-rich industrialists were keen to adopt the leisure pursuits of the aristocracy and benefit from the cultural and even political influence cricket provided.
- 3.3.3 Urbanisation also meant more clubs, games, and spectators, all of which added up to more money. Despite deep inequalities of wealth, in the second half of the 19th century increasing productivity did lead to an increase in working class incomes and hence greater demand for commercialised spectator sport, offering entrepreneurs new and concentrated markets. Between roughly 1840 and 1860 the number of county clubs almost doubled, and the number of county games tripled, although from a relatively low base. In the next 30 years those numbers tripled again; and between 1869 and 1896 MCC, by that stage *the* club of English cricket, quadrupled its number of fixtures.⁵¹

⁵⁰ David Underdown, *Start of Play: Cricket and Culture in 18th-century England* (London: Allen Lane, 2000).

⁵¹ Keith A. P. Sandiford, *Cricket and the Victorians* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1994), p. 53.

- 3.3.4 Cricket enjoyed a dramatic expansion after about 1860 as it was elevated to its position as a national sport, for reasons that were as much to do with ideas and culture as economics. Among many changes, one would have a long-lasting legacy for the culture of cricket: the game began to embody and epitomise an idealised version of middle and upper class, ‘manly’ Englishness.
- 3.3.5 The Victorian cult of athleticism and ‘muscular Christianity’, with its link between physical and moral improvement, became central to this ideal. Building on the Duke of Wellington’s supposed claim that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, in 1841, by General Order, army barracks were required to have their own cricket pitches.⁵² The ‘public schools’⁵³ – nursery for national and imperial ruling elites – were at the vanguard of promoting this as an ideology. By the 1860s, cricket had become an essential part of the curriculum, “*a primary device used by the guardians of England’s public schools to write a cultural code upon their youthful charges.*”⁵⁴
- 3.3.6 The wildly successful Tom Brown’s Schooldays – an 1857 novel by Thomas Hughes, himself a cricketer who played at Lord’s for Oxford University – chronicled life at Rugby School during the years of Dr Thomas Arnold’s headmastership; having cricket as one its central themes, it helped to popularise the culture and mores of the English public school across England and Empire.
- 3.3.7 Ironically, W. G. Grace, English cricket’s most iconic figure and successful populariser, did not attend public school. He was, though, undoubtedly England’s first properly national sporting hero. Throughout his extraordinarily long career, Grace was the best batter and a leading bowler in England. His physical presence – tall, bearded, profoundly robust – made him one of the most recognisable and popular of all 19th century Victorians, perhaps only behind Queen Victoria herself.
- 3.3.8 Alongside the ascendancy of Grace, by the 1890s a prominent cult of ‘amateurism’ had developed: men who did not play cricket in order to make a living, in theory at least. Grace himself was nominally an ‘amateur’, having qualified as a professional medical doctor, but he is widely believed to have made far more money from cricket (typically paid as ‘expenses’) than medical practice.
- 3.3.9 The amateur cricketer was supposed to know instinctively how to play the game, not just to the letter but to the spirit of the law, ‘walking’ from the wicket, never questioning the umpire’s decision, acting with magnanimity in victory and defeat, and playing in an entertaining style. Amateurs of course had to be independently wealthy, floating above the grubby business of money, and they elevated the cult of cricket further, “*combining older notions of honour and chivalry with an evangelical belief in the purity of moral purpose of competition and physical endeavour.*”⁵⁵
- 3.3.10 Alongside the development of local and county clubs and the inaugural county championship in 1890, cricket was propagated within voluntary organisations, church societies, old boys’ associations, and in the workplace, from coalmines to factories. Yet the centre of financial power had moved towards the big cities, and the rules of the game were made by one small section of the elite in London: MCC. By the end of the 19th century, cricket had become ‘national’, but in deeply hierarchical form, dominated by a wealthy elite.

⁵² Hew Strachan, ‘The early Victorian army and the nineteenth-century revolution in government,’ *The English Historical Review*, xcv, ccclxxvii (1980), p. 783.

⁵³ ‘Public school’ originally refers to a small number of fee-paying schools, ‘public’ only insofar as they differed to private, at home tuition, the preferred method of education for the old aristocracy. They are not to be confused with state-provided, public education. The seven schools identified in the 1868 Public Schools Act were: Charterhouse, Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Shrewsbury, Westminster, and Winchester.

⁵⁴ Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the locations of identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 147.

⁵⁵ Richard Holt, ‘Cricket and Englishness: the batsmen as hero,’ *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 13, 1 (1996), pp. 53–54.

3.4 An imperial game

- 3.4.1 Sport generally was inextricably linked with the racial ideology of imperialism. As the Bishop of Calcutta – J. E. C. Weldone, schooled at Eton, ex-headmaster of Harrow – put it in 1906: “*The qualities associated with sport had produced a characteristic of the British race – the power of government; for it is a quality which the race has exhibited in relation to subject peoples at many periods of English history in the many regions of the world where the flag of England flies.*”⁵⁶
- 3.4.2 Particularly in the “*final, and robustly imperial, decades of the 19th century*”, it was above all on the cricket field that public school boys were “*taught the virtues of loyalty, obedience, discipline, and conformity which were held to be the characteristic virtues of the English ‘gentleman.’*” And in acquiring these virtues, the boys “*were also quite consciously being outfitted for the responsibilities of imperial rule.*”⁵⁷
- 3.4.3 Although it was and remains a private club, as is widely known, since 1787 MCC has assumed sole authority for making the official laws of cricket. As the 19th century progressed and cricket became increasingly embedded in the social and cultural fabric of Empire, MCC’s role added ever more to the prestige and cultural power of England and English cricket.
- 3.4.4 MCC leadership was typically drawn from the aristocratic and upper middle class public schools. A good example is the 1895 MCC President, Lord Harris. An accomplished amateur cricketer, Lord Harris – born in Trinidad in the Caribbean where his father had been governor – later followed in his father’s colonial administrative footsteps by becoming governor of Bombay (now Mumbai) in India. He played for Eton, Oxford University, MCC, Kent, and England.
- 3.4.5 MCC had the power to make the rules of the game but also used its location at Lord’s – the self-styled ‘home of cricket’ – as a tool of imperial prestige. The authority of MCC and English cricket was circulated across the Empire through endless newspaper and magazine column inches, the pages of Wisden, children’s books, artist’s impressions, cigarette cards and so on. By 1914, Lord Harris claimed that MCC was “*perhaps the most venerated institution in the British Empire*”, reflecting the commonplace view that enjoyment of ‘our’ games by ‘our’ people “*wherever they were, was a wholesome expression of the naturalness of Empire.*”⁵⁸
- 3.4.6 MCC also projected its power through imperial institutions. In 1909 the first meeting of the *Imperial Cricket Conference* (ICC) was held at Lord’s, comprising three members: England, Australia and South Africa. At a second meeting a month later, rules governing Test Matches were agreed. Regular meetings took place from the 1920s onwards; during this decade, the West Indies, New Zealand and India were added. But as the membership grew, England’s dominance of the institution, with the support of its White settler colony allies, remained unquestioned.
- 3.4.7 South Africa introduced Apartheid in 1948. When it became a republic in 1961 and left the Commonwealth, it also had to withdraw from the ICC, because membership was limited only to Commonwealth countries. After this point, England and Australia enjoyed the status of ‘Foundation Members’, which meant little could be achieved unless those countries agreed. It was not until 1991 that all Test playing countries achieved equal standing within the ICC.
- 3.4.8 The ICC was in fact, as MCC’s own website makes clear, an ‘adjunct of MCC’. The President of MCC was automatically the Chairman of the ICC until that tradition was abolished in 1989, and the Secretary of MCC performed the same function for the ICC until 1993. The change of name to *International Cricket Conference* came in as late as 1965, and a meeting did not take place outside England until 1991. The re-branded International Cricket Council finally left Lord’s for its new home in Dubai in 2005.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Quoted in James A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 21–43.

⁵⁷ Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the locations of identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 147.

⁵⁸ G. R. C Harris and F. S. Ashley-Cooper, *Lord’s and The MCC* (London: London and Counties Press Association, 1914), p. 209; Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 227.

⁵⁹ MCC, ‘The Imperial Cricket Conference is Founded at Lord’s’:

<https://www.lords.org/lords/our-history/father-time-wall/1909-the-imperial-cricket-conference-now-known-as>

- 3.4.9 International governance was a key facet of English imperial control of the game. But cricket is perhaps first and foremost a social, cultural and leisure activity, and throughout England's – later Britain's – empire, colonisers would cut a 'square' upon which to prepare a wicket, mark out boundaries for the field, and establish the cricket club, both as a reminder of home and as part of a 'civilising mission': to demonstrate the English way of life to the 'natives'.
- 3.4.10 This is evidenced by the settler colonies in North America before and after the American Revolution, in Canada, in the slave empire that Britain established in the Caribbean from the 16th century, and in later colonies of 'conquest' beyond. One of the oldest cricket clubs established in Britain's empire was the Calcutta Club of 1792, only five years younger than MCC itself. Cricket was introduced to South Africa by colonial settlers from around 1795, and the Melbourne Cricket Club was founded by colonisers in 1838.
- 3.4.11 Clubs, generally, were spaces that enabled colonisers to gather socially, and to exclude the local 'non-White' population.⁶⁰ Controlling access to the club and the land upon which the game was played was integral to the exercise of colonial power and the establishment of a racialised, segregated social order in colonial societies.
- 3.4.12 Even if the club itself was a private space, the cricket field was both a place of exclusion and public performance. Colonised people were not allowed to play against or alongside Whites, but they could observe the game from a distance, and unsurprisingly elites in colonial societies followed a similar pattern to the English middle classes, adopting the habits and leisure pursuits of their social superiors.
- 3.4.13 A tiny number of the most privileged colonial subjects were, after much opposition, allowed to enter these spaces of White privilege. The Indian prince K. S. Ranjitsinhji made his way to Cambridge University and represented Sussex and England at cricket between 1896 and 1902. He often professed great loyalty to the Empire and freely reinforced existing racial prejudice: "*It is not at all the fact that the Indian is too lazy to play the game*", he said, responding to an interviewer's question in 1895, but it was true that "*constitutionally*" the Indian cricketer "*may not be so energetic as the Englishman*."⁶¹
- 3.4.14 In India, the Parsi community were among the first to establish elite cricket clubs for Indians, and tours were arranged to England, which provoked positive responses, for example that "*they came nearer to us in sympathy and feeling through that game than through anything else*", but also anxieties about the political implications of 'natives' adopting the imperial game.⁶² Overall, the exception tended to reinforce the rule: colonised 'non-Whites' should not play a sport that was integral both to middle and upper class English identity and to the imperial ethos.⁶³
- 3.4.15 Here, the history of cricket points to the multiple internal contradictions and longer-term 'instability' of the imperial mission. Cricket provided an accessible and demonstrable example of English 'superiority': manliness, physical prowess, and adherence to the rules of the game. But Empire was also supposed to be about a 'civilising mission', helping to improve the lot of 'backward people'. And if that mission succeeded in a cricketing sense, colonised people would take up the game, which they did, with enthusiasm and skill.⁶⁴ So, what would happen if – when – the 'natives' learned the game so well that they beat the colonial master at it?⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Mrinalini Sinha, 'Britishness, clubbability, and the colonial public sphere: the genealogy of an imperial institution in colonial India.' *Journal of British Studies*, 40, 4 (2001), pp. 489–521.

⁶¹ Interview with Ranjitsinhji, *Cricket*, 18 July 1895, quoted in Jack Williams, *Cricket and Race* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), p. 20.

⁶² *Cricket*, 11 June 1885. Cf. Prashant Kidambi, *Cricket Country: An Indian Odyssey in the Age of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

⁶³ Satadru Sen, *Migrant Races: Empire, Identity, and K.S. Ranjitsinhji* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

⁶⁴ Ramachandra Guha, *Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of the British Sport* (London: Picador, 2002); Hilary Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket*, Vol. 1 (London: Pluto Press, 1998).

⁶⁵ For a fictional but nonetheless powerful and engaging depiction of this dynamic, see the 2001 film *Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India*, directed by Ashutosh Gowariker.

- 3.4.16 On the field, the imperial dimensions of cricket developed significantly in the late 19th and into the 20th century. The first ‘test’ match was played between England and Australia in 1877 in Melbourne, formalising the fraternal sense of competition between England – at the Empire’s core – and its White settler colonies overseas. South Africa joined this elite group of three ‘test’ playing nations in 1889, and for the next 39 years no others were admitted.
- 3.4.17 In 1928, a West Indies team played their first Test Matches in England, but they were captained by White men for 32 years. When a White cricketer – Cambridge educated Gerry Alexander – who was widely regarded as an inferior player to his Black peers, took over the captaincy in 1958, “*Alexander Must Go*” became an anticolonial rallying cry. C. L. R. James, then the editor of *The Nation* newspaper in Trinidad, wrote: “*The idea of Alexander captaining a side on which Frank Worrell is playing ...is to me quite revolting.*” It was only in 1960–61 that Worrell became the first Black man to captain the West Indies through an entire Test series.
- 3.4.18 The Test Match playing club grew again in 1930, when New Zealand was able to raise a competitive team. India was added in 1932, and Pakistan in 1952. Commentary and press reports on the early Test Matches typically expressed racism, condescension and stereotypes. According to Neville Cardus, the Black Trinidadian cricketer Learie Constantine’s game grew from “*impulses born in the sun.*” During the summer of that year, Cardus suggested it would “*be a pity if Constantine allows his crowd to endow him with the irresponsibility of a ‘Jazz’ coon cricketer.*”⁶⁶ The West Indies were stereotyped as ‘calypso’ cricketers, entertaining but prone to lose control, and commentary on South Asian cricketers tended to emphasise style over substance.

3.5 War and social change

- 3.5.1 As noted earlier, despite traditionally being seen as a ‘male’ sport, cricket had been played by women for just as long as men. Not only did the first recorded women’s match take place in 1745, but the first World Cup in 1973 was played by women, not men. However, even if women did play cricket relatively freely in the 18th century, dates and facts such as these can be misleading. By the early 1890s, whilst cricket was still played in certain private girls’ schools, Victorian male chauvinism meant female participation in sports was disparaged:⁶⁷ alongside ‘muscular Christianity’ went the ideal of the passive, childbearing woman.
- 3.5.2 In 1890, entrepreneurs set up two teams known as ‘The Original English Lady Cricketers’, playing exhibition games at county grounds. Upon encountering them, W. G. Grace declared: “*They might be original and English, but they are neither cricketers nor ladies.*”⁶⁸ Some employers offered cricket for their female workers, such as Cadburys and Boots. But much of this cricket was played secretly, behind closed doors. By 1914, there were perhaps no more than 50 women’s cricket clubs and for the most part women cricketers “*were laughed at, scoffed out of existence.*”⁶⁹
- 3.5.3 As part of the fight for political, social, and cultural emancipation, women’s suffrage campaigners began attacking bastions of male power and privilege including golf clubs, racecourses, rugby grandstands, and cricket clubs: in April 1913, the pavilions at clubs in Kent, Perthshire and Middlesex were set on fire, and in March 1914, Smethwick Cricket Club was torched, with suffrage literature left scattered on the ground.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Quoted in Duncan Hamilton, *The Great Romantic: Cricket and the Golden Age of Neville Cardus* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2019), p. 144.

⁶⁷ Nancy Joy, *Maiden Over: A Short History of Women’s Cricket* (London: Sporting Handbooks, 1950).

⁶⁸ Marcus Williams (ed), *Double Century: Cricket in The Times: Vol. I* (London: Pavilion Books, 1989), p. 100.

⁶⁹ Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 128.

⁷⁰ Adam McKie, ‘Women’s sport and the feminism conundrum: the case of interwar English cricket’, *Sport in History*, 40.4 (2020), p. 505.

- 3.5.4 World War I had a significant impact in terms of women's political rights. In 1918 the Representation of the People Act allowed women over the age of 30 to vote, provided they met a specific property-ownership qualification. It was not until the Equal Franchise Act of 1928 that women achieved the same voting rights as men. Women's participation in wartime work amplified already established calls for equal political rights, but also had implications for social and cultural power. For example, women formed sports teams, including cricket, in army barracks, training depots, munitions factories and other workplaces.
- 3.5.5 From this point, cricket was again subjected to scrutiny as to its suitability as a sport for women. As women's roles in public life grew after the war, they were able to establish a more formal, albeit limited, presence in the game, although this was no 'natural' development and came in the context of much struggle and considerable opposition from cricket's male establishment.
- 3.5.6 In 1926, the Women's Cricket Association (WCA) was formed. The WCA's purpose was *"to encourage the formation of Cricket Clubs throughout the country and to provide facilities for, and bring together [...] those women and girls who previously have had little opportunity of playing cricket after leaving School and College."*⁷¹
- 3.5.7 In the 1927 season 49 matches were played by WCA-affiliated teams; by 1929, 37 clubs and 39 schools were affiliated members and a public women's cricket match was played on Beckenham Cricket Ground between London District and the Rest of England. In 1933, County Associations were formed in Middlesex, Lancashire, Kent, Nottinghamshire and Surrey along the same organisational lines as the men's counties. In late 1934 an England team travelled to Australia and New Zealand for the first ever international women's cricket matches. The WCA's affiliation figures for 1938 listed 105 clubs, 18 colleges and 85 schools.⁷²
- 3.5.8 Although difficult to document, it is likely that up to 1939 and into the post-war decades, the majority of participants were middle and upper class: generally, the sport required financial independence to purchase equipment, pay subscriptions, and travel. The 1934-5 overseas tour was self-funded, preventing any working class women from participating; local education authorities took the view that cricket for state school girls was *"not worth attempting"* due to the lack of suitable facilities.⁷³
- 3.5.9 As with male cricketers in the colonial context, control of resources significantly hampered the development of women's cricket. Since cricket grounds are almost always owned by men, finding places to play has traditionally been a challenge for women cricketers and, as the evidence we have gathered demonstrates, remains so to this day. The first match on a 'first class' ground took place in 1932. In 1929, the WCA wrote to MCC asking to play at Lord's, but the MCC Committee refused. They only changed their minds 47 years later, after the success of the women's World Cup in 1973 led to the first women's one day international at Lord's in 1976. To this day, the England Women's national cricket team has never been given the opportunity to play a Test Match at Lord's.
- 3.5.10 Perhaps as a consequence of its domination by middle and upper class women, from the outset the WCA adopted the rules of the equally middle and upper class-dominated governing body of men's cricket, MCC, and also, arguably, their conservatism: they dictated how their players dressed, and how they behaved on and off the pitch. Marjorie Pollard, one of the founders of the WCA, wrote in 1930 that it was necessary *"to play in something that is above criticism"* and argued that it was important that women were not seen to be trying to *"play like men."*⁷⁴

⁷¹ <https://womenscrickethistory.org>

⁷² Rafaëlle Nicholson, 'Cricket Has Given Me Everything', *Women's Sport and the Women's Movement in Twentieth-century Britain*, *French Journal of British Studies*, 23, 1 (2018), p. 89.

⁷³ Rafaëlle Nicholson, 'Cricket Has Given Me Everything', *Women's Sport and the Women's Movement in Twentieth-century Britain* *French Journal of British Studies*, 23, 1 (2018), p. 90.

⁷⁴ Marjorie Pollard, *Cricket for Women and Girls* (London: Hutchinson, 1933), p. 17, quoted in Rafaëlle Nicholson and Matthew Taylor, 'Women, sport and the people's war in Britain, 1939-45', *Sport in History*, 40, 4 (2020), p. 562

- 3.5.11 But public cricket matches from the 1920s onwards made women's cricket more visible, and the antagonists "*more vociferous*."⁷⁵ In the 1930s, the argument that women had no place in the masculine domain of cricket was fairly common, as was the criticism that the average female had no genuine interest in cricket but merely "*goes to the ground to eat strawberries and be admired*."⁷⁶ By 1950, the editor of the Sportswoman's Manual summarised the situation as follows: "*It has been established that a woman may play games if she chooses, just as she may go into Law, Medicine or the House of Commons... But now that we need no longer struggle we must take stock. Some people look with alarm at women playing strenuous games. It is unladylike, it is unattractive, it stops them having children, and the rest of the century-old arguments are still with us*."⁷⁷
- 3.5.12 In 1952 the England cricketer Walter Hammond claimed that "*there are some games women can play, in general, actually better than men, but the muscular differences of the sexes prohibits cricket from being one of them*."⁷⁸ In 1963, England captain Len Hutton said, during a charity match against a women's side, that "*women playing cricket was quite absurd, like a man trying to knit*."⁷⁹ As it happens, the women won the match.
- 3.5.13 In the face of such obvious sexism, the WCA actively advocated placing the right to leisure above domestic commitments. Playing cricket was a powerful statement, part of an evolving women's movement across the 20th century making claims to women's rights to control their own bodies, rejecting traditional models of domesticity, and placing their own leisure needs above servicing the needs of their husbands.⁸⁰
- 3.5.14 Despite obvious progress, opposition from established elites continued. Women were barred from becoming members of MCC until 1998, after a campaign led by the former England Captain, Rachael Heyhoe-Flint. In 1999, ten women were granted honorary life membership of the club, although most future women members had to join the 20-year waiting list along with the male applicants for membership.
- 3.5.15 The profile of the women's game has grown significantly in recent years, with the introduction of the Women's Super league in 2016, the Women's Regional Structure in 2020, and The Hundred competition for women's and men's teams in 2021. Women's cricket received a significant boost when England won the World Cup in 2017, playing in front of a full house at Lord's.
- 3.5.16 A recent MCC exhibition about the evolution of women's cricket rightly points out the lack of ethnically diverse women, which is "*obviously problematic, and reflects that women's cricket in England has historically been a very white (and middle class) sport*."⁸¹ Ebony Rainford-Brent was the first Black woman to represent England at cricket, in 2007, and remains one of only two Black women, along with Sophia Dunkley, to have done so. On the first day of the opening England Men's Test Match against West Indies in 2020, Rainford-Brent spoke publicly about the extent of the racism she had experienced in cricket.⁸²
- 3.5.17 As noted, class distinctions and conflicts have been integral to the development of the game since its inception. By the end of the 19th century, class was structurally embedded by the 'amateurs' and 'professionals' categories, so rigidly bounded that the different groups changed in separate dressing rooms and entered the field through different gates. Their names were recorded in different formats on match scoresheets.
- 3.5.18 Class-based divisions were reflected even in the physical construction of the cricket ground. Members' pavilions and balconies, requiring not just money but also social connections to access, prevented the cricket watching elite from having to mix with the hoi polloi. Different gates, seating areas, entrance fees and usage terms all combined to maintain distinctions between social status.

⁷⁵ Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports* (London, Routledge, 1994), p.124, quoted in Nicholson, 'Cricket Has Given Me Everything', p. 91.

⁷⁶ Nicholson, 'Cricket Has Given Me Everything', p. 91.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁷⁹ Jim White, 'The untold story of the women's game,' *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 March, 2022.

⁸⁰ Nicholson, 'Cricket Has Given Me Everything', p. 99.

⁸¹ <https://www.lords.org/lords/news-stories/women-s-cricket-evolution>.

⁸² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaJff0Dq8QI>.

- 3.5.19 During the 19th century there was a growth in the number of paid professionals playing for local clubs throughout the country, which some of the old elites saw as a threat to the ‘amateur’ spirit in which they believed cricket ought to be played, and which had been so heavily promoted during cricket’s ‘golden age’ in the years leading up to 1914.
- 3.5.20 The belief that cricket remained “*the sport for the amateur, or the man who played for the love of the greatest game the world has ever seen*” was perceived as being under threat from the rise of commercialism, the paying customer, and above all the rise of professionalism, which was likened to a kind of cancer: “*The knife has to be applied first of all to the professional. He must be cut away from the cricket system.*”⁸³
- 3.5.21 Conversely, by the 1940s the amateur ethos was held responsible by many for the poor sporting performance of England cricket teams. The Daily Herald published a series of lengthy articles in 1947 asking “*What’s wrong with British Sport?*.” In the article on cricket, MCC was said to be “*too much concerned with amateurism, with Eton and Harrow cricket and University stuff.*”⁸⁴
- 3.5.22 The amateur/professional distinction was also connected to differences in how the game was played, and who played it, in different parts of the country. The 1950s were ‘boom years’ for league cricket in the North with big name professionals and even larger crowds.⁸⁵ The professional Lancashire and Yorkshire Leagues were highly competitive and popular with spectators, whereas for many years, participation in leagues and knock out competitions was actively discouraged in the South.
- 3.5.23 After the 1948 defeat to Donald Bradman’s Australia, the Evening Standard suggested, despite the danger of “*talking heresy*”, that “*if London followed the lead of the North the Southern clubs would be a fuller reservoir of talent for our county and England elevens.*”⁸⁶ Some cricket associations in the South saw a need for change, including the Surrey Association, which established a knock out cup competition in the 1940s. Towards the end of the 1960s, the London Club Cricket Conference also recognised the need for change, dropping an old rule forbidding members from competing in league cricket.
- 3.5.24 The technical distinction between the professional, paid cricketer and his noble unpaid counterparts had always been less straightforward than some had assumed. Amateurs used an arcane system of claiming ‘expenses’ that could amount to very significant sums, and this even acquired a name in the press: ‘shamateurism’. An article from The Observer in 1958 mocked cricket for creating a situation in which the only thing that amateur cricketers may not receive money for was playing cricket itself.⁸⁷
- 3.5.25 But the debate about amateurs and professionals was not simply about money; it reflected and influenced wider political debates about amateurism and leadership in British politics and society. As with many of those debates, the impact of the war on attitudes towards amateur and professional status in cricket was marked. Wisden called for its abolition in 1943 and Len Hutton – England’s first professional captain – argued that “*those who had received the King’s commission in battle were worthy of the honour of leading England in cricket.*”⁸⁸
- 3.5.26 In a cultural sense, the post-war years saw a drift towards professionalism, and a further widening of the scope of debate. Hutton stated that “*we don’t play cricket for fun*”, and The Observer described Peter May’s “*formative education among the uncompromising and unforthcoming Surrey professionals [which] has given him their attributes to a marked degree.*”⁸⁹

⁸³ H. V. Dorey, *The Official Handbook of the Club Cricketers Charity Fund* (1913), which became the London Club Cricket Conference in 1915, quoted in Duncan Stone, *Different Class: The Untold Story of English Cricket* (London: Repeater Books, 2022), p. 99.

⁸⁴ Stone, *Different Class*, p. 147.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁸⁷ The Observer, 23 February 1958, p. 23.

⁸⁸ Charles Williams, *Gentlemen & Players: The Death of Amateurism in Cricket* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2012), p. 63.

⁸⁹ The Spectator, 21 June 1957, p. 9; The Observer, 4 January 1959, p. 21.

- 3.5.27 The ascendancy of professional culture in cricket coincided with a crisis of confidence in the sport. Only 1 million people paid to watch first class cricket in 1960 compared with 2.3 million people in 1947.⁹⁰ By 1962 The Guardian argued that “*county cricket as we know it today exists by kind permission of the football pools and other speculative ventures.*”⁹¹
- 3.5.28 Conservative reaction blamed this on professionalism. Amateurs – steeped in their public school education and unburdened by the pressures of making ends meet – were thought to play in a more entertaining and enjoyable way. Lord Trafford lamented in The Spectator that cricket had become “*so tedious to watch*” because it was played “*in a red brick manner by red brick characters with red brick outlooks.*” He criticised the sport for excluding “*personality*” in favour of “*technique*” and reminisced about a time when “*the England side of 1902 included a classical scholar ... a future Governor of Bengal, and an Indian ruler who was later to head his country’s delegation to the League of Nations.*”⁹²
- 3.5.29 Yet again, cricket’s history was marked by division and struggles that fed off but also contributed to wider conflicts in society at large. Change had been happening under the surface for some time, but it was not until 1963 that the formal distinction in cricket between amateurs and professionals, ‘Gentlemen’ and ‘Players’, was abolished.
- 3.5.30 Since then, the game has maintained many of its elitist connections, with the proportion of privately educated players far exceeding the proportion in the general population, and links between county cricket and private schools stretching throughout the country. In 2021, 58% of England Men’s players and 45% of the England Women’s team were privately educated, compared with 7% of the general population.⁹³

3.6 Decolonisation

- 3.6.1 England lost their first ever Test Match against Australia in 1877, and more famously lost again in 1882 when the so-called ‘Ashes’ of English cricket (two incinerated bails) were interred in a small, and now very famous, wooden urn. South Africa beat England in Johannesburg as early as 1906.
- 3.6.2 But such defeats by ‘kith and kin’ – bitterly resented on the field, of course, and by the wider cricket watching public – could be accommodated within the racial framework of the Empire. When Neville Cardus wrote in 1945 that “*none except the people of England or of the English-speaking countries has excelled at cricket*”, he was not immune to the brilliance of certain individuals from outside of what he undoubtedly saw as a ‘racial’ family.⁹⁴ What he meant was, in national terms, England and its scions in the White settler colonies reigned supreme.
- 3.6.3 But the historical evolution of cricket within the Empire, whereby the game was gradually adopted by the colonised themselves, put English cricket and Englishness in an awkward position. It was not until 1950 that the West Indies, still led by a White captain, won their first Test Match against England, at Lord’s. India beat England at Chennai in 1952. Pakistan beat England at The Oval in 1954. But from an English cricketing perspective, worse was to come. From 1969 to 2000, England failed to win a Test series against the West Indies, home or away.

⁹⁰ Williams, *Gentlemen & Players*, p. 91.

⁹¹ The Guardian, 28 December 1962, p. 8.

⁹² The Spectator, 21 June 1957, p. 9.

⁹³ Based on ICEC historical player research, calculated as percentages of the players for whom we found schooling data.

⁹⁴ Neville Cardus, *English Cricket* (London: Collins, 1945), p. 7.

- 3.6.4 The rise to pre-eminence of West Indian cricket – in the eyes of its leading protagonists on the field, and in terms of what the Barbadian historian Hilary Beckles referred to as the West Indian fans’ *“unfettered spectator responses”* – embodied widely recognised and deeply felt historical connections. The racial hierarchy of empire, expressed so profoundly through the game of cricket, was about to be upended. The success of the team from the 1970s onwards was a source of immense collective pride for Black people, in the Caribbean and for the diaspora in England.⁹⁵
- 3.6.5 Cricket as an elite, international spectacle – an expression of Black power and national consciousness – was of undoubted historical significance. According to Beckles, the English were *“thrown into panic”* by the sense that cricket matches between the West Indies and England were not just sport but *“the business of history and politics.”* The figure who embodied this new pre-eminence, perhaps above all others, was Sir Vivian Richards. For Beckles *“[e]ach century, each double century, peeled away the optic scales accumulated over 400 years of inhuman subjection.”*⁹⁶
- 3.6.6 The 1976 West Indies tour of England had begun with the South African-born England captain Tony Greig telling the media that he intended to make the West Indies team ‘grovel’ – particularly incendiary language in the circumstances, which helped incentivise the West Indian players to win the series 3–0.⁹⁷ The press portrayed the West Indies team – specifically on account of their very fast bowling – on a spectrum of *“unsporting”* to *“savage”*, conjuring colonial imagery of embattled Whites and unruly natives.⁹⁸ Earlier condescension and mockery in the British press had turned to outright hostility and racist stereotyping.
- 3.6.7 In 1987, animosity between Pakistan and England saw international cricket reach an unprecedented low, with the England captain Mike Gatting and the Pakistani umpire Shakoor Rana exchanging audible expletives on the field of play. The British press was almost unanimous that Pakistan was engaged in orchestrated cheating. When Pakistan toured England in 1992 and won the series on the basis of reverse swing, the South African-born England batsman Allan Lamb made public accusations of ball tampering, and much of the British press immediately assumed guilt. *“P**** cheats”*, screamed the Daily Mirror, and *“Pak off the cheats”*, shrieked The Sun.⁹⁹
- 3.6.8 Ironically, at the end of the previous summer’s cricket, John Holder, at that stage the only ever Black international umpire, claims that he wrote in his match report for the West Indies versus England Test Match at The Oval, 8–12 August 1991, that he had challenged the England captain Graham Gooch regarding what he believed to be ball tampering on the part of the England team. These charges were not acknowledged by the English cricket establishment, but were subsequently rejected by some of the England team members who were on the field of play that day. More recently, John Holder has publicly accused English cricket of conspiring to dismiss him as an umpire for his temerity in making such a claim,¹⁰⁰ a claim that was denied by the ECB.

⁹⁵ Hilary Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket, Vol. 2: the age of nationalism* (1998); Babb, Colin, *They Gave the Crowd Plenty Fun*, (London: Hansib, 2015).

⁹⁶ Beckles, *The Development of West Indies Cricket, Vol. 2*, p. 87.

⁹⁷ Simon Lister, *Fire in Babylon: How the West Indies Cricket Team Brought a People to Its Feet* (London: Random House, 2016), p. 57.

⁹⁸ Stephen Wagg, ‘Calypso Kings, Dark Destroyers: England–West Indies Test Cricket and the English Press, 1950–1984’, *Cricket and National Identity in the Postcolonial Age* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 171.

⁹⁹ Cited in Neil Farrington, Daniel Kilvington, John Price, and Amir Saeed, *Race, Racism and Sports Journalism* (United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2012), p. 103.

¹⁰⁰ Barney Ronay, ‘John Holder: “I rocked the boat and got punished for doing my job properly”’, *The Guardian*, 12 February 2021.

- 3.6.9 As the England cricketer Derek Pringle later wrote, “*once a feud is set up it is not easily diffused... it gets passed from one dressing room generation to the next, snowballing in significance until it manifests as “P*** cheat!” so beloved of headline makers, and now sadly part of the lingua franca where English is spoken.*”¹⁰¹ It seemed to many observers that English accusations of cheating were “*expressions of white English racism.*”¹⁰² Pakistani players were awarded a bonus for the 1992 tour for having to suffer the emotional stress from what was deemed to be a “*vicious English media*”, accusing them of cheating almost every day. The Pakistani perspective can be summed up by Omar Kureishi’s sardonic comment: “*there is no way an English team can be beaten fair and square. They are invincible. If, perchance, they should lose [...] it is always because they have been robbed.*”¹⁰³
- 3.6.10 In general, the deep suspicion that colonial racism still permeated the postcolonial game has created a profoundly political dimension to international cricket, and the English response – from players, cricket administrators, the media – stimulated yet further racism within postcolonial England itself.
- 3.6.11 Just as Black British people reported higher-than-normal levels of racism and violence following West Indies’ victories over England, one of the many consequences of this period was that it generated broad swathes of prejudice for the thousands of recreational and the (few) professional cricketers playing in England who had either been born in Pakistan or were identified with Pakistan in terms of their ethnic heritage.¹⁰⁴
- 3.6.12 Where the West Indies and Pakistan teams had come to be seen as a serious threat to English cricket’s prestige, other smaller cricketing nations were still treated with an old-fashioned disdain. Sri Lanka had won the World Cup in 1996, but when they toured England in the summer of 1998 England offered the South Africans five Test Matches and Sri Lanka only one. England were beaten easily, with spin bowler Muttiah Muralitharan taking 16 wickets.
- 3.6.13 Much tension and suspicion surrounded the debate over Muralitharan’s bowling action. Although his action was cleared in 1996 by the ICC after biomechanical analysis, a number of umpires – Australian and English – continued to call ‘no ball’ whilst he was bowling, on the basis that in their view he was ‘chucking’ the ball with a bent arm. The media frenzy saw Muralitharan cast as “*devilish*”, a “*freak*”, with “*something of the Orient*” about him.¹⁰⁵ On a number of occasions during his career he was excluded from the bowling attack on the basis of decisions about his bowling action taken by the umpires. He still ended his career as the leading wicket taker in Test Match history with 800 wickets, a record that will be hard to beat.
- 3.6.14 Wider attitudes towards English cricket were also tainted by the fact that men such as Graham Gooch and John Emburey went on the ‘rebel tour’ to apartheid South Africa in 1982 and after serving three year international bans, were later appointed as England captains. A player who had already been England captain, Mike Gatting, toured South Africa in the second English rebel tour in 1990, described as “*the most morally dubious of all [tours], since it took place as South Africa was going through a period of momentous change, before the release of Nelson Mandela*” and because the England players who went on the tour “*were being paid by the apartheid government rather than corporate sponsors*”, which had previously been the case.¹⁰⁶
- 3.6.15 As well as appointments to the England captaincy, some of those who went on the rebel tours achieved other posts of high status and influence in the game, such as MCC President, Chairman of England selectors and Chief Executive of the Professional Cricketers’ Association.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ Derek Pringle, ‘The special tensions of England v Pakistan’, *The Independent*, 24 July 1996.

¹⁰² Jack Williams, *Cricket and Race* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), p. 147.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Ben Carrington, and Ian McDonald. ‘Whose game is it anyway?: Racism in local league cricket’, *Race, sport and British society* (Routledge, 2002), pp. 71–91.

¹⁰⁵ Claire Westall and Neil Lazarus, ‘The pitch of the world: cricket and Chris Searle’, *Race & Class* 51, 2 (2009), p. 57.

¹⁰⁶ Paul Weaver, ‘English rebels who ignored apartheid cause still show a lack of shame’, *The Guardian*, 11 January, 2010.

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/cricket/article-10726813/Four-decades-England-Test-stars-reflect-tours-Apartheid-South-Africa.html>.

- 3.6.16 Such postcolonial tensions have also been very evident off the field, within the structures of international cricket governance. The rising financial power and hence political influence of Indian cricket has produced a number of flashpoints. For example, in 2001, during a series between India and South Africa, match referee Mike Denness, a former England captain, penalised an unprecedented six Indian players for various charges, including excessive appealing, inadequate control by India's captain Sourav Ganguly, and, most controversially, ball tampering by Sachin Tendulkar, probably India's most celebrated cricketer of all time.
- 3.6.17 The immediate fallout was one of intense polarisation. The Indian cricket authorities, and the Indian cricket public, were outraged. They refused to accept Mike Denness' judgements and saw it as "*the newest battle in an old colonial war.*" Much of the Australian and English press complained about what they saw as India challenging the umpire's decision in the broadest sense. The head of Indian cricket's board of control, Jagmohan Dalmiya, was labelled as the "*central force behind the entire crisis*", a "*ludicrous*" megalomaniac, and a "*strongman*" given to "*bullishness*" who had to be stopped.¹⁰⁸ The English interpretation seemed to be that such behaviour was simply 'not cricket'.
- 3.6.18 The strength of reaction was perhaps partly driven by the sense that England's very long-standing 'ownership' of the game of cricket was being challenged by India – and English indignity was only further enhanced by the dawning realisation that the ICC and world cricket simply could not operate without the financial power of India.
- 3.6.19 The postcolonial power struggle has thus been played for decades on and off the field. As Ashis Nandy has put it, the world now looks very different from the time long ago when English public schoolboys projected their power and authority around the world. For many in India today, "*cricket is an Indian game accidentally discovered by the English. Like chilli, which was discovered in South America and came to India only in mediaeval times to become an inescapable part of Indian cuisine, cricket, too, is now foreign to India only according to the historians and Indologists. To most Indians the game now looks more Indian than English.*"¹⁰⁹

3.7 Immigration

- 3.7.1 Going back to the period immediately after World War II, even if British imperial ambitions to hold onto territories overseas were still alive, 'at home' some of the legacies of empire – namely 'non-White' immigration – were beginning to undermine racialised conceptions of Britishness.¹¹⁰ Yet again, cricket was a central part of this story.
- 3.7.2 Probably the most prominent Black cricketer in England in the early 20th century was Learie Constantine, later Lord Constantine, the UK's first Black peer. He played for Nelson CC in the Lancashire League between 1929 and 1937, where he was extremely successful, helping Nelson win the league in seven of his nine seasons. In the mid-1930s he was approached to play for Lancashire CCC but members of the Lancashire Board and, later, players in the team opposed the idea of a Black player for the County. In a 1975 interview, the Lancashire and England professional Len Hopwood recalled that the thought of a "*coloured chap playing for Lancashire was ludicrous.*" He suggested that "*we Lancastrians were clannish in those less enlightened days,*" and that the reaction in the dressing room was "*electric,*" with the players wanting "*none of Constantine. We would refuse to play.*"¹¹¹ The Lancashire League was popular with many West Indian and other overseas players, including some of the greatest Black cricketers including Everton Weekes, Clyde Walcott, Charlie Griffith and Wes Hall.

¹⁰⁸ Satadru Sen, 'The Peasants are Revolting: Race, Culture and Ownership in Cricket', *Subaltern Sports: Politics and Sport in South Asia* (2005), pp. 113–116.

¹⁰⁹ Ashis Nandy, *The Tao of Cricket* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 1.

¹¹⁰ Paul Ward, *Britishness since 1870* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 8.

¹¹¹ Jack Williams, *Cricket and Race* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), p. 39.

- 3.7.3 The number of recreational Black cricketers in England increased significantly with the arrival of the ‘Windrush generation’ in the 1950s and 1960s. They brought with them a passion for cricket and a style of play that reflected the original ‘English’ culture of cricket that had been exported through colonialism, then adapted to reflect the culture of the Caribbean. Some of those who arrived, particularly to do more ‘working class’ jobs, found it difficult to join local cricket clubs, experiencing overt racism and exclusion. As a result, many set up their own clubs, the first being Leeds Caribbean in 1948. An early London club was Carnegie CC, established in the Brixton area in 1955. Many large employers also ran their own teams and owned their own grounds. London Transport had many teams based around its depots, which provided a source of cricket for the many Caribbean migrants who worked in London’s public transport system.
- 3.7.4 The number of Caribbean clubs grew through the 1950s so that by the 1970s, there were hundreds of Caribbean cricket clubs playing across England, often to a very high standard. Specific leagues were created for Caribbean clubs, such as the Birmingham Commonwealth Cricket League, established in 1976. These clubs and leagues usually existed outside the cricketing ‘mainstream’ so were not under the control of the governing body. As well as the cricket itself, there was an important social aspect, with teams often being attached to African Caribbean cultural centres.¹¹²
- 3.7.5 There has been a decline in the participation of Black communities in cricket since the 1970s and 1980s, partly shown by the disappearance of a number of the Caribbean clubs and leagues. The exact reasons for this decline are complex, but are often explained by a combination of factors, such as the fall from pre-eminence of the West Indies cricket team by the mid-1990s, as well as greater interest in football on the part of British-born Black people of Caribbean origin. Other reasons include overzealous ground regulations on musical instruments, high ticket prices, the reduction in the amount of cricket in state schools, reduced numbers and quality of pitches in local authority parks, and the increasing generational distance from the ‘Windrush generation’ who had arrived with a love of the game that had been instilled in the Caribbean.¹¹³
- 3.7.6 Whilst some or all of these factors may have played a part, for many stakeholders the bigger issue is the extent of anti-Black racism in English cricket, particularly during the 1990s. The ECB itself acknowledged that there was, or at least could be, an issue of racism in cricket when it established a ‘Racism Study Group’ in 1999. The Group’s report (‘Clean Bowl Racism’) concluded that *“there is a need for positive action as soon as possible and practical against racism that exists in English cricket.”*¹¹⁴ However, the report often seemed to imply that the problem of racism in cricket was one of ‘perception’ and ‘belief’. The report refers to findings about racism that are *“generally believed [anecdotally]”*, with the authors consistently and strongly implying that this data may not be a representation of reality.¹¹⁵ The executive summary of the report stated that 58% of respondents to their Questionnaire Survey believed racism existed, with the word ‘believed’ underlined. In the following sentence, the report notes that *“a number of respondents commented that they thought racism in cricket was not a serious problem,”* and goes on to claim that *“it became evident that the ‘Race Card’ is often used to cloud the issue and sometimes, as a result, perpetuates racism.”*¹¹⁶
- 3.7.7 One way in which anti-Black racism in the sport manifested itself was through the lack of recognition and funding for Black cricket at grassroots and developmental levels. A prominent example is the story of the cricket college established at Haringey in 1984, a landmark achievement of the Black cricket community. Working in and around the deprived areas of Tottenham, north London, its remarkable success – producing more first-class cricketers than many of the most expensive, elite ‘cricket schools’ in England – brought national and international acclaim. Despite this, the College’s financial difficulties mounted in late 1996 and into 1997. Recent research has shown that the College’s trustees begged for financial support from cricket’s governing body, but, with no money forthcoming, the Haringey project was shut down by the summer of 1997.¹¹⁷

¹¹² Michael Collins, ‘The Windrush Project’
<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/history/research/research-projects/windrush-cricket>

¹¹³ Russell Holden, *Cricket and Contemporary Society in Britain: Crisis and Continuity* (London: Routledge, 2021), pp. 59–75.

¹¹⁴ ECB Racism Study Group Report ‘Going Forward Together’, Executive Summary, p. 8.

¹¹⁵ ECB Racism Study Group Report ‘Going Forward Together’, pp. 25–29.

¹¹⁶ ECB Racism Study Group Report ‘Going Forward Together’, Executive Summary, p. 8.

¹¹⁷ Michael Collins, ‘Black cricket, the College at Haringey and the England and Wales Cricket Board,’ *The Political Quarterly*, 94, 1 (2023).

- 3.7.8 The former editor of Wisden, Scyld Berry, has suggested that perhaps the most important single issue confronting cricket in terms of issues of equity is “*why Haringey Cricket College was closed [...] when it was producing so many Afro-Caribbean cricketers [...] [t]he college’s closure effectively killed Afro-Caribbean cricket in Britain.*”¹¹⁸ The College’s closure certainly had a serious material impact on the talent pool of Black British players coming through the ranks. For many, it also sent a signal that the cricket establishment did not see Black cricket as important.
- 3.7.9 From the first Test Match in 1877, it took 103 years before a Black player first represented the England national cricket team in 1980. From 1980 to 1997, 14 Black men (no women) made their debuts for the England national cricket team, only three of them born in England. They played a combined total of 251 Test Matches. In the 25 years since 1997, only six Black male players (plus two female players) have made their debuts. Four out of the six male players were born in England. They have only played a total of 37 Test Matches between them. The only two Black women players, Ebony Rainford-Brent and Sophia Dunkley, were both born in the UK. Throughout, the environment was often hostile for these cricketers, and the mid-1990s were notable for the general negativity – sometimes overt racism – directed towards some of England’s Black cricketers.
- 3.7.10 Devon Malcolm, who played 40 Test Matches, achieved some remarkable successes as a fast bowler for England, but was often portrayed as erratic and unpredictable. In July 1995, Malcolm was one of two Black players, along with Philip DeFreitas, accused in the pages of Wisden Cricket Monthly of being incapable of performing in the same way as his White counterparts because of their ‘race’, and their inability to be “*unequivocally*” English.¹¹⁹
- 3.7.11 Michael Carberry, the last Black, England-born cricketer to play for the men’s national team, played six Test Matches for England between 2010 and 2014. After the 2014 tour of Australia, Carberry was deselected, despite being the team’s second highest run scorer. In a June 2020 interview, Carberry went public with his account of racism in cricket. He alleged that “*cricket is rife with racism*”, and that “*the people running the game don’t care about Black people.*” “*Black people*”, he said, “*are not important to the structure of English cricket.*”¹²⁰ As well as the interpersonal racism that people tend to think of when discussing discrimination in the game, he argues that the very structure of English cricket means that Black people do not ‘count’ or ‘belong’.
- 3.7.12 The number of Black professional cricketers in England has dwindled by 75%.¹²¹ A 2020 report by Sport England found that whereas approximately 36% of adult involvement in recreational cricket is ‘non-White’, Black participation was so low as to be statistically irrelevant, apparently lower than golf and tennis.¹²² In the domestic women’s professional game, there were just two Black non-overseas players in 2021.¹²³
- 3.7.13 As we have seen, there were a small number of prominent South Asian cricketers in England in the late 19th and early 20th century, predominantly from wealthy Indian backgrounds who studied in England. In addition to Ranjitsinhji, K. S. Duleepsinhji and the Nawab of Pataudi, Iftikhar Ali Khan also played with notable success. Raman Subba Row, who was born in Streatham and went on to become Chair of Surrey CCC and Chair of the Test and County Cricket Board (one of the predecessor organisations to the ECB), was the only other South Asian cricketer to play for England before 1980. Basil D’Oliveira, born in South Africa of Mixed Indian and Portuguese ethnicity and so classed under apartheid rules as ‘Cape Coloured’, played for England between 1966 and 1972.

¹¹⁸ Scyld Berry, ‘Why game needs an independent view at watershed moment’, Daily Telegraph, 19 November, 2021, p. 7. Lonsdale Skinner, ‘ECB’s failures on Caribbean cricket in England’ The Guardian, 21 June, 2021 <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/blog/2021/jun/21/ecbs-failures-on-caribbean-cricket-in-england-are-worse-than-robinsons-tweets>.

¹¹⁹ John Henderson, ‘Is it in the blood?’ Wisden Cricket Monthly, 17 (2) July 1995, pp. 9–10; Robert Winder, ‘Sporting heroes, but on whose side?’ The Independent, 2 September, 1995, p. 13. Mike Marqusee, ‘In Search of the Unequivocal Englishman: The Conundrum of Race and Nation in English Cricket’, in Ben Carrington and Ian McDonald (eds.), ‘Race’, Sport and British Society (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 121–32.

¹²⁰ Wisden Staff, ‘Carberry, “The people running the game don’t care about the Black people in it”’, Wisden.com, 10 June 2020: <https://wisden.com/stories/news-stories/carberry-the-people-running-the-game-dont-care-about-the-black-people-in-it>

¹²¹ <https://aceprogramme.com/>

¹²² Sport England, Sport for All, January 2020: <https://www.sportengland.org/news/sport-for-all>

¹²³ Based on ICEC historical player research.

- 3.7.14 From the mid-to-late 1940s onwards, increased migration from South Asia, principally India and Pakistan, significantly increased the number of South Asian cricketers in England. As with the Black community, they often formed their own clubs and leagues because they were not welcomed by established ‘White’ clubs. Those Asian-specific clubs have been described as having several roles: they “*act as symbols of community and cultural resistance, facilitate contingent and cultural integration, provide spaces for resisting racism and circumventing the normalisation of ‘Whiteness’*” within mainstream sporting structures.¹²⁴
- 3.7.15 The Quaid-E-Azam league in Bradford is an example, being established in 1981 “*with the specific purpose of providing South Asian communities (mainly Pakistani), who had been unable to access White teams, with opportunities.*”¹²⁵ Another example was the Khalifa league, established by Indian Gujarati Muslims to connect other members of the diaspora dispersed through the UK.
- 3.7.16 Some clubs that are described as ‘Asian clubs’ were not set up solely for South Asian players, but have come to have a majority of South Asian members because of the changing demographic of the local area. One club in Sheffield with over 95% South Asian membership was formed in the middle of the 19th century and it was only in the 21st century that it started to attract a greater number of South Asian players than White players. The club plays in a high level ‘mainstream’ league and is known locally as an ‘Asian club’, although it welcomes White players.¹²⁶
- 3.7.17 The enthusiasm and passion for cricket in the South Asian community is reflected in the number of people who play the game. Despite comprising around 6.9% of the population of England and Wales (according to the 2021 Census), players of South Asian ethnicity make up 26–29% of the adult recreational playing base in England and Wales. Yet the level of participation is not reflected in progression into professional cricket: only c5% of First Class County cricketers were British South Asian in 2021.¹²⁷

3.8 Legacies

- 3.8.1 In 2004, MCC published its first anthology of cricket poetry, entitled *A Breathless Hush*, in which the editors included the following verses from *Lovely Cricket*, a poem written in 1999 by John Groves:



*Cricket is an English game...
It is not suited to hot-blooded races,
Although we export it to other places...
True cricket is a game
Of gentle English scenes,
For poets dozing on quaint village greens
And not the same
As cricket where there's so much dash and din
And people play it so they can win.*¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Thomas Fletcher, ‘Cricket, migration and diasporic communities’, *Identities*, 22, 2 (2014), 141–153.

¹²⁵ Thomas Fletcher and Spencer Swain, ‘Strangers of the north: South Asians, cricket and the culture of ‘Yorkshireness’, *Identities*, 20, 1 (2016), pp. 86–100.

¹²⁶ Thomas Fletcher and Thomas Walle, ‘Negotiating their right to play: Asian-specific cricket teams and leagues in the UK and Norway’, *Identities*, 22, 2 (2014), pp. 230–246.

¹²⁷ Based on ICEC historical player research.

¹²⁸ D.R. Allen and H. Doggart, *A Breathless Hush: The MCC Anthology of Cricket Verse* (London: Methuen, 2004), p. 207.

- 3.8.2 In just nine lines, some of the historical problems explored above are neatly summarised. In this vision, the game of cricket belongs to a special national group, with ‘racial’ dimensions. Even if euphemistically ‘exported’ elsewhere, there is a true essence of cricket, which is different to the noisy cricket played by others and those who play to win, a reference to the crass professionals of the interwar and post-war age, or the postcolonials who so often ended up beating England at their own game by the end of the 20th century, perhaps both.
- 3.8.3 Historians, sociologists, players and fans of cricket have identified the 1990s as a particularly problematic phase for English cricket.¹²⁹ As discussed above, roughly a hundred years before – in the 1890s – an intimate bond had been established between Englishness and cricket, which also cemented the dominance of an elite social group that was profoundly White, male and middle to upper class. The legacy of that period remains embedded in the idea of cricket as ‘the quintessential English game’, and the suspicion remains that the historical sense of ownership and entitlement developed during this period does not lie somewhere in a safely distant past.¹³⁰ As we examine in more detail in Chapter 7, Governance and Leadership, English cricket is still dominated by those from that elite social group, despite some recent signs of increasing diversity.
- 3.8.4 In 1991, the Conservative politician Norman Tebbit proffered his infamous ‘cricket test’, which questioned the loyalties of immigrants who were not White, asking who they cheered for when England played cricket against former colonies. Tebbit later explained that his remarks were not aimed at “*all immigrants*”, but particularly those “*second-generation British-Blacks*” who had “*split loyalties*.”¹³¹ Such thinking betrayed a profound discomfort with the idea that postcolonial identities could be multi-layered.
- 3.8.5 By the 1990s, the wider crises of identity that the loss of empire and postcolonial immigration had brought about remained unresolved, and were being expressed and played out on the cricket field, in the media and in cricket’s boardrooms. Players and lovers of the game of cricket often viewed cricket’s inability to reckon with its past and to embrace change as a tragedy, a missed opportunity. As Diran Adebayo has put it, with reference to the banning of musical instruments at Lord’s in the 1990s: “*faced with increasingly vocal supporters of Pakistan and the West Indies, who blew horns, whistles and banged drums at their teams’ triumphs, the English cricketing authorities had responded by banning these instruments from its grounds, treating its latest chance to broaden its appeal with the scorn and the blinkered vision I had come to expect*.”¹³²
- 3.8.6 Despite the racism scandals that plagued English cricket in the 1990s, when the ECB was formed in 1997, its first major statement – Raising the Standard – contained no recognition that there was a problem of racism in the game, nor an acknowledgement that cricket’s governing body had at its disposal a rich ecosystem of cricketing talent in ethnically diverse communities.¹³³
- 3.8.7 In 2005, the England cricket team finally regained the ‘Ashes’ from Australia, something they had failed to do for 19 years. The 2005 victory in that famous and historic series of matches produced an outpouring of English patriotic fervour and a certain ‘carnival’ atmosphere, prompting astute observers and sociologists of sport to wonder whether Englishness might be entering a more benign phase, leaving the overt racism of the earlier period behind.¹³⁴
- 3.8.8 However, after Azeem Rafiq’s testimony – and a much wider range of evidence regarding racism in cricket since the year 2000 – concerns remain about the presence of an exclusive and racialised form of Englishness permeating English cricket.

¹²⁹ Chris Searle et. al, *Hit Racism for Six* (London: Roehampton Centre for Sport Development Research, 1996); Mike Marqusee, *Anyone But England: Cricket, Race and Class* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).

¹³⁰ Dominic Malcolm and Philippa Velija, ‘Cricket: The Quintessential English Game?’, in Tom Gibbons and Dominic Malcolm (eds.), *Sport and English National Identity in a ‘Disunited Kingdom’* (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 30.

¹³¹ Quoted in Michael Collins, ‘Cricket, Englishness and Racial Thinking,’ *The Political Quarterly*, 93, 1 (2022), p. 101.

¹³² Diran Adebayo, ‘Batting collapse,’ *Index on Censorship*, 29, 4 (2000), p. 163.

¹³³ England and Wales Cricket Board, *Raising the Standard: ‘The MacLaurin Report’* (London, ECB, 1997).

¹³⁴ Malcolm and Velija, ‘Cricket: The Quintessential English Game?’, p. 28.

- 3.8.9 The 2005 team did contain a majority of state school educated players, the most famous and successful being Andrew Flintoff. Flintoff has since very publicly shone a light on the increasing marginalisation of state school cricketers in the game, and the overwhelming dominance of privately educated players within the England setup.¹³⁵ In 2023, MCC has still been arguing about whether two of the most elite and privileged private schools in England – Eton and Harrow – should or should not continue to be the only schools that are guaranteed a fixture at Lord’s. At the playing level, private school educated players are disproportionately represented, to a significant extent, in England’s national teams, both men and women, compared with the general population. Diversity of ethnic background has also decreased in the men’s professional game over the last 30 years, and has never been high in the women’s game.
- 3.8.10 Women’s cricket has undoubtedly made significant progress in the last decade. In particular, The Hundred competition, introduced by the ECB, has brought new crowds and media exposure for women cricketers. Yet women’s cricket remains clearly subordinate to the men’s game at grassroots level, in the talent pathway and in professional cricket, with pay equity occasionally discussed but not yet even close to being realised.
- 3.8.11 Historically, established elites have consistently limited access to the game for the working classes, for women and for players from ethnically diverse communities. Even so, the game has been capable of embracing, even leading, change. One-day and T20 cricket, and World Cup competitions, are evidence of that, even if the profile of decision-makers in England and Wales has remained largely the same.
- 3.8.12 Although cricket holds its traditions dear, it is important to recognise that the game has a complex history. While we may celebrate its ancient roots and modern popularity, we cannot ignore the ways in which cricket has reinforced social hierarchies based on race, gender and class. Discrimination has been an unfortunate part of cricket’s history, and it is important that we acknowledge and address this fact. English cricket should take this opportunity to confront its past in order to move towards a more equitable future. As we celebrate the game’s rich heritage, we must also be mindful of the social conflicts that have shaped it. By recognising and learning from the game’s past, we can help create a brighter future for cricket and for those who play and enjoy it.

¹³⁵ ‘Freddie Flintoff’s Field of Dreams’, South Shore Productions, BBC1 2022.

Chapter 4: State of Equity in Cricket

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 Our ambition for cricket is that it genuinely becomes a game for all, where everyone has a chance to achieve their potential, regardless of their background, and where people are always treated with dignity and respect. We want cricket to become the most equitable sport in England and Wales, setting an example for other sports at home and around the world. In order to do so it is essential to understand both how equitable the game is now and to be clear about what a truly equitable game would look like.
- 4.1.2 In this Chapter, we present the facts that contributed to our conclusions in this Report. While some of these facts will be familiar to those close to the game, others may be surprising, and many will need concerted action in response.
- 4.1.3 We hope this Chapter can act as a benchmark for cricket, aiding its leaders in reflecting on how equitable the game is today and what decisions are needed to eliminate discrimination and advance equity. It will allow the game to review progress by replicating and building on this analysis, publishing results consistently and transparently.
- 4.1.4 Further detailed data is presented in the following Chapters, alongside our analysis, findings and recommendations to improve equity.

The importance of data in EDI work



It is the essence of fair decision-making that both those who make the decisions and those affected should know clearly what the consequences of any particular decision will be. That is why the availability of data is so important.

Equality and Human Rights Commission¹³⁶

- 4.1.5 Cricket is arguably one of the most data-led of all professional sports and the use of data and insight has already been embraced by the game with much success.¹³⁷ Data is also critical for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) work: using data to understand who is leading, administering and playing the game can help to answer key questions, diagnose potential problems, and highlight knowledge gaps. Such questions may include 'Do professional players represent the recreational cricket playing population?' or 'Does the game invest equitably in the women's and men's games?' Once robust data is collected, questions can be answered and, if inequity is identified, a strategy to improve performance can be developed. In turn, data can be used to assess the implementation of the strategy and whether it is achieving its aims.

¹³⁶ 'Executive Summary', How Fair is Britain? Triennial Review, (2010), p. 5.

¹³⁷ Dickens, 'Getting the edge - on and off the cricket field', The Telegraph, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/cricket/supporting-england/data-insight/>

- 4.1.6 Good EDI work always begins with ensuring that there is clarity on what questions you are trying to answer and then considering the data you need to collect to enable you to do so. The data must be detailed enough to highlight issues, without being so granular that it cannot be used to identify relevant trends across an organisation or, in this case, a sport.
- 4.1.7 Transparency in relation to EDI data is also critical; it aids performance and accountability. For example, evidence shows that the introduction of gender pay gap¹³⁸ reporting has led to a narrowing of the gap and that data disclosure can be a powerful tool to change behaviour.¹³⁹

Setting appropriate benchmarks

- 4.1.8 For data to be useful, baselines need to be set, providing a snapshot in time against which trends can be monitored. In addition, an appropriate benchmark needs to be agreed to enable a fair assessment of performance. For example, when assessing if the workforce of cricket properly reflects the wider population, a key question is: which population - local, regional, national, the recreational playing population, or some combination of these?
- 4.1.9 If a particular population already reflects any particular bias, that must be acknowledged and understood. For example, the recreational playing population in cricket reflects certain biases and barriers that make it more difficult for some communities to access the sport.
- 4.1.10 Setting appropriate benchmarks is crucial to achieving equity: they enable strong self-reflection, help to identify solutions and then assist in monitoring successful change. Importantly, the publishing of clear, stretching goals and targets has been shown to provide an accountability mechanism that drives performance.¹⁴⁰
- 4.1.11 In this assessment we have chosen comparator benchmarks that will challenge cricket to the greatest extent in terms of advancing EDI, enabling the game to clearly identify what it must do going forwards if it is to become the most equitable sport in England and Wales.

About the data

- 4.1.12 We use comparative figures where appropriate to demonstrate whether cricket is representative of key demographics. These include the general population of England and Wales, local or regional populations, and those who play cricket at a recreational level.
- 4.1.13 This assessment provides a snapshot of what the data tells us as at the end of 2022; it is inevitable that some of the facts presented will have changed by the time of our Report's publication.

Race and ethnicity

- 4.1.14 It is well established that the concept of race has no biological basis and is rooted in historical justifications of imperialism, colonialism and enslavement. Race became *"a way of organising human beings into biological categories and was used to explain perceived differences between them, particularly asserting the superiority of the Europeans over Black, Brown and Asian 'others'."*¹⁴¹ Ethnicity is usually a self-identified form of group identification based on common racial, cultural, religious, linguistic, national or, at times, regional backgrounds. In the UK the concept of self-identified ethnicity is recognised by, and is the basis of, official public data collection. Therefore, ethnicity data was chosen as the basis of our analysis of race in cricket.

¹³⁸ Blundell, 'Wage responses to gender pay gap reporting requirements', Centre for Economic Performance, No. 1750, March 2021. p. 1. <https://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/dp1750.pdf>

¹³⁹ Chilazi, Bohnet, 'How to Best Use Data to Meet Your DEI Goals', Harvard Business Review, December (2020). <https://hbr.org/2020/12/how-to-best-use-data-to-meet-your-dei-goals>

¹⁴⁰ Dobbin, Kalev, 'Why Diversity Programs Fail', Harvard Business Review, August (2016). <https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-diversity-programs-fail>

¹⁴¹ Mirza, H. and Warwick, R. (2022), 'Race and ethnicity', IFS Deaton Review of Inequalities, <https://ifs.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-11/Race-and-ethnicity-IFS-Deaton-Review-of-Inequalities.pdf>

Gender and sex

- 4.1.15 Gender and sex are often used interchangeably in everyday and policy contexts, although they have different and contested meanings. For the purposes of our Report we have largely relied on the 2019 definitions used by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) set out below.¹⁴² Their definition of gender recognises that it is a spectrum, rather than binary. In addition, we also acknowledge 'gender fluidity'¹⁴³ (i.e. the change in a person's gender expression or identity over time).

Sex is defined as:

- referring to the biological aspects of an individual as determined by their anatomy, which is produced by their chromosomes, hormones and their interactions
- generally male or female
- something that is assigned at birth

Gender is defined as:

- a social construction relating to behaviours and attributes based on labels of masculinity and femininity; gender identity is a personal, internal perception of oneself and so the gender category someone identifies with may not match the sex they were assigned at birth
- where an individual may see themselves as a man, a woman, as having no gender, or as having a non-binary gender - where people identify as somewhere on a spectrum between man and a woman

- 4.1.16 Official public data collection in the UK largely uses 'self-identified sex' data, with the ONS having only recently started to collect data on gender identity through a voluntary question in the 2021 Census. Despite this we most commonly hear about the 'Gender Pay Gap' and 'Gender Equality' e.g. the government published its Gender Equality Road Map in 2019,¹⁴⁴ a report that focused on equality for women and girls using data on 'sex'.
- 4.1.17 We have predominantly used 'sex' data for quantitative analysis of gender in cricket.

Class and socio-economic status

- 4.1.18 Definitions of class are contested, vary across international geographies and, like race and gender, shift over time. Some consider class to be an inherited static identity, others consider it to be a social relation, others argue low or high incomes and wealth are primary factors. For the purposes of this Report we have considered class to be a marker of social positioning within society usually (but not always) relative to socio-economic status.

¹⁴² <https://web.archive.org/web/20190712012354/https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/articles/whatisdifferencebetweensexandgender/2019-02-21> In March 2022, a notice was added to these ONS definitions setting out that they were developed for the purpose of examining progress against achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals and that they do not reflect a current cross-government agreed position. This was subsequently updated after April 2023 (exact date unknown) to remove the definitions entirely. Our use of these definitions does not necessarily indicate that we think they are infallible or that they are not open to reasonable critique, but for the purposes of our Report they provide a helpful starting point for understanding these terms.

¹⁴³ Sabra L. Katz-Wise, PhD (December 2020) 'Gender Fluidity: What it means and why support matters', Harvard Health Publishing. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/gender-fluidity-what-it-means-and-why-support-matters-2020120321544>

¹⁴⁴ HM Government (July 2019) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/821889/GEO_GEEE_Strategy_Gender_Equality_Roadmap_Rev_1_1.pdf

- 4.1.19 Socio-economic status can also be defined in a number of ways but usually comprises data related to education, occupation and income. In the UK, official statistics use the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC)¹⁴⁵ which is focused on employment relations and occupations, and has eight distinct 'analytical classes'. The Social Mobility Commission in its guidance to employers¹⁴⁶ on monitoring socio-economic background recommends seeking data on parental occupation, schooling (i.e. state, private, etc.), free school meal eligibility and, in some cases, the educational level of parents/guardians.
- 4.1.20 Data on socio-economic status is not as readily available as sex or ethnicity data because it is not routinely collected, so research is often conducted with proxies. For this Report we have used data on socio-economic status, where available, and schooling data as a proxy where it isn't. We note that schooling as a proxy for class has some limitations (i.e. many children from middle class¹⁴⁷ families attend state school and some children from working class families attend private school thanks often to bursaries or scholarships). However, we consider it is sufficiently close to being an indicator of likely class to justify its use.

Data presentation

- 4.1.21 Key EDI data is presented in four sections below:
- Power, voice and influence
 - Playing and progressing in cricket
 - Working in cricket
 - Investment.
- 4.1.22 In each section we seek to examine a range of indicators. For example, under 'power, voice and influence', we have examined the data available to see how representative the game's leadership is in relation to race, gender and class.
- 4.1.23 We include summaries throughout the Chapter to highlight the key features of the following data.
- 4.1.24 There are, inevitably, some areas identified throughout the Chapter where there is a lack of reliable information and data. We have sought to identify these clearly.

¹⁴⁵ ONS, Census 2021, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/otherclassifications/thenationalstatisticsocioeconomicclassificationnssecbasedonsoc2010#classes-and-collapses>

¹⁴⁶ Social Mobility Commission guidance (updated 21 May 2021) 'Simplifying how employers measure socio-economic background: An accompanying report to new guidance' <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-a-workforces-socio-economic-background-for-change/simplifying-how-employers-measure-socio-economic-background-an-accompanying-report-to-new-guidance#executive-summary>

¹⁴⁷ Where we refer to 'middle class' we are also referring to 'upper class'.

4.2 Power, voice and influence

- 4.2.1 Those with power, voice and influence in cricket are largely White, male and middle class notwithstanding the fact that 30-35% of the adult recreational game's base are from ethnically diverse communities. Progress is being made on improving gender diversity, although women remain significantly underrepresented. Considerable further work is needed to improve diversity by reference to race, class, gender and other protected characteristics (e.g. disability).
- 4.2.2 Power can be defined as *"the potential ability to influence behaviour, to change the course of events, to overcome resistance, and to convince people to do things that they would not do otherwise."*¹⁴⁸ Power, voice and influence in cricket are largely held by its most senior leaders and, albeit to a lesser degree, where organisations are member based, its members. Others hold power too, such as broadcasters, sponsors and funding bodies like Sport England. However, the Commission's focus has been on parties within the game itself.
- 4.2.3 As the national governing body for cricket, the ECB sits at the top of the game's leadership structure. The ECB has a Board of 12 and is controlled by its 41 members, comprising the Chairs of the 18 First Class Counties (FCCs), the Chairs of the 21 County Cricket Boards (CCBs) in National Counties (NCs), the Chair of Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), and the Chair of the National Counties Cricket Association (NCCA).¹⁴⁹ Accordingly, this group currently comprises 53 individuals. Given the critical nature of their roles, we also consider the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the 18 FCCs and MCC to be part of cricket's most senior leadership, bringing the total to 72.¹⁵⁰

Only 12.7% of cricket's most senior leadership are women

With the exception of a single Black woman on the ECB Board, Black people are entirely absent from cricket's most senior leadership

All current FCC Chairs (18) are men, and all but two of them are White

¹⁴⁸ Pfeffer, *Managing with power: Politics and influence in organizations* (Harvard Business School Press, 1994).

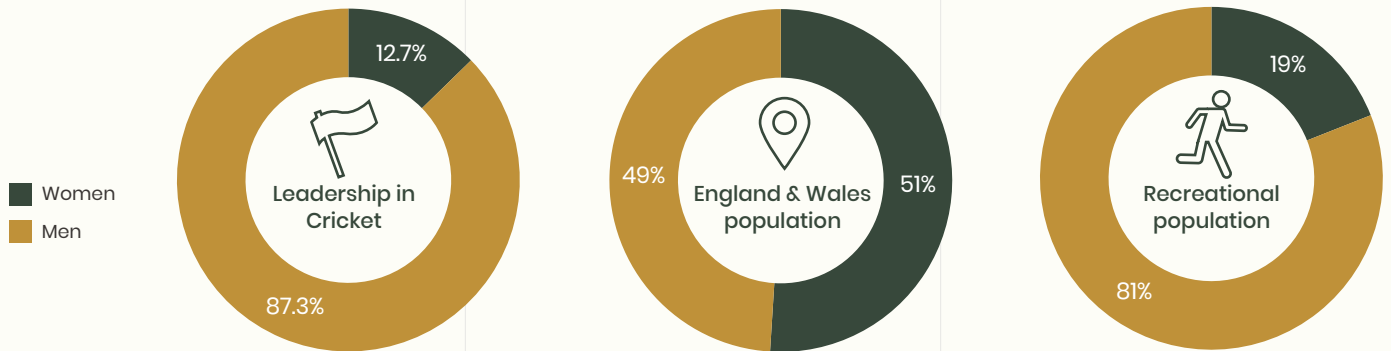
¹⁴⁹ ECB, 'Our Members', <https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/who-we-are/our-members>

¹⁵⁰ One ECB Board position is currently vacant (as at 31 December 2022) so the number of occupied positions in this senior leadership group is 71, which is therefore the basis for our calculations.

Cricket’s most senior leadership – gender

4.2.4 Men are significantly overrepresented in leadership roles, exclusively so in the case of FCC Chairs. Only 12.7% (9/71) of cricket’s top leadership are women compared to 51%¹⁵¹ of the UK population and 19%¹⁵² of the adult recreational cricket population.

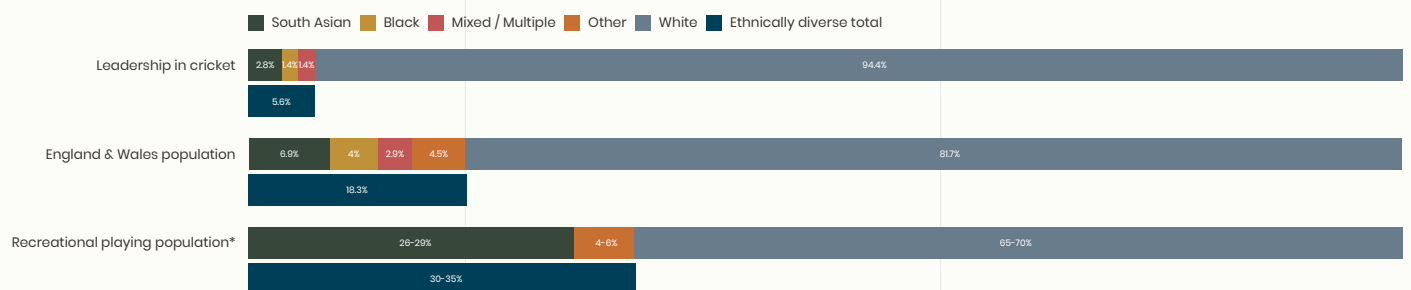
Figure 1: Most senior leadership – gender



Cricket’s most senior leadership – race

4.2.5 White people, particularly White men, are overrepresented in leadership roles. With the exception of a single Black female ECB Board member (who is shortly departing less than half a term into office), Black people are absent from cricket’s most senior leadership. South Asian representation is limited to one ECB Board member and one FCC Chair (who is stepping down less than half a term into office), and, therefore, just 2.8% of the game’s most senior leadership. This is despite South Asians making up 26-29%¹⁵³ of the game’s adult recreational population and 6.9%¹⁵⁴ of the population of England and Wales. Overall, ethnically diverse people make up only 5.6% (4/71) of cricket’s most senior leadership despite accounting for 30-35% of the adult recreational game,¹⁵⁵ and 18.3% of the general population.¹⁵⁶

Figure 2: Most senior leadership – race



*Exact figures not available for this cohort.

¹⁵¹ ONS, Census 2021.

¹⁵² See details in paragraph 4.3.3 below.

¹⁵³ ECB evidence.

¹⁵⁴ Total figure for ‘Asian’ in the ONS, Census 2021 is 9.3%. South Asian figure calculated using raw data from ONS, Census 2021.

¹⁵⁵ ECB evidence.

¹⁵⁶ ONS, Census 2021.

Cricket's most senior leadership – class

- 4.2.6 We have not identified accurate data on the class/socio-economic status or schooling of cricket's leaders. However, it is reasonable to assume that those from middle class backgrounds are overrepresented in the game's leadership given the findings from our wider work. In particular, our lived experience survey was targeted only at people in cricket¹⁵⁷ and just 58% of respondents said that they attended state school. This compares to 93% of the general population.¹⁵⁸ Given the size of the sample we are confident that it is an accurate representation of the game overall, including its leadership.

The ECB Board

- 4.2.7 **The ECB Board more closely resembles the gender and ethnic diversity of the population of England and Wales than do the Boards of most county cricket organisations. Two important roles on the ECB Board (Senior Independent Director and (interim) CEO) have been held by women since 2019. Data on socio-economic status and/or school backgrounds of most of the current ECB Board members was not available. Historic data indicates an overrepresentation of privately-educated ECB Chairs.**
- 4.2.8 The ECB's Board comprises 12 members. At the end of 2022, the ECB's Board had 11 members and carried one vacancy. Of the occupied positions, four are women (36.4%). Nine of the 11 Board members are White (81.8%), one member is Black (9.1%) and one member is South Asian (9.1%). Data on the socio-economic status and/or school backgrounds of most of the Board members was not available.
- 4.2.9 One of the most important Board roles (CEO) is currently held by a woman, although this is an interim appointment and the role will shortly be occupied by a man.¹⁵⁹ All post holders of the senior Board roles are White. The Senior Independent Director post is currently vacant having been held by a woman until recently.¹⁶⁰
- 4.2.10 The ECB's target for 2025 is that 50% of Board members are female, and 20% from ethnically diverse communities.¹⁶¹ To reach this at least six out of 12 members need to be women, and three from an ethnically diverse background.
- 4.2.11 There have been eight Chairs since the ECB was created in 1997, all White and male.¹⁶² Five were privately educated, one attended state school. We have not found publicly available schooling information on the remaining two.
- 4.2.12 The ECB is currently recruiting five new Non-Executive Directors to fill four upcoming vacancies and the existing vacancy. The new Senior Independent Director will be appointed from among the members of the new Board.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷ Respondents comprised recreational players, parents or guardians of recreational or Academy players, County Age Group players, Academy players, current professional players, former professional players, staff members (at the ECB or a county cricket organisation), volunteers, board or committee members, coaches, officials, umpires, fans and some who worked in an ancillary role in cricket.

¹⁵⁸ The Sutton Trust and The Social Mobility Commission, *Elitist Britain (2019)* [Elitist-Britain-2019.pdf](#) p. 4.

¹⁵⁹ He took up his post in February 2023.

¹⁶⁰ ECB, 'ECB Board Member, Brenda Trenowden CBE passes away', August 2022. <https://www.ecb.co.uk/news/2768615/ecb-board-member-brenda-trenowden-cbe-passes-away>

¹⁶¹ ECB, 'Annual ECB EDI Report: The ECB's equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) plan', December 2022, p. 4.

¹⁶² ICEC research.

¹⁶³ Six new Non-Executive Directors were announced by the ECB in April and May 2023.

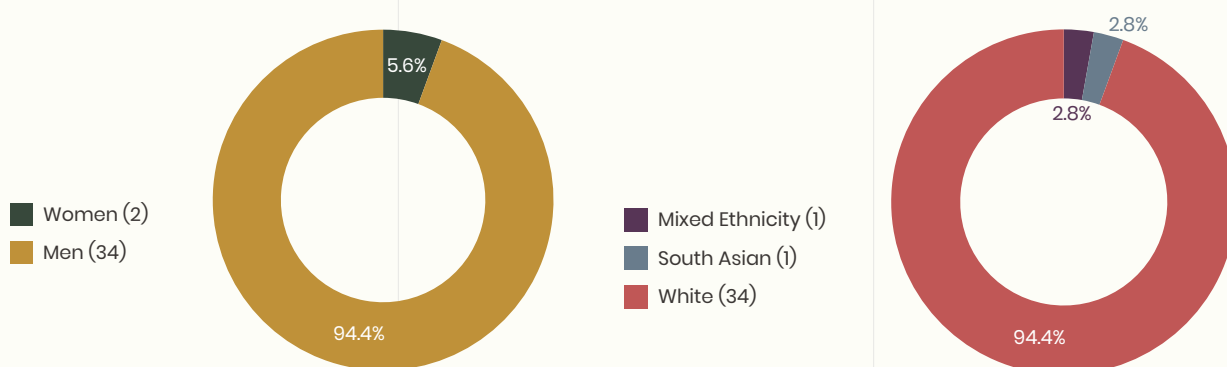
Counties

4.2.13 The two most powerful roles (i.e. Chair and CEO) across Counties are almost exclusively held by White men who are likely to be middle class. There is no Black representation and very limited South Asian representation despite the fact that 30–35% of cricket’s adult recreational base comes from ethnically diverse communities (with 26–29% being South Asian). There are currently no female Chairs of an FCC¹⁶⁴ and the only previous female Chair left during her third term.[†] She was South Asian. The introduction of the County Governance Framework (CGF) has resulted in significantly higher gender and ethnic diversity at speed across FCC and CCB Boards. There is significant scope for further progress, particularly at the most senior level.

FCC Chairs and CEOs

- 4.2.14 The Chair sits at the head of the FCC Board, which is responsible for the overall strategy and direction of the County. The CEO oversees the day-to-day running of the FCC. There are currently 18 Chairs¹⁶⁵ and 18 CEOs.¹⁶⁶
- 4.2.15 All of the Chairs are men. 16 of the Chairs are White, one is South Asian and one is of Mixed or Multiple ethnicity.
- 4.2.16 Sixteen of the CEOs are men, two are women. All of the CEOs are White.
- 4.2.17 There are no Black Chairs or CEOs.
- 4.2.18 Although robust schooling or socio-economic status data is unavailable, it is reasonable to assume that this leadership group is largely middle class.

Figure 3: FCC Chairs and CEOs – gender and ethnicity



CCB Chairs

4.2.19 There is little public information available about Chairs of CCBs. However, we have established that of the CCBs in the 21 NCs that are Members of the ECB (and so form part of our description of cricket’s most senior leadership), there are three female Chairs and 18 male Chairs.

¹⁶⁴ In January 2023, Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson was appointed Co-Chair of Yorkshire CCC until Lord Patel stood down in March 2023, when she became interim Chair.

[†] Post publication factual correction: This text originally noted the only previous female Chair left during her first term. This was incorrect and has been amended to 'third term' for accuracy.

¹⁶⁵ One is an interim appointment.

¹⁶⁶ One is Head of Finance and Company Secretary but broadly fulfils the role of CEO. There is no formal CEO post in that County.

FCC and CCB Board members

- 4.2.20 The CGF contains a Board diversity target for gender (at least 30%) and states that the ‘ethnic diversity’ of the Board should reflect the local County demographics. As of February 2022, diversity among FCC and CCB Boards was 23.5% representation of women and 9.8% representation of ethnically diverse communities.¹⁶⁷ After a focused effort on recruitment, as of December 2022, diversity among FCC and CCB Boards rose to 33% representation of women and 17% representation of ethnically diverse communities.¹⁶⁸
- 4.2.21 The aggregate 17% figure for ethnically diverse representation across the Boards of FCCs and CCBs as of December 2022 was less than the 18.3% for overall ethnically diverse representation across England and Wales.
- 4.2.22 The format of the available data does not allow the volume of Board members who are in both groups to be calculated (i.e. women from ethnically diverse backgrounds) and does not, therefore, allow for any form of intersectional analysis.
- 4.2.23 In February 2022, 12 CCBs and 7 FCCs had no one from an ethnically diverse background on their Board. As of December 2022, 5 CCBs (and no FCCs) had no one from an ethnically diverse background on their Board.¹⁶⁹
- 4.2.24 We have not identified schooling data for Board members of FCCs and CCBs.

Members

- 4.2.25 Fifteen of the 18 FCCs are member-based organisations.¹⁷⁰ We asked Counties if they collect demographic data of their members and found that four of those 15 FCCs collect ethnicity data, six collect data on gender and none collects schooling data. Therefore, it is not possible to assess by reference to data whether the FCC memberships are representative of the playing or general population by race, gender and class.¹⁷¹ This is a significant data gap in the sport.

Women’s Regional Teams

- 4.2.26 Women’s Regional Teams (WRTs) are not currently structured as separate legal entities and are instead hosted by one or more FCCs. As such they do not have a comparable structure at Chair and CEO level to a County.

MCC

- 4.2.27 Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) is considered the “*guardian of the Laws of the game*.”¹⁷² It has a World Cricket Committee which “*has a remit to act as an independent think tank debating issues and making recommendations about the health and state of the game, as well as to commission research*.”¹⁷³
- 4.2.28 MCC was founded in 1787. It is a members’ club, with the members owning the club’s assets. MCC teams play a large number of matches each season against schools, universities and other clubs. MCC’s home is Lord’s – ‘the Home of Cricket’ – where Middlesex County Cricket Club, the Sunrisers WRT, The Hundred’s London Spirit team, and the ECB are also based. MCC hosts professional and recreational fixtures each season at Lord’s, including international matches involving England’s men and women teams.

¹⁶⁷ ECB evidence, aggregate calculated by the ICEC.

¹⁶⁸ ECB evidence.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Hampshire, Northamptonshire and Durham CCCs are privately owned.

¹⁷¹ See discussion at paragraph 7.3.27 and following paragraphs.

¹⁷² Lord’s, ‘Our History’, <https://www.lords.org/mcc/the-club/about-the-mcc>

¹⁷³ Ibid.

- 4.2.29 In 1998, 211 years after its founding, MCC began accepting membership applications from women.¹⁷⁴ There are c18,000 full members of MCC and in 2019, the most recent year when MCC published figures, 217 were women (1.2%).¹⁷⁵
- 4.2.30 The President of MCC is appointed on a twelve-month term, as an honorary position. Since 1821, there have been 169 Presidents of MCC, three of whom served two terms.¹⁷⁶ 167 (98.8%) have been White men.
- 4.2.31 In the last three years MCC has improved the diversity of appointments to its President role. In 2020, the first non-British national and first South Asian President was appointed, followed by the first female President in 2021, and the first (as far as we know) openly gay President in 2022.
- 4.2.32 We found schooling data for 21 of the last 24 MCC Presidents, dating back to 1996. Of those 21, 18 (85.7%) were privately educated and three (14%) attended a state school.¹⁷⁷
- 4.2.33 The current MCC Committee has 12 members. Three (25%) of the members are women, all of whom are White. There are 10 White members (83.3%),¹⁷⁸ one British South Asian (8.3%) and one non-British South Asian (8.3%).

4.3 Playing and progressing in cricket

- 4.3.1 In this section we look at who is playing and progressing in cricket by examining the recreational game, the talent pathway and the professional game.

Participation (i.e. recreational cricket)

- 4.3.2 **Adult participation is dominated by men who make up an estimated 81% of the recreational game, with women at approximately 19%. The gap is narrower for children playing cricket, 33.4% of whom are girls. Currently, ethnically diverse communities account for 30–35% of adults involved in recreational cricket. This figure is largely made up of South Asians (26–29%), with other ethnically diverse groups making up the remainder. Black adults are not playing cricket in sufficient numbers to be picked up by surveys that measure participation in cricket. Black children are amongst the ethnic groups that are least likely to play cricket. Evidence on class suggests that cricket is a sport played disproportionately by those from more affluent backgrounds. Further analysis is needed to understand how class and ethnicity intersect in recreational cricket.**
- 4.3.3 According to the ECB's latest figures from 2020, 2.6 million people in England and Wales are playing cricket: 1.4 million children and 1.2 million adults. The 1.4 million children include 460,000 children who play in a six week programme administered by Chance to Shine.¹⁷⁹ The 1.2 million adults include 232,900 women (19%). ECB figures for the period 2017 to 2021 show that between 30–35% of adult recreational cricketers are from ethnically diverse backgrounds, mainly South Asian (26–29% of the total). 26–30% of U16 recreational cricketers are from an ethnically diverse background, most of whom are South Asian (15–20% of the total).¹⁸⁰ The ECB does not currently collect any socio-economic status or schooling data for recreational players.

¹⁷⁴ Lord's, 'Our History': <https://www.lords.org/mcc/the-club/about-the-mcc>

¹⁷⁵ Morgan, 'MCC members can now recommend two new joiners – but only if one is a woman', The Telegraph, 27 October 2022. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/cricket/2022/10/27/mcc-members-can-now-recommend-two-new-joiners-one-woman>

¹⁷⁶ Lord's, 'Our History': <https://www.lords.org/mcc/the-club/about-the-mcc>

¹⁷⁷ ICEC research.

¹⁷⁸ Including Stephen Fry, who is Jewish.

¹⁷⁹ ECB, Inspiring Generations: Our 2020–24 Strategy for Cricket, 2019, p. 7. Updated by ECB evidence.

¹⁸⁰ ECB evidence.

- 4.3.4 The most recent Sport England data from their ‘Active Lives Survey’¹⁸¹ shows that between November 2020 and November 2021, 627,900 adults¹⁸² said that they had played cricket in the previous 12 months, of whom 98,500 (15.8%) were women. It also showed that 530,400 children¹⁸³ said that they had played cricket at least once in the previous week during the academic year 2021–2022: 175,600 were girls (33.1%), 349,700 were boys (65.93%), and 5,100 (1.0%) described their gender “*in another way*”.
- 4.3.5 For adults, the social status group most likely to play cricket was NS SEC 9;¹⁸⁴ a grouping made up of the following subcategories: “*full time students*”, “*occupations not stated or not adequately described*” and “*not classifiable for other reasons*”. This was followed by NS SEC 1–2 (most affluent), then by NS SEC 3–5 (mid affluent) and NS SEC 6–8 (least affluent) groups who were least likely to play. This pattern aligns to general levels of physical activity (i.e. across all types of activity) where the least affluent are also the least likely to be active.
- 4.3.6 For children, this trend was mirrored with those from less affluent groups being least likely to play. In addition, the survey also revealed that whilst 16.8% of children at private schools were playing cricket once a week during school hours, only 7.2% of children at maintained state schools and 6.2% at academies were doing so (during the academic year 2021–2022).
- 4.3.7 The survey shows that between November 2020 and November 2021, Asian adults (5.0%)¹⁸⁵ were more likely to have played cricket in the previous 12 months than their White British (1.1%) counterparts. There was no available data for Black adult participation (or for adults from other ethnic groups).¹⁸⁶
- 4.3.8 This pattern was also true for children during the academic year 2021–2022: their participation rates were Asian (13.4%) and White British (6%). The data showed that 4.9% of Black children played cricket at least once in the previous week; however, they are among the ethnic groups least likely to do so. Children from other ethnic groups (8.4%) and those with ‘White Other’ (4.6%) backgrounds were also playing cricket every week. This is in stark contrast to general levels of activity where the most severe levels of inactivity are found among people of Asian descent, particularly among people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent – and especially among girls and women in these groups.¹⁸⁷
- 4.3.9 It should be noted that during the reporting period for adults from November 2020 to November 2021, Covid restrictions were in place for the majority of the year.¹⁸⁸ Absolute numbers are, therefore, likely to be significantly lower than usual.

The talent pathway

- 4.3.10 **Ethnic diversity for both the boys’ and girls’ talent pathway is growing, although still lags behind ethnic diversity in the recreational game overall. Schooling or socio-economic status data for players in the talent pathway is generally not available. There is, however, evidence that Counties have many more connections with private schools than state schools.**
- 4.3.11 The talent pathway is an overarching name for a series of stages and programmes administered and delivered by Counties (through both FCCs and CCBs) and WRTs to train talented young cricketers. Chapter 9 on Schools and the Talent Pathway sets out our detailed findings, including the issue of progression through the talent pathway, with some key features presented here.

¹⁸¹ Sport England, ‘Active Lives Survey’: <https://activelives.sportengland.org>

¹⁸² Adults are recorded as 16+.

¹⁸³ Children are recorded as 5–16yrs.

¹⁸⁴ National Statistics Socio-economic Classification.

¹⁸⁵ Excluding Chinese.

¹⁸⁶ The ‘Active Lives Survey’ does not provide data for groups where the numbers responding are too low to provide a valid result (i.e. Black adults, Asian including Chinese).

¹⁸⁷ Sport England, Sport for All (2020).

¹⁸⁸ Five months of notable restrictions (two-and-a-half months of full national lockdowns and two-and-a-half months of significant restrictions) and seven months of limited restrictions (three months of easing restrictions and four months with no legal restrictions).

Ethnic diversity in the boys' pathway

- 4.3.12 From 2017 to 2022, the percentage of boys taking part in the U13-U18 County Age Groups (CAG) across England and Wales who were from 'diverse backgrounds' increased from 17% to 23%.¹⁸⁹ ECB data also shows that Emerging Player Programmes (EPPs) in 2022 were made up of just over 21% boys from ethnically diverse backgrounds, an increase from just under 17% in 2017. This largely reflects an increase in the number of South Asian players. The percentage of players in EPPs from Black communities has remained below 1% throughout the same period. Boys from ethnically diverse backgrounds in Academies increased from just under 15% in 2017 to just under 27% in 2022.¹⁹⁰ Again, this largely reflects an increase in the number of South Asian players, with the percentage of players from Black communities at its highest in 2019 (just under 3%) and currently just over 1%.

Ethnic diversity in the girls' pathway

- 4.3.13 In 2021, 10% of girls' CAG players were from ethnically diverse backgrounds. This rose to 14% in 2022.¹⁹¹ For the girls' Academies, there has been little change from 7% in 2021 to 8% in 2022.¹⁹² South Asian and Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups comprise the largest proportion of players from ethnically diverse backgrounds, with girls from Black communities representing less than 1% in both CAG and Academies.

Socio-economic status

- 4.3.14 We have not identified consistent schooling or socio-economic status data across the boys' or girls' pathways.
- 4.3.15 The Sport England data from 2021-2022 that we referred to in the section on participation shows that children from a more affluent background are more likely to play cricket than those from a less affluent background, and that a higher percentage of private school children play cricket weekly than those at state school. We think it is reasonable to assume that this is replicated in the talent pathway, which is therefore likely to contain a higher proportion of more affluent and/or private school educated children than those from less affluent backgrounds and/or state school.

School connections

- 4.3.16 Through our own extensive research, we identified that the WRTs, FCCs and CCBs have (at least) 251 connections to secondary schools across their County talent pathways. 127 private secondary schools were found to have a connection to County cricket, compared to 52 state secondary schools. Some schools had more than one connection with the game, so the overall number of connections is greater than the total number of schools. Types of connections include one of the school's coaching staff being a current/former professional player, or a link on an organisational level between the school and a County (e.g. for the sharing of facilities).
- 4.3.17 There are approximately 1,432 private secondary schools in England and Wales.¹⁹³ We found that at least 127 (8.9%) have a connection with County cricket.
- 4.3.18 There are approximately 3,640 state secondary schools in England and Wales.¹⁹⁴ We found that at least 52 (1.4%) have a connection with County cricket.

¹⁸⁹ ECB, Annual ECB EDI Report, Game-wide Action Plan to Tackle Discrimination: 12 Months on, December 2022. p. 9.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² ECB evidence.

¹⁹³ Calculated from <https://www.best-schools.co.uk/senior-school> - approximately 1,500 independent senior schools in the UK - and then deducting the number of independent senior schools in Scotland and Northern Ireland - 68 - taken from <https://www.schoolsearch.co.uk/>

¹⁹⁴ Calculated using: BESA, 'Key UK education statistics', July 2021. <https://www.besa.org.uk/key-uk-education-statistics/>

- 4.3.19 Therefore, of the approximately 5,072 private and state secondary schools in England and Wales, private schools make up 28.2%, yet they represent 70.9% of the secondary schools that are connected with cricket Counties.¹⁹⁵
- 4.3.20 Research in 2017 into a group of nine private schools known as the Clarendon schools found that *“the alumni of these nine elite schools are 94 times more likely to reach the British elite”* compared with all those who had been to all other schools.¹⁹⁶ County talent pathways are connected to eight out of these nine schools. One FCC is connected to three of them.

4.4 Professional players

- 4.4.1 The ethnicity of male and female players at professional level does not reflect the ethnicity of the adult recreational playing base, nor the wider population of England and Wales. The number of Asian British and Black British male professional players for FCCs reduced from 9.2% in 2012, to 8.1% in 2021. Female cricketers playing at professional level are disproportionately White: in 2021, there were only two Black British, four Mixed/Multiple ethnicity and eight Asian female players, out of a total of 161. A majority of male and female players at professional level (for whom we have schooling data) attended private school: in 2021, 56.4% had been to private school at some point, and 43.6% had been to state school throughout their education. Captains of England Women’s teams have all been White and captains of England Men’s teams have mainly been White (87% since 1991).
- 4.4.2 There are seven England Teams: Men’s Red Ball, Men’s White Ball, England Women, Physical Disability, Learning Disability, Visually Impaired, and Deaf.¹⁹⁷ There is also the England Lions team (men), which is effectively the England Men’s second team, and there is an England Women’s A team, which is comparable to an England Women’s second team. There is a Young Lions Team (U19 men) and an U19 team for women was announced in 2022.¹⁹⁸ All of the players in the England Disability Cricket teams are currently men, but the teams are open to women.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁵ Although private schools make up approximately 28% of the secondary schools in England and Wales, as noted elsewhere in this Report (e.g. paragraph 4.4.16), only about 7% of all pupils attend private schools, albeit that percentage increases for those aged 17 and 18. One possible reason for this difference could be that the average number of students attending each private secondary school is lower than the equivalent number attending state secondary schools.

¹⁹⁶ Flemmen Friedman, ‘The Decline and Persistence of the Old Boy: Private Schools and Elite Recruitment 1897 to 2016’, *American Sociological Review* (2017), p. 16. <https://www.pepf.co.uk/research/the-decline-and-persistence-of-the-old-boy/>

¹⁹⁷ ECB, *Inspiring Generations: Our 2020–24 Strategy for Cricket*, 2019. p. 7.

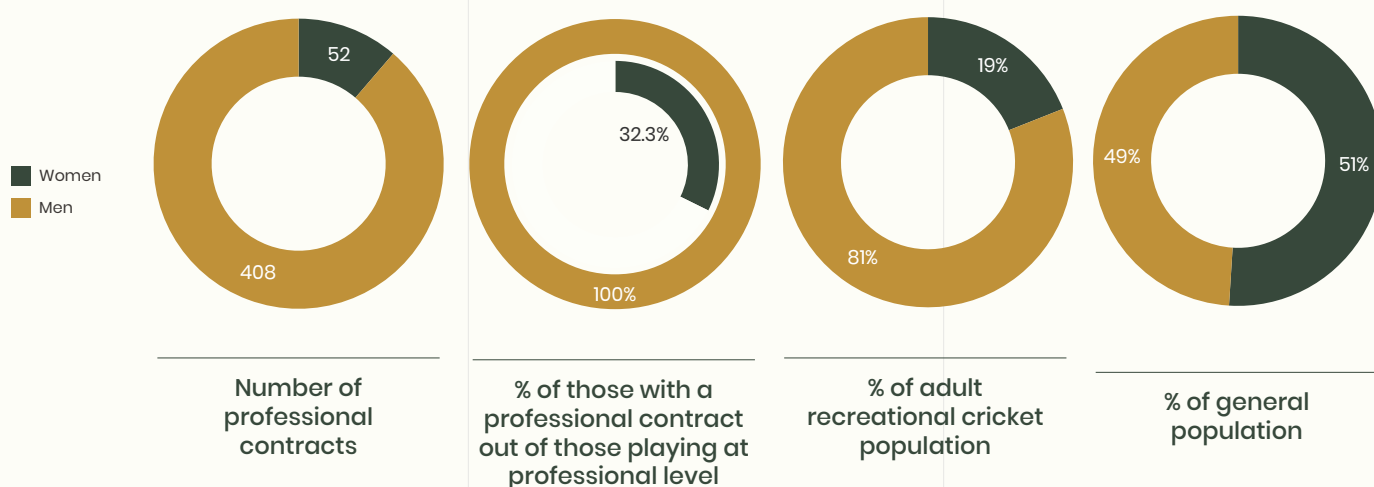
¹⁹⁸ ECB, ‘England Women U19 announce squad for ICC U19 Women’s T20 World Cup 2023’, October 2022. <https://www.ecb.co.uk/news/2858562/england-women-u19-announce-squad-for-icc-u19-womens-t20-world-cup-2023>

¹⁹⁹ ECB evidence.

Gender

4.4.3 We found 569 people who had played professional level domestic cricket²⁰⁰ in England and Wales in 2021, 161 women and 408 men. All 408 male players had professional contracts. Just 52²⁰¹ of the 161 women playing at professional domestic level had professional contracts (the remainder either received fees on a match by match basis or were not paid at all).²⁰² Therefore, of all professional domestic contracts, 88.7% were held by men and 11.3% by women.

Figure 4: Professional contracts by gender in 2021



4.4.4 The number of professional domestic female players has increased since the first awards of professional domestic contracts in 2020, when there were 41 contracted players, with 40 funded by the ECB and one by a WRT.²⁰³

4.4.5 The ECB has now funded 80 professional domestic female players²⁰⁴ which represents 100% growth in the volume of professional domestic women’s contracts funded by the ECB in three years (with contracts funded by WRTs adding to that number).

²⁰⁰ For these purposes, professional level means specifically first team cricket for an FCC or WRT.

²⁰¹ Based on ICEC historical player research. The ECB gave us a figure of 51.

²⁰² Female players began to have professional contracts in domestic cricket in 2020 when the WRT structure was established. In the KIA Super League between 2016 and 2020, some women were paid to play match by match but did not have contracts. Since 2020, there has been a mixture of women playing at professional domestic level who have contracts and those who do not. Of those without contracts, some receive fees on a match by match basis and others do not receive any fees for playing.

²⁰³ ECB evidence.

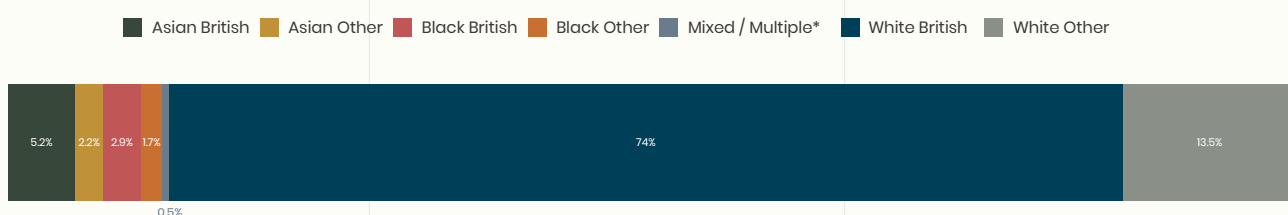
²⁰⁴ As at April 2023.

Ethnicity

Professional male player ethnicity

4.4.6 Data for 2021 shows that 87.5% of male professional players were White (74.0% White British and 13.5% White Other). Those who were White Other consisted of White South African, White Zimbabwean, White New Zealander, White Australian, and White European.

Figure 5: Ethnicity of 2021 male professional players



**The data for players from Mixed/Multiple backgrounds did not distinguish between British and Other.*

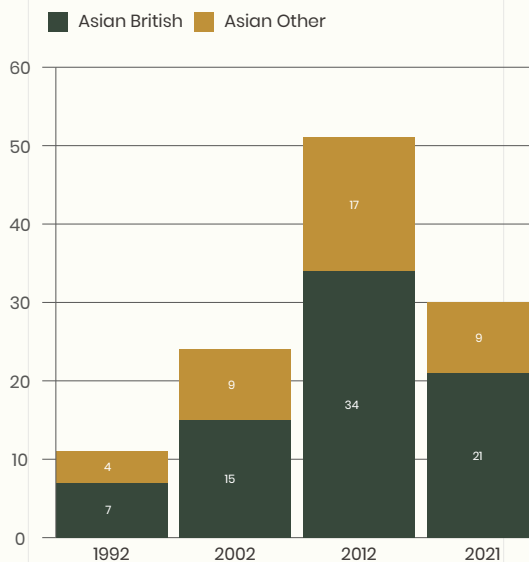
4.4.7 In 2021, 8.1% of British male professional players were Asian or Black (i.e. less than 1 in 12). This ratio is approximately one quarter of the ratio in the adult recreational game.

4.4.8 There were more players from White Other backgrounds (55) than Asian British players (21) or Black British players (12). White Other players outnumbered Asian British players by c2.6 times, and Black British players by c4.6 times.

4.4.9 5.2% of male professional players in 2021 were Asian British (7.4% including all Asian players), compared to 26-29% of cricket’s adult recreational base being South Asian. We have used the distinction of Asian British and Asian Other (i.e. non-British), but it is of note that it is predominantly South Asian players that make up both these categories.

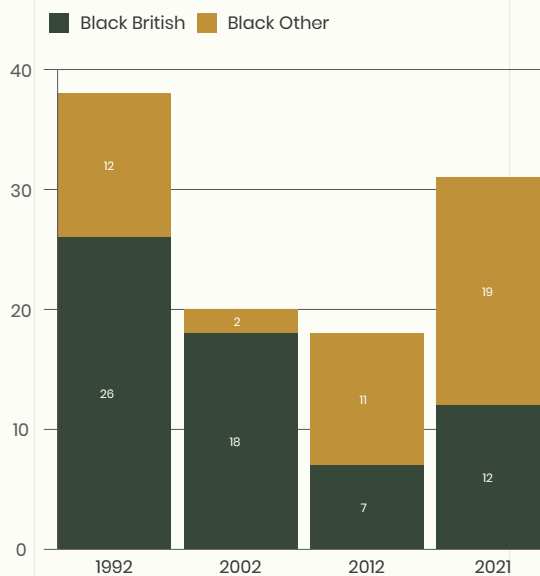
4.4.10 In 2012 there were 51 Asian British and Asian Other male professional players (11.5% of total players). The number decreased by 41% to 30 in 2021 (7.4% of total players).

Figure 6: Professional male players - Asian British, Asian Other



4.4.11 A widely quoted existing statistic is that there has been a decline in Black British professional players of around 75%.²⁰⁵ Our data corroborates a decline, although we have not identified the specific dataset underpinning the 75% statistic. Our work found 26 Black British male professional players in 1992 (7.3% of total players) and in 2021 less than half that number, 12 (2.9% of total players).

Figure 7: Professional male players - Black British, Black Other

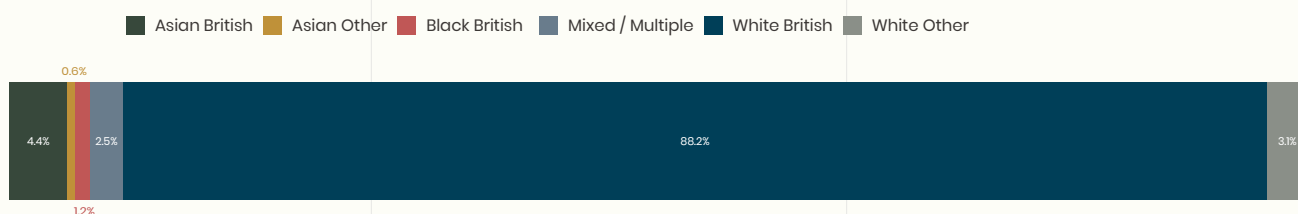


²⁰⁵ ACE Programme, 'About Us'. <https://aceprogramme.com/about/>

Professional female player ethnicity

- 4.4.12 In 2021, women who played for professional teams (both those with professional contracts and those without) were overwhelmingly White (91.3%). 5% were Asian (4.4% Asian British and 0.6% Asian Other), 1.2% were Black British, and 2.5% were of Mixed or Multiple ethnicities.²⁰⁶
- 4.4.13 The profiles of both the female player groups, with or without professional contracts, do not represent the ethnicity profile of the general population.
- 4.4.14 Among female players with a professional contract in 2021, there was a higher percentage of White players (94.2%) compared to players without a contract playing at a professional level, who were 89.9% White. The reverse was true for ethnically diverse women.

Figure 8: Ethnicity of 2021 female professional players



Schooling

- 4.4.15 In collecting schooling data, we looked at whether players attended private or state secondary school (typically ages 11-18) and noted evidence of movement between the two.
- 4.4.16 In 2021, out of the 569 male and female players who played professional cricket for an FCC or WRT, schooling data was identified for 468 (82.3%). Of these, 204 (43.6%) appear to have been state school educated throughout their childhood and 264 (56.4%) had attended private school at some point.²⁰⁷ Just 7% of the UK population goes to private school.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁶ The data for players from Mixed/Multiple backgrounds did not distinguish between British and Other.

²⁰⁷ Based on ICEC historical player research.

²⁰⁸ The Sutton Trust and The Social Mobility Commission, Elitist Britain (2019) [Elitist-Britain-2019.pdf](#) p. 14.

- 4.4.17 Of the 264 who had attended private school at some point, our evidence showed that 22 had moved from state to private school and nine had received scholarships. However, public information about players moving from state to private schools is not readily available, nor is receipt of scholarships. Based on our wider qualitative research, it is likely, therefore, that more than 22 players made the move from state to private, with or without scholarships.

Figure 9: Schooling for 2021 professional players (men and women)²⁰⁹



- 4.4.18 The 'Elitist Britain' report in 2019 noted that men's cricket was the profession with 10th highest level of private school attendance, behind Senior Judges, Lords, Public Body Chairs, News Media, and others. According to that report, 43% of male professional cricketers and 35% of female professional cricketers at the time attended private school.²¹⁰ In comparison, female and male professional football players had the lowest private school attendance.²¹¹
- 4.4.19 We were able to identify the educational background of around two thirds of the female players at domestic professional and equivalent level.²¹² Of those, 48% in 2016 had been privately educated, rising to 50% in 2021.
- 4.4.20 The percentage of male England players who were privately educated was 57% in 2012, and was similar at 58% in 2021.²¹³ This is significantly higher than the 7% of the general population who are privately educated.

England captains

- 4.4.21 All 12 women who have captained England have been White British.²¹⁴ We did not identify the schooling data for this group of players.
- 4.4.22 Twenty-three men have captained England Men's teams since 1991. Twenty (87%) have been White. We found schooling data for 22 of the 23: 12 were privately educated (at least one via a scholarship), and 10 attended state school. Accordingly, at least 52% of England Men's captains since 1991 attended private school, compared to 7% of the general population.

²⁰⁹ For whom we found schooling data.

²¹⁰ The Sutton Trust and The Social Mobility Commission, *Elitist Britain (2019)* [Elitist-Britain-2019.pdf](#). This Report shows a lower percentage of players attending private school than our data, but it is still significantly more than the percentage of the general population who attend private school. Calculations of private school attendance can be done in various ways e.g. whether someone spent a majority of their time at private school. Our figures include those who attended private school at some point in their education.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²¹² Those playing between 2016–19 competed in the Kia Super League, and were not playing under professional contracts. However, we have used these as a comparator as the League was the closest step towards professional level prior to the introduction of professional domestic contracts in 2020.

²¹³ Based on ICEC historical player research.

²¹⁴ Officially the England Women's team has had 11 captains not 12. This is because Ella Donnison did not captain the full England Women team - she captained at the 1999 Women's European Cricket Championship to which England did not send a full strength team. However, as she was the captain for this tournament, we consider it right for our purposes to include her in these figures.

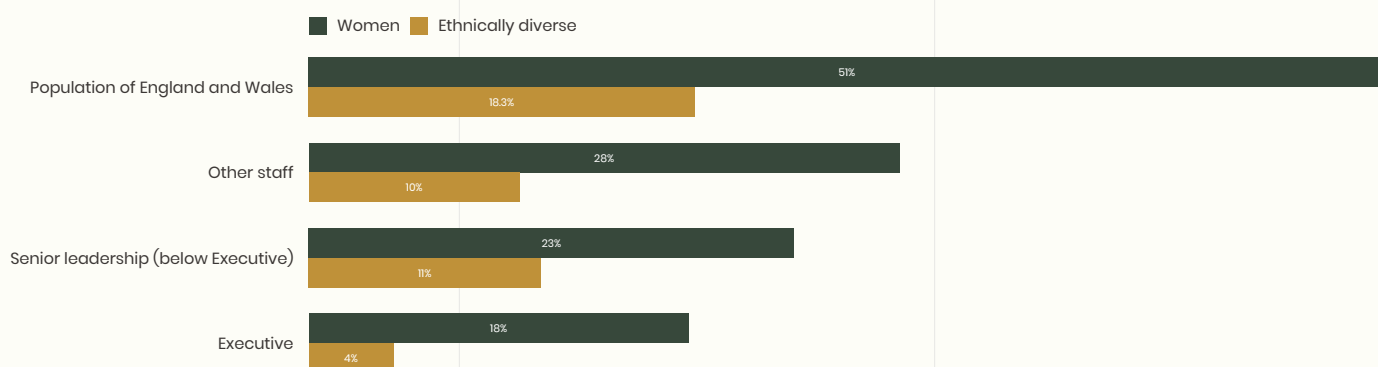
4.5 Working in cricket

4.5.1 Across the County cricket workforce, women are underrepresented especially at senior levels. Cricket’s workforce is significantly Whiter than the adult recreational playing population and the population of England and Wales, again especially at senior levels. Staff in County cricket and at the ECB are more likely to be privately educated compared with the population of England and Wales. The number of women participating in coaching courses at entry and lower levels has increased, but the overall proportion compared with men has remained very low over the last 10 years. Women are largely absent from the higher levels of professional coaching, particularly at FCC and England level. All head coaches for England Men’s teams in the last 36 years have been White.

All County workforce

4.5.2 Across County cricket, the more senior the role, the less the people in those roles represent the demographics of the general population in England and Wales.

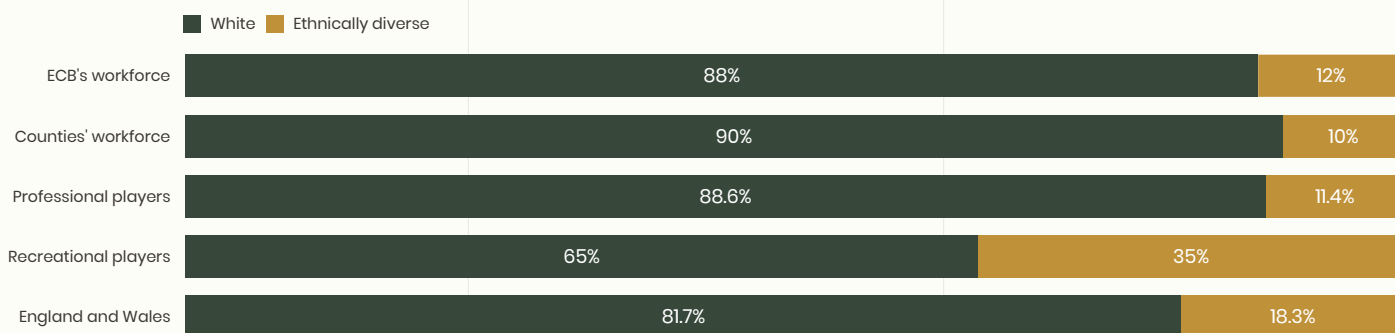
Figure 10: Gender and ethnic diversity in County cricket workforce



Source for Other staff, Senior Leadership, Executive: ECB EDI Census 2021.

4.5.3 County cricket’s workforce is 90% White and the ECB’s workforce is 88% White, compared to 81.7% of the population of England and Wales and around 65-70% of cricket’s adult recreational playing population.

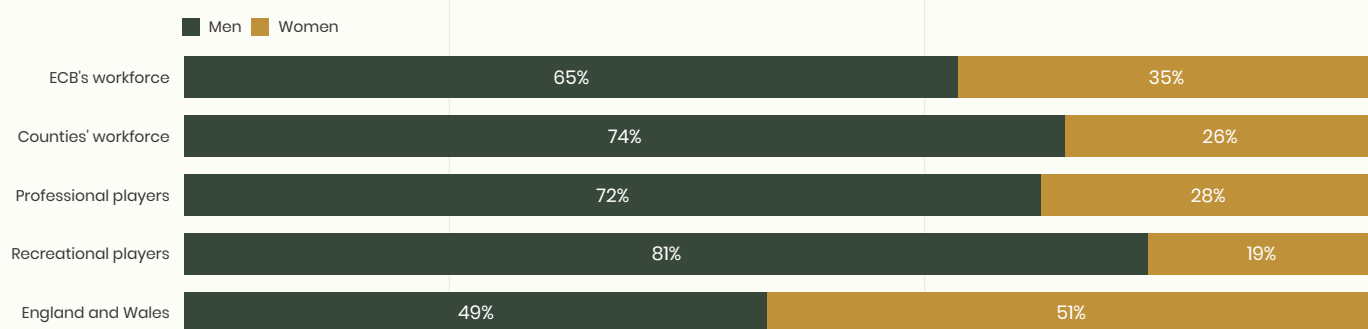
Figure 11: Ethnicity in cricket



Gender

4.5.4 As well as there being far higher numbers of men than women playing professional and recreational cricket, in 2021 men filled 74% of all roles in Counties and 65% of all ECB roles.²¹⁵ Women are underrepresented compared with the 51% of the general population of England and Wales who are women.²¹⁶

Figure 12: Representation of men and women in cricket



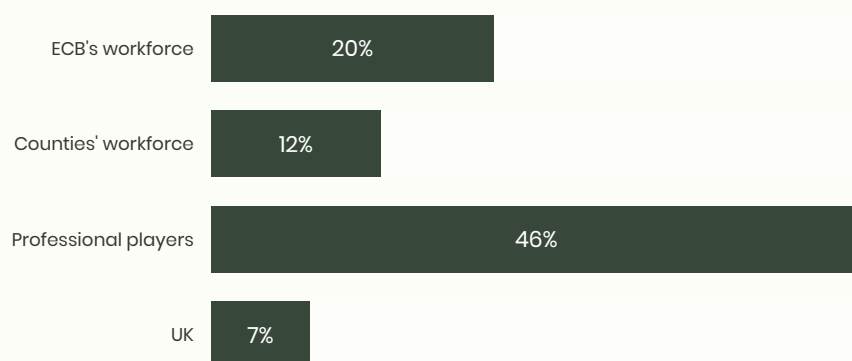
²¹⁵ ECB EDI Census 2021.

²¹⁶ ONS, Census 2021.

Class

- 4.5.5 Data on the socio-economic status of those within the cricketing workforce is unavailable. We have, however, identified some information about schooling.
- 4.5.6 20% of ECB staff and 12% of the county cricket workforce attended private school.²¹⁷ Both figures are significantly higher than the UK average of 7% private school attendance.²¹⁸
- 4.5.7 Of the 4,156 people involved or recently involved in cricket who responded to our lived experience survey, 42% attended private school.²¹⁹ We are confident that this broadly reflects the overrepresentation throughout the game of those who have been privately educated.

Figure 13: Private school attendance in cricket



Coaches

- 4.5.8 There is a lack of data collection on coaches across the sports sector, including within cricket. In the Sporting Equals Race Representation Index 2021, they state: “Across the sector, Senior (paid) coaching is the weakest area in terms of ethnically diverse representation and detailed data collection.”²²⁰ We have included in this section the data that we have been able to identify.

Race

- 4.5.9 Since 1986, all the head coaches for the England Men’s teams (Test, ODI and T20) have been White men. Nine have been English, two Zimbabwean, two Australian, and one from New Zealand.²²¹ There have therefore been five White non-British head coaches, but no Black or South Asian coaches.
- 4.5.10 The ECB 2018 South Asian Action Plan (SAAP) noted that under 5% of the coaching staff across the FCCs were South Asian i.e. under one in 20. In December 2022, the ECB announced that 33% of ECB coaching course participants are from “ethnically diverse backgrounds”.²²²

²¹⁷ ECB EDI Census 2021.

²¹⁸ The Sutton Trust and The Social Mobility Commission, *Elitist Britain* (2019) [Elitist-Britain-2019.pdf](#) p. 14.

²¹⁹ Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket.

²²⁰ Sporting Equals, ‘Executive Summary’, Race Representation Index 2021, March 2022, p. 4.

²²¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_England_cricket_team_coaches

²²² Annual ECB EDI Report, Comprehensive Action Across Cricket, December 2022, p. 11.

4.5.11 In September 2022, the ECB announced that more than 2,000 South Asian women had volunteered in cricket delivering All Stars Cricket and Dynamos Cricket sessions, and that at least 10% have gone on to take up full time roles in sport in local communities.²²³ The number of ECB qualified coaches who are South Asian women is unavailable.

Gender²²⁴

4.5.12 The number of women participating in coaching courses at the Entry level has increased from 9% in 2013 to 30% in 2022. Level 1 is a new course and the proportion of women participating was around 20–25% from 2018–2022. At levels 3–4 (now known as Advanced or Specialist), the proportion of women has remained around 10% for most of the last 10 years. The ECB's target for female participation in the Advanced and Specialist courses is 20%, and the ECB requests that the Counties apply the same target for the Entry level and Level 1 and 2 courses.

4.5.13 As at August 2022, there were no female head coaches at FCCs; there were 3/16 (19%) female head coaches with The Hundred teams and 2/8 (25%) female head coaches at WRTs. The ECB appointed its first female head coach in January 2022, who left her role at the end of the 2022 season and was replaced by a man.

Class

4.5.14 We have not identified socio-economic or schooling data for coaches.

The ECB

4.5.15 **The five CEOs of the ECB since it was established in 1997 have all been White and privately-educated. The four permanent post holders have all been men. The Executive Management Team (EMT) is 30% ethnically diverse, which is higher than the comparable figure in the general population, although there is no Black member of the EMT. Most (53%) of the ECB's staff work at Lord's as their 'home' office and so, in that sense, are based in London; they do not represent the ethnic diversity of the population of London, particularly in relation to Black employees (2% of all ECB staff compared with 13.5% of London's population). In 2021, both when including and excluding players, there was a gender pay gap in all four quartiles. In particular, the difference in average pay between female staff and players employed by the ECB and male staff and players was 43.9%.**

ECB Executive

4.5.16 We have already looked at the ECB at Board level. Below the Board, the ECB's EMT consists of ten members and has *"responsibility for the day-to-day running of the ECB and delivering the strategic plans."*²²⁵

4.5.17 At the end of 2022, there were three female EMT members, including the interim CEO. When the new (male) CEO started in February 2023, the interim (female) CEO returned to the role of Managing Director of Women's Cricket on the EMT (which she had continued to hold alongside her role as interim CEO) and became Deputy CEO of the ECB. Women's representation reduced from 30% (three out of 10) to 27% (three out of 11).

4.5.18 The EMT is 70% White, has three ethnically diverse members and no Black members.

²²³ ECB, 'Over 2,000 more South Asian women now volunteering in cricket as Dream Big programme reaches landmark', September 2022 <https://www.ecb.co.uk/news/2799514/over-2000-more-south-asian-women-now-volunteering-in-cricket-as-dream-big-programme-reaches-landmark>.

²²⁴ All data in this section provided by the ECB.

²²⁵ ECB, 'Our Executive'. <https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/who-we-are/our-executive>

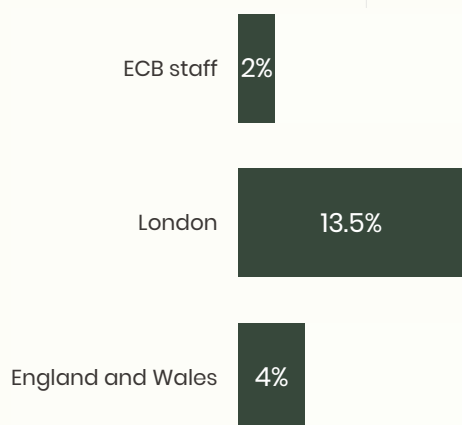
4.5.19 Since 1997, there have been five CEOs of the ECB, four of whom have been men. The sole woman to hold the post did so on an interim basis for seven months from June 2022. All five have been White and privately educated.²²⁶

ECB workforce

4.5.20 Most (53%) of the ECB's staff work at Lord's as their 'home' office and so, in that sense, are based in London. Its workforce does not represent the London population in terms of ethnic diversity.

4.5.21 London's population is more diverse than that of England and Wales as a whole: 53.8% of its population are White (combining White British and Other White)²²⁷ compared with 81.7% of the population of England and Wales.²²⁸ Despite this, 88% of the ECB's staff are White.

Figure 14: ECB staff – Black representation



4.5.22 13.5% of people living in London are Black.²²⁹ This is more than six times the percentage of Black staff at the ECB (2% in 2021). The 2021 Census shows that 4% of the population are Black, demonstrating that the number of Black staff at the ECB also substantially lags behind the national population.

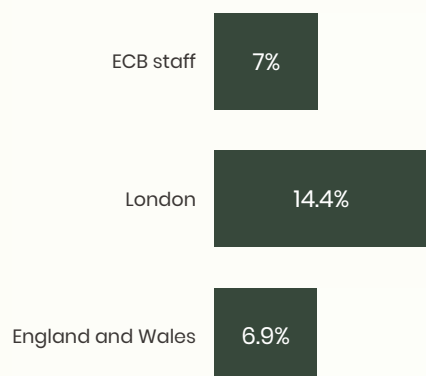
²²⁶ ICEC research.

²²⁷ Gov.UK, 'Regional ethnic diversity', December 2022. <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/latest> (36.8% White British and 17% White Other).

²²⁸ ONS, Census 2021.

²²⁹ Gov.UK, 'Regional ethnic diversity', December 2022. <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/latest>

Figure 15: ECB staff – South Asian representation



4.5.23 In 2021, 7% of ECB staff were South Asian, which is just less than half the South Asian population of London (14.4%)²³⁰ and similar to the South Asian population of England and Wales (6.9%).²³¹

4.5.24 As already noted, 26–29% of all adult recreational players are South Asian, demonstrating a significant mismatch between representation within the wider game and representation within the workforce of its national governing body.

Gender pay gap

4.5.25 The government defines the gender pay gap as “the difference between the average earnings of men and women across a workforce.”²³² Employers with a workforce of 250 or more must comply with regulations on gender pay gap reporting.²³³ The ECB collects and analyses data to meet the statutory requirement to publish gender pay gap information. For the past two years, the ECB has collected and analysed ethnicity pay data and published that data in March 2023. They do not collect and analyse pay data by class, and there is no statutory requirement to do so.

4.5.26 ECB gender pay gap reporting for 2021, both when including and excluding players, shows that there is a gender pay gap in all four quartiles.²³⁴

4.5.27 The mean (often referred to as an average) gender pay gap is calculated by dividing the total of all female employee salaries by the number of female employees and comparing the same calculation for male employees. In 2021, the mean gender pay gap was 43.9%. Therefore, overall, the difference in average pay between female staff and players employed by the ECB and male staff and players is 43.9%. When players are excluded, the gap decreases, albeit remaining at 18.8%.²³⁵

²³⁰ Calculated using ONS, Census 2021. (Calculated adding London Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani populations.)

²³¹ Calculated using ONS, Census 2021. (Calculated adding Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani populations.)

²³² Gov UK, Government Equalities Office, ‘Gender pay gap reporting: guidance for employers’, February 2022. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/gender-pay-gap-reporting>

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ ECB, Gender pay Gap Results 2019–21. <https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2021/10/04/17b91f72-2285-4bfe-a074-becb0ecld122/2021-Gender-Pay-Document.pdf>

²³⁵ ECB, Gender pay Gap Results 2019–21. p. 4.

- 4.5.28 The median gender pay gap is taken by arranging the salaries of male employees from lowest to highest and finding the number which sits in the middle, and doing the same for female employees. The median gender pay gap is the percentage difference between the two figures. The median gender pay gap for all ECB staff and players in 2021 was 29.5%. Excluding players, this gap also decreased, but by a smaller amount, to 25.5%.²³⁶
- 4.5.29 Analysing pay gaps produces different results depending on which calculation is used. For example, the ECB's mean gender pay gap has decreased by 6.4% since 2020, but the median pay gap has widened by 9.9%. It is therefore important, as the ECB has done, to do more than one calculation. Increased equity would be indicated by both calculations progressively showing a decrease to zero.
- 4.5.30 Because the figures show that the pay gaps decrease when players are excluded, it is clear that the gender pay gaps for male and female centrally contracted players are greater than for the rest of the ECB staff.
- 4.5.31 For the figures including players, the biggest pay gap between men and women is in the upper quartile of salaries. Four out of five of these roles are held by men. In 2021, the median pay gap in this quartile was 40.6% and the mean pay gap was 27.3%.²³⁷ For all quartiles there was a pay gap.
- 4.5.32 As noted above, the ECB published ethnicity pay data in March 2023. They told us that they have no plans to report on the class pay gap.

4.6 Investment

Summary

- 4.6.1 **There are significant disparities in the amounts invested into the men's and women's game. England Men receive 13 times the amount of remuneration paid to England Women (for all cricket) and for white ball cricket, where there is a broadly equivalent amount of cricket played, the average salary for England Women is significantly less than the average salary for England Men. In domestic professional cricket, the average salary for a player at a WRT is 45.5% of the average salary of a player at an FCC.**

England teams

- 4.6.2 In 2021, for every £1 that the ECB spent on England Women's teams, £5 was spent on England Men's teams.²³⁸
- 4.6.3 In 2022, England Women were scheduled to play 48 days of cricket, compared to England Men who were set to play around 113 days (the disparity largely reflects the fact that women play less red ball cricket).

England teams' terms and conditions

- 4.6.4 In terms of overall remuneration for all formats, in 2021 England Men received 13 times the amount paid to England Women. Looking only at white ball cricket, where there is a broadly equivalent amount of play, England Women still receive significantly less than England Men. We received credible evidence that the average salary for England Women is 20.6%²³⁹ of the average salary for England Men for playing white ball cricket (although the ECB has indicated that they consider this figure to be up to 30%).

²³⁶ ECB, Gender pay Gap Results 2019–21. p. 4.

²³⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

²³⁸ Although a direct comparison between the international women's and men's games is not straightforward for a number of reasons (primarily because England Men play significantly more red ball cricket than England Women).

²³⁹ Based on figures for the 2022/2023 contract year.

Pay Disparities – England Players

The number of red ball/white ball matches and days' cricket played by England Men (113 days) and Women in 2022 (48 days):

	Red Ball	White Ball
England Women	2 Test Matches (up to 8 days)	40 fixtures/days
England Men	15 Test Matches (up to 75 days)	38 fixtures/days

- **International white ball cricket** – The average salary for England Women is 20.6% of the average salary for England Men for playing white ball cricket.²⁴⁰
- **International white ball captain's allowance** – England Women's captain's allowance is 31% of the allowance awarded to the England Men's captain.²⁴¹
- **International match fees** – England Women's fees are 25% of England Men's for white ball matches and 15% for Test Matches.²⁴²
- **Prize money** – The prize money for the ICC 2022 Women's One Day International (ODI) World Cup was equivalent to 35% of the prize money for the 2019 Men's ODI World Cup.

Domestic cricket

4.6.5 In 2021, £5.5 million was invested in the women's regional structure. In October 2022, the ECB announced a £3.5 million increase in funding.²⁴³

4.6.6 For the 2023 season, the ECB had funded 80 professional women's domestic cricketers, doubling the 40 in 2020.²⁴⁴

Domestic cricket terms and conditions

4.6.7 In 2021, each FCC squad had a salary cap of £2,500,000 and a collar of £1,300,000 (i.e. maximum and minimum levels) whereas there was just a maximum total salary budget per WRT of £250,000. (The men's figure at each FCC covered a squad of approximately 25 players, the WRT squads comprised six full time players on average.)

²⁴⁰ Based on figures for the 2022/2023 season.

²⁴¹ As at February 2022.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ <https://www.ecb.co.uk/news/2877898/the-ecb-increase-funding-for-the-professional-womens-domestic-game>

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

Pay Disparities – Domestic Players²⁴⁵

- **Domestic cricket average salary** – The average salary for a player in a WRT is equivalent to 45.5% of the average salary for a player at an FCC.
- **The Hundred salaries** – The total spend on the women’s salaries is 25% of the men’s, and the highest salary tier for the women is just £1,250 more than the lowest tier for the men.
- **Prize money** – Excluding The Hundred, the total prize money for women is equivalent to only 10% of the total prize money for men.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the ECB publishes an updated ‘State of Equity in Cricket’ report every three years, using as a benchmark our assessment of the State of Equity in Cricket in Chapter 4.

²⁴⁵ In 2022.

Chapter 5: Culture



Sport is life. It is striving, sacrifice, success, failure, pain and joy. That's why it resonates with people and that's why it is so loved. Its power is its equality. Sport is not supposed to discriminate.

Michael Holding²⁴⁶

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Ebony Rainford-Brent has described how it was only when she started playing cricket that she was made to feel different for being Black.²⁴⁷ She explained how she was from a background of varied cultures, yet it became obvious to her that many people in cricket lacked a similar level of engagement with others, and her culture and looks were something of a “spectacle.” It seems that many other cricket participants share her view. Our lived experiences survey received 4,156 responses.²⁴⁸ Many people wrote thousands of words to describe their experiences, and it is those experiences as well as other evidence we have gathered that have helped us to form a view of the attitudes, values and behaviours that comprise the culture of cricket today.
- 5.1.2 The lived experiences survey contributed to a key theme that emerged in our wider evidence gathering: the tension between, on the one hand, the attitude of many cricketing organisations and some individuals that the traditional ‘spirit of cricket’ and the sport’s inclusive, social nature brings people together and, on the other, the view from many individuals that there is an elitist and exclusionary culture that is often based on race, gender and class.
- 5.1.3 Cricket is not alone in grappling with issues around culture. New scandals relating to culture, both in sport and wider public life, are reported on a near weekly basis. Social attitudes are changing and people are growing in confidence to speak out about behaviours that may once have been accepted or tolerated, but in reality were oppressive and damaging. This is important, given the significance of culture to an organisation’s success. It sets the tone internally for staff, attracts (or repels) new recruits, establishes the organisation’s reputation externally, and determines whether it is able to achieve its strategic and other goals.
- 5.1.4 We recognise that the culture of an entire sport, played and followed by millions and comprising many different and varied organisations, is difficult to identify. Of course, every team and every organisation has, in some sense, a unique culture that reflects the particularities of their histories and the individuals of which they are composed. Nonetheless, we have explored whether there is an identifiable culture that applies broadly throughout cricket in England and Wales, which cuts across teams and organisations, and influences and determines attitudes and behaviours more generally. In particular, we are interested in how this culture impacts on equity and a sense of inclusivity in the game.

²⁴⁶ Holding, M (2021) Why We Kneel, How We Rise. Simon & Schuster UK Ltd.

²⁴⁷ Katie Gibbons and Rachel Sylvester, ‘Ebony Rainford-Brent: White cricket culture made me uncomfortable’, The Times, 6 November 2021. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ebony-rainford-brent-white-cricket-culture-made-me-uncomfortable-26hs0ff2c>

²⁴⁸ Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket.

What do we mean by culture?



At its simplest, organisational culture is taken to mean ‘the way we do things around here’.

ICSA²⁴⁹

5.1.5 In their report on ‘Organisational Culture in Sport’, the Governance Institute positions culture as providing the context for and underpinning all that an organisation does: what it does, why it does it, and how it goes about doing it. Of course, culture can extend outside and beyond the boundaries of a particular organisation. Indeed, in our Call for Written Evidence, we defined culture as the attitudes, values and behaviours that shape the everyday experiences of those within cricket generally. Culture often dictates what behaviour is welcomed, encouraged or tolerated, and what is rejected and considered unacceptable. The psychologist and former professional basketball player John Amaechi has described how *“When looking at organisational cultures a way to define them might be to understand that it is not the most common behaviours that define them, rather it’s the worst behaviours tolerated.”*²⁵⁰

The importance of culture

- 5.1.6 Research by PwC for its Global Culture Survey 2021 evidenced how a strong culture is at the core of high achievement. The research showed that many organisations believed that their culture was a source of competitive advantage: *“an organisation’s culture is as unique as a thumbprint, but each distinct culture can be a source of competitive advantage if leaders understand how cultural traits support or hinder change and take steps to activate the right behaviours in order to support strategic goals.”*²⁵¹
- 5.1.7 Conversely, the report highlights how deficiencies within an organisation’s culture can undermine its ability to meet its strategic objectives. More than that, poor culture can actively damage an organisation, and harm individuals, as shown by recent examples both within and outside sport.
- 5.1.8 Through considering both governance and culture as part of our work, it has become very clear that the two are closely interwoven and mutually reinforcing. One without the other will not produce a well-run game that can deliver on its objectives, certainly in relation to EDI but also more widely. As the Governance Institute observes, *“rules-based compliance cannot on its own deliver healthy behaviours within organisations.”* Rules, systems and procedures will only be effective if they align with the behaviour, attitudes and values of those subject to them – and behaviour *“is determined to a significant degree by the culture of the entity concerned.”*²⁵² At the same time, the culture of a system will be strongly influenced by the nature and quality of its governance and leadership. Those with power and authority, and the rules and processes that they put in place, undoubtedly have a vital role to play in defining and establishing behaviour, attitudes and values.

²⁴⁹ ‘Organisational Culture in Sport – Assessing and improving attitudes and behaviour’ ICSA May 2018 <https://www.cgi.org.uk/assets/files/policy/research/Organisational-culture-in-sport.pdf>

²⁵⁰ Amaechi, J. (2021) ‘The Promises of Giants’ Nicholas Brearley Publishing.

²⁵¹ PwC Global Culture Survey 2021 <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/upskilling/global-culture-survey-2021/global-culture-survey-2021-report.html>

²⁵² ‘Organisational Culture in Sport – Assessing and improving attitudes and behaviour’ ICSA May 2018 <https://www.cgi.org.uk/assets/files/policy/research/Organisational-culture-in-sport.pdf>

5.1.9 The importance of culture as part of governance is also recognised in Sport England’s Code for Sports Governance (Principle 4):

“Standards and Conduct: *Organisations shall uphold high standards of integrity, promote an ethical and inclusive culture, and engage in regular and effective evaluation to drive continuous improvement.*

Why is it important? *Having the right values embedded in the culture of the organisation helps protect public investment and also enhances the reputation and effectiveness of the organisation, earning stakeholder trust. Constantly seeking to improve makes an organisation swift to respond to new challenges and opportunities.”²⁵³*

5.1.10 Reflecting the emphasis on setting the right tone from the top, in this Chapter we explore the importance of leaders in cricket role modelling the right values and behaviours. We also consider the need to ensure “*cultural coherence*”²⁵⁴ – ensuring consistency between words and actions. In this regard, the importance of following through on EDI pledges was highlighted in McKinsey’s 2020 diversity report, which noted how “*a disconnect between what the company says and the progress it is making on the ground can seriously erode credibility both inside and outside of the organisation and further contribute to a lack of experienced inclusion.*”²⁵⁵ To our mind this goes to the very heart of our review.

Questions to be addressed

5.1.11 In our work we examined if and how the historical and current culture of cricket impacts equity in the game and whether it enables cricket truly to become a game for everyone. We sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the culture of cricket and how does that impact EDI in the game?
- What role has cricket’s leadership played in setting culture?
- How does, and how should, cricket view its past?

5.2 What is the culture of cricket and how does that impact EDI in the game?

5.2.1 If culture is, as quoted above, “*the way we do things*” in cricket, how then can we identify what that “*way*” is? After all, in England and Wales, there are around 14 million followers of cricket, 2.6 million players, 42,000 volunteers and 5,000 recreational clubs. Cricket is played by amateurs and professionals, on village greens in rural settings, in urban areas on concrete pitches with a tapeball, on grounds next to coalmines and factories, in schools, universities, local authority parks and stadiums accommodating tens of thousands of spectators. Games can last from well under three hours to five days. Players can range from age 4 to 90. Such variety has created a unique cultural heritage for the game, as England’s national summer sport, but equally makes it a challenge to define “*the way we do things*”.

²⁵³ <https://www.sportengland.org/funds-and-campaigns/code-sports-governance>

²⁵⁴ PwC Global Culture Survey 2021 <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/issues/upskilling/global-culture-survey-2021/global-culture-survey-2021-report.html>

²⁵⁵ McKinsey & Company, Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters, 2020.

<https://www.mckinsey.com/-/media/mckinsey/featured%20insights/diversity%20and%20inclusion/diversity%20wins%20how%20inclusion%20matters/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters-vf.pdf>

5.2.2 The Preamble to the Laws of the game sets out the 'Spirit of Cricket'. It provides guidance for the way in which cricket should be played, talking of the need for "respect" and "a positive atmosphere."²⁵⁶ It concludes by saying "Cricket is an exciting game that encourages leadership, friendship and teamwork, which brings together people from different nationalities, cultures and religions, especially when played within the Spirit of Cricket." We know there will be many people reading this Report who will consider their experience of the culture of cricket to encompass many or all of these qualities. Yet the evidence we received makes it abundantly clear that is not always how it is and that there are many who have had an entirely different experience of the game. Therefore, whilst acknowledging the diversity of cultures that are encompassed by English and Welsh cricket, we set out in this Chapter those key, recurring, cultural norms that we found prevail across wide sections of the sport.

An elitist and exclusionary culture exists within English and Welsh cricket

5.2.3 As we have already outlined, our lived experiences survey received 4,156 responses, helping us to form a view of the attitudes, values and behaviours that shape people's experiences of cricket today.

5.2.4 The positive aspects of cricket's traditional culture were said to include values of team spirit, respect, teamwork, loyalty, camaraderie, competition, fairness, sociability and good sportsmanship, among others. This view was also held by cricketing organisations who submitted evidence to us.



Cricket has a fantastic ability to connect people from all different backgrounds, teaching everyone about playing their role, supporting others, dealing with failure etc.

CCB

5.2.5 Nevertheless, we received very strong and substantial evidence that an elitist and exclusionary culture exists at all levels of cricket, including through the dominance of private school networks within the talent pathway and racist, misogynistic, homophobic and ableist comments and behaviour throughout the game. We heard evidence of a 'laddish' drinking culture that can alienate women, children and people from ethnically diverse communities due to religious or cultural beliefs.



Teams are mostly upper class men with lad culture, they talk about women and send nude pics of women and rate any women in the news on a scale of how desirable they are. They routinely express homophobic and transphobic views and anyone who objects to them is outcasted.

Individual in Recreational Cricket

5.2.6 Even among those who emphasised the positive aspects of cricket's culture, there was recognition that cricket's strong traditional and historical roots reflected wider inequalities and biases in society that limit opportunities and diversity within the game.

5.2.7 Chapter 3 on the Historical Context of cricket sets out how the sport was historically "a space in which hierarchies of race, class and gender have been established and perpetuated." It disappoints and saddens the Commission to conclude that, based on the evidence we have received, these hierarchies continue: the current culture within the sport has allowed discriminatory behaviour, attitudes and practices to continue to flourish and to become normalised over a sustained period without robust, strategic or effective challenge. Our evidence suggests that racism, sexism, elitism and classism remain widespread. This is simply unacceptable.

²⁵⁶ <https://www.lords.org/mcc/the-laws-of-cricket/preamble-to-the-laws-spirit-of-cricket>

5.2.8 We found that an individual's experience in the sport will all too often depend on their race, gender and/or class. Whilst respondents to our Call for Written Evidence who were White, middle class men (largely captured by what we have referred to in the Report as Type K)²⁵⁷ mostly believed cricket to be an inclusive sport in which everyone has the same sense of belonging and opportunities to be themselves regardless of their backgrounds, such a positive outlook was not shared by many of the women, and people from minority groups and/or lower socio-economic backgrounds who responded. Indeed this exclusionary culture was often attributed to the sport's lack of ethnic, socio-economic and gender diversity, particularly among its officials and leaders off the pitch, with Counties and clubs mainly run by White, middle class men. With Type K individuals tending to dominate cricket both on and off the field, it is, therefore, perhaps unsurprising that there seems to have been, in many cases, a failure to substantively address many of the issues that are raised in this Report.



I feel this is one of the biggest barriers to widening the grassroots participation in the game, and creating a safe and welcoming environment for players at all levels. Speaking with many of our cricket apprentices (of all race and faith), they have remarked many times about how it's still 'a white man's game' and that selection is 'on who you know'.

Coach Core Foundation

5.2.9 Many of the experiences that people described to us were shocking. Discrimination was not limited to race, gender or class, as can be seen from a detailed review of the Report at Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket.

5.2.10 In the remainder of this Chapter, we will explore the detail behind our conclusions and highlight some of the individual features that in our view contribute to them.

The experience and perception of inclusivity and equity is heavily dependent on your race, gender or class, both individually and collectively

5.2.11 Exactly half (50%) of all respondents to our online survey reported some form of discrimination in the past five years. Among women and people from diverse minority groups, the figure was much higher still. People of Pakistani/Bangladeshi heritage were by far the most likely to describe being discriminated against (87%), followed by people of Indian heritage (82%), Black people (75%), LGBTQ+ people (73%), disabled people (70%) and women (68%). By contrast, just 33% of Type K respondents reported being discriminated against.²⁵⁸

5.2.12 According to many of the respondents, cricket is less inclusive and diverse than other major team sports: 54% of all ethnic minority respondents considered this to be the case (compared to 17% who thought it was more inclusive), rising to 72% of Black respondents (compared to 14% who thought it was more inclusive). The view of cricket of Type K respondents was, again, a lot more positive: 59% believe that cricket is as inclusive and diverse as other major team sports, or more so.

5.2.13 Similarly, Type K individuals were far more positive about the prospects within the game for people from different ethnic groups: 71% believed that everyone in cricket always or mostly has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their race, ethnicity or skin colour. Yet Black and South Asian respondents suggested exactly the opposite: 72% of Black, 76% of Indian and 80% of Pakistani/Bangladeshi people **did not** believe that everyone has the same opportunities, regardless of their race, ethnicity or skin colour.

²⁵⁷ To measure intersectional advantage and discrimination, the research company that conducted our online lived experiences survey created a number of 'personas' or 'types' of which Type K was intended to reflect, broadly speaking, the experience of White, middle class men. A full definition is set out at Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket, in section 12.2.

²⁵⁸ Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket.

- 5.2.14 In relation to gender, 58% of women who responded **did not** believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their sex. In fact, only 13% of women who responded thought that women always have the same opportunities as men. Among ethnic minority women educated in state schools, only 6% believed that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their sex. Type K respondents appear to underestimate the extent to which women's opportunities are restricted. From their perspective, women mostly or always enjoy the same opportunities as men in the majority of cases (64%).²⁵⁹
- 5.2.15 With respect to class, for state school educated respondents (regardless of their ethnicity or gender), 54% **did not** believe that everyone has the same opportunities based on their class, compared with 46% of Type K respondents. Interestingly, the gap between the relative perceptions of the impact of class on opportunities was smaller than with race and gender, which might suggest that there is a broader awareness and more widely accepted recognition of the barriers in cricket that social class creates.
- 5.2.16 Our lived experiences report describes how “*a clear gulf*”²⁶⁰ exists in people's lived experiences based on their socio-demographic and socio-economic profile, undermining the idea that cricket is currently ‘a game for everyone’. Moreover, on top of the detriments experienced as a result of individual factors, these results clearly evidence the combined disadvantages linked to the intersection of gender, race and class, with ethnic minority women who attended state schools having the worst experiences and most negative perceptions on all measures that were surveyed.



End of season drinks awards function that focus on alcohol in which the networks and favouritism amongst coaches and parents are forged. That, in addition to low ethnic minority representation, lack of transparency and feedback on selection, and high representation from private school networks, all in all mean an Asian, Muslim, state school child of a single working parent has very little opportunity to progress, is often not selected to bat, has fewer opportunities to practice, has less access to being able to play. Everything requires inherent investment, be it transport to fixtures, annual kit, equipment and then bias.

Asian (Bangladeshi) woman, parent/guardian

A ‘deep-seated issue of racism’ continues to exist in cricket

- 5.2.17 On the basis of the evidence we outline in this Report, the Commission agrees with the DCMS Select Committee's finding that there is “*a deep-seated issue of racism*”²⁶¹ in cricket. We have seen some appalling examples that lead us to conclude that, in various respects, little seems to have changed since the Clean Bowl Racism report in 1999, which we discuss in Chapter 6, Approach to EDI in Cricket.
- 5.2.18 Chapter 9, Schools and the Talent Pathway, contains evidence of the many examples of stereotyping, exclusion and other forms of racism directed towards South Asian and Black players and officials. A common theme was that individuals from both groups felt that they needed to be overqualified to succeed. As the England player Moeen Ali has commented publicly: “*My Dad always told me you have to be better than everybody because they will get the chance before you. As Asians we feel like we need to be twice as good.*”²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ As described by the then Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee (14 January 2022, HC: para 5) in its report on Racism in Cricket <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5802/cmselect/cmcmdeads/1001/report.html>

²⁶² <https://www.skysports.com/cricket/news/12123/11392595/matt-floyd-investigates-why-there-is-a-lack-of-south-asian-players-in-english-cricket>



There is a culture of ‘casual’ racism created where it becomes the norm for people to say things that are not acceptable.[.....] The environments that have been created in these institutions is where the problem lies and unfortunately I don’t think it will ever change because it’s so normal to say racist and unacceptable things.

Talent Pathway Participant

5.2.19 When looking at the talent pathway in cricket, we also identify the structures that lead to racial disparities and discrimination in terms of talent selection and progression, such as the lack of cricket in inner cities, the absence of role models and the use of talent selection criteria that increase the vulnerability of South Asian and Black players to bias. The evidence points to the fact that often they are not afforded the same opportunities, the same recognition and the same support as their White counterparts.

5.2.20 The qualitative responses to our lived experiences survey included many examples of overt racism and abuse from club officials, team members and supporters directed at Black and South Asian players including derogatory and inappropriate language, racist stereotyping and assumptions being made about them. As well as the quotes outlined below, additional experiences can be found in Chapter 9, Schools and the Talent Pathway.



All the stories that Azeem Rafiq talks about, that all happened to me. All the abuse, the isolation, the hatred. [Teammates] poured alcohol on me. They threw bacon sandwiches at me. I have lived with all that and never spoke to anyone about it.

Asian (Pakistani) man, state school, former player



Three Asian players who were speaking to each other in Urdu when the coach walked in and said to us directly: ‘I don’t want any of that sh*t spoken in here’.

Asian (Pakistani) man, former professional player

5.2.21 Indeed, three-quarters of Black respondents to the lived experiences survey reported recent personal experiences of racism²⁶³ and people of South Asian heritage describe experiencing discrimination at even higher levels. Only 18% of Indian respondents and 13% of Pakistani and Bangladeshi respondents reported no experiences of personal discrimination in the past five years – compared to 50% of all respondents and 67% of Type K respondents.²⁶⁴ Some players of South Asian heritage, particularly Pakistani men, reported bullying, physical abuse and degrading treatment, which can only sensibly be attributed to racism and/or Islamophobia.



I could write a book about it: P***, ‘paedo’, ‘nonce’, ‘terrorist’: you name it.

Asian (Pakistani) man, recreational player, volunteer

²⁶³ Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.



I do feel if you speak with a British accent you are accepted. If you don't, then it's a lot harder to be accepted.

Asian (Indian) man, umpire



I overheard senior players talking about how they slept with a girl and then used a fellow Muslim player's prayer mat to clean up the mess. I was sat with the players when they were sharing this as a joke!

Asian (Indian) man, former professional player

- 5.2.22 We also heard evidence of a failure to recognise that racism exists within cricket, which we discuss in more detail in Chapter 6, Approach to EDI in Cricket. We have concluded that the ECB's Board has yet to reach a settled view on the question of whether there is “*a deep-seated issue of racism in cricket*”, as was stated by the DCMS Select Committee. This must change.
- 5.2.23 We recognise that there are examples of positive inclusion initiatives in the game. The ECB, for example, told us that they are working on education within the game to combat Islamophobia and repair relationships with Muslim communities. They have formed a partnership with Nujum Sports, who have devised a Muslim Athlete Charter²⁶⁵ and will work with the ECB on education across the game, including the England Men's and Women's teams, as well as the professional and recreational game. We also understand from the ECB that many FCCs, and MCC, have held Ramadan celebrations, through hosting Iftars or Eid prayers and inviting members of the local Muslim community to attend.
- 5.2.24 The ECB's South Asian Action Plan (SAAP), developed in 2018, also contained various interventions to improve the match day experience of South Asians, including in relation to food provision, atmosphere, family offers and multi-faith prayer facilities. That work has been expanded through the more recent 'Welcoming Environments' initiative. These are all focused on match venues in the professional game, and we welcome them. For the recreational game, we understand that the ECB has committed to a programme around Muslim inclusion, but we have not seen any details of this.
- 5.2.25 These are all examples of progress, although much more needs to be done. Furthermore, we note, with great concern, that none of these initiatives are directed towards Black communities.

There is a self-reproducing culture of elitism and little is being done about it

- 5.2.26 As well as identifying issues of racism, Chapter 4, State of Equity in Cricket and Chapter 9, Schools and the Talent Pathway, both highlight the prevalence of elitism and class-based discrimination in cricket. We believe that much of this is structural and institutional in nature, driven by the lack of access to cricket in state schools and the way in which the talent pathway is structurally bound up with private schools, making it much harder for talented young people to progress if they are not in 'cricketing' schools (which are overwhelmingly private schools) and do not have alternative ways to access the sport. Private school and 'old boys' networks' and cliques permeate the game to the exclusion of many – there is compelling evidence that it's often about who you know and not how well you perform.

²⁶⁵ <https://nujumsports.co.uk/pledge/>

- 5.2.27 In support of this, and as outlined above, more than half (54%) of people educated in a state school who responded to our lived experiences survey did not believe that everyone engaged with cricket has the same opportunities to enjoy the game, progress and be rewarded fairly, regardless of their social class. In fact, only 19% of people educated in a state school thought that everyone always has the same opportunities, regardless of their social class.²⁶⁶
- 5.2.28 There were also examples of overt discrimination in the context of socio-economic status and experiences of the stigmatisation of players based on a distinction drawn between the so-called ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’.
- 5.2.29 In Chapter 6, Approach to EDI in Cricket, we explore the lack of a fundamental strategy to address inequity based on class or socio-economic background, a fact we believe must be urgently addressed.

A reluctance to change or embrace difference

- 5.2.30 We received substantial, credible evidence of a culture of ‘traditionalism’ within the sport leading to a reluctance to challenge the status quo or to embrace difference. The cricketing establishment has, for example, at times, failed to appreciate or respect the way the game is played and enjoyed by different communities, both those who brought their passion for the game with them when they came to this country and those who were born here. We also heard about the ways in which authorities have sought to sanitise the atmosphere at grounds through measures such as banning musical instruments, which had a disproportionate impact on ethnically diverse communities, particularly those from Caribbean communities. Indeed, Lord’s still bans musical instruments even during T20 and Hundred matches, something the ECB ordinarily permits.
- 5.2.31 We also heard that, even in circumstances where the game lets ‘difference’ in, it regularly places conditions upon such entry requiring those who are ‘different’ to ‘know their place’ and ‘to fit into the way we do things around here’. Similarly, whilst many in cricket appear to believe that the game is welcoming and inclusive, we recognise that this will turn on who is in a position to decide who is ‘welcomed’, who they are willing to include, and the nature and terms of that ‘inclusion’. For as long as the game is dominated, at least in terms of those in positions of power, by a certain demographic, this process will, consciously or otherwise, likely be skewed.



The culture encourages people to be part of the club but not necessarily within their own culture more in the ‘way of the club’.[...] Clubs would suggest they are inclusive without really understanding what inclusive environments mean. I haven’t seen that clubs are knowingly exclusive but their actions don’t suggest any real effort to understand what others might want from being a club member.

CCB

- 5.2.32 Against this backdrop, in our view, changing where and with whom power resides is critical if the game, and its culture, is going to become fairer and more equitable.
- 5.2.33 Despite the need to change where the power lies to make cricket equitable our evidence suggests an ongoing failure to actually redistribute that power. For some this leaves a perception that there is a reluctance to do so. Indeed, despite some progress recently in diversifying the Boards of the ECB, FCCs and CCBs, the leadership of the game remains overwhelmingly White, male, and often private school educated (Chapter 4, State of Equity in Cricket). On this front, alarmingly little appears to have changed since the Clean Bowl Racism report in 1999.

²⁶⁶ Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket.



The expression 'Cricket is administered by white, middle class men' was often quoted during discussions and in general conversations.

Clean Bowl Racism Report - 1999



[Cricket needs to] dispel the image of cricket being only for White, middle/upper class men, and make it appear available to everybody.

White man, 'prefer not to answer' school, staff member (at the ECB or a County organisation) - 2021

Women's cricket is still seen as less important than men's cricket on and off the field

- 5.2.34 Whilst there has certainly been some welcome progress in the women's game in recent years (for more detail, see Chapter 6, Approach to EDI in Cricket), the unavoidable and depressing reality is that, in terms of culture, the women's game is still seen as an 'add-on' to the men's game. It has been 278 years since the first recorded women's cricket match, 133 years since the first group of women cricketers toured the UK, and 97 years since the foundation of the Women's Cricket Association,²⁶⁷ yet women are not even nearly on an equal footing with men within the sport today.



There is a [...] sense that women's cricket remains tokenistic: more about being seen to have cricket for women than about genuinely investing in developing that side of the game. [We] need investment in proper training facilities, proper coaching for girls/women.

White woman, volunteer, official or umpire

- 5.2.35 We find it shameful that women continue to be treated as subordinate to men within, and at all levels of, cricket. This is evident both from the lived experience of professional and recreational women cricketers and from the structural barriers that women continue to face. Chapter 7, Governance and Leadership, considers how the women's game lacks representation amongst the highest level of decision-makers within cricket. Insofar as earnings are concerned, England Women's average salary is significantly less than that of England Men, and domestically the women earn on average less than half of the men's average earnings - disappointingly small amounts comparatively speaking, as highlighted in both Chapter 4, State of Equity in Cricket, and Chapter 6, Approach to EDI in Cricket. There are significant levels of inequity in the availability of kit for women and girls and in the number of grounds and facilities for women and girls to use, often meaning greater time and cost spent on travel (Chapter 9, Schools and Talent Pathway). There is less media exposure and there are fewer opportunities to play at the premier grounds; the fact that the England Women's team have never played a Test Match at Lord's is truly appalling (particularly as schoolboys from Eton and Harrow have played there every year since 1805).



There is gradual acceptance of the female game by traditional cricket participants. However, it is still very much inferior to men's cricket. For example, priority is given to men's teams using facilities at a recreational level, with women's fixtures scheduled around their male counterparts.

CCB

²⁶⁷ <https://www.lords.org/lords/our-history/evolution-of-women-s-cricket>

- 5.2.36 Even at a professional level we heard how comparatively little support there was for training environments: *“the men are training outdoors but we’re not allowed to use the outfield at [venue] because it rained two weeks ago.”*²⁶⁸
- 5.2.37 The lived experience report at Annex 1 describes how women’s experiences of the game are *“radically different”*²⁶⁹ to those of Type K respondents, based on hundreds of examples provided by respondents to our online survey. More than two-thirds (68%) of all female respondents said that they had experienced discrimination in the past five years, whether from male players, coaches, club managers, parents, colleagues or board members.
- 5.2.38 The evidence also indicated that machismo and stereotypical forms of masculinity are still often promoted as desirable attributes. Cricket, this evidence suggests, continues to be seen as principally a man’s sport.
- 5.2.39 We also noted that many women in the game appear to feel that they cannot talk openly or publicly about certain equity issues, including pay and employment rights. A culture that empowers women and encourages those discussions needs to be created. Equally, we felt there to be a lack of visible support and general solidarity from male players in promoting and celebrating the women’s game or being vocal in tackling the discrimination that women face, both generally within the game and specifically in the context of pay inequity.
- 5.2.40 Many women across professional and recreational cricket shared how they are placed under constant pressure to ‘prove’ themselves and to show that they, as women, ‘belong’. The organisation ‘Take Her Lead’ (THL),²⁷⁰ set up by former England player Isa Guha to promote inclusive cultures for women and girls in cricket, has conducted research with over 300 girls (ages 8+) involved in cricket through facilitated workshops. Their findings revealed that girls were often made to feel isolated and inferior (although some relished the challenge of proving naysayers wrong) and that the lack of appropriate kit (i.e. having to wear whites or kits designed for boys) made them feel like outsiders. They also found awareness of unequal access, opportunities and treatment ranging from boys having access to the best coaches and being prioritised for facilities to girls as young as eight reflecting on their unequal earning potential in cricket. There is, in our view, credible evidence that many in the sport, at all levels, hold the view that women should be grateful for the gains that they have recently made. This is not only wrong, it fails to acknowledge that the game actively excluded women for generations or to recognise that the progress made on women’s cricket in recent years represents merely the first small step in making up for those years of exclusion.
- 5.2.41 In terms of behaviours, the evidence we received also indicated a widespread culture of sexism and misogyny, and unacceptable behaviour towards women in both recreational and professional clubs. This included misogynistic and derogatory comments about women and girls, and sexist ‘jokes’. Women and women’s teams are frequently demeaned, stereotyped and treated as second-class. On top of this, some described being ostracised and ridiculed either for not participating or for objecting to sexism directed towards female players and umpires or the women’s game more generally. There was evidence of unwanted and uninvited advances from men towards women.



‘We’re really pleased to have you. You’re the type of good-looking girl we want to have on billboards. How incredible to have someone like you at the forefront of our marketing campaign.’ It makes you feel you’re there because of how you look rather than how you play.

White woman, current professional player

²⁶⁸ Women’s Current or Former Professional Player.

²⁶⁹ Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket.

²⁷⁰ <https://takeherlead.org/>



I think that within the dressing room and the dressing room culture, the way women are treated and spoken about, and I've been guilty of this myself, is nothing short of a disgrace. It really – it is so bad, that as I've said, once you dive into this, this would be one of the biggest issues that would come out of dressing room culture. The respect for women is just not there.

Men's Current or Former Professional Player



Our daughter had her long hair cut into a shoulder length bob and the captain told her she looked like a lesbian. When we made a formal complaint, it was dismissed as banter. 'She's one of the lads', they said.

White woman, parent/guardian



As a female, cricket has often felt like a male sport and one I'm not expected to appreciate or understand, the drinking culture at matches also feels oppressive.

Mixed ethnic groups (White and Asian) woman, parent/guardian, county age group player



[I have been] told: A lady cannot be a good umpire. I should go back home. Get off the field. Women's cricket is sh*t. Women can't make decisions. Women shouldn't even umpire.

Unattributed to protect confidentiality



Female coaches are often only used to coach girls and women. People believe you don't have the skills level to coach men.

White woman, county age group player, coach



As a scorer I was once told by a player that he really liked when I scored for the team. When I asked why, he stated: 'It's nice to have something to look at'. As an 18-year-old being told this by a senior player, I felt disgusted, and I haven't scored since. I felt like I wasn't valued as a person, player, or volunteer, and was only wanted there to gawp at. I told another senior player, but nothing was done.

White woman, recreational player, coach, scorer



Constant, constant humiliation when playing with men/boys on the field and even from others when telling them I played cricket. They would question why I played a 'boys' game', isn't cricket for boys?

White woman, former professional player

5.2.42 In terms of the women’s game more generally, and as we examine in more detail in Chapter 6, Approach to EDI in Cricket, good progress has been made in recent years, and there was a sense amongst some evidence givers that there is reason to be cautiously optimistic that attitudes towards women playing cricket were improving. There was a widespread belief across respondents to our online survey, for example, that ECB initiatives (principally All Stars and Dynamos) and Chance to Shine programmes (independent of the ECB but part funded by it) have made cricket more accessible for girls, and that overall, opportunities for girls and women have increased significantly. Many parents reported that their girls had very positive experiences and feel that, at the youth level, the game is indeed becoming more diverse and inclusive. Many were hopeful that women’s cricket will grow in quality and appeal and become better resourced.



There were few opportunities for girls, but this has improved dramatically over the past 18 months, especially with the introduction of Dynamos – more girls playing cricket at our club, which led to them doing more training, putting on more events, etc.

White woman, parent/guardian



I think that’s shifting, but I think it’s shifting very slowly and I think it’s shifting because in a way I feel like women’s cricket is demanding their respect now. It’s literally coming in as opposed to the men giving it to them. That’s just my honest opinion, I don’t know if I’m right or wrong, but it feels like [...] the women’s game is growing, right, [and] people are loving the women’s game.

Men’s Current or Former Professional Player

5.2.43 We also saw examples of the success of women’s cricket at a club level, including at one club where women’s cricket was described as having “*totally transformed*” the club, and that the women had “*dragged the club into the New Millenium!*”²⁷¹

5.2.44 There is, however, still a long way to go and many barriers to overcome to ensure women feel valued and the women’s game is treated with as much respect as the men’s game. Behaviours also need to change; for example, we look at drinking and the impact it can have on behaviour towards women below.

A heavy drinking culture excludes a significant number of people



If you don’t drink, you don’t get into cricket. Literally there is no other way the grassroots game functions.

Men’s Current or Former Professional Player

5.2.45 The fact that there was significant evidence of a deeply embedded drinking culture in cricket, especially at recreational level, but also still in the professional game, will likely not come as a surprise to many. Having a beer as part of the usual post-match routine and social events involving alcohol are part of many clubs’ culture. It is also an essential element in many of these clubs’ revenues.

²⁷¹ <https://dcfcricket.com/2022/04/buxton-cc-story-of-womens-cricket/>



Drinking, as part of a post-match routine or team bonding, has been, and continues to be, a consistent feature of cricket, at all levels. At amateur levels in particular, not only is the consumption of alcohol considered a fundamental part of the post-match team bonding ritual, it is also crucial to a club's financial survival. Bar takings from alcohol consumption account for a large proportion of most clubs' earnings and therefore, for clubs which have pavilions (or an equivalent communal space) most social gatherings revolve around events where alcohol can be consumed.²⁷²

- 5.2.46 Clearly, drinking alcohol at cricket clubs is not going to stop, nor are we suggesting that it should. However, where we are examining how attitudes, values and behaviours in cricket shape people's experiences, it is vital to consider the impact of a drinking culture on those who don't want to participate. The evidence we received was clear: drinking is often seen as a necessary part of 'fitting in' and can make cricket feel unwelcoming both to those who do not drink and others. It can also lead to completely inappropriate behaviour.
- 5.2.47 The negative impact of cricket's drinking culture on women was often raised in the evidence that we received, with the unacceptable behaviours indicated earlier in this section often exacerbated when men were under the influence; we heard some disturbing examples of the conduct and attitude of men towards women, often fuelled by alcohol.



I have experienced predatory behaviour [from] some men in cricket: players, coaches, media, corporate executives, which may be when they drink or not although it feels more prevalent with alcohol. In every instance they were unsolicited advances. On three of those occasions I had fear for my safety, and on four occasions did I feel awkward about being in the same room again. I only told a few people and never reported it because I knew I would have to see them again. In these situations they appear to act as if there is no accountability for their actions, and you have no idea how it is being reported to others. Sadly, I am aware that this is an experience of many other women in cricket. It must be said that I have had advances on other occasions where they respectfully backed away as soon as there was no interest shown and I wasn't made to feel unsafe.

Unattributed to protect confidentiality



At University there were certainly barriers. More money was spent on alcohol than on the women's side of the club... that should be telling. I am a working class woman and I do not drink – which did not fit at all within the culture of cricket at university. The older male students would drink to excess every week, [whilst] encouraging the younger female students to do the same and wouldn't leave them alone. Disgusting behaviour.

White woman, recreational player



Pissed guys 'sexting' my daughter. It's demeaning and threatening, so she stopped playing to avoid being exposed to that crap. How is this even allowed to happen in 2021?

White woman, parent/guardian

²⁷² Fletcher, T and Spracklen, K, 'Cricket, drinking and exclusion of British Pakistani Muslims?' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 37, 8 (2013) pp. 1310–1327.



I went to one social and never went back again, it was horrific, but I stayed playing. Most women go to one social and leave. At the AGM, the men refused to understand the link between alcohol, their behaviour, and the lack of a stable women's team. It was all just a laugh to them.

White woman, recreational player

- 5.2.48 The drinking culture also affects others who simply do not particularly enjoy a drink. One former professional player and coach said that he hated the “*pub and golf culture*” of cricket, but felt he had to attend and sometimes would pretend to drink just to fit in.
- 5.2.49 Some of the behaviour described to us was the sort of puerile ‘lads’ culture that would be regarded as disgusting by most people, such as one example of a South Asian player being made to drink urine.
- 5.2.50 It was also highlighted to us that parents socialising over drinks with coaches can help to develop and maintain connections and relationships, from which non-drinking parents are likely to be excluded. That can then have an impact, consciously or otherwise, on a child’s prospects of progression, particularly in light of the extensive networks within cricket identified in Chapter 9, Schools and the Talent Pathway.
- 5.2.51 The culture of drinking can act as a particular barrier to the inclusion of Muslim communities (the vast majority of Pakistani and Bangladeshi people), many of whom do not drink for religious reasons. As one evidence-giver told us: “*At club level, there is still a drinking culture so Muslim players are never integrated that well. Peer pressure on young players to join in with the drinking as they don’t feel part of the team otherwise. Most social events are all centred around alcohol.*”²⁷³
- 5.2.52 Social events in cricket involving alcohol not only prevent some Muslims from even attending, but can also lead to marginalised communities, including Muslims and those from other ethnically diverse communities, bearing the brunt of alcohol-fuelled so-called ‘banter’. We heard evidence of people being called names and ostracised for refusing to drink.
- 5.2.53 We recognise that within the Muslim community, there are different attitudes to alcohol; some Muslims will not be in the same room as someone drinking alcohol, others will be present but will not drink alcohol themselves, and others will drink alcohol. A truly inclusive culture will create opportunities to ensure that everyone is accommodated. In these circumstances, senior members of a team or club who are largely responsible for its culture should take the trouble to find out the attitude of each of its members towards drinking – rather than making assumptions one way or the other – and more broadly will take the time to understand the cultures and beliefs of all players and their motivations for playing cricket.



The Asian guys may not be as voluntarily helpful or involved with the English club, they may show up 10 minutes before the game starts and they may be gone 10 minutes after it has ended. They [...] clearly won’t be in the bar for religious reasons because they don’t drink, so the English fraternity will see that as a negative. But actually you need to understand why they are late, they may have just finished a taxi job at 2am, they don’t drink alcohol [...] One of the best things that happened during Covid was all of the cricketers used to sit on the outfield rather than in the bar because we weren’t allowed in the club house, so the coke and the drinks and the orange juice were outside so everyone was sitting together. So that was a great thing and certainly created opportunities to grow after the game as people/club.

Cricket Equalities Organisation

²⁷³ Asian (Pakistani) woman, recreational player, parent/guardian, board or committee member, coach.

- 5.2.54 One of the main obstacles to change is structural: many local cricket clubs are heavily reliant on bar takings for their finances. Whilst, however, we accept that this is a genuine issue which will need to be met head on, there should, in our view, be much greater levels of support provided to clubs (by the ECB and other major cricketing and sporting institutions), either directly (through funding) or indirectly (through other forms of guidance and support), to shift away from reliance on this financial model.



You see some black and Asian faces occasionally on the pitch. But in the boardroom and the decision-making processes you don't see anybody like us. And actually this notion that, and this was played to me by a Muslim colleague, this notion that we don't have a drink that they always go on about and therefore we're not revenue generating for the cricket club: if we were involved in the decision-making process of the cricket club we'd tell them a million different ways they could make revenue, outside of the bar, but they never ask us and we're never involved.

Kick It Out

- 5.2.55 The ECB expressed the view that the culture of drinking was a thing of the past, telling us that it “*just doesn't reflect reality [...] The drinking culture which was in the recreational game 10 years ago is disappearing [...] So that drinking culture in the recreational game does not exist as much as it used to*”. We were surprised at how divorced from reality this view appeared to be in light of the experiences that have been described to us.
- 5.2.56 There have been some high profile examples of how a small change in approach to alcohol can make a difference. When England won the T20 World Cup in November 2022, and Australia won the Ashes in January 2022, both captains delayed the traditional spraying of champagne to allow Muslim members of the team to celebrate the lifting of the trophy along with their teammates. This type of awareness and consideration will help to advance inclusion and it has rightly been treated as a step in the right direction, including amongst Muslim players themselves, although we are aware that some people have expressed the view that this is a fairly low bar against which progress should be measured.²⁷⁴

Inadequate complaints processes mean issues aren't raised or are not dealt with appropriately

- 5.2.57 In the previous sections we have drawn attention to the significant levels of discrimination along the lines of race, gender and class that remain prevalent within cricket. These issues are compounded by the lack of appropriate guidance with regard to, and confidence in, the complaints system. Chapter 8, Complaints, highlights how there is a widespread fear of raising issues of discrimination to those in authority in the game out of concern for the consequences. There was also a common perception amongst many of those who experienced discrimination that ‘nothing would be done’; that making complaints, particularly against senior and influential figures, would be futile. This combination of fear and futility has been an extremely powerful force in sustaining some of those negative cultural features of cricket that we have already highlighted.

The impact of this culture on the participation, progression and wellbeing of those involved in the sport

- 5.2.58 We have already set out our reasoning, and the underlying evidence, for concluding that large sections of English and Welsh cricket remain elitist and exclusionary, permitting discriminatory behaviour, attitudes and practices to flourish without robust or effective challenge. In this section we describe some of the effects of this culture on those involved in the sport.

²⁷⁴ Yas Rana, ‘Put the Champagne on ice: its time to stop praising cricketers for not spraying Muslims with alcohol’, Wisden, 14 November 2022. <https://wisden.com/series-stories/t20-world-cup-2022-series-stories/put-the-champagne-on-ice-its-time-to-stop-praising-cricketers-for-not-spraying-muslims-with-alcohol>

5.2.59 It is clear to us that people's backgrounds and identities are shaping their experience in cricket, for good or bad. Some thrive in an environment in which they possess the 'right' characteristics whereas those who do not are often faced with barriers that they cannot overcome, denied opportunities to progress or, worse, are emotionally or mentally harmed by their time in the game. We heard how it was easy to feel like an outsider or that you did not 'fit in'.

5.2.60 There was evidence that the discriminatory culture experienced by many within cricket and the consequent lack of inclusivity is having a significant impact on player performance, wellbeing and retention. More than half of all those who reported to us through our online survey that they had experienced discrimination said that they had considered leaving cricket sometimes, often or had actually left cricket as a result of their experiences.



Continued racism in the league and difficulty finding a club where I was treated equally despite being born and raised in the UK. Ultimately, I gave up after 15 years of playing. The final straw was being nicknamed 'Joe' (short for Joe Daki, which is cockney rhyming slang for 'P*'). After that I stopped playing.**

Asian (Indian) man, recreational player

5.2.61 Women and people educated in state schools were four times more likely to have left cricket because of discrimination, compared with Type K respondents. People from ethnically diverse backgrounds were five times more likely to have left cricket than their Type K counterparts, with the greatest percentage loss being among Pakistani/Bangladeshi people, who are more than seven times more likely than Type K to have left cricket because of discrimination.



I got tired of the constant backhanded comments, 'you can actually play' or 'you're good for a girl!'. [...] These comments just made me angry and fall out of love with the sport.

White woman, recreational player

5.2.62 Beyond the loss of individuals, experiences of discrimination, especially when they are not handled satisfactorily, can take a severe toll on mental health. People reported suffering in silence and becoming demotivated. Victims of discrimination are left with self-doubt and a sense of not being wanted, welcome or treated fairly. Respondents to the online survey spoke of how their confidence and self-esteem has been crushed, leading to anxiety, depression and, in the most extreme cases, suicidal thoughts.

5.2.63 Some respondents described leaving cricket because, while they had never personally experienced discrimination in the game, they witnessed it against others and did not wish to be part of a sport where such behaviour is tolerated. Others said that they have formed their own leagues and clubs in which to play (which respondents to our online survey made clear was not a matter of genuine choice, but a response to exclusion).

5.2.64 Our view is clear: unless the culture within cricket changes, the sport is failing and will continue to fail to attract and retain the best cricketers from the widest possible pool of talent. More importantly, many people from different demographics, regardless of however 'talented' they are, will not feel that it is a game for them. The exclusionary culture will continue to be fostered, to the detriment of both the individuals who experience discrimination (in whatever form it takes) and the reputation of the sport.

5.2.65 It is also crucial to say that the issues revealed by our work are not just historical, nor are they indicative of the existence of 'a few rotten apples'. They are not limited to one geographical area nor to one aspect of the sport - they are widespread. We received substantial evidence of discrimination throughout professional and recreational cricket, and there must be concerted action taken in response.

- 5.2.66 We are, of course, not saying that everyone involved in cricket is prejudiced or acts in a discriminatory manner. That is a long way from the reality and misunderstands the nature of how a ‘culture’ develops and sustains itself. We recognise, too, that there is a great deal of good work going on within the game to make cricket more inclusive, some of it longstanding and some prompted by the increased focus on discrimination since our review commenced. Initiatives at national level launched by the ECB and cricketing charities, and regionally and locally by FCCs, CCBs and local clubs, are, we believe, having an impact, and are to be commended. These are referenced throughout our Report. By highlighting how much more still needs to be done, we do not seek to diminish in any way their importance or achievements.
- 5.2.67 The evidence, however, points to the fact that cricket needs to go much further, and faster. If it doesn’t, the game will remain out of step with its stated ambitions and will fail to deliver the desired (and worthy) goal of becoming ‘a game for everyone’.
- 5.2.68 In particular, changing where and with whom power resides is critical if the game is going to become fairer and more equitable. Moreover, people in leadership roles, be that on or off the pitch, must lead by example, ‘walking the talk’, setting the right tone and creating a fully inclusive culture. We examine the role of leadership in the next section.

Other cultural issues we encountered

- 5.2.69 We received evidence relating to other issues not directly related to our Terms of Reference that we found concerning and which merit recognition. In particular, we heard how a ‘cricket first’ lens – a high performance mentality of winning at all costs – had the consequence of leading to some poor behaviours, bullying, intimidation and exclusion. We were told about how this approach has also, at times, resulted in the acceptance of players and/or staff who have been allowed to behave without the levels of probity that would be expected of others. Likewise, we were made aware of the existence of so-called ‘dirty secrets’ – that is, individuals who are widely known to hold and express highly problematic views but who are not challenged about them (often due to their seniority, status or value within the team). This conduct is indicative of a poor culture and needs to be addressed; if the individuals in question are not able to improve their behaviour after being given the opportunity to change, they do not have a place in cricket.



The simplest way to prevent toxic behaviour from seeping into your organizational culture is to get rid of the individual(s) who are spreading it.

Damian Stoudamire Assistant Coach Boston Celtics, former NBA player²⁷⁵

- 5.2.70 We also recognise that our online research participants were aged 16 and over. They included parents/guardians and coaches, but not the children themselves. Some adults we heard from specifically said that they had never discussed their negative experiences outside of the current research – largely because of shame and not wanting to upset others. It is safe to imagine that many children would often not reveal their experiences either. It is, therefore, imperative to ensure that the ECB provides a safe space for under 16s to talk about their experiences too.

²⁷⁵ <https://athleticdirector.com/articles/dont-let-superstars-ruin-your-organization/>

5.3 What role has cricket's leadership played in setting culture?

- 5.3.1 Discrimination, whether along the lines of gender, class or race, is devastating. Alongside the economic and social cost of missed opportunities to individuals, organisations and wider society, it has also been shown to seriously impact mental and physical health.²⁷⁶ We have been tremendously affected by the distressing testimony of those who were brave enough to share their experiences with us. It is clear to us that many have been, and continue to be, harmed by the game. This must be addressed and those who lead cricket have a responsibility to do everything within their power to create a culture that eliminates discrimination and inequity in the game.
- 5.3.2 The culture of an organisation – or, in this case, a sport – is set at the top. The ECB, as the game's governing body, is responsible for leading the transformation of cricket's culture, and for it to be, first and foremost, a more inclusive game. It must – with the support of leaders of all cricketing organisations – also ensure that this transformation filters through to both the professional ranks and to the sport's grassroots.



Ensuring that the message reaches the lifeblood of the grassroots is critical, particularly as the numbers involved at that level may increase the risk of incidences of poor behaviour.

ICSA²⁷⁷

- 5.3.3 Whilst leadership is primarily covered elsewhere in this Report, in particular Chapter 7, Governance and Leadership, in the next section we consider the misalignment of the existing culture with the ECB's overarching strategy for cricket, why that may have happened and how it can be addressed.

Culture and strategy are misaligned

- 5.3.4 At the core of the ECB's 'Inspiring Generations' strategy is the ambition to make cricket 'a game for everyone', described on their website as follows: *"We want to encourage more young people to form a lifelong relationship with cricket from an early age, to be passionate about the game throughout their lives, and pass this passion on for generations to come. Beyond just a new generation, we want people and communities to be united by the feeling that cricket is a game for them. This transcends simply participating, volunteering, following or attending, and gets to the heart of how people perceive cricket – as a game that has something to offer everyone. Inspiring Generations is being delivered through six priorities:*
- *Grow and nurture the core;*
 - *Inspire through elite teams;*
 - *Make cricket accessible;*
 - *Engage children and young people;*
 - *Transform women's and girls' cricket;*
 - *Support our communities.*"²⁷⁸
- 5.3.5 The ECB described the strategy as *"timeless."* Whether or not this is the case, it is currently not aligned with large parts of the sport's culture, which means that cricket is currently not a game for everyone.

²⁷⁶ <https://bmcpubhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-020-09792-1> & <https://europepmc.org/article/MED/31497985>

²⁷⁷ 'Organisational Culture in Sport - Assessing and improving attitudes and behaviour' ICSA May 2018 <https://www.cgi.org.uk/assets/files/policy/research/Organisational-culture-in-sport.pdf>

²⁷⁸ Inspiring Generations - [our-strategy](#).

5.3.6 This lack of alignment is, in part, a product of the distance that the game needs to travel to achieve its stated ambition and, in part, a product of defects within the ECB's and the wider game's approach to, and understanding, of EDI. We explore EDI strategy in more detail in Chapter 6, Approach to EDI in Cricket. The misalignment is also, we think, a function of the lack of a clear articulation of a game-wide set of values, without which we consider Inspiring Generations will fail to fulfil its potential.

Cricket needs to develop a clear set of values

5.3.7 In our view, for culture and strategy to become better aligned, cricket in general, and the ECB in particular, must articulate far more clearly the underlying norms and values that it believes will enable Inspiring Generations to be delivered.

5.3.8 It is helpful to consider the approach of some other organisations by way of example. Patagonia, the American outdoor clothing retailer, is renowned for its socially conscious and purpose driven approach to business, and has five core values: “Quality,” “Integrity,” “Environmentalism,” “Justice” and “Not Bound by Convention.” “Integrity,” it explains, involves examining “our practices openly and honestly, learn[ing] from our mistakes and meet[ing] our commitments. We value integrity in both senses: that our actions match our words (we walk the talk), and that all our work contributes to a functional whole (our sum is greater than our parts).”²⁷⁹

5.3.9 “Justice” is described as follows: “Be just, equitable and antiracist as a company and in our community. We embrace the work necessary to create equity for historically marginalized people and reorder the priorities of an economic system that values short-term expansion over human well-being and thriving communities. We acknowledge painful histories; confront biases; change our policies; and hold each other accountable. We aspire to be a company where people from all backgrounds, identities and experiences, can be their whole selves and have the power to contribute and lead.”²⁸⁰ This clarity of purpose is something that the ECB, and the wider game, would do well to embrace.

5.3.10 A little closer to home, Sport England’s ‘Uniting the Movement’ vision is “of more equal, inclusive and connected communities. A country where people live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives” through sport. They also outline their mission with clarity: “We’re determined to tackle deep-rooted inequalities and unlock the advantages of sport and physical activity for everyone.” They first set out **what** they will do, identifying five big issues where they see the “greatest potential for preventing and tackling inequalities in sport and physical activity.” These are “recover and reinvent”, “connecting communities”, “positive experiences for children and young people”, “connecting health and wellbeing”, and “active environment”. Crucially, they then set out **how** they will do it, describing their “guiding principles and [their] values [...] irrespective of circumstances,” which will enable them to fulfil their ambitions.

5.3.11 In particular, there are four pillars to their values: “Collaborative”, “inclusive”, “ambitious” and “innovative”, all of which are described on their website in considerable detail.²⁸¹ These, they say, define the “ways we’ll enshrine our mission in our everyday choices. We’re determined to not just say them, but to live them. Our values steer the ways we shape our organisation’s skills, capabilities and behaviours.”

5.3.12 Whilst Inspiring Generations contains a vision of ‘what’ the ECB intends to do, in our assessment, it must go further in setting out ‘how’ this will be done and according to which specific set of values.

5.3.13 We recognise that the ECB has codes of conduct, including a revised Anti-Discrimination Code, but, as we quoted in the introduction to this Chapter, “rules-based compliance cannot on its own deliver healthy behaviours...”. Rules, systems and procedures will only be effective if they align with the behaviour, attitudes and values of those subject to them – and behaviour “is determined to a significant degree by the culture of the entity concerned.”²⁸²

²⁷⁹ <https://eu.patagonia.com/gb/en/core-values/>

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ <https://www.sportengland.org/about-us/uniting-movement/how-we-work>

²⁸² ‘Organisational Culture in Sport – Assessing and improving attitudes and behaviour’ ICSEA May 2018 <https://www.cgi.org.uk/assets/files/policy/research/Organisational-culture-in-sport.pdf>

- 5.3.14 We appreciate that people may argue that there already is a set of values, given that the ECB's Articles of Association contain an obligation to uphold the 'Spirit of Cricket'. As described in the Preamble to the Laws of Cricket, the 'Spirit of Cricket' does articulate and encourage the advancement of certain values and behaviours, but only in very broad terms. The Preamble says, for example, that "*respect is central to the Spirit of Cricket*" and that the 'Spirit' involves creating a "*positive atmosphere by your own conduct.*" Clearly, we do not disagree with these sentiments. But, in our view, tucking away the obligation to apply the Spirit of Cricket more widely than to the playing of the game itself within the Articles of Association, which few people will read, is not enough. Cricket needs a well publicised set of values to guide behaviours and embed a commitment to EDI within the game's culture.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that, within the next 12 months, the ECB, in collaboration with its stakeholders, develops a set of cultural values (i.e. principles and expected behaviours) to guide organisations and individuals participating in English and Welsh cricket. These should form the basis of a game-wide values and behaviours framework which is explicit about the culture the game aspires to build and the behaviours it expects and rejects.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that the ECB develops a programme of ongoing 'culture health checks', similar to those UK Sport has undertaken, to ensure that it can track and monitor progress of its initiatives to improve the cultural health of the game. This should include an ongoing mechanism to understand the lived experiences of people across the professional and recreational game.

5.4 How does, and how should, cricket view its past?



I am not willing to get over histories that are not over yet.

Sara Ahmed²⁸³

5.4.1 To end this Chapter, we consider cricket's relationship with its past. Developing an inclusive culture must start with acknowledging cricket's history and the role that it has played in forming the culture of the game today.



I listened to the testimony of Azeem Rafiq and he could have been talking about the things we'd heard in the 90's. The aggressions (from micro to outright racism) don't seem to have changed much. That speaks of an embedded culture of racism in the sport. And while much has been said by members of the cricket establishment, the record is very poor. And it seems to be spread across counties, clubs and the media. The same tropes about Black and Asian cricketers persist to this day.

Individual

5.4.2 There are many examples across different aspects of cricket where those seeking to make changes have faced vocal and entrenched opposition, whether those efforts related to the introduction of new formats like T20 or The Hundred, the changing of terminology from 'batsman' to 'batter', or the potential removal of the 'right' of students from Eton and Harrow and Oxford and Cambridge to play at Lord's. Just as some within the game try to move it forward, others seek to rely on its history to hold it back.

5.4.3 That resistance to change is, of course, being challenged by rapid developments in global cricket, affecting in particular the top level of the game. The growth of T20 leagues around the world is impacting levels of remuneration in both the men's and women's game and leading to some players giving up other forms of cricket in order to travel the world playing for T20 franchises. Some young players in England are choosing a career solely focused on white ball cricket rather than even attempting to develop a professional red ball game. The growth of the women's game is highlighting the need for equality with the men, as well as shining a light on aspects of the culture of the men's game that need to change. Despite these developments, however, cricket's relationship with its past, we believe, continues to stunt its progress.

5.4.4 In the 2021 Cowdrey Lecture,²⁸⁴ Stephen Fry, the current MCC President, captured this well. He talked of the need *"to understand history and pain,"* recognising that some *"preferred dogged denial to open scrutiny."* He also drew attention to the *"legacy of empire and subjugation which gave the world cricket but also raped the riches and resources of peoples around the world, stole the dignity and rights of more than a billion and created an imbalance that for so long seemed permanent, immutable and unquestionable. But questioning the unquestionable is the very thing that drives the species forward and it propels the game of cricket too."* In relation to the Yorkshire racism scandal he said *"it behoves us all to make a huge effort to understand what is going on, what it means and how it can be addressed [...] own it, learn from it, act upon it."* We couldn't agree more.

²⁸³ Ahmed, S (2017) 'Living a feminist life', Duke University Press.

²⁸⁴ <https://www.lords.org/lords/news-stories/mcc-cowdrey-lecture-2021-stephen-fry>

- 5.4.5 Whilst some in cricket's leadership appear to understand the importance of facing up to cricket's past, some, it seems, do not. For some, that may be because of a sense of apathy, indifference or a lack of interest. For others, it may be because they would actively prefer the darkness in cricket's past to remain hidden. The truth is that we do not know. Whatever the reason, it seems to us that the desire to leave the past behind and 'move on' prevails. That approach can result in the game focusing almost exclusively on public demonstrations of the progress it is making (or, in many cases, that it will make soon). We appreciate the desire to share good news – and would encourage it, so that people are aware of, and inspired by, the changes that are taking place – but the danger is that positive stories on their own will be dismissed by many as nothing more than hollow PR. The past is not something to simply 'get over', nor is it enough to merely accept that whilst bad things may have happened in the game's history, now that we are 'going in the right direction', it is time to 'move on'.
- 5.4.6 It is important, too, to recognise that confronting the realities of the past is not just a question of addressing the grievances of specific individuals that relate to events that took place years ago. Whilst this is undoubtedly important, it is not enough. Cricket, and those who run it, must recognise and respond to the deep connection between the historical culture of the sport and the systemic injustices that are still faced by various groups (including women, ethnically diverse communities and those from working class and/or lower socio-economic backgrounds). The past lives on, in particular in the structures of power in the game and how they affect and exclude 'others'.
- 5.4.7 Despite this, one only has to read some of the polarised responses to Stephen Fry's speech to begin to understand the willingness, and at times desire, of some people to ignore what has happened, the level of resistance to change that exists, and the challenge that cricket faces to bring about the transformation it needs. A number of evidence givers expressed a view that the game is for and run by 'gentlemen' and that this has led to a tendency to think that cricket is above reproach: elements of the game have turned a blind eye to its past and present and are desperate to see the game as meritocratic – despite the wealth of evidence that shows it is not.
- 5.4.8 We do appreciate that, in some cases, this resistance to change or unwillingness to engage with some of the more challenging or uncomfortable aspects of cricket's history is more borne out of a fear of 'saying the wrong thing' and, as a consequence, facing condemnation. Creating an environment in which difficult conversations can be held, concepts of equity can be fully explored, and where people can ask questions and maybe even acknowledge their own (or the game's) problems, without fear of judgement or repercussion is, therefore, in our view an important part of genuinely facing up to the past and making tangible, systemic progress.
- 5.4.9 That past, of course, includes the Clean Bowl Racism Report, which found in 1999 that "*there [was] a need for positive action as soon as possible and practical against racism that exists in English cricket.*" One of the issues identified by the Study Group who produced the report was "*poor levels of appreciation of culture and traditions between white and ethnic minorities.*" The Report set out suggestions by respondents for how to combat racism in cricket: "*positive actions should be taken to encourage ethnic minorities into mainstream cricket; players should be selected on merit, encourage ethnic minority role models; improve the image of the top administrators of cricket; training of leaders, representatives and staff; strict sanctions should be taken against racism; and much should be done to promote harmony in the game.*" It is striking, and deeply concerning, to note how similar these suggestions are to many of the comments made by people who have given evidence to us, indicating the lack of progress made by the game over the last two decades or more when it comes to making cricket truly a game for everyone.

- 5.4.10 Cricket must not find itself in the same position in another two years' time let alone another twenty. The Commission is in no doubt that it is only by 'staying with' the game's history and truly understanding and acknowledging people's experiences, alongside implementing and embracing the structural changes that need to be made, that we can be confident that history won't repeat itself. This seemed to be acknowledged by the newly appointed Chair of the ECB: *"People who have been affected need to be heard and engaged to be part of the solution, so other generations don't go through it. There has to be a sense of truth and reconciliation and most importantly, that people learn, or history will just repeat itself."*²⁸⁵ Whilst this comment was only referencing the lived experiences gathered as part of the Commission's work rather than the part that the historical culture has played (and continues to play), we are nevertheless encouraged by these remarks and very much hope that this message is heard and reproduced across the game.
- 5.4.11 We make no apology, however, for repeating the words of Ebony Rainford-Brent cited in the Introduction to this Report: that confronting racism and, indeed, all forms of inequity and discrimination in cricket must be *"everyone's problem"*. In her interview, Rainford-Brent prefaced this by saying: *"until people in power start to understand and feel what it feels like to be oppressed we won't progress."* Such understanding and feeling will, in part, come from knowing and appreciating the weight of history in the present. The answer is certainly not, as one respondent to our Call for Evidence suggested, to *"draw a line under it all, describe the plan for the future and move on."*²⁸⁶ Neither do we agree with the same respondent that *"dwelling on this subject too long will cause more damage."* To the contrary, in our view **failing** to dwell on the subjects of inequality and discrimination will, ultimately, cause more harm.
- 5.4.12 For much of its long history, racism, sexism, elitism and class-based discrimination have existed within the culture and institutions of English and Welsh cricket. Our evidence shows that interpersonal discrimination is a serious and pervasive game-wide issue. We also found that elitism alongside deeply rooted and widespread forms of institutional and structural racism, sexism and class-based discrimination continue to exist across the game. The neglect of cricket in Black communities in England and Wales is of particular concern, including the failure of the sport's national governing body to take meaningful action to prevent it. We believe that a full, frank and public recognition of discrimination in cricket, past and present, can help to rebuild trust and signal a clear future direction. With this in mind and as set out in the Executive Summary, we have made an overarching recommendation that the ECB makes an unqualified public apology for its own failings, and those of the game it governs.

²⁸⁵ Ali Martin, 'ECB's Richard Thompson: 'It's not quite a Packer moment, but it's a real risk', The Guardian, 26 November 2022.

https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2022/nov/26/cricket-ecb-richard-thompson-its-not-quite-a-packer-moment-but-its-a-risk?CMP=share_btn_link

²⁸⁶ White man, recreational player, parent/guardian, volunteer, board or committee, coach.

Chapter 6: Approach to EDI in Cricket



When diversity is a viewing point, a way of picturing the organisation, then racism is unseen [...] Racism becomes something bad that we can't even speak of [...] Racism is treated as a breach in the happy image of diversity.

Sara Ahmed²⁸⁷

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Fairness, equality and justice have always mattered. In the aftermath of recent international social movements like #MeToo and Black Lives Matter, however, delivering – or being seen to deliver – equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) has taken on a much greater level of significance for many organisations in the UK and beyond. In this context, EDI has become the central lens through which such organisations purport to respond to issues of unfairness, inequality and injustice.
- 6.1.2 As part of our Terms of Reference, we committed to reviewing the strategic approach of the ECB in relation to issues of race, gender and class. For the reasons set out above, at the moment most institutions and organisations in the UK (and elsewhere) tend to frame their strategic work on race, gender and class through the prism of EDI. Quite understandably, the ECB does so too.
- 6.1.3 Accordingly, in this Chapter, the Commission will describe, analyse and evaluate the strategic approach taken by the ECB to EDI. What has the ECB's approach to EDI been until now and where is it falling short?

²⁸⁷ Ahmed, S. (2012) 'On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life'. Duke University Press.

What is EDI?

EDI contains three elements: equity, diversity and inclusion. At Appendix 5 we set out a detailed explanation of each of these elements, some of the challenges to the effectiveness of EDI work, and what it means to do EDI well. Equity, diversity and inclusion are distinct terms with distinct meanings. It is the Commission's view that doing EDI well demands concerted and specific action in relation to each of these distinct elements.

Equity describes the process of acknowledging that people's circumstances and needs are different and that these differences must be taken seriously when seeking to promote true equality of opportunity and treatment. This differs from the concept of **equality** which is the process of treating everyone in the same way regardless of their different circumstances and needs. Equity relates to the use of targeted and differentiated strategies to redress current and historic unfairness, inequality and injustice. In the context of cricket and this Report, 'equity' means the intentional and continuous practice of changing policies, practices, systems and structures to reduce (and ultimately eliminate) inequalities and injustices faced by people who have been marginalised and discriminated against within the sport due to their background or identity.

Diversity describes the extent to which an organisation is composed of individuals with different backgrounds and identities. When we refer to diversity in this Report, it is also used as an expression of the priorities, values and commitments of an organisation – a 'diverse' organisation reflects the diversity of society. In this sense, diversity commits organisations to accepting and including people from all backgrounds, and is therefore about fairness.

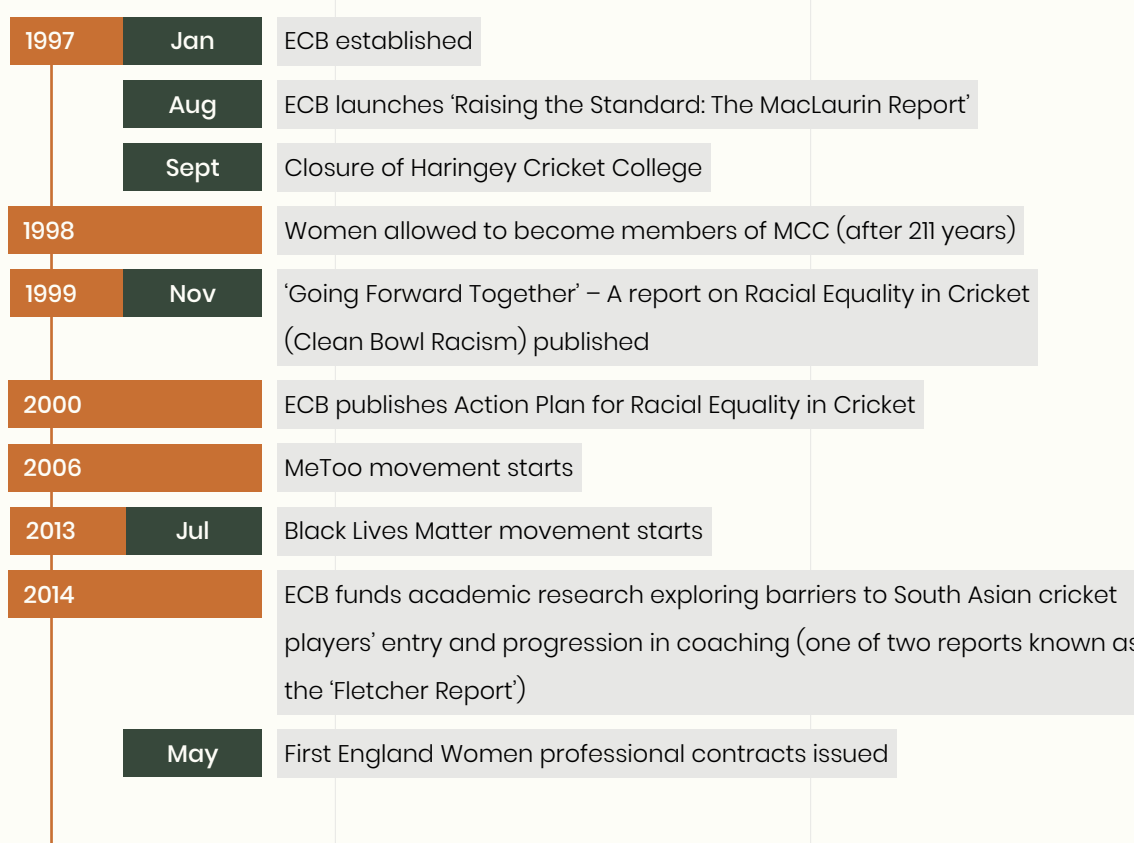
Inclusion describes actions taken to include people who are excluded because of their background or identity, both currently and historically. It involves creating and sustaining an environment where each individual can be themselves fully and feel welcome and safe, regardless of differences.

6.2 How we assessed the ECB's strategic approach to EDI

- 6.2.1 We began our work in this area by considering and reflecting on the history of the game in England and Wales and how it arrived at where it is today. This enabled us to ground our analysis of the ECB's current approach to EDI within the appropriate historical context. Alongside this we conducted a critical analysis of key ECB game-wide strategic plans, including the game-wide 12 Point Plan to tackle racism and eliminate discrimination. Our analysis explored the underlying purpose of these plans, the robustness of the evidence used to inform decision-making (including the stakeholders involved in their development) and, importantly, evidence of their impact. Finally, our assessment of the ECB's strategic approach to EDI was informed by the full range of evidence that was available to the Commission including responses to our Calls for Evidence, documentation, data and evidence from the ECB, Counties, WRTs and other sources as well as oral evidence from a wide range of witnesses, including senior ECB staff and Board Members.
- 6.2.2 Through all of these sources, we were able to undertake a close analysis of the ECB's strategic approach to EDI and, importantly, how this has been translated across the game. Progress on EDI needs to be measured by impact and not simply by the number of initiatives undertaken or commitments made, no matter how worthy or well-intentioned they might be. Progress and effectiveness are measured by what the evidence tells us about the extent to which interventions, or indeed the lack of them, are making a material difference. We feel that it is, therefore, particularly important to read this Chapter in conjunction with Chapter 4, State of Equity in Cricket. That Chapter provides an overarching assessment of what the data is currently telling us about how equitable the game is today in relation to race, gender and class, highlighting areas where the game is performing relatively well, where it is not and where there are crucial gaps in the data that need to be closed.

Timeline of key events

- 6.2.3 Given our task is to consider the effectiveness of the ECB's strategic approach to EDI, we share below a timeline of key events we consider relevant to our work since the inception of the ECB:



2015		ECB and the Yorkshire Cricket Partnership co-fund research into South Asian communities in cricket in Bradford and Leeds (one of two reports known as the 'Fletcher Report')
		ECB launches Cricket Unleashed
2018	May	ECB overhauls its governance structure and puts in place an independent Board ²⁸⁸
	May	ECB launches the South Asian Action Plan
2019	Jan	Inspiring Generations announced
	May	Kumar Sangakkara first non-British national and first South Asian appointed President of MCC
	Oct	ECB launches Transforming Women's and Girls' Cricket Action Plan
2020	Feb	ECB begins implementing Inspiring Generations
	Mar	Women's Regional Teams established
	Mar	UK Government lockdown measures come into force
	May	George Floyd murdered and resurgence of BLM movement
	Jun	Michael Carberry, former England batsman, speaks about racism in cricket and that <i>"Black people are not important to the structure of English cricket"</i>
	Jul	Ebony Rainford-Brent and Michael Holding publicly share experiences of racism
	Jul	England players (Men and Women) take the knee in support of BLM
	Aug	Azeem Rafiq, former Yorkshire CCC player, gives interview about racism he experienced at the County
	Sept	England players (Men and Women) stop taking the knee
	Sept	Azeem Rafiq gives further interview about racism he experienced
	Sept	Yorkshire CCC launches investigation into Azeem Rafiq's allegations
	Oct	First professional domestic women's contracts issued
	Nov	ECB commits to launching ICEC and an Anti-Discrimination Code
	Dec	Azeem Rafiq files a legal claim against Yorkshire CCC
	Dec	John Holder and Ismael Dawood lodge race discrimination complaint with Employment Tribunal

²⁸⁸ By independent Board, we are referring to the fact that, since 2018, individuals on the Board do not (and cannot) also hold relevant posts in the County cricket network or at MCC.

2021	Mar	ICEC Chair, Cindy Butts, announced
	Mar	Early Day Motion tabled in Parliament concerning the underrepresentation of African, Caribbean and Asian coaches, umpires and match officials at all levels of cricket in England and Wales
	Mar	The Equality and Human Rights Commission is called upon to conduct a formal investigation into allegations of racism in English cricket
	Mar	ECB launches Anti-Discrimination Code
	May	Baroness Valerie Amos joins the ECB Board
	Jul	ICEC Terms of Reference and Commissioners announced
	Jul	ECB launches The Hundred
	Aug	Yorkshire CCC apologises to Azeem Rafiq saying he was a victim of inappropriate behaviour but denies institutional racism
	Sept	Summarised findings of Yorkshire CCC report published, acknowledging Azeem Rafiq was a victim of racial harassment and bullying
	Sept	ECB commences regulatory investigation into Azeem Rafiq's allegations about his time at Yorkshire CCC
	Oct	Yorkshire CCC announces that no disciplinary action will be taken
	Oct	Clare Connor becomes first woman President of MCC in 233 year history
	Nov	ICEC begins taking evidence
	Nov	Yorkshire CCC report leaks and receives widespread criticism
	Nov	ECB suspends Yorkshire CCC from hosting major international matches and announces full regulatory investigation
	Nov	Yorkshire CCC Chair Roger Hutton resigns and Lord Kamlesh Patel announced as new Chair
	16 Nov	DCMS Select Committee hearings with Azeem Rafiq
	26 Nov	ECB announces game-wide 12 Point Plan to tackle racism and discrimination
	26 Nov	ECB publishes its EDI Action Plan
2022	Jan	DCMS Select Committee publishes 'Racism in Cricket' report
	Jul	ECB launches 'Raising the Game'
	Dec	ICEC closes evidence gathering

6.3 Our assessment of the ECB’s approach to EDI

Failure to take sustained, effective action on racism despite evidence it is a serious problem



What is it you want me to reconcile myself to? [...] You always told me it takes time. It has taken my father’s time, my mother’s time, my uncle’s time, my brothers’ and my sisters’ time, my nieces’ and my nephews’ time. How much time do you want for your ‘progress’?

James Baldwin²⁸⁹

- 6.3.1 In May 2020, the ECB, like many other organisations across the world, found itself asking questions about racism and racial inequity after the world’s collective witnessing of the murder of George Floyd and the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement. Many Black and South Asian cricketers spoke up publicly about their experiences of racism in the game, leading the ECB to announce the creation of an Independent Commission to examine these issues, alongside wider inequity and discrimination in the sport, in order to identify the actions needed to make cricket a more equitable game.
- 6.3.2 Crucially, this was not the first attempt by the ECB to understand the prevalence of racism in the game – it had been considered more than 20 years ago in the ECB-commissioned ‘Clean Bowl Racism’ report. Media reports at the time described the “*ECB war against racism*” and their “*hopes to see more ethnic minority players at the highest level.*”²⁹⁰
- 6.3.3 Despite this, the ECB has confirmed that they are unable to provide “*real clarity*” on the initiatives put in place for the 15 years that followed a 2002 audit of actions taken in the report’s aftermath.²⁹¹ Indeed, with the exception of funding academic research in 2014 and 2015,²⁹² we have been unable to find any substantial evidence of concerted action dedicated to tackling racism in the sport until 2018 and, worryingly, even since then there has been a failure to specifically and unambiguously name racism as a problem in the game (other than in the context of individual racist incidents).
- 6.3.4 It is, therefore, unsurprising that racism remains a serious issue in the game, as described in Chapter 5, Culture, a fact that should be of deep concern, shame and regret, and for which the whole game should take responsibility and come together to put right.

²⁸⁹ James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket (1989 – documentary).

²⁹⁰ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sport/cricket/522795.stm>

²⁹¹ The ECB told us “*What we can address with certainty is post-2018, and the overhaul of ECB strategy spearheaded by Inspiring Generations, and whether the Clean Bowl policies are addressed through our current EDI actions. Our assessment is that the 28 recommendations of the Clean Bowl Racism report have been implemented except in six instances. In most of these cases the proposed policies are no longer relevant or have been superseded by other actions.*”

²⁹² <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/blog/2021/nov/20/ecb-national-inquiry-racism-cricket>

Failure to name racism and other forms of discrimination

- 6.3.5 We consider that the failure to meaningfully address racism in the sport derives, in part, from the ECB's apparent inability to use the word 'racism' or acknowledge its existence in cricket.
- 6.3.6 We found it striking that there are no references to racism (or indeed other forms of discrimination) in the Inspiring Generations strategy or in its underlying plans including, surprisingly, the South Asian Action Plan (SAAP). Neither is there any direct acknowledgement of the need to create robust processes by which racial discrimination at the interpersonal, institutional or structural level in the recreational or professional game is identified and addressed, beyond references to unconscious bias training.
- 6.3.7 We note and welcome that the word 'racism' is used in the game-wide "12-point action plan to tackle racism and all forms of discrimination" in November 2021 (and is used on the web page hosting details of the plan), although this is unsurprising given the circumstances that led to the plan's creation. However, the plan's individual commitments do not set out the various forms of racism and discrimination that it sought to tackle. In fact, none of the 12 points actually refers to racism directly. By contrast, the word "diversity" (or some variation on it) is used seven times within the plan. Of course, the ambition to increase diversity is one that we fully support. But this should not be (whether intentionally or otherwise) at the expense of measures that are focused specifically on tackling racism and other forms of discrimination.
- 6.3.8 This failure to explicitly name racism in most of the relevant plans is difficult to understand, though we consider that a number of factors could be at play: concerns about the reputational impact of doing so; a fear that there would not be game-wide buy-in; denial that racism is a significant problem in the game; and, in some cases, a lack of EDI competency on 'race' – poor 'racial literacy'²⁹³ – which we discuss further below.

The understanding of racism amongst the ECB's, and wider game's, senior leadership is varied and must improve quickly



If we do not know how to meaningfully talk about racism, our actions will move in misleading directions.

*Angela Davis*²⁹⁴

- 6.3.9 During our hearings with the ECB we asked their senior leadership if they agreed with the conclusion reached by the DCMS Select Committee "that there is a deep-seated issue of racism in cricket" and that, more pertinently, "it is evident to [...] the England and Wales Cricket Board that there is an issue of racism in cricket."²⁹⁵ The responses were mixed. Some Board members acknowledged that there was "a history of racism in the game" but that it was not "deep-seated in that broad sense" but instead existed in "pockets." Others, however, were clear that "without doubt the way cricket has been structured and led historically has created the conditions for racism or racist incidents to be perpetuated" and that it was in fact "probably" deep-seated in part.

²⁹³ Joseph- Salisbury, R in *Race & Racism in English Secondary Schools*, Runnymede Publications 2020.

²⁹⁴ Angela Y. Davis. (2016). 'Freedom is a Constant Struggle'. Haymarket Books.

²⁹⁵ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/8470/documents/86256/default/>



Clearly there are racist issues across the game that we are dealing with, but cricket I don't believe is a racist sport. And I hope that's become obvious with what we're trying to do in the sport. So I don't believe it's racist. There are clearly racist attitudes and behaviours still out there that we are addressing and dealing with.

ECB

- 6.3.10 It seems to us that the ECB's Board has yet to reach a settled view on this question. This perhaps explains their inability to unambiguously state that racism is a serious problem in cricket. It is also our view that this disparity in responses reveals varying levels of understanding amongst Board members of the way that racism, in all its forms, manifests in cricket (and wider society), and of the skills and confidence necessary to combat racism as leaders of the game.
- 6.3.11 Understanding how racism operates requires time and honest self-reflection. It requires open and sustained dialogue and may be, for many of cricket's leaders, uncomfortable. It is this very discomfort that leads many to cling to the idea that a 'colour-blind' approach has merit despite overwhelming evidence over decades that this is not the case. The desire to treat everyone equally is, at face value, a noble one (with people believing they are doing the right thing by saying that they don't take any notice of the colour of a person's skin), but research shows that people do in fact perceive race even if they think they don't, and they do so from a very young age.²⁹⁶ In fact people who have been blind since birth also learn to recognise race based on the social cues of the people around them.²⁹⁷ It is literally not possible to ignore race. Attempting to take a colour-blind approach has also been shown to have counterproductive effects including the loss of confidence amongst ethnically diverse groups, who feel their lived experiences are being ignored or rejected, and, as shown by the data in Chapter 4 on the State of Equity in Cricket, can mask inequalities and often lead to ineffective action. It can risk denial or avoidance of the reality of racism and fails to recognise that an equitable approach sometimes requires more targeted interventions.
- 6.3.12 A lack of competence in this area has serious ramifications for the way in which the ECB, and those it governs, seek to address racism in the game. If, for example, racism is seen by some, as our evidence suggests it is, as simply a 'bad deed that only bad people do' (i.e. through an interpersonal lens often largely limited to racial slurs), the strategy put in place to tackle it will inevitably fail. In particular, it will miss the fact that racism exists within institutions, structures and systems. This means that both individuals and organisations that do not see themselves as racist - and that want, and even try, to do the right thing - can still produce racist or discriminatory outcomes. By contrast, acknowledging that racism exists within institutions, structures and systems enables us to develop the sorts of strategic interventions that have the best chance of making a sustained impact.
- 6.3.13 The evidence is unequivocal that racism is a serious issue in cricket. We are clear, as a Commission, that racism in cricket is not about 'a few bad apples' or limited to individual incidents of misconduct (i.e. interpersonal racism). In our opinion, the cumulative picture of evidence is undeniable: the failure to specifically name racism as a problem, the lack of urgency or sufficient commitment to address racism, the failure to take meaningful action to understand or reverse the decline of cricket in Black communities (which we discuss further below), the pervasive levels of interpersonal racism across the game, the low reporting of racist incidents (despite high prevalence), the lack of trust in cricketing authorities to address complaints fairly and, critically, the strong evidence of inequitable outcomes highlighted in our Chapter 4, State of Equity in Cricket demonstrate that institutional and structural racism continue to shape the experience of, and opportunities for, many in the game. We hope that our Report enables the ECB, and importantly the wider game, to move to a more realistic view of the extent and nature of racism in English and Welsh cricket.

²⁹⁶ https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/Racial%20Color%20Blindness_16f0f9c6-9a67-4125-ae30-5eb1ae1eff59.pdf

²⁹⁷ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21132954/>

Recommendation 5

We recommend that:

- a) Within the next six months, the ECB puts in place mandatory, specialist, high-quality training to support the development of racial literacy amongst its leadership (Executive and Board) and the most senior leadership of the wider game (as defined in Chapter 4, State of Equity in Cricket).
- b) A continuous programme of education and training to build competency in leading EDI in cricket should be put in place for the most senior leadership of the game.

Sizeable improvements particularly since 2018 but EDI approach lacks maturity

- 6.3.14 It is clear to us, and we believe to the ECB itself, that its EDI journey began in earnest after the redesign of its governance structures in 2018. In particular, the contributions of the two former Senior Independent Directors (SID) who, between them, were in post from 9 May 2018 to 19 August 2022²⁹⁸ appear to have been critical in changing the ECB's approach to EDI matters for the better. The benefit of having an independent Board with diverse race, gender and class representation, and ensuring that one of the most senior posts on the Board is held by someone championing EDI, is clear. There is emerging evidence of welcome improvement in their strategic approach to EDI. Inspiring Generations and its underlying plans, including the SAAP and the Transforming Women's and Girls' Cricket Action Plan (TWGCP), deserve some real credit, and have had a positive impact across the game.
- 6.3.15 We do, however, have concerns about the overreliance on identity holders to drive much needed change.²⁹⁹ EDI is the responsibility of the entire Board and progress should not be reliant on particular individuals to champion and drive through change.
- 6.3.16 More generally, it is our view, based on the evidence we received and reviewed, that the ECB's overall approach to EDI still requires significant further development, and there remains an urgent need to improve in several areas.
- 6.3.17 This is, of course, unsurprising given the fact that the ECB only appears to have started to seriously address these issues recently. It will take time for any organisation, let alone the body responsible for governing cricket across England and Wales, to embed EDI values and put in place an effective strategy alongside the systems and people needed to implement it. Late entry into the EDI space and improving performance in some areas does not, however, absolve the ECB, or the wider game, from the responsibility of not taking concerted action on these issues earlier. Indeed, it makes it incumbent on all in cricket to ensure that EDI is a strategic priority that has the resources needed to drive further improvement. This should include increased investment - acknowledging that this will mean reprioritising and making difficult decisions in other areas.

²⁹⁸ Lord Patel held the SID post from 9 May 2018 to 31 August 2020 and Brenda Trenowden MBE held the role from 1 September 2020 to 19 August 2022.

²⁹⁹ A person holding a particular identity, for example a woman, being relied on to drive forward action on gender equality.



There has been an enormous shift when you ask about EDI philosophy since we've had an independent board. [...] As per our earlier conversation about the journey that our members and stakeholders are on, that is relatively recent. That is only the last four years, where we've had an independent board with a senior independent director, Brenda, with her enormous EDI expertise. Where the board has been comprised of virtually all men, representing men's cricket, men's county cricket and men's first-class cricket [...] the lens by which the board used to operate was very insular, very much about self-interest, doing what we've always done, trying to have the best men's cricket team we can have. That's been blown apart now by an independent board that holds the executive to account on delivering a strategy that's got inclusion at its heart. Where we are now as a board in terms of philosophy, compared with just four years ago is unrecognisable.

ECB



The board's philosophy on EDI is a young one I would say, but it is devoted.

ECB



We've had two senior independent directors since the governance changes in 2018. The first senior independent was Kamlesh, who sponsored the SAAP and was also the board member [we] worked most with on 'Inspiring Generations'. The second was Brenda. So to have the second most senior person on the board owning these issues has been transformational.

ECB

EDI approach lacks a clear and consistent philosophy

- 6.3.18 Developing a successful approach to EDI requires the leaders of cricket to be absolutely clear and intentional about what EDI means for them in principle and practice. Is it, for example, simply about 'D&I' (i.e. 'diversity and inclusion') or is it also, sincerely, about 'equity'? If so, has the thinking, leadership development and hard work taken place to enable this? There must also be clarity on what 'success' looks like in this context: is it limited to having a leadership, workforce and playing populations that are 'representative' or is it about more than that, namely being proactive in the fight against all forms of discrimination in the game?
- 6.3.19 Our analysis shows that the ECB's approach to EDI lacks a clear and consistent philosophy. For instance, despite describing its commitment to making cricket equitable, diverse and inclusive, we found that the ECB's strategic approach has often prioritised other commercial considerations (such as maximising the game's growth and protecting and/or promoting the sport's reputation) over, and sometimes at the expense of, genuinely furthering EDI.
- 6.3.20 This has inevitably resulted in a strategy that has delivered mixed results. There have been some notable successes for which the ECB deserves real credit, in particular, relating to the development of the women's game in certain respects and to the limited, but important, progress in relation to those from South Asian communities, at least within the talent pathway and in terms of wider engagement. But it has also resulted in some clear and unacceptable failures, for which there must be both acknowledgement and remedy. These include a lack of action to halt, and reverse, the decline of Black cricket in England and Wales and the absence of any targeted initiatives to address the significant underrepresentation in professional cricket (and in the talent pathway) of those who attend only state school.

6.3.21 Examples of some of the areas that cause us particular concern are manifest in the Inspiring Generations strategy itself. Accordingly, we felt it helpful to include a more detailed breakdown of our analysis of the strategy (occasionally with reference to the other plans sitting underneath it, including the game-wide 12 Point Plan published in November 2021) as a case study for the ECB and the wider game to learn from. It is important to bear in mind that Inspiring Generations is a ‘strategy for cricket’ and not specifically an EDI plan. The ECB claims, however, that EDI sits at the core of the strategy. During our hearings with them, we were surprised by a comment that if the aims and objectives of the plan were to be achieved, it would be “*perfect from an EDI perspective*”. Focusing on Inspiring Generations, therefore, allows us to understand and analyse the ECB’s approach to EDI, identifying both weaknesses and strengths.

Prioritising commercial considerations

6.3.22 Quite understandably, what can broadly be described as commercial considerations are treated as a priority by the ECB. Indeed, growth and revenue generation and the protection and/or promotion of reputation are all critical and necessary activities both for the governing body and the sport itself. Inspiring Generations sets out clearly that it is underpinned by measures to “*secure the long-term sustainability of the game*” and the need to “*ensure that cricket in England and Wales has strong structures and robust finances both now and in the future*”. The approach is similar in the SAAP (2018) and the TWGCP (2019).

6.3.23 Inspiring Generations was specifically designed “*to grow cricket in England and Wales between 2020-2024*.” The implication is that increasing the number of people involved in cricket (in particular by “*diversifying*” cricket and “*opening up*” the sport to all) and growing the sport’s revenue are, inevitably, mutually inclusive objectives. The ECB also advocated this approach in our hearings with them.



I don’t think there are ways to grow the game without making it more diverse. This goes back to the core. What we sell, if you want to put it in those terms, is an audience. In order for the game to exist, it needs money. In order for people to invest in us, they need to invest in our audience. If we don’t have a diverse audience, then we don’t have a business/sport going forward.

ECB

6.3.24 It is true that in many cases, EDI and wider commercial goals will complement each other. There are dangers, however, in assuming – as the ECB has tended to do – that they will always align. One risk is that EDI is promoted only inasmuch as it serves those commercial objectives: where EDI objectives and commercial objectives do not clearly align, EDI can be deprioritised and/or ignored. Another risk is that, where a decision has to be made between an initiative that generates growth (both in terms of engagement and revenue) and one that promotes greater equity, growth will likely take precedence and questions of equity will fall by the wayside.

6.3.25 Although the relationship between growth and equity is a complex one, it is in our view obvious that making cricket bigger – in terms of both the overall numbers playing the game and the revenue generated by the sport – does not **necessarily** equate to making it more diverse, inclusive and/or, critically, equitable. Indeed it is our conclusion that, in part, the apparent long-term neglect of Black and working class communities in cricket is likely a by-product of an overemphasis on growth and revenue generation.

- 6.3.26 Commercial considerations are inevitably centred in the context of private companies which tend to (and are often required to) prioritise the interests of their shareholders. The ECB is, or at least should be, different. It describes itself as a “*not-for-profit – all our money goes into the game. And we want every pound of our income to achieve the maximum possible benefit to the game of cricket.*”³⁰⁰ Importantly, the ECB governs a ‘public asset’, namely the game of cricket in England and Wales. In our view, this comes with certain responsibilities to those who play, work in and are fans of the game, responsibilities that include ensuring the game is fair, equitable and non-discriminatory, which should be prioritised over other considerations like growth and reputation.
- 6.3.27 We are, of course, not arguing that the ECB must choose equity *over* commercial success. This is a false dichotomy: commercial success can and should be achieved whilst striving to make cricket a truly equitable game. Short term commercial opportunities may be superficially attractive but a longer term approach embracing equity may deliver more substantial and more sustainable commercial returns. We are saying that commercial success and equity are not **always** the same thing. And if the issues to be addressed are EDI, EDI should, in those circumstances, be the ultimate priority.
- 6.3.28 It also cannot be overlooked that cricket receives significant amounts of public money. Since 2009, Sport England has invested over £141 million in cricket including £80 million directly with the ECB.³⁰¹ The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)³⁰² offers a useful guide to how EDI should be built into everything that an organisation does ‘by design’. The PSED applies to private bodies and charities if they are considered to be delivering public functions. It is our view that the ECB should comply with the PSED given their management of a public asset, their receipt of significant amounts of public money and importantly, because it will improve their approach to EDI.

Doing something or being seen to be doing something: the dangers of an overemphasis on ‘good PR’

- 6.3.29 For any organisation, including the ECB, reputation management is a critical and necessary element of its work. However, prioritising a ‘quick fix’ to protect reputation above taking careful, considered and evidence-driven decisions is, in our view, a serious error of judgement, especially when seeking to promote EDI. It results in action that can be rushed and ill-conceived, ultimately resulting in further damage.
- 6.3.30 A number of witnesses, including senior leaders in cricket (outside of the ECB), gave evidence to us citing their concerns about the ECB’s apparent focus on reputation protection over and above taking effective action that will genuinely drive EDI. Indeed, during the course of our work there have been times where the ECB has adopted what seems like a knee-jerk, almost frenzied approach, with initiative after initiative announced without, in our view, a clear strategy and, importantly, a clear sense of what ‘success’ would look like.
- 6.3.31 We were particularly struck by the speed with which the game-wide 12 Point Plan was published in November 2021, only 10 days after Azeem Rafiq appeared before the DCMS Select Committee. The ECB told us that an immediate response was necessary for the purposes of making a “*clear statement*” in response to Rafiq’s testimony. They also made clear that they considered it important to seize the moment to re-emphasise and accelerate progress on matters related to racism and discrimination. These are, in themselves, both entirely reasonable justifications.
- 6.3.32 The ECB’s response, however, also suggests that public relations considerations were central to its decision-making. They told us that it was not just about responding, but about “*show[ing] the game we were doing something, and were united in tackling problems.*”
- 6.3.33 That public relations considerations were overemphasised in the ECB’s approach was reflected in the evidence we received.

³⁰⁰ <https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/what-we-do/finance>

³⁰¹ Based on figures provided by Sport England inclusive of ECB funding up to 2025, funding for Chance to Shine, the Lord’s Taverners and local cricket clubs with projects in England where cricket is identified as the main sport (i.e. excluding multi-sport projects and national projects).

³⁰² <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty#h1>



My fear, when you see something that's done so quickly, is you're managing the PR and not the problem. And are you staying long enough in the problem? Pretty much every organisation that we're involved in [...] I get them to answer four questions: why, where, how and what. Why are you doing this? Where are you trying to get to? How are you going to overcome the barriers? And what interventions are you going to make? And my experience is that most people will jump to the 'what' because it's really, really uncomfortable. So stay in the discomfort, stay in the problem, stay in the why and try to understand what actually are the problems.

Kick It Out

- 6.3.34 An overemphasis on public relations concerns (i.e. what the ECB and wider game were **seen** to be doing) risks undermining the substance and efficacy of the response. In particular, in circumstances where the motivation was, in large part, about being **seen** to be immediately acting in the right way, the nature of the response was more likely to be rushed and, therefore, to miss the target.
- 6.3.35 The result has been an approach that is heavy on widely-drawn commitments which sound great on paper but are light on matters of implementation. We understand that a balance has to be struck between ensuring clarity of message and providing sufficient detail, but that has led to a series of commitments that lack the necessary specificity to either assess the quality of the plan or to ensure genuine accountability. This concern was communicated to us by a number of evidence givers.



So it's just 12 actions to us that have no context at the minute, to be absolutely honest.

Kick It Out



It is the question around the practical application of actually what's happening [...] there is probably a lot of detail there that I think still needs to be worked out and understood.

Chance to Shine



I've looked at the Action Plan [and] I would be thinking to myself "would I see that as something that's going to get me to where I want to be and the change in the counties and give them the difference and reducing instances of discrimination and racism in the sport?" [...] I would argue on paper alone it isn't [...] where are the accountabilities for the counties to take responsibility for some of this as opposed to just contributing to the report?

Sport England

- 6.3.36 One of the clearest failures, from a strategic perspective, as a result of this approach has been the lack of effective action on a central commitment of the game-wide 12 Point Plan: the "*adoption **within three months** of a standardised approach to reporting, investigating, and responding to complaints, allegations, and whistleblowing across the game.*" In light of the problems highlighted by Azeem Rafiq at the DCMS Select Committee hearing, a central focus of the ECB's response should have been to ensure that a system was in place, across the game, to enable discrimination complaints to be reported, investigated and handled fairly and effectively. Despite this, it was noteworthy that the ECB acknowledged to us in our hearings with them in late summer 2022 that their complaints handling processes, particularly (but not only) in the recreational game, were still not up to scratch, and that it was an area in which they needed further support. This was almost six months **after** the commitment was supposed to have been delivered.

- 6.3.37 As we discuss later in this Chapter, the ECB made what appeared to be a positive announcement in April 2022 that £1 million would be committed to reducing financial barriers for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access the talent pathway, yet there are important questions about whether this amount will be enough to address the problem. The primary purpose of announcing these funds is also questionable. The ECB told us that it “*wanted to make a statement*” and that £1 million sounded “*significant enough*” to do so, without, it seems, any preliminary analysis to work out how much was needed or where the money would go. It seems to us to be a prime example of wanting to be seen to do something, perhaps ‘anything’, rather than making a considered decision to do something that is likely to be effective.
- 6.3.38 It is perhaps for these reasons that there was some concern amongst evidence-givers about whether the game-wide 12 Point Plan was going to produce the sort of action required to transform the game.



I think what we've got to make sure is that it's not just window dressing, if that makes sense? There is substance behind these programmes, there is change [...] we need to make sure that the results are true and not just looking great – we see it a lot now from companies where it's all about their social media, it's all about the image.

The PCA

- 6.3.39 We share these concerns and, for the reasons set out above, have concluded that the focus on ‘being seen to do the right thing’ has, to some extent, hindered the game’s ability to progress important actions to address racism and wider discrimination.

Equity is overlooked in favour of diversity and inclusion

- 6.3.40 Our analysis also shows that ‘equity’ and importantly, how to achieve it, is (or has at least until very recently been) largely absent from the ECB’s key strategic plans. When they are explicit about EDI, those plans have almost exclusively focused on the ‘D’ and ‘I’. Diversity and inclusion are, of course, essential and the ECB should be commended for placing these at the heart of their ‘Strategy for Cricket’. Furthermore, greater diversity is likely to emerge from a more equitable approach, and promoting inclusive practices is also likely to help promote greater equity. But something vital to effective EDI work is lost when equity, as a distinct objective, with distinct features, is either de-centred, de-valued or overlooked.

Case study: Inspiring Generations

Equity is overlooked in favour of diversity and inclusion

EDI references in Inspiring Generations are heavily skewed towards the language of diversity. More recent articulations of the strategy also emphasise the central role of diversity, inclusion and belonging, without centring equity at the same time. Indeed, the ECB expressly stated in our hearings with them that Inspiring Generations “[*at its heart [...] is a diversity strategy*]” and “*a strategy about inclusion – ensuring everyone has a place in cricket.*” Nothing like this was said about, specifically, equity.

There is in fact only one direct reference to either equity or equality in Inspiring Generations and subsequent descriptions of the strategy. It is in the context of developing the role of cricket in the National Counties (NCs) in order to give players across England and Wales “*an equal opportunity to develop, regardless of location*” (i.e. whether they live within the boundaries of an NC or an FCC).

In Inspiring Generations, the words ‘diverse’ and ‘diversity’ are used eight times; ‘inclusivity’ is used once; and ‘equity’ is not used at all. Moreover, accessibility is framed in terms of broadening the “*demographic of cricket’s player and follower base,*” “*encourage[ing] a broader cross-section of people to engage with cricket,*” and “*mak[ing] it more accessible for those who already do*” (i.e. by reference to expanding diversity).

This approach – centring diversity and inclusion without equal attention paid to equity – is largely mirrored throughout the ECB’s strategic plans relevant to EDI sitting under Inspiring Generations.

- 6.3.41 The marginalising of equity in strategic thinking can lead to the faulty conclusion that all that is needed to eliminate discrimination is greater representation. This is not the case. Whilst creating a representative game at all levels is a positive first step in an EDI journey, representation alone will not deliver equity. Indeed, it is possible to have a game that is largely representative at all levels that remains inequitable and plagued by discrimination. Making cricket equitable requires acknowledging that systems within cricket have historically been designed to advantage some groups over others and that making the game genuinely equitable requires the game to ‘level up’ for those who have been left behind.
- 6.3.42 For those who have been disadvantaged because of their race, gender and/or class to have fair opportunities to thrive and succeed will require more than diversity and inclusion. It needs reform, and in some cases the dismantling and redesigning, of systems that govern the game and a true commitment to equity. It also requires proactively pursuing specific anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-classist strategies, which are premised on the recognition and acknowledgement, in the first place, that racism, sexism and class-based discrimination exist.

Greater EDI competency is needed on the ECB’s Board and Executive

- 6.3.43 Greater EDI competency on issues of race, gender and class, and more widely on issues of EDI, is needed on the ECB’s Board and Executive. Our evidence shows that discrimination is often only viewed through the lens of deliberate, interpersonal abuse. There appears to be a failure to recognise, or at least clearly acknowledge, that discrimination can also be institutional and/or structural in nature and can manifest itself in systems and decision-making processes that disproportionately disadvantage one group over another. It is critical for the ECB’s leadership (and, indeed, cricket as a whole) to build its competency on how racism, sexism and class-based discrimination intersect, operating within institutions and social structures (for example, through our school system) and in so doing compound disadvantages.
- 6.3.44 Decision-making at the highest level must be underpinned by EDI expertise. For that reason, we consider it essential that there is an ongoing and mandatory programme of training and development of these competencies for the ECB’s Board and Executive. Having done such training before, or in other contexts, is clearly not sufficient.
- 6.3.45 Given that developing EDI competency will inevitably take time, we also consider it essential that the ECB establishes an Executive-level Chief EDI Officer, with a singular focus on EDI, and puts in place sufficient resource to support EDI delivery. The Chief EDI Officer should also sit on the Board, in the short- to medium-term and/or until there is improved performance across the EDI outcomes described in our State of Equity in Cricket assessment in Chapter 4.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the ECB commits to being an anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-classist organisation and encourages all other cricketing organisations to do the same. The ECB should ensure that this is reflected in its strategic approach to EDI, including the development of new, or revision of existing, game-wide strategies or plans, and the development of its game-wide values and behaviours framework.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the ECB adopts a clear and consistent strategic approach to issues of EDI. To achieve this:

- a) Advancing EDI should not be relegated beneath or subsumed within commercial or other considerations, including the protection of reputation and public relations.
- b) There should be greater emphasis specifically on equity, alongside diversity and inclusion, when EDI decisions are made.
- c) The ECB must be willing to unambiguously name discrimination (e.g. racism, sexism and class-based discrimination) and include clear commitments to tackle the issue, within its strategic documents, where the evidence indicates that it is a problem.
- d) Identity holders must no longer be relied upon to highlight failures and drive change within cricket.
- e) The ECB should consider EDI in all aspects of its operations by carrying out EDI impact assessments for its existing and new programmes, initiatives and policies.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the ECB substantially increases the money allocated towards advancing EDI in all areas of the game, particularly at recreational and talent pathway level.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that the ECB complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty wherever possible, given its management of a public asset, its receipt of significant amounts of public funds and, most importantly, the benefits that doing so will have on advancing EDI across the game.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that, within the next six months, the ECB establishes an Executive-level Chief Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Officer role with a singular focus on EDI, and puts in place sufficient resources to support EDI delivery. We recommend that the Chief EDI Officer sits on the ECB Board for the short to medium-term and/or until there is improved performance across EDI outcomes described in our assessment of the State of Equity in Cricket in Chapter 4.

6.4 Black cricket has been failed – there must now be a commitment to reviving it



It is not only what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable.

Molière

- 6.4.1 Chapter 3, Historical Context provides the background to our review of the recent treatment of Black cricket in England and Wales. Cricket's importance to Black people, particularly of Caribbean descent, cannot be under-estimated and is compellingly captured in the 2010 British documentary 'Fire in Babylon'.³⁰³
- 6.4.2 The decline in Black English and Welsh cricket has been well documented and subject to much public debate for many years. Many have described, including many of the witnesses we spoke to, the closure of Haringey Cricket College in 1997 as a pivotal moment in this decline. We considered these issues, including how and why the ECB's strategic approach to EDI has likely contributed to this decline, and, importantly, how this can be remedied in the future.

Black cricket has been neglected

- 6.4.3 There is no reference to cricket in Black communities in Inspiring Generations, despite its central role in English cricket in the recent past. For a 'Strategy for Cricket' that is described as placing 'diversity and inclusion' at its core, this is a striking omission.
- 6.4.4 The ECB told us that prior to Inspiring Generations, and specifically the development of the SAAP in 2018, their "activity did not heavily focus on targeting specific ethnicities" and that once they realised this approach was not working, they had to make "tough choices." One such choice was to make "a conscious decision to focus on South Asian Communities." In doing so, given the SAAP's focus on "urban areas in general" they felt that there would "be cross-over benefits" for other ethnically diverse communities. The ECB also told us that it accepts "that there is much more work to be done to engage with Black communities and support players into the professional game."

³⁰³ <https://www.aaihs.org/fire-in-babylon-and-the-racial-politics-of-west-indian-cricket/>

- 6.4.5 We reject the notion that the ECB had no option but to prioritise South Asian cricket over and above Black cricket. It is worrying to even imply that two ethnically diverse groups, both with long established connections with and love for cricket, were (and are) somehow competing for resources. The ECB is a well-resourced organisation and it should never have amounted to an 'either/or' situation. If the ECB knew there was a problem, it could (and should) have developed targeted approaches for both communities.
- 6.4.6 Nonetheless, we welcome the recent recognition that Black communities also need targeted interventions and that the ECB is now applying "*an increasing focus [on] developing players from Black communities*" (e.g. through greater investment in the ACE Programme³⁰⁴) and a move to create a "*Black Cricket Community Group*"³⁰⁵ as part of future plans. However, we have been unable to identify any specific action that the ECB has taken or initiated itself, in relation to Black communities, since its formation in 1997 or since its own 'Clean Bowl Racism' report was published in 1999.
- 6.4.7 As we set out in Chapter 3, Historical Context, the reasons for the decline of the game in Black communities are complex and varied. Considering that the decline is, and has for a long time been, a well-established (and much discussed) fact, we found it deeply concerning and surprising that there is no evidence of ECB-led activity (until now) to even understand, let alone develop a strategy to reverse, this trend.
- 6.4.8 In addition, we are clear that the failure to intervene to save Haringey Cricket College was indeed a pivotal moment that contributed to the decline of Black cricket in England and Wales. Reflecting on the tremendous success of the College during its lifetime,³⁰⁶ it is regrettable that the ECB at the time did not use its power, influence and resources to prevent its closure.



We know we have lost a generation of black cricketers to our sport. We accept that the ECB could have done more historically to own that challenge and come up with a comprehensive programme sooner.

ECB

- 6.4.9 We believe that this failure to halt the decline of Black cricket was a result of multiple factors, including the prioritising of commercial considerations over and above equity, the absence of any Black representation to champion action amongst the game's senior leadership, and a failure to nurture and develop stakeholder relationships with Black cricketing communities that could have alerted them to this serious omission in their strategic approach.

³⁰⁴ <https://aceprogramme.com>

³⁰⁵ The ECB described plans to create a series of engagement mechanisms with communities in our hearings with them.

³⁰⁶ <https://www.espnricinfo.com/story/remembering-haringey-cricket-college-the-charity-behind-a-generation-of-black-cricketers-1285205>

Prioritising growth over EDI



There was this conflation between how do we grow the game and lack of representation [...] you're not going to grow it if you're ignoring over a third of the population [i.e. South Asian communities], [...] The two got conflated early on I think somewhere.

So first it's the business case in terms of saying how much the South Asian community spend[s] on cricket, so what's their value, what's their ticket value, where does it drop off, why does it drop off, what's their value in terms of subscriptions to watch, [...] why does the 35% fall off, when does it fall off and what are the issues and what we're going to do about it?³⁰⁷

If we'd started with the Black Caribbean Action Plan they'd have said nobody comes. Here, 35%, they're knocking the doors down, you're not letting them in, I think it was that process.

Current or Former Senior Cricket Leader

- 6.4.10 One problem with seeing EDI through the lens of commercial considerations is the risk that those aspects of EDI that correlate most closely with revenue generation take undue precedence. This may, for instance, mean that those communities that constitute a more readily monetizable market are prioritised over those that (at least at face value) do not.
- 6.4.11 This appears to have played out in relation to cricket in Black communities. Our evidence indicates that the centrality of 'growing the game' contributed to the ECB's decision to make what it describes as the "tough choice" to focus on South Asian communities, to the exclusion of other ethnically diverse communities, such as Black communities. It is our view that understanding and reversing the longstanding decline in the participation and progression of Black communities ought to have been an absolute priority for the ECB from an EDI perspective.
- 6.4.12 It is important to note that the ECB denies that commercial considerations played into its decision to prioritise South Asian communities over Black communities. They told us that it was about making the most 'impact' in circumstances where it had data about South Asian communities and not others. We, however, found this explanation unpersuasive in circumstances where South Asians already constituted a highly engaged (if relatively commercially untapped) group in comparison with their Black counterparts. Given this, along with evidence we have received on the importance of the business case to the development of the SAAP, it is, in our view, reasonable to conclude that the decision to focus on South Asian communities and not Black communities was driven, at least to some extent, by commercial considerations.
- 6.4.13 Again we wish to be clear: the point, of course, is not that the ECB should not be seeking to drive growth in the game, whether in terms of revenue or absolute numbers playing the sport. As already noted, this is a key part of its 'raison d'être' and represents an important strand when thinking about promoting EDI in the game. Rather, it is to note that doing so will not always correspond with what is right from an EDI perspective, and that these need to be treated as distinct from one another to avoid EDI being subsumed within a broader commercial strategy. To be effective, EDI work must be driven, above all, by EDI considerations. Otherwise, it can simply become a means to an end, with what is right for EDI - in this case, investing in Black cricket - potentially getting lost along the way.

³⁰⁷ We understand this to be the individual's comment on the proportion of adult recreational players who are South Asian, which is much lower in the professional game.

Absence of Black representation amongst the game’s senior leadership

- 6.4.14 One of the starkest findings in Chapter 4, State of Equity in Cricket, is the almost total absence of Black representation across the game’s most senior leadership. In light of our evidence that the ECB’s most successful strategic approaches to EDI have largely been driven by identity holders from the relevant marginalised groups, it raises the possibility that this lack of Black representation around the Board table has directly contributed to the failure to take action: Black communities had no one to speak for them and were simply forgotten.



When you talk about strategic approach, the South Asian Action Plan was a genuine strategic attempt that Kamlesh Patel personally championed to try and make connections with those communities up and down the country that love their cricket but aren’t engaging with, what you might call, mainstream cricket. Implementing it is hard. But the direction of travel is right. There was no strategy, until Ebony came along, for connecting with the black community. That, I think, needs a refresh and an update.

Current or Former Senior Cricket Leader

- 6.4.15 Whilst identity holders should not be relied upon to drive EDI transformation, we are realistic about their role in doing so. Accordingly, to help remedy the failures with regards to Black cricket in England and Wales that we have identified, it is incumbent on the ECB, and the wider game, to address the lack of Black representation at the most senior levels of leadership within the sport with some urgency.

The need for effective engagement with Black communities

- 6.4.16 During our hearings with them, the ECB shared a commitment to create a new engagement group with Black communities. We welcome the decision in principle, though in the absence of any detail on the role or purpose of this group we cannot comment on whether it is likely to be effective. We can say that the ECB must recognise it will take time and effort to rebuild trust with Black communities and they must come with a serious offer to utilise the expertise of stakeholders in the development of their future strategic approach.

The need for a targeted strategic approach for Black cricket

- 6.4.17 We are somewhat reassured that the ECB clearly recognises that they have not done enough to support Black communities and have already made some commitments to try to put this right. In our view, it will require a targeted strategic approach, similar to the approach taken with South Asian communities through the SAAP. The strategy must be informed by sound intersectional analysis and insight from stakeholders from the Black community, who have experience in cricket, including those who have done such excellent work as part of the ACE Programme.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that, within the next 12 months, the ECB undertakes an in-depth examination of the decline of cricket in Black communities in England and Wales and develops a targeted action plan to reverse that decline. This should include:

- a) Providing increased and sustained funding for the very successful ACE Programme.
- b) The identification of Black-led cricket clubs across England and Wales and an offer of financial support and capacity building to develop targeted programmes in their local communities.
- c) Proactive and extensive engagement with stakeholders from Black communities when developing the plan, using the evidence-based and user insight-led approach taken under the South Asian Action Plan.

6.5 There is an urgent need to recognise and tackle cricket's class problem



The whole image of cricket from the marketing to the presentation on match days, the affordability, the whiteness of it, even I as a white man from Surrey find it hard to swallow, it is exclusionary and elitist and they don't even realise they are doing it. The cultural blindness is staggering.

Academic

- 6.5.1 The existence of barriers in cricket faced by those from working class and/or low socio-economic status backgrounds is clear. Whether due to the prohibitive cost of attending international matches, the fact that most televised cricket is only available behind an expensive paywall, the huge overrepresentation of private school players on the talent pathway and in the professional game, or the significant costs associated with progressing through the pathway, cricket represents, in many cases, a distinctly middle and upper class sport. Moreover, this is by no means a new phenomenon, as our Chapter 3 on the Historical Context of cricket clearly demonstrates. Issues of class inequity have been a part of the fabric of cricket for as long as cricket has existed.



The amateur/professional distinction, the whole concept of amateurism in sport [...] was designed to exclude working class participation so that these men didn't have to go through the ignominy of public defeat [...] So cricket has a serious cultural issue, there is an awful lot of baggage.

Academic

- 6.5.2 Our view is that there has been little to no focus on removing these deeply-rooted class barriers in cricket. Representatives of the ECB appear to have recognised this themselves, albeit, it seems, surprisingly late in the day.



One of our big reflections over the last 18 months or so is that our understanding of lower socio-economic groups is not good enough.

ECB

- 6.5.3 We agree: the understanding of, and efforts to change, how the game treats those from working class and lower socio-economic status backgrounds is not good enough.
- 6.5.4 The ECB told us that its aim was that “*financial costs should not be a barrier preventing any young person from being able to progress through the talent pathway.*” Nevertheless, it has been clear to us that ‘class’, by whatever measure, and by the ECB’s own admission, is not an area that the ECB or the wider game have given sufficient thought to.
- 6.5.5 This concern was reflected by many of the people who provided evidence to us.



And there’s so many opportunities to actually engage with these [working class, inner-city] communities, to make sure that we actually find those players, identify those players and bring them in. But you get the feeling that [cricket clubs] would only deliver to get the numbers and to get the funding in. There isn’t a genuine will to really engage with these populations and there isn’t a genuine will to integrate these populations and to make them part of that little rarefied group, not as a guest but as an actual member. A part of the project.

Cage Cricket

Inspiring Generations, the SAAP and other initiatives fail to substantively address class barriers

- 6.5.6 The effect of this means that to date, the ECB has not developed a specific, holistic strategy to address inequity based on class, schooling and/or socio-economic background. The need for such a strategy is increasingly being recognised elsewhere in the game. For example, when asked to identify the actions that should be taken to make the game more equitable and inclusive, one FCC responded “*connecting talent pathways into the areas of the game where it is more tricky and potentially more time consuming to do so, i.e. not just link into clubs and private schools [...] To connect into all state schools and all private [cricket] academies and all local and community initiatives that create opportunities for players to engage with cricket. This will in turn potentially change the diversity of the playing groups that will create role models that the game can evidence to future generations is a game for all. **We need a socio-economic diversity strategy.***”
- 6.5.7 As with ‘race’ (excepting the SAAP), there are no actions within Inspiring Generations targeted specifically at eradicating the significant class/socio-economic inequities that exist within English and Welsh cricket. That isn’t to say that these inequities are not indirectly addressed in certain ways by Inspiring Generations. In principle, growing the game and making cricket more accessible should, if delivered successfully, benefit those from working class and/or low socio-economic backgrounds in terms of their engagement with the sport. But without a targeted approach, the entrenched class inequities in the game will not be meaningfully addressed.
- 6.5.8 This lack of a specific focus on class/socio-economic status might explain why none of the actions under the ‘*Making Cricket Accessible*’ priority within Inspiring Generations is directed at addressing the cost barriers to both participating and, crucially, progressing in the sport. It might also explain why a strategy or action plan that specifically focuses on eradicating socio-economic disadvantages within cricket has not been formulated by the ECB (in contrast to, for example, the SAAP and the TWGCP).

- 6.5.9 We are conscious that in the ECB's game-wide 12 Point Plan, the aim to remove "*barriers in talent pathways*" did contain an action of "*targeted support programmes for players from diverse or under-privileged backgrounds.*" As noted earlier, this has included the announcement of £1 million to reduce financial barriers for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access the talent pathway. When asked how the figure was determined, however, the ECB responded that "*[it was] a financially viable initial commitment which we felt was substantial enough to make an impact on reducing financial barriers. We wanted to make a statement, to show communities that the ECB is committed. [We] felt the sum was significant enough to do that [...] We were very open that this was not the final figure. [It] buys us time to understand the complexity.*"
- 6.5.10 Whilst we appreciate the ECB's candour, the fact that the amount was chosen to "*make a statement*" before the time had been taken "*to understand the complexity*" of the issue – to work out where the money should go or how much was needed – is striking. In addition to the concerns noted earlier about the overemphasis on good public relations, we are clear that £1 million is likely to be wholly insufficient to have the sort of impact on reducing financial barriers that is needed. Although a figure had not been finalised, we are aware that an early estimate of between £4 million to £5 million had been considered by the ECB to be the cost of making the talent pathway 'free' and, therefore, genuinely accessible for many of those from working class and/or lower socio-economic backgrounds.
- 6.5.11 Given the intersections of race and class, we appreciate that plans (like the SAAP) and initiatives (like the ACE Programme) that involve investment in ethnically diverse communities are also likely to disproportionately benefit people from lower socio-economic backgrounds within those communities. Moreover, some of the elements of the other plans, in particular the SAAP, that aim to improve provision of cricket in economically deprived regions will benefit the wider population. Indeed, the ECB told us of their belief that whilst the focus of the SAAP was on South Asian communities, some of the actions would cut across communities within all urban areas. Again, though, those benefits, to the extent that they exist, are ultimately incidental and are, therefore, unlikely to significantly open up the sport along the lines of class.
- 6.5.12 We note, too, that there is relatively little in the SAAP about the impact of socio-economic factors on the engagement and progression of South Asian cricketers, and the intersections of race and class, particularly in the context of the talent pathway. While the SAAP explicitly recognises that South Asian communities are "*extremely diverse [...] encompass[ing] a wide variety of cultures, languages and faiths,*" it does not then go on to reflect on the impact this might have. There is no reference in the SAAP, for example, to the particular challenges faced by, specifically, working class South Asian cricketers.
- 6.5.13 One of the 11 priorities in the SAAP is devoted to "*Financial Support*", which involves the creation of a bursary scheme "*to help reduce finance as an obstacle to the development of talented young South Asian players.*" Whilst this acknowledges the impact of socio-economic factors on a player's progression, it represents a very small part of the SAAP as a whole.
- 6.5.14 Moreover this appears to have turned into something completely different by the time the 2018-2019 SAAP Impact Report was written. According to that report, this financial support amounted to the provision "*through a partnership with the Royal Springboard Foundation*" of scholarships to "*six South Asian boys...to attend outstanding boarding schools that will support them in both their sporting and academic pursuits.*"
- 6.5.15 In circumstances where this appears to have constituted the **only** action focusing specifically on the financial barriers to South Asian cricketers progressing through the talent pathway, it is concerning that the impact – benefiting just six individuals – was so limited.
- 6.5.16 The "*Facilities*" priority in the SAAP also applies a socio-economic lens, noting correctly that the provision of year-round access to cricket facilities in "*urban locations*" is necessary to tackle "*the challenges of availability, quality and cost*". This, however, as with other initiatives we have outlined above, is focused on the recreational game as opposed to 'elite cricket'.

6.5.17 We are not suggesting that the ECB has failed to establish or support any initiatives that are linked to low socio-economic backgrounds. There are a number of such initiatives and they are very positive, particularly in the talent pathway. They include:

- Providing free places on the Dynamos and All Stars National Programmes
- Increasing investment in Chance to Shine (whether in schools or through its Street programme) and the Lord's Taverners to deliver cricket to more children from underserved communities
- Requiring, through County Partnership Agreements, Counties to make hardship funds available
- Offering the Diploma in Sports Education (DiSE) programme to young people at state schools in CAGs to support them to transition to EPP level.

6.5.18 These initiatives, however, are principally aimed at **participation** in cricket rather than **progression** onto or through the pathway. Whilst we are obviously supportive of widening participation, that in and of itself cannot and will not address many of the barriers to progression that are identified in this Report. Where the initiatives do go beyond participation and target players already on the talent pathway (for example, DiSE and hardship funds), they represent individualised responses rather than a systemic response to the issue of cost barriers faced by people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Class barriers need to be specifically addressed in ECB strategy

6.5.19 What is of most concern to the Commission, as we have outlined above, is the fact that fundamentally none of the initiatives outlined forms part of a coherent overarching strategy specifically focused on people from lower socio-economic backgrounds and, more broadly, those who attend state schools.

6.5.20 We did hear evidence, both from representatives of the ECB and others, that more recently there had been something of a shift in culture within the ECB on the issue of class, but in our view, any such shift needs to be accelerated as a matter of urgency. An immediate transformation in approach is required: a recognition of the extent of the barriers and a systematic, proactive and country-wide change in approach to break them down. Plans that target other marginalised groups (e.g. women, and Black and South Asian communities), should all place class considerations at their core. But this isn't enough: the ECB's, and the wider game's, EDI strategy must be expanded to specifically address class as a barrier in itself.

Recommendation 12

We recommend that, within the next 12 months, the ECB undertakes an in-depth examination of the class barriers that exist in cricket and develops a game-wide strategy to remove them.

6.6 Equity in the women’s game is improving but there is still much to do



I definitely have seen a massive difference [in terms of the women’s game] I think because the profile of the women’s game is growing so much, people are aware of the fact that girls can play, women can play and we can be good.

Women’s Current or Former Professional Player

- 6.6.1 The ECB should be commended for its strategic approach to driving forward equity for women and girls in cricket. The women’s game has made a number of significant strides forward since the launch of Inspiring Generations and the TWGCP. The ECB’s most recent annual EDI Report in December 2022³⁰⁸ provides powerful evidence of this: a 75% increase in women’s and girls’ teams across England and Wales since 2019, record attendances at women’s fixtures (domestic and international), and 1,200 women signing up for ECB coaching courses, amongst many others. There is also, of course, the positive impact of The Hundred on the women’s game, which we discuss further later in this section.
- 6.6.2 Understanding what is driving this success is critical, so it can be learnt from and, importantly, strengthened further. We set out our conclusions below.
- 6.6.3 One obvious place to start, however, is with the composition of the game’s leadership. We have already set out that improved race, gender and class representation on the ECB’s Board has been critical in changing its approach to EDI matters for the better. Notwithstanding our concerns that identity holders should not have to bear the burden of driving EDI, we note the significance of the fact that two important Board roles (Senior Independent Director and Interim CEO) have been held by women since 2019 and commend the ECB for setting a target of equal gender representation on its Board by 2025. Our assessment in Chapter 4, the State of Equity in Cricket also shows that progress is being made on improving gender diversity on the Boards of FCCs and CCBs, although there is much more to be done, particularly among FCC Chairs and CEOs.

A greater focus on equity is paying dividends

- 6.6.4 In contrast to the approach to race and class, Inspiring Generations does include an explicit focus on “transforming women’s and girls’ cricket” which demonstrates proactive recognition by the ECB of a central EDI issue in cricket: the vast inequality between the sport’s treatment of men and women.
- 6.6.5 The aim to **transform** women’s and girls’ cricket by “increas[ing] the representation of women at every level of cricket” also has a sense of ambition that is, to some extent, missing from the rest of Inspiring Generations. Indeed, its inclusion is likely to be one of the reasons why there has been greater progress on gender representation within the game’s senior leadership than there has been with respect to either race or class.
- 6.6.6 Likewise, compared with the challenges of race and class, the ECB’s articulation of their vision for women and girls at our hearings with them – “a vision that women and girls have the same opportunity, same welcome and same chance to progress as men and boys in any role in cricket on or off the pitch” – also firmly centres ‘equity’. There was, we felt, some recognition that inequality defines the gender divide within cricket and that it is necessary to reduce, and ultimately, eradicate it.

³⁰⁸ <https://www.ecb.co.uk/news/2978734>

- 6.6.7 Finally, when the TWGCP was launched in 2019, it came with what the ECB described as “ground breaking” commitments, including an ambition to invest £50 million over five years “to enable organisations across the cricket network to recruit more dedicated resources, improve the player experience, and increase the opportunities to build careers in the sport” as well as the funding of “40 full time-professional contracts.”³⁰⁹ We are not aware of equally clear (or substantial) investment commitments to address specifically race-based or class-based inequities in the game.

The Hundred has had a positive impact on the women’s game

- 6.6.8 There is also, of course, the undeniable impact of The Hundred, described to us by one evidence giver as the “Brexit of cricket. For some people it’s the Holy Grail, for some others it’s the curse of all curses.”
- 6.6.9 We do not come out, overall, on either side of that debate. We recognise, for example, that there have been benefits in terms of expanding the game to new audiences, yet there have also been some causes for concern with respect to the process by which the competition was set up. But we are clear that The Hundred has had a positive impact on the women’s game. The introduction of equal prize money, double headers (albeit initially introduced as a fix to a pandemic-related scheduling challenge) and the increased exposure of the women’s game, placed on close to an equal footing with the men’s, has in many ways catalysed a significant change in what was the status quo, which we of course welcome.



I don’t think you can argue with the fact that it’s probably accelerated the growth of the women and girls’ game, which everyone would welcome. So I’m a massive fan of The Hundred [...] I think it’s been a genuine game changer for the women and girls’ game and I really hope it continues to be a success. Because I think some really good examples are chatting to families and they say, ‘oh we go for the women’s game but then we leave when the men’s game came on’, because they enjoyed watching the game and they felt it was a nicer environment to watch the sport and I thought that was really nice. And you also have examples where families who have a boy and a girl, the boy gets into the women’s game as much as he does the men’s game. So I think when we’re talking about the social attitudes, I think those youngsters are going to come through with a much different attitude towards women and women’s sport than maybe what we’ve had historically. And I think that is what The Hundred will do, which is obviously good.

Women’s Current or Former Professional Player

A strategy with some limitations

- 6.6.10 Whilst the approach to women’s and girls’ cricket in Inspiring Generations has much to commend it, the issue we raised earlier - of prioritising commercial considerations over EDI - also applies, to some extent, in this context. The emphasis in relation to women’s and girls’ cricket is, as elsewhere, on ‘growth’: under the heading “Transforming women’s and girls’ cricket” in Inspiring Generations, the ECB states that “women and girls are underrepresented at every level of cricket. Changing this is the game’s biggest growth opportunity,” and the measure used to track progress is “[t]he total number of women and girls engaging with cricket.”
- 6.6.11 By contrast, issues like ‘sexism’ (in all its forms) and ‘misogyny’ are completely absent from Inspiring Generations and, indeed, the TWGCP.
- 6.6.12 Increasing the number of women engaging with cricket is a vital part of the ECB’s overall mandate, as is growing the game more generally. Moreover, as with race and class, efforts to grow and open up the sport are likely to both demand and produce a sport that is more equitable, diverse and inclusive. Despite this, however, the reluctance to go further and centre both gender equity and the elimination of sexism and misogyny within the sport is noteworthy, particularly given what our evidence has revealed about the discrimination that women and girls continue to face in the game.

³⁰⁹ <https://www.ecb.co.uk/news/1373377/ecb-launches-new-plan-to-transform-women-s-and-girls-cricket>

- 6.6.13 Likewise, whilst there are references in the TWGCP to the goal of achieving a 'gender-balanced' sport, issues of equality and equity within cricket as between men and women appear secondary to the desire for greater numbers of women playing the game. There is, for example, no significant commitment to increasing the number of women in significant roles within men's cricket and there are limited ECB initiatives focussed on supporting inclusive cultures for women and girls currently in the game. For example, how women and girls feel about the inclusivity of cricket for women and girls is not one of the TWGCP's measures of success.

Women's and girls' cricket needs to be valued as integral to the game

- 6.6.14 Notwithstanding the clear progress that has been made and that we were told about, there is much more to do before cricket will be close to being a genuinely equitable sport for women and girls. Our evidence shows, for example, that women and girls continue to face widespread interpersonal, institutional and structural discrimination in the game, with women's and girls' cricket frequently devalued and deprioritised.
- 6.6.15 We heard evidence of differential approaches to the women's game in a range of areas including their terms and conditions, opportunities to play and access to facilities.



Why would you stick with it if even at the top level [...] you're not able to play at first class grounds, not paid well, not respected.

Stump Out Sexism



[X] which is the domestic team that I play for, an issue they're having is trying to get facilities. Because often, at [X] for example, the men get priority and it can be really hard for the women to get the facilities that they need and not get pushed to out grounds. And there's examples like the girls can't net indoors because the men have booked it just in case it rains and things like that.

Women's Current or Former Professional Player



I think the biggest difference between men's and women's cricket, not tactically or strength-wise or anything like that, is just the sheer amount that the guys get to play, which naturally will make them better cricketers because they always seem to have these opportunities.

Women's Current or Former Professional Player

- 6.6.16 Several people we spoke to cited the game's response to the COVID pandemic as an example of deprioritization, where re-establishing the men's game was openly declared to have primacy.



It was certainly put on the back burner, I think the priority of governing bodies was to try and preserve income and try and get men's cricket back on. It was certainly a lot longer for the women's game to get back going. It impacted it quite negatively for a long time I think. I do think since Covid though, certainly the ECB have tried to look at ways to do things differently and make things more equal. Whether that's down to the pandemic I'm not sure, but I do think it gave people a chance to assess what wasn't right and what needed to change. But there's no doubt in my head that women's sport massively went on the back burner. Men's sport was hugely prioritised.

Women's Current or Former Professional Player



COVID is a really interesting one because there's definitely a kind of prevailing narrative that the women's game should be grateful for what we got, which was that actually they did play an international series against the West Indies in the 2020 summer, despite [a senior representative of the ECB] having come out in April or May and basically said it's okay for there not to be any women's cricket because the men's game matters more. Now that's not a direct quote, but [...] effectively what she was saying was that the men's game bankrolls the women's game, so it's more important for us to get men's international cricket restarted than it is for us to get women's international cricket restarted, and I accept that. And that's the kind of most senior voice in the whole of women's cricket governance in this country saying that she accepts that men's cricket has to be prioritised.

Unattributed to protect confidentiality

- 6.6.17 The COVID pandemic response is indeed an interesting point. Professional cricket had been suspended for a period of time during the pandemic and the ECB was facing significant financial losses. The ECB acknowledged the financial impact of the COVID pandemic to us and said that *"COVID was a blow for women's sport much more significantly than men's sport."*
- 6.6.18 The comments referenced in the above quote were made in a press conference when it was effectively said that the men's game had to be prioritised for financial reasons: *"If the international women's schedule can't be fulfilled in full but a large amount of the international men's programme can this summer, which is going to reduce that £380m hole, we have to be realistic about that [...] In order for the whole game to survive, the financial necessity rests upon many of those international men's matches being fulfilled [...] If we have to play less international women's cricket this summer to safeguard the longer-term future and investment and building the infrastructure for a more stable and sustainable women's game then that is probably a hit we might have to take [...] We've got these long-term ambitions for the game that extend beyond this summer and trying to protect as much investment as possible over the next five years, that is largely going to come down to how much international men's cricket can be staged this summer. I'm realistic about that [...] That's not to say we won't be fighting hard to play our international schedule against India and South Africa as best we can [...] I would be devastated if there was no international women's cricket this summer [...] But we're only going to have a few venues, if any, in operation and if that ends up being two bio-secure environments or three, there's only a certain number of days to try to cram everything into."*³¹⁰
- 6.6.19 Few people are going to argue with the commercial rationale articulated in this press conference. The COVID pandemic presented an 'existential crisis' for a significant number of industries, including sport. Difficult decisions had to be taken. Furthermore, the ECB told us that significant financial and logistical efforts were made to try to secure England Women's Internationals during the summer of 2020 (and England Women did play a T20 series against West Indies Women in September 2020). Equally, however, had women's cricket not been devalued for so long then cricket may not have been in a position during the pandemic where the commercial reality necessitated prioritising the men's game.
- 6.6.20 We heard from a number of evidence-givers that there continues to exist a prevailing narrative that women should be 'grateful' for the gains that they have recently made. We have said it elsewhere in this Report, but it is worth repeating: suggesting that women should be grateful for recent gains fails to acknowledge the historical exclusion of women or to recognise that recent progress made in women's cricket is only a small step in making up for those years of exclusion of women from the sport.
- 6.6.21 There must be express recognition of the historic injustices that women have faced in cricket and that to remedy this injustice and reverse its consequences, even more must be done, including pursuing specific anti-sexist strategies. Both in terms of the language used, and the actions taken, the women's game must be treated as an integral part of cricket, of equal value and not subservient to the men's game, if cricket is to become truly an equitable sport.

³¹⁰ <https://www.skysports.com/cricket/news/12173/11984290/ecbs-clare-connor-says-englands-mens-cricket-could-take-priority-over-womens-game-this-summer>



I think acknowledging that cricket is institutionally sexist is really important, because I don't think that we see that. I've never seen anybody say that publicly and I think that that's important because that's the starting point.

Academic

- 6.6.22 We agree wholeheartedly with the above quote. As set out in the Executive Summary, we are recommending that the ECB makes an unqualified public apology for its own failings, and those of the game it governs, to include an acknowledgement that sexism in cricket has existed, and continues to exist.

Women need to have an equal role in the governance of the game

- 6.6.23 We have found a disturbing lack of representation of women's cricket within the game's formal governance structures, which we discuss in more detail in Chapter 7 on Governance and Leadership. There is an urgent need for the equal representation of women among the game's most senior leadership, where men remain significantly overrepresented, exclusively so in the case of FCC Chairs.
- 6.6.24 Women need more power and influence, and a greater voice, in the game which we believe should have a huge impact on how decisions are made, helping to ensure that women's cricket is treated with equal significance and value as the men's game.

The women's game needs increased investment and equal pay

- 6.6.25 The women's game remains the poor relation of its male counterpart in English and Welsh cricket. Whilst we found good evidence of significant year-on-year improvement, we also found undeniable evidence of inequitable investment and unequal treatment for which we found no reasonable justification. Significant pay disparities persist. We consider it a matter of both fairness and justice that this is remedied at speed. Women have the right to equal pay for equal work and should not be penalised for having fewer opportunities to play than their male counterparts. Importantly, if the commitment to make cricket in England and Wales equitable is serious, it requires the game to acknowledge and address the historic underinvestment and lack of fair (or indeed any) remuneration that women have faced for decades.
- 6.6.26 There are also clear commercial reasons for the game to increase its pace on this issue. In January 2023, cricket saw what has been described as both a 'seismic' and 'game-changing' development: the announcement of the Indian Women's Premier League (IWPL).³¹¹ The IWPL will provide a long overdue opportunity for women players from across the world to showcase their talents and expand the reach and audience for women's cricket globally. In doing so, it will create a more competitive market for the best players.
- 6.6.27 To address both that challenge and the current levels of inequality, the game in England and Wales must respond with a fundamental overhaul of the pay structure for women's professional cricket and provide greater investment in its core infrastructure.

Investment disparities

- 6.6.28 The ECB should be commended for tripling its investment into the women's game since the launch of Inspiring Generations, including a £50 million commitment over 2020-2024. This investment is having a clear and demonstrable impact on the international and domestic game. Indeed, it shows just how important money and resources are when it comes to engaging those who have been marginalised by the game for so long. The ECB also announced a further £3.5 million increase for the women's game in October 2022.

³¹¹ <https://wisden.com/series-stories/womens-ipl/womens-cricket-league-india-2023-game-changing-moment>

- 6.6.29 Although a direct comparison between the international women's and men's games is not straightforward for a number of reasons (in part because England Men play significantly more red ball cricket than England Women), there are nonetheless clear and significant disparities. In 2021, for every £5 that the ECB invested in the international men's game, £1 was invested in the women's. When compared with England Women, England Men had just under double the investment in staff and operations, and over double the investment in the England pathway. The difference, however, is most stark in relation to players' remuneration, which we discuss further in our section on pay disparities below.
- 6.6.30 For the domestic professional game, a direct comparison is even more challenging. There are different numbers of organisations (i.e. 18 FCCs and eight WRTs) and FCCs manage grounds and facilities, which require additional resources to staff and maintain, whereas the WRTs do not. WRTs are dependent on FCCs for use of their facilities and infrastructure support.
- 6.6.31 As a result, we expected some disparity between investment in FCCs and WRTs. However, we found that in 2021 boys' Academies alone received 40% of the total investment into the entire professional women's domestic game (including its Academies). This in our view is wholly wrong, and serves only to perpetuate the current lack of equity.
- 6.6.32 In addition, the fact that the WRTs are dependent on FCCs for use of their facilities and other infrastructure support is important: we have received evidence of men receiving privileged access to these facilities, with women having to fit in around them. Whilst we have not had the capacity to explore this in detail, we are confident, based on the evidence we received, that it is unlikely to be exceptional.
- 6.6.33 It is our view that the ECB, as recommended by Women in Sport,³¹² should introduce the practice of gender-based budgeting into their business planning cycle. This does not necessarily mean that an equal amount must be spent on men's and women's cricket. Rather, it is a process that requires an evidence-based assessment of differing needs and priorities, and a comparison of how budget decisions benefit both men and women. It allows for decisions to be taken that more fairly allocate resources. We consider this to be essential if the historic injustice faced by women over decades of underinvestment is to be addressed fairly.

Recommendation 13

We recommend that the ECB introduces gender-based budgeting into their next, and future, business planning cycle to analyse the fairness of their resource allocation decisions and the impact they have on gender equality. Spending and investment decisions can have very different impacts on women and men, because of different starting points, needs and priorities. The analysis conducted to inform decision-making should adopt an intersectional approach that considers race, class and gender.

- 6.6.34 Whilst we are not in a position to recommend specific levels of additional funding for the women's and girls' game, we strongly believe that investment should be increased significantly and at pace to ensure an equitable allocation of resources throughout English and Welsh cricket between men and women.

Recommendation 14

We recommend that the ECB and the wider game increase, at pace, the levels of investment in the core infrastructure and operations of the women's and girls' game, reflecting the outcome of gender-based budgeting.

³¹² <https://womeninsport.org/statement/gender-budgeting-must-be-applied-if-sport-is-to-meet-the-needs-of-women-and-girls/>

Disparities at the international level – remuneration

- 6.6.35 We are aware of different terms and conditions between England Men and Women players. The women are simply not receiving some of the benefits that the men are entitled to, including, for example, the payment of an overseas tour premium and the provision of hospitality and support at home games (which includes hospitality tickets for every home match, a fully catered hospitality box for families at weekends, and transport for families to and from matches). We welcome the fact that women have, since November 2022, become entitled to injury payments, on the same basis as the men, and overseas family provision, although we understand that the family provision is not equal to the men, which should be put right.
- 6.6.36 Another area of disparity is in relation to match fees. They are paid to the full squad for England Men but only the playing XI for England Women, who receive approximately 25% (or less) of the match fees paid to the men.³¹³ The fact that injury payments are calculated as a percentage of match fees means that there is a further inequality in the distribution. We understand that New Zealand³¹⁴ and India³¹⁵ have already introduced equal match fees and consider it essential that the ECB follows this good practice. We also understand that England Men have a structured win bonus matrix meaning they are rewarded for each match win, and each win that contributes towards a series win. This isn't the case for England Women, who have a fixed overall bonus pot that equates to approximately 8% of the estimated bonus pot for England Men.³¹⁶
- 6.6.37 Importantly, we have evidence that the approach to agreeing the remuneration budget for England Men and England Women differs: the men's budget is fixed through a three year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the ECB and the Team England Player Partnership, an arrangement not currently replicated for the women's team. We believe that England Women should also have the stability of an agreed three year MOU.
- 6.6.38 In terms of overall remuneration, in 2021 England Men received 13 times the amount paid to England Women (the disparity in part reflects the fact that women play less red ball cricket). Looking only at white ball cricket, where there is a broadly equivalent amount of play, England Women still receive significantly less than England Men. We received credible evidence that the average salary for England Women is 20.6% of the average salary for England Men for playing white ball cricket (although the ECB has indicated that they consider this figure is up to 30%). The inequity is stark on many levels, even when comparing 'like with like'. In view of our recommendations about the importance of achieving equal pay, we urge relevant parties in the professional game, both international and domestic, to agree a transparent basis for calculating the comparative levels of salary and other remuneration for men and women players, so that progress towards, and the achievement of, equal pay can be tracked.
- 6.6.39 Examples of key areas of disparity in pay are set out in the table below.³¹⁷ We also found evidence of disparity in other areas including commercial payments. In certain areas, such as prize money for international competitions, remedying disparities is outside of the ECB's gift. However, we are aware that Cricket Australia committed to top up prize money to ensure parity between men and women in the 2020 ICC Women's T20 World Cup, a move we think the ECB should replicate.

³¹³ As at February 2022.

³¹⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2022/jul/05/new-zealand-cricket-pay-equity-deal-women-men-same-match-fees>

³¹⁵ https://www.thecricketer.com/Topics/womenscricket/bcci_india_commit_to_equal_match_fees_for_men_and_women_national_sides.html

³¹⁶ As at February 2022.

³¹⁷ The table is also included in Chapter 4, State of Equity in Cricket.

Pay Disparities – England Players

The number of red ball/white ball matches and days' cricket played by England Men (113 days) and Women in 2022 (48 days):

	Red Ball	White Ball
England Women	2 Test Matches (up to 8 days)	40 fixtures/days
England Men	15 Test Matches (up to 75 days)	38 fixtures/days

- **International white ball cricket** – The average salary for England Women is 20.6% of the average salary for England Men for playing white ball cricket.³¹⁸
- **International white ball captain's allowance** – England Women's captain's allowance is 31% of the allowance awarded to the England Men's captain.³¹⁹
- **International match fees** – England Women's fees are 25% of England Men's for white ball matches and 15% for Test Matches.³²⁰
- **Prize money** – The prize money for the [ICC 2022 Women's One Day International \(ODI\) World Cup](#) was equivalent to 35% of the prize money for the [2019 Men's ODI World Cup](#).

Disparities at the domestic level – remuneration

6.6.40 This pattern of unequal treatment is replicated in the domestic game. Women and men appear to have different terms and conditions in some respects including, for example, unequal access to the Futures Fund. Unlike in the men's game, there are still 'Pay as You Play' contracts in the women's game (i.e. fees are paid on a match by match basis) rather than full contracts. There are also no 'rookie contracts' (for young players) for women. We can find no reasonable grounds for these disparities and they should be removed.

6.6.41 We also found significant disparities in the levels of pay across the domestic professional game. A welcome exception is prize money for The Hundred, even though significant salary disparities between men and women competing in The Hundred remain. Some of the disparity across the rest of the domestic professional game can be explained by the fact that women are playing less cricket than men. However, it is our clear view that women should not be penalised for having fewer opportunities to play. In addition, we are aware that the approach taken to setting salaries varies: in 2021, each FCC squad had a salary cap of £2,500,000 and a collar of £1,300,000 (i.e. maximum and minimum levels) whereas there was just a maximum total salary budget per WRT of £250,000. (The men's figure at each FCC covered a squad of approximately 25 players, the WRT squads comprised 6 full-time players on average.) We set out further details about the nature of these disparities below.³²¹

³¹⁸ Based on figures for the 2022/2023 contract year.

³¹⁹ As at February 2022.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ The table is also included in Chapter 4, State of Equity in Cricket.

Pay Disparities – Domestic Players³²²

- **Domestic cricket average salary** – The average salary for a player in a WRT is equivalent to 45.5% of the average salary for a player at an FCC.
- **The Hundred salaries** – The total spend on the women’s salaries is 25% of the men’s, and the highest salary tier for the women is just £1,250 more than the lowest tier for the men.
- **Prize money** – Excluding The Hundred, the total prize money for women is equivalent to only 10% of the total prize money for men.

6.6.42 We recognise that the difference between the total prize money pot for domestic competitions (excluding The Hundred) is complicated by factors such as the larger number of men’s teams, the greater number of matches played and the presence of red ball as well as white ball competitions for men. But, as we have already set out, women should not be penalised for having fewer opportunities to play in competitions that are organised by those who subsequently determine how much they are paid.

6.6.43 In order for the ECB to achieve its vision of transforming the sport to one where “*women and girls have the same opportunity, same welcome and same chance to progress as men and boys in any role in cricket on or off the pitch,*” we have made a series of recommendations below that we know will be challenging. They will require taking action to overcome the structural barriers that women face in the game, including addressing the historical underinvestment that has resulted in the women’s game being less profitable to date, as well as moving quickly to address the fewer opportunities that women have to play. This must of course happen alongside the necessary cultural change to ensure that women’s cricket is recognised as an equal and integral part of the sport.

³²² In 2022.

Recommendation 15

We recommend that there should be a fundamental overhaul of the professional women players' pay structure within English and Welsh cricket and that there should be equal pay at domestic level by 2029 and at international level by 2030, as follows:

International and domestic level

- a) With immediate effect, there should be equality for all working conditions between women and men.
- b) The approach to the calculation of remuneration (i.e. through a three year agreement/Memorandum of Understanding) should be equal and standardised between men and women.

International level

- a) Match fees between England Men and England Women should be equalised with immediate effect.
- b) Other forms of England Women's pay/fees, including average salaries, captain's allowances and win bonuses, should be equal to the England Men's white ball team by 2028.
- c) England Women's average commercial pay (i.e. payment for promotional appearances) should be equal to England Men's average commercial pay by 2028.
- d) England Women's prize money for the ICC ODI World Cup and T20 World Cup should be topped up by the ECB in line with England Men's until the ICC makes these equal.
- e) There should be overall equal pay at international level by 2030. By this, we mean average pay, because we recognise that there will be different levels of pay within the teams, with the top players (men or women) being paid the most.

Domestic level

- a) Rookie contracts should be introduced to the Women's Regional Teams (WRTs) and minimum salaries for WRT players should be equal to First Class County players by the start of the 2024 season.
- b) WRTs should be fully professionalised by the start of the 2025 season by increasing the number of WRT contracts to 15 to make a full squad.
- c) Average pay and prize money should be equal by 2029 based on the following schedule (in this context, average pay includes both red and white ball cricket):
 - ◆ 50% of the men's by 2025
 - ◆ 75% of the men's by 2027
 - ◆ 100% of the men's i.e. equal by 2029
- d) The women's salaries for The Hundred are currently 25% of the men's in terms of overall salary pot, captain's bonus and the amounts in each of the salary tiers. These should all be equal by 2025.

Chapter 7: Governance and Leadership



Leaders are the stewards of an organisation's culture; their behaviours and mindsets reverberate throughout the organisation. Hence to dismantle systems of discrimination and subordination, leaders must undergo the same shifts of heart, mind, and behaviour that they want for the organisation as a whole and then translate those personal shifts into real, lasting change in their companies.

Professors Robin J. Ely and David A Thomas³²³

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 Cricket is facing a reckoning. Confidence in the game, and in those who run it, has been severely undermined following public revelations of racism and discrimination. There have also been widespread concerns both within the game, and externally, about how these matters have been handled by those in leadership positions. Much of this debate has been carried out in the public domain as we have undertaken our work. Governance issues formed a key part of the then Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Select Committee hearings that followed those revelations, held in November 2021. The hearings exposed evidence of ineffective complaints handling and weaknesses in governance structures. Moreover, they revealed fault lines amongst the game's leadership. The Committee's report, 'Racism in Cricket', set out unambiguously that *"It was apparent that governance within the sport had failed in some fundamental manner."*³²⁴
- 7.1.2 A key aspect of our work has been to examine governance and leadership arrangements within cricket insofar as relevant to EDI. We focus principally on the ECB as the national governing body (NGB) of cricket in England and Wales, but also consider other institutions or organisations that are in a position to influence equity in cricket, including the First Class Counties (FCCs), Women's Regional Teams (WRTs) and County Cricket Boards (CCBs). We have considered if and how current arrangements contributed to creating an environment where discrimination has gone undetected, unreported or unchallenged, why this may be the case and how this could be remedied in the future.
- 7.1.3 Equally we have explored where there have been successes that have helped to make cricket more equitable in order to see how they can be shared, learnt from and replicated across the game.

³²³ Harvard Business School <https://hbr.org/2020/11/getting-serious-about-diversity-enough-already-with-the-business-case>

³²⁴ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/8470/documents/86256/default/> - p. 4.

7.14 In Chapter 4, State of Equity in Cricket, we set out our assessment of what the data is telling us about how equitable the game currently is, in relation to race, gender and class. This data provides a clear quantitative picture of how the game, and the leaders that govern it, are currently performing on EDI. Annex 1 to this Report provides details of the lived experience of the thousands of people who completed our online survey, one in two of whom said that they had suffered discrimination in the last five years. It is with this performance in mind that, within this Chapter, we assess the following questions:

- How is cricket governed and what impact on EDI does this have?
- How are EDI matters regulated and is this working?
- Who is leading cricket and what impact on EDI does this have?

The challenges of sports governance

7.15 We begin, however, with a brief reflection on the challenges of governing a sport like cricket today.

7.16 In their May 2019 report ‘The Future of Sports Governance: Beyond Autonomy,’ The Chartered Governance Institute (ICSA) addressed in detail the question of whether sports governance is unique.³²⁵ It reflected on how, over the last quarter of a century, “*unprecedented media exposure*” and “*transformative funding streams*” have radically altered the landscape within which sport operates, with some sporting organisations “*failing to keep pace with the decline of the amateur participant and the rise of fully funded professionals.*”

7.17 The ICSA report described how historical conventions of autonomy and self-regulation had been central in sports governance in the UK until the introduction of Sport England’s ‘Code for Sports Governance’ in October 2016.³²⁶ The Code (since updated in July 2020 with strengthened EDI provisions) was introduced following a number of high profile governance failures. According to ICSA, it marked the “*end of autonomy*” for any sports body receiving public funding by introducing mandatory compliance standards that sought to transform sports governance by transferring and adapting good governance practice from other sectors. Many of these reforms were also identified as necessary by Transparency International in their 2016 report on global corruption in sport, where they described why improved governance and accountability are needed and why they are so hard to achieve owing to the “*peculiar history and organisation of sports bodies.*”³²⁷

7.18 It is notable that these reforms do not appear to have been universally welcomed by all NGBs. In particular, requirements for 25% Independent Non-Executive Board Members and a perceived emphasis on diversity instead of Board skills or sports knowledge had caused concern. Indeed, ICSA reported that some NGBs saw “*their memberships kick back against what is felt to be an attack on their autonomy.*” However, “*despite the complaints, all but one of the summer sport NGBs funded by UK Sport, for example, had met or agreed compliance requirements by the end of October 2017.*”

7.19 On top of these specific challenges to governance structures, governing a major sport like cricket is, without doubt, incredibly challenging. It is also a vastly different enterprise to what was envisaged when many of the bodies running the game were founded. Broadcast deals worth £1.1 billion³²⁸ have seen the ECB’s annual turnover increase by 600% in the last 25 years, to £302 million in 2022.³²⁹ Alongside commercialisation we have seen intense media and parliamentary scrutiny, growing demands for accountability and increased expectations for cricket to deliver and contribute against wider social objectives such as public health, tackling inequality and promoting the economy. As the NGB, the ECB has multiple and, at times, potentially conflicting roles that it must fulfil, often whilst facing sustained pressure both externally and from within the game.

³²⁵ <https://sportsgovernanceacademy.org.uk/media/aewni2vo/the-future-of-sports-governance-beyond-autonomy.pdf>

³²⁶ <https://www.sportengland.org/funds-and-campaigns/code-sports-governance>

³²⁷ https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/2016_GCRSport_EN.pdf - Chapter 29.

³²⁸ <https://www.ft.com/content/62a732a6-83d0-4144-bfa2-e2c4ae540849>

³²⁹ <https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2022/05/18/5405823f-d903-49dc-a9d5-f70f917ba953/Financial-Statements-202122.pdf> & ECB Financial Statement 1997

- 7.1.10 All of this must be accomplished whilst working with a wide range of stakeholders to deliver high performance teams at the professional level, overseeing the recreational game across England and Wales, and working with partners to improve participation and access to cricket. Notwithstanding the huge revenues generated by the sport, this sits against a backdrop of ongoing financial pressures resulting from emergency measures to support the game through the Covid epidemic, alongside the impact of rising energy and other costs.
- 7.1.11 Sport also matters a lot. Major sporting events offer a unique opportunity to showcase a nation and it is estimated that they have the potential to deliver £4 billion in soft power, trade and investment to the UK over the next decade.³³⁰ Research by the British Council looked at 10 countries of strategic importance to the UK and found that improved perceptions of the UK's 'openness' was one of the most important legacies of the London 2012 Olympics, with 36% of respondents saying it had made them more likely to visit the UK.³³¹
- 7.1.12 For all of these reasons, the skill sets and expertise required to lead and govern across such a complex landscape and agenda are profoundly different to what they have been historically. Effectively governing a national sport like cricket, today, is far from easy, which makes it even more important to get the structures of governance and leadership right.

What we mean by governance and leadership of EDI

- 7.1.13 There are many ways to define governance and leadership and how they interact in the running of organisations, including specifically within sport.

For the purposes of this Report, we have defined governance and leadership as follows:

Governance is the system by which an organisation is directed and controlled. It includes the defining of purpose and the setting of strategy and objectives. It is concerned with accountability for decision-making, the evaluation of performance against objectives and the effective management of risk. An organisation's Board is typically its most senior level of governance. Often within member-owned organisations, common across cricket, members exercise power and authority via their right to appoint and remove Board Directors, alongside other powers and responsibilities set out within the organisation's constitutional documents.

Leadership is the process by which the actions of others and/or an organisation are directed or influenced to achieve desired objectives. It is embodied by those with power, authority and responsibility within an organisation or group. Within this Report, the term 'Leaders' or 'Leadership' predominantly refers to Board members, senior executives of organisations and those in positions of influence or responsibility for teams, matches and competitions such as selectors, umpires, coaches and captains. However, leadership is not limited to people in these positions. It can be embodied by anyone in any role.

- 7.1.14 Good governance and leadership are critical to the success of any organisation. Sport England makes clear that any organisation seeking public funding (as the ECB and other cricketing bodies do) "*must meet gold standards of governance considered to be among the most advanced in the world.*"³³² Good governance is also critical to the advancement of EDI and it is through the lens of EDI, described in more detail in Chapter 6, Approach to EDI in Cricket, that we have evaluated the game's governance and leadership.

³³⁰ <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/assets/About-us/working-with-the-community/the-impact-of-major-sports-events-2021.pdf>

³³¹ <https://www.britishcouncil.org/research-policy-insight/policy-reports/culture-means-business>

³³² https://www.sportengland.org/funds-and-campaigns/code-sports-governance?section=the_principles

7.1.15 Delivering EDI is a challenging and constantly evolving process which requires time, effort and expertise. All leaders within an organisation, especially senior leaders, must visibly own the agenda, have high levels of EDI competency and literacy, and understand how their decisions may impact different groups. Their work must be intentional, evidence-led and transparent, and, importantly, leaders must be accountable for their decisions. In addition, those who lead and govern must act and manage as they expect others to, demonstrating and modelling EDI as part of their values, as discussed in Chapter 5, Culture. They must set the standards for others to follow and learn from, they must persuade and bring people with them and, if necessary, they must be prepared to make difficult decisions in line with their values. It is ultimately their responsibility to embed EDI across both strategy and operations, creating a just and ethical culture where everyone can thrive regardless of their background or personal circumstances.

The business case for EDI

7.1.16 Much has been written about the business case for EDI. There is convincing evidence that it leads to both improved performance and more effective decision-making.³³³ It is clear to us that in cricket, talent is everywhere whilst opportunity is not, and that improving EDI across the game will ultimately lead to better players, better teams and a better game. However, we would express some caution towards overemphasising the business case arguments to justify EDI. Some research shows that such an approach can backfire and actually reduce the likelihood of underrepresented candidates wanting to work for organisations.³³⁴

7.1.17 In any event, as a Commission we are clear that promoting EDI needs no more justification than innovation or good financial management. EDI should not be up for debate; it should just be what we do.

7.2 Background and context

The structure of the game

7.2.1 Cricket's governance framework is complex, multi-layered and rooted in the history of how the game developed across England and Wales. It broadly follows the standard pyramid structure of sports governance (i.e. the NGB at the top and amateurs/grassroots at the bottom) but unlike football or rugby, which are structured around clubs with interconnected leagues, it is largely structured, both professionally and recreationally, around the historic Counties of England alongside Wales.

The Counties

7.2.2 Thirty-eight CCBs (or equivalent) and CricketWales oversee the delivery of recreational cricket across the regions, overseeing affiliated leagues and clubs within each County. Recreational cricket relies heavily on approximately 42,000 volunteers to run the game, without whom the game could not function (as with most sports).

7.2.3 There are 18 FCCs that run the professional men's county cricket teams and, alongside MCC, professional cricket venues. The FCCs compete in the County Championship, One Day and T20 competitions. The remaining 21 Counties contain National County Cricket Clubs (NCCs) which run non-professional cricket teams. Most of the NCCs compete in the 3-Day Championship, One Day and T20 competitions run by the National County Cricket Association (NCCA). In some Counties, FCCs and NCCs have joined with the local CCB to become single entities that oversee all professional and affiliated recreational cricket in a County.

³³³ <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters>

³³⁴ <https://hbr.org/2022/06/stop-making-the-business-case-for-diversity>

- 7.2.4 Women’s professional cricket comprises eight WRTs linked to one or more local FCCs as ‘regional hosts’, which were introduced in 2020. The WRTs play a 50 over and T20 competition, but not a multi-day, red ball competition. The CCBs oversee recreational women’s cricket in the Counties.
- 7.2.5 In addition to the FCCs and WRTs, in 2021 a new professional men’s and women’s competition first took place called The Hundred, comprising eight city-based teams. Players are drawn from the FCCs, the WRTs and overseas. The teams are owned by the ECB and are separate from the County structure.
- 7.2.6 There is another cricket club of note for governance purposes. MCC is a private members’ club that owns and manages Lord’s Cricket Ground. MCC is also the ‘guardian’ of the Laws of Cricket. MCC does not have its own professional team but runs a large number of non-professional teams, and retains a powerful and unique role in the game both domestically and internationally.

The ECB

- 7.2.7 The ECB is the NGB for cricket in England and Wales and is responsible for overseeing every aspect of the game: recreational, professional and the national teams.
- 7.2.8 The ECB’s purpose, role and responsibilities are set out in its Articles of Association.³³⁵ They include leading, administering and regulating the game, encouraging participation, improving playing standards, and marketing, promoting and developing the sport. Like most NGBs, the ECB meets these responsibilities through developing a strategic game-wide plan, implementing a governance framework, generating income, organising competitions and administering officials (e.g. umpires) alongside a wide range of other activities. As the NGB, the ECB’s role is critical in leading the game on EDI through guidance, regulation, enforcement and of course by example.
- 7.2.9 As set out earlier in Chapter 4, State of Equity in Cricket, the ECB is controlled by its 41 Members. The ECB’s Articles of Association set out a number of rights that are conferred on Members: the ECB must lead and administer cricket for their benefit (as well as the benefit of other stakeholders such as players, officials and supporters) (Article 3.1.2), the ECB cannot unfairly prejudice the rights of all or some of the Members (Article 5.1), the Members have the right to give specific instructions to the ECB Board if two thirds of Members are in favour (Article 5.1), and more. The Articles also confer specific rights on FCCs in relation to certain changes to the competitions in which they participate, which must have the support of two thirds of FCCs (Article 5.2).
- 7.2.10 As part of the actions to underpin the game-wide 12 Point Plan that was developed in November 2021, the ECB commissioned Portas Consulting (a specialist sports management consultancy)³³⁶ to undertake a review of governance and regulation in cricket to identify opportunities to strengthen the structures and processes across the game. We considered their report as part of our work.

Cricket’s County Governance Model

- 7.2.11 With effect from 1 February 2020, after two years of negotiation, County Partnership Agreements (CPAs) were agreed between the ECB and FCCs, CCBs, NCCs and the NCCA. They set out the amount of funding provided by the ECB to the Counties for 2020 to 2024 and include a set of roles and responsibilities, and associated standards, to which Counties are accountable (the CPA Standards). This was the first time that such legally binding agreements with minimum standards had been put in place. They formalised the relationship between the ECB and the Counties, and gave the ECB the ability to monitor compliance, and where appropriate apply sanctions, beyond existing regulations, including on matters of governance and EDI.

³³⁵ Available at <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/03251364/filing-history>

³³⁶ <https://portasconsulting.com>

- 7.2.12 Following the introduction of Sport England’s Code for Sports Governance in 2016, the ECB also worked with the wider game to develop a County Governance Framework (CGF) which came into effect at the same time as the CPA, with a two year implementation period. The CGF is inspired by Sport England’s Code but has been adapted to allow for proportional implementation across cricket where there are a wide range of bodies. Complying with the CGF is a CPA Standard.
- 7.2.13 There are also Regional Host Agreements (RHA) between the ECB and each organisation that is a Regional Host of one of the WRTs. They are similar to the CPAs with the FCCs, setting out the funding from the ECB as well as the Regional Host’s responsibilities around the WRT’s senior team and the Regional Academy.

The Membership Model

- 7.2.14 We understand that 15 of the 18 FCCs are member-based organisations. Members will usually pay an annual subscription in return for certain benefits including, for example, being able to attend matches free of charge, sit in the pavilion, have priority when it comes to buying tickets for international matches at their ground (where relevant) etc. Importantly, members usually have rights to elect Board and Committee Members, including some specific positions such as County Chairs. In addition, it is sometimes the case that only members are eligible to serve on Boards and Committees, and to become Chairs. In some cases, a set number of Board and Committee positions are reserved for members.³³⁷
- 7.2.15 As well as the role that members play in electing or appointing the leadership of the County, they can also have a wider influence on developments in the game. Important decisions are often referred by Counties to a vote of their members, or at least to obtain their views, through proactive choice by the County’s management, or because such votes or consultation are required by the County’s constitution, or through members themselves organising a vote.

7.3 Barriers to EDI are built into the game’s structure

- 7.3.1 We found a range of barriers to EDI built into the very structure of the game and how it is governed. As Chapter 3, Historical Context of cricket makes clear, the way in which cricket has developed in England and Wales has created systems and structures that mean power is concentrated in the hands of, mainly, White, middle class men. For example, despite women playing cricket for virtually as long as men, most structures of cricket decision-making exclusively represent the men’s game. Even with the recent growth of professional women’s cricket, WRTs are not present in their own right in the sport’s governance structures.

Complexity of the structure presents risks

- 7.3.2 Throughout our work it has often proved challenging to clearly identify where responsibility for elements of EDI across the game sits, particularly in relation to regulatory matters, which we address in more detail below.
- 7.3.3 We found that different legal structures and operating models (with varying levels of resource, capability and capacity) exist across both the professional and recreational game. This creates risk in relation to the game’s ability to deliver EDI and has resulted in some parts of the game lagging behind whilst others perform relatively well. We also found widespread confusion, across all levels, about roles, responsibilities and, importantly, where accountability lies.

³³⁷ The County Governance Framework contains provisions dealing with the election or appointment of Directors to Board positions.

7.3.4 It is of course the ECB's role to try to ensure consistent progress, but there is a vast difference between the financial and personnel resources of a leading FCC that regularly hosts Test Matches, and a small CCB largely staffed by volunteers. Add to that the varying levels of acceptance and understanding of the importance of EDI among cricket's leaders and it is no surprise that Counties are at different stages of their EDI 'journey'.

7.3.5 We considered whether a complete restructuring of the game was necessary to meet the challenges it faces and to restore trust in the game and its leaders. Our conclusion is that there are benefits to the County structure (such as roots in local communities and geographical spread across the country) that are not easily replaced. Our Call for Written Evidence (CfWE) revealed a dominant theme, from both individuals and organisations, of wanting the ECB to be more local and community driven.

7.3.6 Therefore, we concluded that the priority should be to make the significant changes to benefit EDI that we recommend within the existing structure, rather than diverting attention to the extensive work that would be needed to develop an alternative to the County model.

Women need more power, voice and influence in the game

7.3.7 We are particularly concerned about the lack of representation of women's cricket within the game's formal governance structures. The WRTs are not members of the ECB and so they have to rely on their host FCC(s) to speak for them, should they wish to, which mirrors a constant theme in the evidence we heard: the women's game is seen as an 'add on' to the men's game.

7.3.8 Although women's cricket certainly isn't new, we appreciate that the professional domestic women's game is - the current structure of WRTs was only set up in 2020 - and that the women's game has seen rapid growth in recent years. But that growth has not been matched in the representation of the women's game at the highest levels of decision-making.

7.3.9 This is not simply a technical point of governance. Membership of the ECB provides significant influence over the direction of the governing body. It gives the 'regulated' a considerable degree of influence over the regulator. For example, funding decisions by the ECB prioritise the interests of its Members above all others, as we discuss later in this Chapter.

7.3.10 Likewise, the FCCs have specific rights built into the Articles by which changes to competitions involving the FCCs cannot be made without their agreement (by two thirds majority), which has propelled much public and private discussion recently in relation to proposals within the High Performance Review led by Sir Andrew Strauss. There is no such protection for the women's game.

7.3.11 Given that the vast majority of the Chairs and CEOs of the ECB Members are men, decisions are being made about the women's game by those who have not played women's cricket nor, in many cases, have any direct experience of the day-to-day running of it.

7.3.12 As well as the issue of ECB membership for the WRTs, there is a lack of representation of the women's game on the ECB Board and Committees. The recent review by Portas Consulting of the ECB's governance and regulation structure concluded that this lack of representation should be addressed. They proposed that the women's game should have the same number of representatives as the FCCs on a number of ECB Committees, although not on all. We do not consider that this proposal goes far enough. It is our view that the women's game should have equal representation to the FCCs on all ECB Committees and sub-Boards on the ECB Board itself and in the Game Committees and Assemblies established by the ECB.

Recommendation 16

We recommend that the women's game should have equal representation to the men's game throughout English and Welsh cricket's governance structure, as follows:

- a) Direct representation, in the same way as FCCs, within the ECB's membership structure and Articles of Association, the ECB Board, and Committees and Sub-Boards.
- b) Any Professional and Recreational Game Committees and Assemblies should cover both men's and women's cricket, which should be represented equally.

The ECB's Articles of Association need to be revised

- 7.3.13 The ECB's Articles of Association set out the ECB's purpose. Critically, that purpose does not include any specific obligation to deliver an equitable game despite, amongst other things, the fact that cricket receives substantial amounts of public money that, in our view, place obligations on recipients in relation to advancing equality. It is our assessment, given the findings of our work, that it must become a core purpose of the ECB as the governing body to promote and deliver EDI in the game.
- 7.3.14 In contrast to the lack of any specific obligation to promote EDI, there are specific references to upholding the "traditions" of the game and the "spirit of cricket."³³⁸ The obligation to "uphold and enhance the traditions [...] of Cricket" gives it the high status of one of the ECB's core purposes yet the phrase itself is vague and open to interpretation, and can easily be used to argue in favour of the status quo by anyone who wants cricket to continue to do things in the same way that they have always been done. A culture of tradition was described by some in our evidence gathering as a reluctance to listen to complaints or change the current system which acts as a deterrence to minority groups.
- 7.3.15 The "spirit of cricket" is similarly not defined, but we take it to mean what is set out in the Preamble to the Laws of Cricket. The principle of fairness is embodied in this text and, in our view, fairness is at the heart of all EDI work. The spirit of cricket also includes references to "respect" and how cricket "brings together people from different nationalities, cultures and religions." We do, however, think that the meaning of the spirit of cricket should be further clarified to include an explicit reference to furthering EDI.
- 7.3.16 Our evidence revealed the disparity in views between cricketing organisations, many of which emphasise the positive tradition and spirit of the game, and individuals whose experiences reveal a different tradition: of elitism and exclusion based on gender, race and class. It is also clear, however, that some of the game's leaders are increasingly cognisant of this dichotomy and the challenges it poses for cricket's future.



Cricket has always been proud of its old-fashioned values and traditions, its history and heritage. Its reputation for sporting behaviours and the 'spirit of the game' on the field of play are one of its strengths.

FCC



Tradition and all its trappings can be as much a negative [...] for those that just want to get on and play the game.

FCC

³³⁸ Articles of Association of England and Wales Cricket Board Limited, Article 3.1.4.

7.3.17 This disconnect between the perceptions of tradition and the spirit of cricket by cricketing organisations and many of those who run the game, compared with the perceptions of marginalised groups within cricket, was a clear and recurring theme throughout our evidence. In our view, the specific references to upholding the traditions of the game and, to a lesser extent, the spirit of cricket have the potential to be used as arguments to maintain the status quo and resist change. They risk acting as a brake on innovation and progress within the game in relation to EDI. Yet, it is clear to us that in terms of governance, leadership and culture, the status quo needs radical change.

7.3.18 We are not arguing that all traditions must go, far from it, but we do believe that making cricket a truly equitable game needs greater prominence in the ECB's constitution. Ensuring that the ECB's purpose reflects its own strategy of Inspiring Generations would send an important signal: that cricket should be an equitable, diverse and inclusive game for everyone. Including that commitment as a specific obligation would elevate the importance of EDI within the game, putting it at the heart of everything the ECB is required to do. It is our view that EDI provisions in the Articles should be added as an overriding 'Objective', and take precedence in the event of a conflict with other provisions in the Articles.

An ECB evidence submission to the DCMS Select Committee's Sport in Our Communities Inquiry in December 2020, concerning the impact of COVID-19 on cricket, raised the possibility that if 2021 had been severely impacted, the ECB would have had to *"make very difficult decisions about how it fund[ed]"* the survival of County Clubs (i.e. its members), which, it explained, *"could mean significant cuts to other growth areas such as women and girls, inner-city facilities and schools' cricket."*

During our Hearings with the ECB we asked why these areas were deemed expendable. They told us: *"Because those are the three areas which sit outside of the funding of our membership. The way that ECB finances typically work is that we start with what our members need in terms of the funding and then we, as a board and an executive, try and work out how much money we have got spare, and we try to allocate as best we can. The constitution of the ECB requires each of its members to be served equitably. Inspiring Generations basically starts with a model where we fund the system, then we work out how much money we have to spare. At the moment we have avoided any cuts. We try to defend the Inspiring Generations growth funding as best we can but absolutely truthfully with cost inflation that becomes harder."*

7.3.19 It is our assessment that the current membership structure of the ECB and the ECB's obligations under the Articles require the ECB to prioritise the interests of its Members above all other activity, including in relation to funding decisions. We are concerned by evidence that this obligation forces the hand of the governing body to cut other areas of essential activity, such as the delivery of EDI, when the game is experiencing challenging financial conditions. We discuss the changes we consider to be necessary to the ECB's membership and structure later in this Chapter.

7.3.20 A further area where current governance arrangements are not enabling effective EDI delivery is covered by Article 17.2. The Article stipulates that ECB Directors (i.e. Board members) must undergo annual ratification by the ECB's Members despite being appointed for three year terms. This is relatively unusual; decisions on renewal would normally be made only at the end of a Director's three-year term rather than annually.

7.3.21 We consider this to be highly problematic because the ability to make medium-to long-term decisions is likely to be constrained when Directors know that an assessment will be made on their professional future each year. The fact that each Director's position depends on retaining the support of a majority of the Members is likely to affect their willingness to take decisions unpopular with the Members but which might be necessary for the good of the game. It may also impede recruitment and retention of a stable and skilled team at Board level.

7.3.22 Under company law, we acknowledge that the Members may remove a Director by majority vote at any time, but we view Article 17.2 as having a different character. It is a scheduled process that takes place every year rather than an extraordinary action that requires a proactive move by Members to put forward a resolution.

7.3.23 It is our assessment that Article 17.2 has a potentially limiting effect on the governing body's ability to lead on EDI. The ECB is the regulator, yet the regulated entities can take a vote each year and remove its senior leadership. Whilst we agree that it is essential that the ECB governs by consensus wherever possible, in our view it is important that this effect is removed.

Recommendation 17

We recommend that the ECB's Articles of Association should be amended within the next six months to better reflect its role and responsibilities as the sport's national governing body in relation to EDI. Amendments should include the following:

- a) It should be a fundamental 'Objective' for the ECB to promote and deliver EDI in professional and recreational cricket (with the necessary ancillary powers to do so at pace, including holding members to account for meeting minimum standards).
- b) There should be a specific obligation to promote, develop and grow women's and girls' cricket.
- c) The references to upholding the spirit and traditions of cricket should be revised to be subject to the overriding duty to promote EDI.
- d) The annual reappointment of Directors should be removed given the fact that it likely has a limiting effect on the governing body's ability to lead the medium-to long-term strategic level change required to improve EDI across the game.

The County membership model presents challenges for governance and EDI

7.3.24 The 15 FCCs that are member-based are accountable to their members. Members have various rights and powers as described earlier. There are important benefits to a membership-based system, at least in principle. It is more democratic, it distributes power more widely rather than concentrating it in the hands of an organisation's leaders, and it has the capacity to create greater accountability.

7.3.25 Throughout the course of our work we have seen reports of members exercising their rights and powers in various ways, from Lancashire CCC members being given the final say on how the County responds to the High Performance Review,³³⁹ to the decision to accept the critical governance reforms at Yorkshire CCC being subject to a members' vote.³⁴⁰

³³⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2022/aug/24/lancashires-awkward-squad-ready-to-battle-for-county-cricket-future>

³⁴⁰ <https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/sport/cricket/yorkshire-ccc-members-face-pivotal-vote-on-clubs-future-at-egm-3633894>

7.3.26 In both these examples, members voted as the Counties' respective leaderships desired, in Yorkshire's case by a substantial margin. However, it is clear that key decisions about how the game is run can be outside the hands of those charged with managing it. This has a range of implications for the ability of cricketing organisations to comply with requirements in the Sport England Governance Code and for EDI. Whilst we agree that it is right and proper that there is a line of accountability to members, there is also, in our view, a credible risk that the leadership of cricketing organisations can become beholden to small but powerful cliques within the memberships that are resistant to the changes needed both for good governance and in relation to EDI.

7.3.27 We received evidence from several sources, including from those who hold, or have held, positions of senior leadership across the game, that County membership demographics are often not representative of their local communities and remain dominated by older, White and often (but not exclusively) middle class men.



[Cricket] is still male dominated in its general outlook and decision-making and is governed by its members who are not diverse across either sex, ethnicity and/or age. This is the case at county club, recreational league and club level.

FCC

7.3.28 In order to explore this further, we asked Counties about whether they collect the demographic data of their members and found that only four of the 15 member-based FCCs collect ethnicity data, six collect data on gender and none collect schooling data. In the absence of a full data set, it is not possible to confirm the exact position; however, based on what we have learned during our work, it is reasonable to conclude that memberships are not representative of the diversity of the population in England and Wales, nor of the cricket playing population. We also asked Counties to inform us about any initiatives they had in place to diversify their membership. The results were mixed; initiatives were minimal, if they existed at all.

7.3.29 As we discussed in Chapter 5 on Culture, our evidence shows that race, gender and class often substantially impact on how the game is experienced and the opportunities available within the game, with people from ethnically diverse communities, women and girls, and those attending state schools more likely to have significantly poorer experiences and fewer opportunities. Our data also indicated that there is a disconnect between, particularly, White, privately-educated men's awareness and understanding of the reality faced by ethnically diverse people or women in the game, and what that reality actually is. There was greater recognition by White, privately-educated men that social class limits opportunities in cricket, although our evidence suggested that both men and women from ethnically diverse backgrounds were much more likely to recognise this to be the case.

7.3.30 In these circumstances, making substantial efforts to diversify memberships is, in our view, critical – both to maintain the legitimacy of the influence that members have over how the game is run and in electing its leaders, as well as responding to many of the sociocultural issues that we have identified through our work.

7.3.31 We note and welcome that the County Governance Framework (CGF), incorporated into the CPA, provides that membership-based organisations must be “*inclusive and accessible*”. However, it is not clear what that means in practice, how performance is measured and what the consequences would be for failure. It is our view that requirements should be specific and measurable, and that there should be well-defined consequences for failing to meet them. More positively, we believe that there should be financial incentives for those Counties that do meet their targets, both to encourage and reward.

7.3.32 In terms of Board and Committee appointments, we also note and welcome that many Counties are trying to bring their arrangements in line with the requirements of the CGF. One such requirement is the need for a County to have a Nominations Committee, which is specifically required to consider a Board's diversity.

7.3.33 Independent Director roles (rather than Directors elected by and from within the membership of the County) are also designed to encourage greater diversity. We remain concerned, however, that without making the changes that we have highlighted above, influential and powerful members who are resistant to change could still impede the progress that this requirement is intended to bring about.

- 7.3.34 The same issues we have discussed in relation to County memberships apply in relation to the membership of MCC. The debate within MCC about the ‘Historic Fixtures’ played annually at Lord’s between Eton and Harrow, and Oxford and Cambridge Universities, bring some of the wider issues at play to light.

The power of members – an MCC case study

As an illustration of the power of a club’s membership, and of the obstacles placed in the way of those seeking to modernise the game, a group of MCC members requisitioned a Special General Meeting (SGM) to challenge the decision by the MCC Committee that the annual matches between Eton and Harrow, and between Oxford and Cambridge Universities (referred to as the ‘Historic Fixtures’), would no longer be played every year on the main ground at Lord’s.

The stated reason for the MCC Committee’s original decision was to allow wider opportunities for people to be able to play on the main ground, with the Historic Fixtures being replaced by the finals of school and university competitions that were open to all. The members who opposed the decision lamented the loss of these traditional fixtures, with some prominent individuals threatening to resign if the matches were not allowed to continue. They argued that there was room in the Lord’s fixture list for new school and university matches, as well as the Historic Fixtures.

An SGM was due to be held on 27 September 2022 but a last-minute compromise was reached and so the meeting did not take place. MCC and the ‘requisitionists’ agreed that consultation would take place about the Historic Fixtures and, since that would take time, Eton and Harrow, and Oxford and Cambridge, would be invited to play their fixtures at Lord’s in 2023. After further discussions, it was agreed that the matches would continue for five years, after which they would be reviewed.

- 7.3.35 As a Commission, we are clear that the Historic Fixtures should end, whether or not there is room for them in the Lord’s fixture list. We respect and value many of the traditions of cricket generally, and Lord’s in particular, but not all. Some no longer have a place in contemporary Britain. Guaranteeing a tiny number of schoolboys the right to play at Lord’s every year when millions of children are denied that right is completely unacceptable. So too is the fact that the schoolboys of two expensive and elite institutions get to play at Lord’s every year when the England Women’s national team have yet to play a Test Match there.
- 7.3.36 Similarly, although we understand the difference between the two fixtures, the Oxford and Cambridge match has also had its time and should no longer be played at Lord’s. It sends a similar message of elitism, entrenching the position of certain institutions to which only a small minority of school pupils will gain access (and which are still attended by disproportionate numbers of privately-educated students).
- 7.3.37 MCC may be a private members’ club, in which some members may resent ‘interference’ with their right to make their own decisions, but it is also a club that benefits from substantial amounts of money from the general public through ticket sales for major matches, with all the accompanying publicity and prestige. In the words of one of MCC’s Presidents, Sir Pelham Warner, MCC is “*a private club with a public function*.”³⁴¹ As such, we believe that it has a duty to discharge that public function responsibly, and the decisions of its members send a very public signal about the club’s values.

³⁴¹ <https://www.lords.org/mcc/the-club/our-history>

- 7.3.38 Those who argue for the continuation of the Historic Fixtures do not seem to understand the damage they are doing to the reputation of MCC and Lord's in the public imagination – compounding a view, whether fair or not, that MCC members are out of touch, elitist and unrepresentative of both the wider population and those who play cricket. As the game strives to become more inclusive, as it clearly must, decisions such as these at 'the home of cricket' do more harm than some people appear to realise.

Recommendation 18

We recommend to MCC that the annual fixtures between Eton and Harrow and between Oxford and Cambridge are no longer played at Lord's after 2023. These two events should be replaced by national finals' days for state school U15 competitions for boys and girls (see Recommendation 38) and a national finals' day for competitions for men's and women's university teams.

- 7.3.39 Overall, it is our assessment that the approximately 40–50,000 active members of County cricket organisations currently wield a disproportionate influence on the game. We want to be clear that we are not saying members should not have influence, rights and powers. That would be undemocratic and risk the sport's legitimacy amongst the grassroots. However, it is also our view that memberships that do not represent the diversity of the game also lack legitimacy.
- 7.3.40 For all of these reasons, diversifying memberships is an essential component of ensuring progress towards a more equitable and inclusive game and the ECB, Counties and MCC should be taking all possible steps to make this happen (see Recommendation 20 below).
- 7.3.41 Whilst commenting on the membership model, we would like to recognise the substantial contribution many members make, as volunteers in the game. Given the scale and scope of volunteers in cricket, we encourage the ECB to think strategically about how to support, develop and measure volunteers' knowledge and skills in relation to advancing EDI.

Allocation/suspension/cancellation of high profile matches

- 7.3.42 It is undoubtedly the case that the ECB's power to allocate high profile matches, and in particular England matches, gives it a considerable amount of influence over those FCCs, and MCC, who rely on such matches for a significant part of their income and prestige.
- 7.3.43 The ECB has provided us with their document 'High Profile Matches 2020–2024 Invitation to Tender' that sets out the basis on which FCCs³⁴² are invited to bid to host high profile matches (such as England matches and finals of domestic competitions). Bids are assessed against six criteria, one of which is "*attracting new audiences*", which is described as follows: "*For the game to grow, Venues need to be welcoming and accessible. A more diverse audience will require a new approach to the match day experience and engagement strategies. An emphasis will be placed on International T20 and the new T20 competition to provide this opportunity.*" That is the only one of the six criteria that appears to have any direct relevance to EDI.
- 7.3.44 Points are awarded against each of the six criteria. Attracting new audiences is allocated a maximum of between 15 and 25 points, depending on the competition (e.g. it is more highly weighted in the T20 competitions as, it seems, they are seen as more 'relevant' to new audiences). By contrast, achieving "*Full Houses*" for matches is always allocated a maximum of 30 points across all competitions – an example of commercial considerations appearing to rank more highly than any consideration of EDI.

³⁴² The document does not seem to apply to bids for high profile matches by MCC.

- 7.3.45 There is no reference to an FCC's record on EDI, nor any regulatory infringements. Under the High Profile Matches 2020–2024 Invitation to Tender document, an FCC could be facing charges for, or could have been found guilty of, serious regulatory breaches, yet that would appear to have no impact under the tender document on their bid to host a high profile match. Similarly, their leadership and membership may be the least diverse in the country, and that too, according to the tender document, would have no effect on their bid. The particular document governing this bid process predates the introduction of the CPA and the CGF, so failures to comply with either of them also cannot, at least under the terms of that document, feature in an assessment of an FCC's bid.
- 7.3.46 The current process lasts until 2024, so that when a new process is put in place the ECB has an opportunity to put EDI front and centre of allocation decisions. It is clear to us that both the allocation and, as we will come on to, the removal of the right to host high profile matches is a powerful tool to encourage and enforce compliance with EDI (as demonstrated by the speed with which Yorkshire CCC reacted to the suspension of their Test Match in 2022).³⁴³ As such, we believe it is critical that there is greater emphasis on EDI in bids to host high profile matches, giving EDI at least equal status with any other criterion.
- 7.3.47 If sufficient improvements in the game on EDI are not made, we would urge the ECB to go further, and treat a bidder's record on EDI as a potential bar to hosting a high profile match, regardless of the quality of its bid in other respects: it would be a 'gateway' criterion, meaning that unless a minimum set of EDI standards was reached, that bidder could not host a high profile match. Those minimum standards should, of course, be stretching, not an easy hoop through which any bidder could jump.
- 7.3.48 Of similar importance are decisions to suspend or cancel a high profile match (again demonstrated by Yorkshire CCC's reaction to the suspension of their Test Match in 2022). On the basis of the evidence we have gathered, there does not appear to be any formal, recorded, published process for how such decisions could be made, nor anything setting out the criteria on which such a decision could be based.
- 7.3.49 The ECB told us that they had the right to take that decision in relation to Yorkshire CCC based on the terms of the match staging agreement with the club. We have reviewed the standard staging agreement (not the specific agreement with Yorkshire CCC) and the ECB does have a right to cancel or re-allocate any high profile match for a number of reasons. These include a material failure to comply with any requirements under ECB Regulations. Under the staging agreement, 'ECB Regulations' includes regulations, rules, and directives, so would cover the Anti-Discrimination Code and Directive 3.3 (not bringing the game into disrepute).
- 7.3.50 However, we consider that it should be made much clearer that a host's right to hold a high profile match may be suspended if it is charged with a serious regulatory breach and may be cancelled for a defined period of time if the charges are upheld.
- 7.3.51 Given the significance of a high profile match suspension, both reputational and commercial, it seems to us essential that there is clarity over the right to take the decision, the process by which it would be made and the criteria on which it could be based.
- 7.3.52 Where a venue fails to comply with non-regulatory aspects of the match staging agreement (such as appropriate provision of facilities for broadcasters or the required standard of practice facilities), the consequences should be a matter for the ECB as the other party to the agreement. In addition, as we recommend in Chapter 8 on Complaints, we consider that the Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) should have the power to suspend or cancel the right to host a high profile match for a regulatory breach, in particular one relating to EDI. It would be one of the most effective sanctions that could be applied, and should be used, where appropriate.

³⁴³ <https://www.espnricinfo.com/story/yorkshire-racism-crisis-yorkshire-suspended-from-hosting-international-cricket-1287508>

Recommendation 19

We recommend that the ECB revises and clarifies its processes and criteria for allocating, suspending, cancelling and reinstating high profile matches to place greater emphasis on EDI. There is clear evidence that being allocated such matches, or having the right to host them withdrawn, is a powerful tool to encourage compliance with EDI. The current process for match allocation (via a tender process against six criteria) expires in 2024 and we have not identified any formal process for deciding to suspend or cancel matches. The revisions should:

- a) Ensure greater emphasis on EDI in the criteria for allocation, giving EDI criteria equal status to the most important of the other criteria.
- b) Consider making a bidder's performance on EDI a 'gateway criterion' requiring hosts to meet stretching minimum EDI standards in order to be able to bid for a high profile match.
- c) Introduce a clear and transparent decision-making process for suspension, cancellation and reinstatement of high profile matches.
- d) The Cricket Discipline Commission (or any future adjudication body if it is replaced and/or renamed) should have the power to suspend or cancel the right to host high profile matches for regulatory breaches, in particular related to EDI.

7.4 How are EDI matters regulated in cricket?



If they don't get their act together, then we have the nuclear option of legislating in order to bring in potentially an independent regulator. That is probably the route that, if we absolutely had to, we could go down.³⁴⁴

Nigel Huddleston MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the then Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport from 14 February 2020 to September 2022.

Background and context

7.4.1 In order to answer this question, it is important to be clear about what sports regulation is and the difference between sports governance and sports regulation.

For the purposes of this Report we have defined sports regulation as follows:

Sports regulation is primarily concerned with upholding standards and ensuring there is fair access and treatment (i.e. no discrimination), fair play (i.e. no cheating), fair competition (i.e. no doping or fixing matches) and exemplary levels of conduct from all parties involved with the sport. Increasingly, in the case of athletes, this means both on and off the field.

Sports have traditionally adopted a self-regulation model, where participants come together to voluntarily develop rules or codes that are designed to regulate the standards, behaviour and actions of their members.

The essential components of any successful regulatory system include: clear standards, an effective and robust approach to determining compliance and to identifying and investigating potential breaches, a fair process for adjudicating cases and both credible and meaningful sanctions for breaches and/or incentives for compliance. Alongside transparency for all of these components, the system must also be seen as legitimate by the parties it seeks to regulate as well as have the confidence of the wider public and those charged with guarding their interests.

7.4.2 Whereas sports governance in cricket involves setting game-wide strategy and overseeing its delivery, sports regulation is the sub-category of sports governance concerned with upholding and enforcing agreed rules and standards through a range of mechanisms. It is arguably one of the primary functions of a national governing body (NGB), which for cricket means the ECB. Because the ECB's regulatory role sits alongside other functions, such as the promotion of the sport's commercial and/or financial interests, there is clear potential for internal conflicts of interest to arise. We examine how this critical subset of governance operates below.

7.4.3 Cricket, like other sports, has adopted a voluntary self-regulation approach. Its Articles of Association (Article 3.1.2) clearly establish the ECB as the regulator of the game. There are many rules, standards, codes, directives and regulations in cricket. Many relate to the playing of the game (e.g. pitch preparation, the rules for particular competitions, facilities in venues etc) and others are specific or relevant to EDI.

³⁴⁴ <https://www.espn.com/story/sports-minister-warns-ecb-of-government-intervention-as-pressure-mounts-on-tom-harrison-1290022>

7.4.4 We appreciate that ‘regulation’ can have a narrow meaning (i.e. the issuing and enforcement of regulations), but when we talk about ‘regulating’ EDI in cricket, we are referring to all the ways in which EDI-related rules and standards are set and enforced. These include rules established through cricket’s formal regulatory process as well as non-regulatory collective minimum standards that apply across the County game. The formal regulatory process generally concerns issues of conduct; the non-regulatory collective minimum standards largely relate to structures, systems and achievement of standards at an organisational level. Where appropriate, we distinguish between formal regulation and collective minimum standards throughout the following sections; otherwise, we refer more widely to the systems in place for regulating EDI in cricket (with this expanded sense of ‘regulating’ EDI in cricket in mind).

What are the game’s current EDI regulations and standards and who sets them?

7.4.5 In the current system, some EDI-related rules are contained in regulations made by the ECB Board as the ‘legislative’ authority for the game (with considerable input from the ECB’s Regulatory Committee). In addition, some of the non-regulatory collective minimum standards under the County Partnership Agreements (CPAs) between the ECB and each County also relate to EDI (as explained earlier in this Chapter, the CPAs are the commercial agreements between the ECB and each County under which the ECB provides funding and the County has to achieve certain standards).

7.4.6 In relation to regulatory matters in the professional game, there are two relevant Directives that govern conduct. Directive 3.3 prohibits conduct that is improper, may be prejudicial to the interests of cricket or may bring the ECB, the game of cricket, any cricketer or group of cricketers into “*disrepute*”. Directive 3.4 requires compliance with the ECB’s Anti-Discrimination Code.³⁴⁵ The Code was introduced in 2021 (and updated in 2022), and sets out specific obligations in relation to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. They include, amongst others, conduct that is likely to offend or insult, making decisions that discriminate against individuals or groups and, for organisations, failing to make effective, timely and proportionate responses to breaches of the Code. The higher levels of the recreational game are covered by General Conduct Regulations (GCR)³⁴⁶ which include conduct obligations reflecting Directive 3.3 as well as a requirement to comply with the Code. The GCR are mandatory for CCBs and Premier Leagues.³⁴⁷

7.4.7 In relation to non-regulatory collective minimum standards, Standards two and three of the CPA are most relevant to EDI. Standard two requires each County to comply with the County Governance Framework (CGF). The CGF contains several diversity-related provisions, including that the structure, constitution and membership requirements of membership-based organisations must be “*inclusive and accessible*” (as discussed earlier). Specifically in relation to Board composition, Nomination Committees must consider the “*diversity required on the Board*.” In particular, the relevant Board should comprise a minimum of 30% of each gender, diversity by reference to ethnicity must “*reflect*” the local community demographic, and actions must be taken to increase Board diversity in general including in relation to age, disability and social background.

7.4.8 Standard three requires each County to: 1) engage fully with the ECB on furthering EDI; 2) publish an EDI Plan that aligns with the game-wide 12 Point Plan and report against it annually; 3) have a Board and Executive Management Team member with responsibility for EDI; and 4) enforce the Anti-Discrimination Code and make sure that all under its jurisdiction are subject to it.

³⁴⁵ <https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2022/03/10/9445013d-36fd-4d25-af9c-33ddd793a4ab/12.Directives-2022.pdf>

³⁴⁶ https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2022/03/15/13ace837-7516-4760-bc86-9b37a208d9d7/ECB_General_Conduct_Regulations_-_GCR_-_2022.pdf

³⁴⁷ For the 2023 season, new Recreational Conduct Regulations have been introduced for the lower leagues. We have not considered the new Regulations in detail because our Report reflects the position at the end of December 2022 (apart from some specific exceptions).

Enforcing formal regulatory matters related to EDI

- 7.4.9 For formal regulatory matters, potential breaches can be identified in a range of ways, including when relevant authorities (i.e. the ECB, an FCC, CCB or league) become aware of an issue directly or through a complaint. Once jurisdiction is identified, the relevant body is responsible for conducting an investigation (in relation to regulatory matters in the professional game, the 'relevant body' is always the ECB). Cases are adjudicated in accordance with the relevant regulations.
- 7.4.10 The ECB told us that it is standard practice, where the matter isn't one that concerns the ECB's direct jurisdiction, for the relevant body to complete any action in relation to a matter first, and for the ECB to await its outcome before considering whether to commence its own disciplinary procedure.
- 7.4.11 The ECB's Integrity Team is responsible for carrying out investigations for the ECB and, where appropriate based on the investigation, would then act as the 'prosecutor', collecting evidence and preparing the prosecution case. The decision on whether to charge is taken by the ECB's Integrity Team or escalated to the ECB's Regulatory Committee. Decisions on charging are discussed with the Chair of the Regulatory Committee to agree the approach. This Committee has an independent Chair and external members with expertise in regulatory, EDI and legal matters as well as other areas. One ECB Board Director is a member of the Regulatory Committee, although according to the ECB they are not involved in any decisions on cases, which are taken by a subgroup of the independent members of the Regulatory Committee.
- 7.4.12 Following a decision to charge, the ECB presents its case to the CDC, which acts as a 'judicial' body to decide on the outcome and any sanctions. We discuss the CDC in more detail in Chapter 8, Complaints.
- 7.4.13 In the recreational game, disciplinary officers appointed by the relevant bodies (e.g. the CCBs) under the GCR are responsible for charging decisions, and for convening disciplinary panels.

Ensuring compliance with non-regulatory collective minimum standards on EDI

- 7.4.14 In relation to determining compliance with the game's collective minimum standards (i.e. non-regulatory, game-wide CPA Standards), the ECB described its general philosophy to us as prioritising support, partnership and development rather than audits and punishments. There is a Partnership Review Process (PRP) that allows the ECB to determine compliance with CPA Standards. This involves countywide plan reviews, an annual CPA Standards self-evaluation, Partnership Review Meetings and an escalation process for non-compliance.
- 7.4.15 This escalation process involves an opportunity for the County to provide further evidence to assure the ECB that they do in fact meet the required standard and/or agree an action plan to ensure compliance within an agreed timeframe. If the issue is not progressed satisfactorily the matter is escalated to the Compliance Review Group (CRG).³⁴⁸ This group determines if a formal notice of non-compliance should be issued. If a notice is issued, a formal process is triggered and the CRG can recommend to the ECB Board that there should be sanctions, which include withholding or withdrawing funding agreed under the CPAs. The final decision about sanctions sits with the ECB Board.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

- 7.4.16 In addition to cricket's own processes, the EHRC has an overarching statutory regulatory role with responsibility for enforcing the Equality Act 2010.³⁴⁹ In this context, it has a range of enforcement powers at its disposal, ranging from giving advice, conducting formal investigations and commencing court action. The EHRC made a supervisory intervention specifically at Yorkshire CCC following their concerns that an unlawful event had likely taken place.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸ The CRG has not yet been fully established and is operating on an interim basis.

³⁴⁹ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-legal-action/our-powers>

³⁵⁰ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/our-response-incidents-racism-yorkshire-county-cricket-club>

7.5 Are the current systems for regulating EDI in cricket fit for purpose?

Cricket's systems for regulating EDI need significant improvement

- 7.5.1 In our view, the current systems for regulating EDI in both the professional and recreational game (i.e. both the regulatory system itself and the process for upholding collective minimum standards) need significant improvement. Our assessment is based on the evidence contained in the rest of this Report, including the data about the current state of equity in cricket set out in Chapter 4, the cultural issues examined in Chapter 5, the racism crisis in the game, and the evidence presented in the rest of this section. Asking how and why cricket found itself in a position where, as our evidence makes clear, discrimination is widespread, yet the systems put in place to regulate EDI (i.e. to ensure fair access and treatment) failed to either detect or prevent this, is critical if the game is to move forward.
- 7.5.2 We acknowledge that the ECB has been taking action to improve the game's regulatory systems, particularly since 2018 when it set up its own Legal and Integrity Team and its Regulatory Committee, and commend it for doing so. This was followed in 2020 with the launch of the CPA Standards and the CGF, which introduced collective minimum standards across the County game, including in relation to EDI. We recognise, too, that these changes have not had sufficient time to bed in and that there is evidence of improving performance. In particular, we note the recent ECB investigation and subsequent disciplinary process regarding Azeem Rafiq's allegations against Yorkshire CCC and several individuals, which resulted in one or more charges being proved against seven of the eight participants.
- 7.5.3 However, in our view, the current systems for regulating EDI are not yet working as well as they need to: we consider them to lack clarity and, especially in the formal regulatory system, sufficient levels of independence. There also need to be stronger and more robust regulations and standards.
- 7.5.4 These issues are, in part, due to cricket's complicated structure and the resulting wide variety of cricketing organisations, many of which are at differing stages of EDI and regulatory and disciplinary competence. In the recreational game in particular, as we discuss in Chapter 8, Complaints, there is a lack of consistency, resource, training and expertise in handling complaints and enforcing the relevant regulations, which needs to be addressed. Organisations in the recreational game are also able to operate their own disciplinary processes, provided they comply with the minimum standards contained in the regulations issued by the ECB, which has the potential to cause lack of clarity and inconsistency across the country. Whilst we acknowledge that it presents challenges, a complicated structure does not negate the ability, or more importantly the need, to put in place clear and effective systems of regulation for EDI.
- 7.5.5 In addition, we found very low confidence in the formal regulatory and complaints processes amongst stakeholders, most concerningly amongst those who have experienced discrimination, that the game can satisfactorily address these issues, even with the changes that have been proposed as part of the game-wide 12 Point Plan. We are clear that without significant further change the game will not be able to deliver on its commitment in that plan to tackle racism and all forms of discrimination.
- 7.5.6 In order to run effective systems to regulate EDI, it is critical that there is a shared understanding of purpose and how the systems operate. Our evidence indicates that this is currently lacking. There must also be clarity on what the rules and standards are, who sets them, ensuring any rules or standards are fit for purpose and, importantly, if there is a breach of a rule or a failure to meet a standard how this is identified and who is responsible for investigating the matter and deciding the outcome. Who sets the rules, investigates or adjudicates a matter is clearly important, but so is how it is done, so that systems are effective, transparent and have the confidence of all relevant stakeholders across the game and beyond. As a Commission, we consider that in cricket many of these essential building blocks require significant improvement.

Lack of clarity on roles, routes and process

7.5.7 Despite the ECB's Articles, which are approved by the ECB's Members, clearly establishing the ECB as the game's regulator, we have heard evidence that there are some in the game who do not accept that the ECB has that role, and that it should instead focus solely on 'getting the money in' and distributing it to the Counties. It has been suggested to us that this view might persist because cricket, unlike some other major sports such as football, had not seen setting standards, education, enforcement etc as a priority for a national governing body, or even as an activity to be undertaken at all, until relatively recently.



Previous iterations of the ECB believed their role was to get the money in and distribute it. A lot of counties believe the ECB exists to do a media rights deal and distribute the money. The idea that the governing body sets standards is not universally accepted.

ECB

7.5.8 Even for those who accept the ECB's regulatory role, our evidence indicates that there is widespread uncertainty over the nature of that role and how the formal regulatory system works in practice. In particular, there is a lack of clarity about the processes by which regulations or standards are enforced, who they apply to, which rules are 'regulatory' in nature and which are not (and the difference between them), who has jurisdiction over different matters and where decision-making responsibility sits. Indeed, we found that some Counties are struggling to meet their responsibilities, actively seeking assistance from the ECB as the NGB and, in their opinion, not always receiving the support they need owing to what they describe as the ECB's view that the regulatory system requires it to maintain distance.



I think it's incredibly muddled and I think the regulatory process and how the game is managed from a regulation point of view, and who does what, when and how, people don't understand. The game doesn't understand and coming out of this there have to be very clear lines of demarcation about who does what, where and when.

FCC



I contacted the ECB pretty early on, and said look, we're aware of this with [...] this is something that we've got some concerns about. We wanted to raise it with you now, because clearly it's not just us, there's [sic] other clubs implicated in this, and how do you want to do it? And we very clearly got the message back, it is a local issue and it is for you to deal with. Which I think was in some respects useful, because if you know you're alone, you just deal with it, and we got a straight answer in that sense. But it was a frustration, and then when there was [...] some suggestion from [FCC] that they'd asked for help and hadn't got it, I suppose what I can say is that I can recognise the frustrations from a first-hand experience where we have specifically asked for help and not been given it.

FCC

7.5.9 It is clear from our evidence that the game does not have a shared understanding of the route that should be followed if an incident takes place that requires some form of regulatory action, across both the professional and recreational game.

7.5.10 Issues are further complicated by a lack of clarity on how a matter arising out of a person's employment, governed by an individual employer's existing HR or complaints processes, should be handled if it is also a regulatory matter (for example, a breach of the Anti-Discrimination Code) that comes under the jurisdiction of the ECB.



We just need some more clarity on who's leading on certain things. And I think where do the complaints sit? [...] Understanding the range of complaints and what is very clearly an employee related grievance or disciplinary matter [...] and whether we lead on it as the employer or the governing body leads on it because it's an issue which is dealt with from a regulatory perspective. And I just think we're confused as a sport. I don't think we've got clarity as to what sits where and it's a changing landscape but there's so much to learn from other sports where things have gone horribly wrong.

FCC



I think from the ECB's perspective, it's really difficult as a governing body, because we [i.e. FCCs] are independent organisations; we have committees or boards; and it is their role to ensure that our organisations meet with the regulatory, legal etc [requirements]. So we have a duty as independent organisations to make sure that our systems and processes are in place to deal with that. So I can understand when this all started to happen, if this is an employee dispute, you should be dealing with that. Because if you start to bring in external bodies, it is an incredibly difficult time. I would expect, if I've got an issue, as an employee, that the organisation that I'm employed by would deal with it. I wouldn't want an external body coming in and dealing with that. And the ECB's role is to ensure that we are compliant as organisations. We do and we have those systems in place. So I think they did find themselves in a difficult position, and then of course we're into this, you know dragged into government scrutiny, things that none of us have ever had to deal with in our lives. We've always been quite under the radar.

FCC

- 7.5.11 In addition, in our assessment, having regulations which are mirrored in the CPA and other agreements (e.g. high profile match host agreements include a requirement to comply with ECB regulations) creates further confusion. Under the current system the same issue could be a breach of a regulation, a breach of a CPA Standard and a breach of a different contractual obligation under a high profile match host agreement, yet all of those are dealt with separately. It is not clear to us, nor, we suspect, to other stakeholders in the game, what the correct route for handling such a matter would be. This lack of clarity has further implications in relation to the potential for conflicts of interests between the ECB's role as regulator and promoter of the game, which we discuss later in this section.
- 7.5.12 It is very concerning that the leaders of the wider game do not have a shared understanding of the game's formal regulatory systems, particularly given the fact that we have received credible evidence that this issue had been raised with the ECB a number of times. As a Commission we found identifying and understanding the existing systems across the professional and recreational game to be challenging and time-consuming. It should be clear to everyone involved in cricket, especially its leaders, what the correct regulatory route should be on any matter, particularly on issues related to discrimination and wider EDI matters. There should be no doubt about jurisdiction, who is investigating, who is making decisions and who is accountable. It is incumbent on the game to resolve this urgently.

Lack of consistency



I think to try and summarise what our issues would be around the process is that there's just a lack of consistency, knowledge and understanding of what the process is. And if I had a member in front of me now who had a complaint made of him or her and they are in a heightened sense of anxiety [...] trying to explain to them what will happen, how and when and through who, we couldn't do [it] with any level of consistency.

The PCA



We have gone from a position of 'we're not going to help you because you need to find your own way and do your own thing', to suddenly 'you're all crap and you all need help, and you're all representing the game and if you don't sort yourself out we're all going down in this ship'.

FCC

- 7.5.13 We also have concerns that there is a lack of consistency as to how the ECB is approaching regulatory matters, concerns that are shared by parties across the game. Consistency, or the lack of it, was an issue raised at the November 2021 DCMS Select Committee hearings relating to Azeem Rafiq's testimony, where questions were raised about why the ECB took a different approach to an incident at Essex CCC, where they decided to launch their own investigation immediately rather than wait for the outcome of an internal investigation as they had done with Yorkshire CCC. The rationale provided by representatives of the ECB to the Select Committee for the different approaches included that "up until that point it was fairly normal practice for first-class counties to run their own regulatory process" and then for the "ECB as the regulator of the entire game to effectively sit in judgement of that investigation done internally."³⁵¹
- 7.5.14 The ECB also maintained that the circumstances in relation to Essex CCC were different in that "we started our regulatory investigation at a time when Essex was not conducting an investigation, so there was no investigation to wait for" adding that they had "learnt lessons through this process" and that they had a "litany of issues to deal with that will help our regulatory processes move forwards."³⁵²
- 7.5.15 We explored this rationale further in our hearings with the ECB and asked if, with the benefit of hindsight, they would act differently now. The ECB reiterated what they told the Select Committee but went on to say that they would now intervene earlier.
- 7.5.16 We were not convinced by the ECB's rationale for the different approaches taken to Yorkshire CCC and Essex CCC and can find nothing in the regulations that would explain this difference. We are satisfied that the different approaches demonstrate the lack of a clearly defined regulatory route for cases of this nature. It is of course entirely reasonable, and appropriate, that the ECB has learnt lessons and adapted its approach as a result. However, we were both surprised and disappointed that this learning did not appear to include recognition that when serious complaints of this nature are raised about an institution (in that case, Yorkshire CCC) under its jurisdiction, the regulator should step in early and conduct its own investigation, in all but exceptional circumstances.

³⁵¹ <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/3013/html/>

³⁵² *Ibid.*

Lack of effective leadership and oversight by the ECB, particularly in relation to the recreational game

- 7.5.17 Effective leadership and oversight of regulatory systems means setting the rules, issuing the guidance, ensuring that the rules and guidance are understood and encouraging compliance through a combination of training, incentives and, where necessary, enforcement action. It also requires having suitable reporting mechanisms and systems in place to alert the regulator, in this case the ECB, that there is fair access and treatment across cricket, so that where necessary it can intervene early to address problems as they arise.
- 7.5.18 In our hearings with the ECB they stated that whilst they had “*unequivocal confidence*” in the professional game’s regulatory processes, they understood that more work was needed to ensure that all parties across the game shared this confidence. When asked how the ECB assures itself that both its investigations and other regulatory processes are effective, they explained that the independent oversight from the Regulatory Committee provides a critical part of their quality assurance process. In addition, the ECB noted, and subsequently provided us with evidence to demonstrate, that they sometimes commission external legal counsel to advise on cases and provide independent assurance to the Board.



Confidence in our [professional game] regulatory process is unequivocal on our side but isn’t completely understood by certain people in the game as well as it might be by people in the game, for example the PCA or even our board.

ECB



We do still have a way to go in translating our trust and confidence in that process to certain members of the cricket family.

ECB

- 7.5.19 We do not share the ECB’s “*unequivocal*” confidence in the professional game’s regulatory processes, nor do we agree that it is just a question of communicating those processes more effectively to others. Expressing that level of confidence indicates a level of complacency that we think is misplaced given that failures of the regulatory process, including in the professional game, contributed significantly to the crisis the game is currently facing. Set against that, the ECB has recognised in its wider evidence to us that its regulatory processes can be improved, especially in the recreational game but also in professional cricket. Given the importance of effective leadership and oversight of the systems for regulating EDI, it is vital that senior leaders of the game, especially within the ECB, are ‘on the same page’ as to what the challenges are and the improvements that need to be made.
- 7.5.20 Specifically in relation to the recreational game, we heard evidence of considerable uncertainty about the extent of the ECB’s oversight of the regulatory and disciplinary processes, without clear reporting lines from the recreational leagues and CCBs up to the ECB.
- 7.5.21 As already noted, we have found discrimination which is deep rooted and widespread across the game, yet this level of discrimination does not seem to have been evident to the ECB. Being unaware of widespread discrimination in the game demonstrates to us there has been a lack of effective oversight of the systems for regulating EDI. Furthermore, whilst some at the ECB view the regulatory processes in the professional game as operating well, it was under this new system that there were the significant problems with how Yorkshire CCC handled Azeem Rafiq’s allegations, with delayed regulatory action by the ECB in response.

Cricket needs an independent regulatory body

- 7.5.22 The game recognised that there was an urgent need to reform governance and regulatory systems, particularly following the DCMS Select Committee hearing in November 2021. We acknowledge that the ECB quickly commissioned external experts Portas Consulting to conduct a review and that the game has reached consensus on a number of reforms. These include the creation of a more independent function with responsibility for regulatory, integrity, education and enforcement matters (via a Regulatory Board), leaving the ECB to focus on a supporting and enabling role. Much of the feedback from the FCCs summarised in Portas Consulting's report echoes the evidence given to us: *"lack of clarity and understanding of the existing regulatory model, including the role and level of independence of the Regulatory Committee"*, the *"perception that the current regulatory model is insufficiently independent of the ECB Board and Executive"* and *"The ECB is conflicted within the current model of regulation - it cannot function effectively as a supporter and enabler of the game's growth, whilst simultaneously acting as a regulator."*
- 7.5.23 We note with some concern, however, that the Portas Consulting proposals were developed following consultation that was almost exclusively internally focused (the only consultee outside of the ECB's Members and Board was the PCA). It was, in our view, a serious error not to consult more widely for this review given both what prompted it (i.e. concerns about the failure of the system to respond effectively and robustly to very serious allegations of racism) and the lack of diversity in the game's current leadership. We were also surprised and concerned to receive evidence suggesting that the game's leaders did not appear, when commissioning the review, to have addressed the specific regulatory failings that led to the current crisis. We, therefore, consider it to be the Commission's responsibility to address these issues and importantly give voice to those who have experienced discrimination in the game and are not represented adequately by the game's current leadership.
- 7.5.24 Such was the level of cynicism and fatalism among those who provided evidence to the Commission that we have to conclude that the Portas Consulting proposals do not go far enough. The phrase 'marking your own homework' was used repeatedly in our evidence to describe the current system of regulation, a system that many people who have experienced discrimination in cricket have been failed by and, as a result, have next to no faith in.
- 7.5.25 In particular, it is our assessment that there is a need for much greater independence of the regulatory function in cricket for the following reasons: there is a widespread perception that the current regulatory process is not sufficiently independent of the ECB (with confusion about who is making decisions, where responsibility lies and a concern that conflicts of interest can arise from the ECB's role as promoter and regulator of the game), there is a lack of trust and confidence across all stakeholders in current processes and the ECB's ability to improve them, and in order to mitigate any capture of the ECB by those it seeks to regulate. We discuss each issue in more detail below.

Promoter vs Regulator conflict

- 7.5.26 We have heard a great deal of evidence about the ECB's dual role as both the promoter and regulator of cricket. Very little of it has been positive. The overwhelming view from stakeholders and witnesses we spoke to, from across the game and beyond, is that there is considerable confusion caused by the mixing of priorities when combining the two roles. These concerns relate to a lack of clarity around which role the ECB is occupying at different times and, importantly, the risk of a conflict arising that has the potential to result in a reluctance to take the regulatory action required if such action conflicts with other commercial and/or financial considerations.



There is the sense that, on this particular issue, again the irony rings loud, but actually what the ECB would have been most interested in is protecting their brand proposition from the media. And therefore their strategy, I'm guessing, because that's pivotal to them to make sure they get the right flow of funds into cricket. So in reaching an outcome their horror story is that some systemic problem in the game [is revealed] or that they failed to do something. If the answer is there's a localised individual [...] problem which they have stamped all over and be shown to have stamped all over it, then that's a far better sell to the media for them and clearly you would expect them to go in that direction.

Current or Former Senior Cricket Leader

- 7.5.27 In our hearings with the ECB, they acknowledged that in the past, commercial imperatives dominated but that this has since changed with greater focus on and investment in the regulatory function, including the creation of a Regulatory Committee in 2018. The ECB described this “*separation*” of the regulatory function as “*critical*”, explaining to us that the reason they set up the system was “*that it was difficult for Board members simultaneously to encourage counties to do things, and at the same time police them. So we separated out regulation and enforcement.*” The ECB also stated that, in their view, EDI and commercial objectives are now one and the same because “*commercial conversations start with us being a game for modern Britain.*” They said that this was increasingly understood by the game and was a key selling point for broadcasters.
- 7.5.28 Specifically in relation to regulatory matters, we heard evidence that this “*critical separation*” between the ECB’s role as promoter and regulator of the game does not in reality exist to the extent that it needs to; the two roles are not sufficiently demarcated to prevent the conflicts that can arise, or importantly that can be perceived to arise, from holding both responsibilities.
- 7.5.29 It is our assessment that combining the two roles is a significant barrier to equity because it has the potential to give rise to conflicts of interest that are irreconcilable under the game’s current and proposed regulatory and compliance structure. Commercial imperatives understandably require the ECB to be focused on reputation management, maintaining brand status and value. That is not only our view: the feedback from the FCCs to Portas Consulting quoted at paragraph 7.5.22 includes the FCCs’ concern that the ECB is conflicted by holding the dual roles. We heard evidence of disquiet within the game, including at senior levels, that this dual responsibility could lead to poor conduct not being tackled appropriately if perpetrators are high performing and considered too valuable to lose. In saying that, we acknowledge that regulatory action has been taken by the ECB against some high profile individuals in recent years, including England players. Nonetheless, our evidence is that there is still concern across the game about the ECB’s dual role of promoter and regulator, which needs to be addressed.
- 7.5.30 We want to make clear that this conflict (actual or perceived) is not just faced by the ECB; we also heard evidence that the incentive not to sanction poor conduct from ‘star players’ extended more widely in the game. Indeed, the challenge of dealing with ‘toxic superstars’ is a phenomenon encountered throughout professional team sport and beyond. If a ‘toxic’ player, member of staff or even member of the Board is deemed invaluable, whether through winning games or driving revenue, the temptation to look the other way can be hard to ignore. We are clear that effective regulation requires commercial considerations to carry no weight when deciding whether to initiate regulatory action or ensuring there is compliance with agreed standards.



He was our star player, he was someone that in the work environment you don't want to p*ss him off if you're part of management because, ultimately, we're here to win games of cricket in their view.

Current or Former Professional Player

7.5.31 We also want to make clear that we do not have evidence (and are not suggesting) that in considering potential charging decisions, the ECB's Regulatory Committee is influenced by commercial considerations. Indeed, based on the evidence we have seen about its role more generally, the Regulatory Committee appears to have a good appreciation of the issues involved in the complex regulatory structure of the game across England and Wales, and provides valuable advice to the ECB in its development of regulations. Similarly, we also do not have evidence that the ECB's Integrity Team takes commercial matters into account when considering charging decisions. Nonetheless, it remains the case that there exist genuine concerns about the risks of conflicts of interest, in the wider game, even if the ECB itself is clear how the regulatory processes work. Indeed, the ECB has implicitly acknowledged itself that there is an issue in this area (at the very least in terms of perception): they have accepted the Portas Consulting recommendations for greater separation of the regulatory function from the ECB, and in relation to collective minimum standards, the need for separation between those who support Counties to achieve the CPA Standards and those responsible for ensuring compliance if they do not.

Lack of trust in cricketing authorities

- 7.5.32 The evidence we have received is unequivocal: there is a significant trust deficit in relation to cricket's ability to regulate itself on EDI matters and to deal appropriately with discrimination complaints in both the professional and recreational game.
- 7.5.33 Our lived experience survey received 4,156 responses from people across the whole game (many, but not all, in the recreational game).³⁵³ Half of the respondents stated that they had experienced discrimination in cricket in the last five years, but only one in four of those who had experienced discrimination reported it. The most common reason for not reporting incidents was a lack of trust that appropriate action would be taken to address the issue. The trust deficit was especially high among people from ethnically diverse backgrounds and disabled people. Hundreds of alleged victims of discrimination who stated they had reported the matter said that *"nothing happened,"* things *"fell on deaf ears,"* incidents were *"swept under the carpet,"* and that it felt *"pointless to challenge"* because they knew nothing would change.
- 7.5.34 This profound disaffection and lack of trust was not limited to those who had experienced discrimination but was also raised with us by current and former leaders within the game. We also experienced a reluctance from multiple individuals to give evidence to us, with several specifically saying that *"the ECB cannot be trusted and so the ICEC could not be trusted because it was set up by the ECB."* Others were only comfortable giving evidence under the condition of absolute anonymity because of the fear of victimisation, saying that they risked 'career suicide' if it became known that they had given evidence. Some witnesses described a culture of leaking across the game and were very concerned about the potential impact if their evidence found its way into the media, concerns that we consider to be credible.
- 7.5.35 This is not a sustainable position. For confidence in the game to be restored it is critical that all parties have faith in how cricket regulates EDI matters. It is our view that the only way to restore this faith is through more independent regulation, with specific and credible expertise in discrimination for both investigators and decision-makers.



There's a complete distrust between the governing body and its stakeholders, the First Class counties particularly.

Current or Former Senior Cricket Leader

³⁵³ Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket.



Within English cricket, no one can have confidence in the regulatory function or that anyone will genuinely be brought to account and history tells us they're not [which] undermines the credibility of the game in my view but that's clearly not how the ECB see it.

Current or Former Senior Cricket Leader

Risk of regulatory capture

- 7.5.36 One of the key concerns around all forms of regulation is that of 'capture'. In simple terms, capture refers to a state of affairs when *"the nature of the regulation is influenced unduly by those that it is meant to regulate"*³⁵⁴ resulting in a regulatory body that serves the interests of those being regulated rather than the purpose it was designed for, and of course, the wider public interest.
- 7.5.37 Under a system of self-regulation, the regulator derives its power from those it is regulating, and has to retain their support (unlike a statutory regulator backed by powers granted by Parliament). As explained earlier, the ECB is controlled by its 41 Members. Yet as the NGB in cricket, the ECB is responsible for regulating these same organisations.
- 7.5.38 The ECB's power to regulate cricket comes from its Articles of Association, which its Members have the power to amend; they might decide to exercise that power if they felt that the ECB was 'over-reaching' in the regulations or standards it introduces into the game (for example, to ensure there is fair access and treatment, or any other measures to eliminate discrimination). In addition, throughout our work the ECB has referred to the fact that Members have the power to vote out any or all of the ECB Board. In those circumstances, we have concerns about the risk of the type of regulatory capture described above, resulting in a dynamic that has required pace and approach on EDI to align with the slowest travellers in the game. We recognise that, in some cases, this is due to a lack of expertise and resource rather than a lack of commitment to EDI. However, we are also concerned that regulations relating to EDI are not as strong or robust as they should be because the ECB cannot push as far or as fast as it might like without the risk of alienating too many of its Members. Similarly, perhaps even more so, the EDI-related collective minimum standards in the CPA also depend on the ECB retaining the support of the Counties that enter into the CPAs: they are agreements and therefore both parties need to agree to their terms. The ECB has significant levers that it can pull to encourage Counties to agree - since ECB funding is provided under the CPAs - but the need to reach agreement means that stronger standards cannot be imposed by the ECB unilaterally.



The current standards in the County Partnership Agreement (CPA) are nowhere near high enough. They had to be agreed with the counties.

ECB



The ECB cannot force standards onto the game if it doesn't agree.

ECB

³⁵⁴ <https://www.oecd.org/gov/regulatory-policy/42245468.pdf>



Their [Counties] ability to commit to a world of best practice EDI is enormously challenging for them - their attitudes, backgrounds, understanding why it matters.

ECB

Recommendation 20

We recommend that stronger and clearer EDI standards are included in the next iteration of the County Partnership Agreement (CPA) and in the County Governance Framework (CGF), and are introduced into the Regional Host Agreements relating to Women's Regional Teams (WRTs) where appropriate. These should include, as a minimum:

- a) An increased gender target for First Class County (FCC) and County Cricket Board (CCB) Board representation (50%, as already in place for the ECB itself) and a formal, specific ethnicity target for each FCC and CCB that reflects their County demographic.
- b) Introducing FCC and CCB Board targets by reference to class/socio-economic diversity.
- c) Game-wide targets to increase diversity at Chair and Chief Executive level across the County game, particularly by reference to ethnicity, gender and class/socio-economic status.
- d) A requirement to improve the diversity and inclusivity of County memberships focusing particularly on ethnicity, gender and class/socio-economic status, with targets based on each County's demographic. Measures should include reviewing the types and cost of memberships available and targeted community engagement programmes.
- e) Financial incentives for Counties that meet their EDI targets.
- f) Enhanced mechanisms for collecting and monitoring EDI data at all levels of County organisations to ensure consistent reporting and analysis across the game.

Recommendation 21

We recommend that the available sanctions for failing to reach EDI standards within the next iteration of the County Partnership Agreement should be widened and strengthened, and that the game should report publicly on performance against those standards.

Conclusion: more independence is needed

- 7.5.39 We are clear that no system is, or will be, perfect. However, given the nature and scale of the issues we have identified, across all levels of the game, we have concluded that much greater independence is the only way for the game to move forward from the current crisis.
- 7.5.40 In these circumstances, we believe that the game needs a single clear regulatory system and an empowered regulatory body with a much greater level of separation from the ECB. The ECB, as the NGB, would continue to be responsible for making regulations (with appropriate input from the separate regulatory body), but the regulatory body would become responsible for their enforcement, including decisions about whether to bring charges and how to conduct investigations. The regulatory body should be as independent as it can be, recognising that it would have to be funded by the ECB and, at least initially, established by the ECB. The regulations themselves would be focused solely on matters of discipline and integrity, including anti-discrimination. All other matters would be non-regulatory collective minimum standards.
- 7.5.41 Importantly, in terms of decision-making there should be clear lines of demarcation from the ECB, and the regulatory body should have the power to investigate complaints about the ECB itself, and its Board members and staff. We set out the details of how this body should function in the recommendations set out below.
- 7.5.42 We are alert to the implications of our recommendations, including the substantial resources required. However, it is our assessment that, short of statutory regulation, this remains the only option that stands any chance of restoring the trust and confidence that has been lost.
- 7.5.43 To be clear, we gave serious consideration to whether statutory regulation was the appropriate solution. On balance, however, we have concluded that this would not be the best vehicle to drive equity in the game at this time. We have concerns that the creation of a statutory regulator is likely to take far too long at a time when there are other priorities for the government, and, importantly, could risk distancing the game's leaders even further from their responsibilities in this area. The current crisis in cricket is of the game's own making and it is our view that it is incumbent on them to resolve it.
- 7.5.44 We believe that our recommendations on regulation present a credible opportunity for cricket itself to remedy the failures that have been laid bare by the current crisis and our Report. If, however, the game does not accept the need for significant and urgent change to address the issues we have identified, or if performance on these issues does not improve at pace, then it may well be that the most appropriate next step would be for government to step in and force the necessary change through statutory regulation, as it has done in relation to some aspects of football.³⁵⁵ It is our view, though, that statutory regulation should only be used as a tool of last resort, if it becomes clear that every other intervention has failed to deliver desired outcomes.

³⁵⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-fan-led-review-of-football-governance/government-response-to-the-fan-led-review-of-football-governance>

Recommendation 22

We recommend that, within the next 12 months, a new regulatory body should be established, independent from the ECB. The new regulatory body, not the ECB, should be responsible for investigating alleged regulatory breaches and for making decisions about whether to bring charges.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) The new body should comprise a Regulatory Board with its own Executive Regulatory Team.
- b) The new body should be in a subsidiary company with its own ring-fenced budget, and its own legal counsel and investigatory staff, rather than sharing the ECB's legal and investigative resources.
- c) The ECB should appoint the first Chair of the Regulatory Board using expert external recruitment assistance to run an open and transparent recruitment process, with lay involvement to provide independent scrutiny and quality assurance. Future Chairs should be appointed by the Regulatory Board itself.
- d) The Chair of the Regulatory Board should appoint remaining members of the Regulatory Board using the same process. Board members must have an appropriate balance of skills, expertise and, importantly, diversity.
- e) Individuals within the new regulatory body charged with carrying out investigations must include people with specific experience of investigating discrimination complaints.

Recommendation 23

We recommend that, as far as possible, there should be a single set of regulations, and non-regulatory standards, which apply across both professional and recreational cricket, made by the ECB (in collaboration with the wider game).

Recommendation 24

We recommend that regulatory matters should be reserved to cover only rules relating to discipline and integrity. The precise scope of rules relating to discipline and integrity should be resolved by the ECB in collaboration with the wider game, but should certainly include anti-discrimination and safeguarding rules.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) There should be substantially greater clarity on what is or is not a regulatory matter, and the process for dealing with it. All current regulations that do not relate to discipline and integrity (for example, pitch regulations) should be renamed so they are no longer called 'regulations', to avoid confusion.
- b) The Cricket Discipline Commission (or any future adjudication body if it is replaced and/or renamed) should continue to hear cases involving regulatory matters (see also Recommendation 32).

Recommendation 25

We recommend that **non-regulatory** matters should be redefined as all other rules and standards etc. within the game that are not 'regulatory' matters (i.e. they do not cover rules relating to discipline and integrity). They would include, for example, standards in the County Partnership Agreement (CPA), including EDI-related standards.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) As well as dealing with regulatory matters, the new, independent regulatory body should be responsible for investigating, and making recommendations with respect to, the compliance by relevant cricketing organisations with **non-regulatory matters where they relate to EDI**, such as the EDI-related minimum standards within the CPA and County Governance Framework. This is necessary to ensure that any conflicts of interests that may arise between the promotion of EDI and the promotion of the ECB's other interests (e.g. its commercial considerations) are avoided.
- b) The ECB should determine the consequences for breaches of non-regulatory matters. However, non-regulatory matters that relate to EDI would follow the compliance and recommendation process by the independent regulatory body described above.

7.6 Who is leading cricket and what impact on EDI does this have?

Background and Context

- 7.6.1 As we explain in Chapter 4 on the State of Equity in Cricket, cricket's workforce lacks diversity, and is not representative of the recreational playing population. The problem is particularly acute among the most senior leadership positions across English and Welsh cricket, those of Chair and CEO, which are almost exclusively held by White men. This is true of the ECB (and its predecessor the TCCB), MCC, FCCs and CCBs. Whilst we have not examined all of their schooling backgrounds (past and present), it is reasonable to assume that many will have also been educated at private school.
- 7.6.2 The Chairs and CEOs of the ECB have always been White, and the ECB has never had a female Chair or permanent CEO.³⁵⁶ All of MCC's Chairs and CEOs/Secretaries throughout its over 230 year history have been White men, although MCC had its first ethnically diverse President in 2019,³⁵⁷ first female President in 2021³⁵⁸ and its current President is a gay, Jewish man who has put *"opening the game up to everyone at the top of the agenda for his presidency."*³⁵⁹
- 7.6.3 Among the current 18 FCC Chairs³⁶⁰ there are no women, one man of South Asian background and one of Mixed or Multiple ethnicity. For FCC CEOs, only two of the 18 are women and there are no CEOs from Black, Asian or other ethnically diverse communities. There has never been a Black Chair or CEO of an FCC.
- 7.6.4 This pattern is largely replicated across the game's wider leadership at Executive level. The results of a game-wide EDI Census in 2021 found that in FCCs and CCBs, White, privately-educated men are significantly overrepresented.³⁶¹
- 7.6.5 Throughout our work, we heard repeated evidence about the lack of diversity in relation to the age profile of those who lead cricket. Because our Terms of Reference do not include age as an area of focus, it was not something that we were able to consider in any detail but we believe it is an issue that the ECB should look into, by collating relevant data and analysing whether age plays a role as a key aspect of identity for those who hold power in the game, potentially intersecting with other characteristics such as gender and race.

Leadership is disconnected and in denial

- 7.6.6 Our evidence indicates a significant and widespread disconnect between the predominantly White, male, private school perception of EDI challenges in the game, and the perceptions of women, ethnically diverse communities and, to an extent, White, state educated men. Breaking this disconnect is essential.
- 7.6.7 Our evidence also indicates that there are perceptions amongst some within the game of a culture of complacency or denial which have been generated through the behaviour of many who have historically 'owned', and continue to 'own', the game.
- 7.6.8 It is notable that in their various EDI strategy documents and in the language they use, the ECB often appears unable to recognise or name structural or institutional forms of racism, sexism or class-based discrimination as problems in the sport, despite the overwhelming evidence that this is the case. A failure, for example, to expressly recognise that a person's ethnicity (either on its own or in conjunction with their socio-economic status and/or gender) is likely to limit their opportunities to enjoy and progress within the sport prevents meaningful action from being taken to address these structural and institutional barriers.

³⁵⁶ Clare Connor was appointed interim CEO in June 2022 following the resignation of Tom Harrison.

³⁵⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2019/may/01/kumar-sangakkara-becomes-first-non-british-mcc-president>

³⁵⁸ <https://www.espn.com/story/clare-connor-steps-up-as-mcc-s-first-female-president-1280987>

³⁵⁹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/cricket/62037856>

³⁶⁰ As at the end of December 2022.

³⁶¹ A game-wide EDI Census was commissioned by the ECB in 2021 and the results were shared with the ICEC.

- 7.6.9 Our assessment is that there has been a lack of leadership across the game on these issues until very recently. Sadly, little has changed since the Clean Bowl Racism Report in 1999.
- 7.6.10 Equally, whilst there has been significant progress in the women's game, it remains devalued and seen as subsidiary to men's cricket, particularly within governance structures.
- 7.6.11 There have been attempts to address lack of engagement with the South Asian community through the South Asian Action Plan at national level (as well as local initiatives), with some very positive results for the representation of South Asian cricketers on the talent pathway. By contrast, there has been a failure to support cricket in Black communities, until the ECB's very recent decision to back the ACE Programme, following the lead of Surrey CCC and Sport England.
- 7.6.12 There has also been a failure to tackle elitism and class-based disadvantage in English and Welsh cricket in a considered or strategic way, as discussed in our Chapter 6, Approach to EDI in Cricket.
- 7.6.13 Some within the senior leadership of the ECB do appear to accept that structures and institutions within cricket have been discriminatory for decades. However, despite their insight, and that of some leaders within Counties, there remains a general failure to understand or accept the scale of the challenge that the game is facing in terms of race, gender and class.
- 7.6.14 The evidence we received suggests that some of cricket's leaders consider the crisis at Yorkshire CCC to be a case of a 'few bad apples'. Those who take that view should bear in mind the rest of the phrase: a few bad apples 'spoil the barrel.' 'Bad apples' in cricket do not exist in isolation, separated from everyone else: they are part of the cricket community and left unchecked, can infect the rest. It is clear from the scale and completeness of our enquiries that the evidence points to problems in cricket existing on a far greater scale than a few people in one County.
- 7.6.15 For as long as there exists a reluctance to admit - or determination to deny - that cricket has a problem persists, the game will not move forward. It is unrealistic to expect that every cricket supporter in the country will embrace the findings and recommendations in this Report, but it is critical for the future of the sport that those in leadership positions do accept the need for substantial, considered change.

Recommendation 26

We recommend that all strategic and operational decisions made by the ECB Executive Management Team and/or ECB Board (or other governance committees) should take account of any EDI implications. To enable this, the ECB should create standard templates for decision-making reports that include the following:

- a) The outcome of the EDI impact assessment conducted to inform the development of the proposal (see Recommendation 7).
- b) Where appropriate, explicit reference to how the proposal is aligned to the ECB's core purpose and values (see Recommendation 3).

Leadership lacks diversity and relies on identity holders to drive change



[Cricket needs] to dispel the image of cricket being only for White, middle/upper class men, and make it appear available to everybody.

White man, state school, staff member (at the ECB or a County organisation)

- 7.6.16 It is clear to us from the evidence that the perceptions match the reality: images of the ‘gentleman amateur’ running cricket for as long as it has been played create obstacles to broadening the game’s appeal and are hindering attempts to make it truly ‘a game for everyone’.
- 7.6.17 Although considerable and important progress has been made in diversifying the Boards of Counties and the ECB, as shown in Chapter 4, State of Equity in Cricket, it takes time for perceptions to change. Importantly, there has been little progress in achieving greater diversity among the most senior and public figures throughout the game, namely Chairs and CEOs.
- 7.6.18 In our view, the governance structures within cricket, including the membership model, encourage the reproduction of this leadership demographic, making it very difficult for those on the ‘outside’ to get into the fold. When they do, they often find it extremely difficult to make progress in their roles. The leaders of cricket’s organisations set the culture for the sport, and for as long as they do not represent the bulk of those who play the game (including in teams outside ‘mainstream’ cricket regulated by the ECB) or the wider population, the culture is unlikely to change significantly.
- 7.6.19 Many of the attempts to achieve greater equity within the game have been driven by women and those from ethnically diverse and/or working class backgrounds. These have typically been either the few that are within the governance structures or those outside it who can exert influence in other ways (including through the media). The ECB accepted in their evidence to us that Lord Patel was the driving force behind the SAAP while he was on the ECB Board, drawing on his South Asian and working class roots to identify the problems and help to develop solutions. Ebony Rainford-Brent was largely responsible for the ACE Programme. Yet EDI is a fundamental responsibility for all the leaders of any organisation. It should be embedded in every Board member’s thinking and decision-making, not allocated to be the sole responsibility of individual Board members who happen to have specific responsibility for EDI or who come from particular backgrounds.
- 7.6.20 People who are part of a specific group - whether defined by race, gender (or other protected characteristics) or class - should not always be expected to take the lead in representing that group’s interests. They should not be the only source of ideas, initiatives and improvements, nor should they always be expected to be responsible for implementation or be the public face - the ‘poster child’ - of every new development. There can be an emotional cost, and sometimes harm to physical health through stress, that comes with the extra burdens and expectations placed on people from marginalised groups if they are always the ones who must do the ‘heavy lifting’: you don’t need to look any further than the pressure heaped on Lord Patel at Yorkshire to see that.
- 7.6.21 It seems to us that there is not enough recognition from the majority within cricket’s leadership of the challenges that underrepresented groups face, nor sufficient or timely support when ideas for change are presented. Our evidence showed that securing the necessary support is often a drawn-out, difficult and dispiriting process.

7.6.22 Finally, there is also evidence in the media that when attempts are made to change the status quo, and adopt a fairer, more inclusive approach, those who do not wish to see change will not only try to block progress but, in some cases, will attack the motives and character of those responsible for trying to achieve it. This has to stop.

Recommendation 27

We recommend that the ECB strengthens the diversity of its Board and Executive Management Team across ethnicity, gender and class/socio-economic status, achieving demonstrable progress within the next 24 months and introducing longer term targets.

Chapter 8: Complaints

We know from our experience it isn't really about the app or the phonenumber, it's about the process and the system and the trust that you create. And about the leadership. So there's no point putting a bit of technology in unless you're putting a bit of technology in against a backdrop of a system change and a culture change. You'll just be dropping something into the culture that just doesn't work. So, you've got to get all that other stuff in my experience running with the whistleblowing to get the whistleblowing bit of it right.

Kick It Out

8.1 Introduction

Complaints work is part of advancing EDI

- 8.1.1 A clear and effective process for addressing and resolving complaints is essential for any organisation. Good complaints handling should never be regarded as a 'nice to have'. The approach taken speaks volumes about an organisation's culture and values – whether there is a genuine commitment to fairness and to learning from mistakes or simply a desire to protect reputations and maintain the status quo. This is doubly true when it comes to promoting equity. Effective handling of discrimination allegations is a key component of developing a genuinely inclusive culture, confronting behaviours that enable and reproduce discrimination. Evidence that we have heard clearly shows that within English and Welsh cricket, despite some recent improvements, the complaints process remains unfit for purpose.

The value of complaints

- 8.1.2 Complaints are often 'the canary in the coalmine', providing an invaluable source of insight for leaders in an organisation. They provide live feedback on performance, help to flag risks and systemic issues, and crucially highlight opportunities to drive positive change. But this will only happen if complaints are viewed as an opportunity to learn, not a problem to be dealt with as quickly and quietly as possible. Action taken also needs to be visible: demonstrating accountability, providing fair resolutions for individuals and offering clarity about the lessons learned to prevent problems from happening again.

- 8.1.3 Across many sectors, public and private, complaints are recognised as a source of “*valuable feedback*” that can “*provide both direct and insights into what [an organisation] is doing well and what it needs to work on.*” Organisations should recognise the importance of not simply responding to “*complaints on an ad hoc basis*” but instead managing them proactively and “*assigning business value to complaints.*”³⁶² We believe that this approach should be applied in cricket.
- 8.1.4 A positive approach to complaints, backed up by effective processes for investigation and decision-making, is a barometer of a strong and healthy organisational culture – one that isn’t afraid to acknowledge that things do sometimes go wrong and is determined to improve and put things right. A failure to invest in effective and timely complaints handling is not only an ethical problem, it represents a strategic error for any organisation: especially one that claims to be committed to EDI.

What is a ‘complaint’?

- 8.1.5 A complaint in cricket could be about anything from the standard of catering to the lack of car parking spaces in a ground, or from questionable selection decisions for players in the talent pathway to discriminatory abuse and harassment. As a Commission, our focus has been on complaints about discrimination or unfair treatment.
- 8.1.6 Importantly, complaints or allegations of discrimination may not only be based on interpersonal treatment but may also be directed at systemic issues within an organisation, for example in cases where facilities and services are provided on terms that disadvantage particular groups (sometimes known as “indirect discrimination”).³⁶³ Any complaints process needs to provide for systemic complaints as well as complaints by one individual about the conduct of another.

For the purposes of this Report we have defined a complaint, and specifically a complaint related to discrimination or unfair treatment, as follows:

Complaint: An expression of feedback, usually dissatisfaction, that requires resolution.

A discrimination (or unfair treatment) complaint: A complaint that relates to unlawful discrimination or unfair treatment. Unlawful discrimination is defined by the Equality Act 2010. Unfair treatment covers discrimination experienced by groups (for example, on the basis of class) that are not protected by the Equality Act 2010. We refer to them collectively as discrimination complaints in this Chapter.

Please see Appendix 7, Key Terms for a description of the legal tests for discrimination.

- 8.1.7 As we set out in Chapter 7, Governance and Leadership, ineffective complaint handling, at multiple levels, was revealed as a key issue throughout the course of our work, receiving much public, media and parliamentary scrutiny. In this Chapter we have therefore focused our attention on answering two critical questions:
- Does cricket have an effective system for handling discrimination allegations?
 - How can the current system be improved?
- 8.1.8 As a result of intense public scrutiny on cricketing organisations and complaints handling throughout the period of our work, the ground has been moving, with policies, procedures and regulations being updated as we undertook our inquiries. We have considered these changes, and importantly, the evidence of the impact that they are having, as we conducted our assessment.
- 8.1.9 We set out in Appendix 6, Complaints Background, a high level summary of what we understand the current system to be.

³⁶² Deloitte (2015) ‘The power of complaints. Unlocking the value of customer dissatisfaction.’

³⁶³ See longer definition in Appendix 7, Key Terms.

Our overall conclusions

- 8.1.10 Before we turn to the analysis, we felt it was important to state our overall conclusions. Our evidence is overwhelming: the systems that cricket has in place for handling allegations of discrimination are unfit for purpose and require urgent reform. Evidence gathering revealed a gulf in perception between those in authority, who generally feel that the systems they operate are effective, and those seeking to raise concerns, who find the systems inadequate and the outcomes unsatisfactory.
- 8.1.11 Compelling evidence was received that the general attitude to complaints is too defensive, regarding them as a problem to be solved rather than appreciating that they can be a source of valuable feedback and insight. The system is not sufficiently victim-centred and focused on achieving appropriate outcomes. Most instances of discrimination go unreported for a variety of reasons, including confusion about the process, a perception that nothing will be done and a fear of victimisation. The process of handling complaints needs to be professionalised throughout the game, not only in the recreational game but also in professional cricket. The ECB and the wider game seem to regard formal complaints as the only (or at least the principal) route to follow, and pay insufficient attention to other means of raising concerns that could lead to quick and informal resolution (where appropriate).

8.2 What is cricket's current attitude towards complaints and what should it be?



During a match, our club members were twice racially abused. A supporter at the ground shouted a racist slur to one of our players and another member posted a comment referencing racialised violence on a live feed of the match. Our experience of seeking effective sanction in this case from the club in question and the cricket authorities has confirmed to us that the culture in cricket around racism is marked by denial, obfuscation, poor education, and a lack of care for the victims of racism. These, in our experience [...] (when the case finally resulted in a written apology from the perpetrators) continue to occur at all levels of the game.

Individual

- 8.2.1 As with all areas of culture, the tone is set from the top. If people in leadership roles on and off the field overlook discriminatory and other problematic behaviour, fail to condemn or intervene to stop it, or even worse engage in such behaviour themselves, others will take their lead from them. In the context of complaints, trivialising and demeaning the importance of individuals' concerns and engaging in denial when problems are revealed can be a knee-jerk, but damaging, reaction.
- 8.2.2 We heard evidence from one senior leader in the sport that, whilst in their opinion complaints are often taken seriously and there is a will to identify problems and make positive reform, there is also a fear that if the issues raised become public, they could damage cricket's 'brand' and/or an organisation's reputation. We are disturbed by the fact that there appears to be a conflict between, on the one hand, the desire to 'right wrongs' through conducting a robust complaints process and, on the other, concerns about the impact that going through a public process may have on revenue from sponsors and spectators as a result of negative media coverage.
- 8.2.3 These conflicting considerations reinforce the need for greater independence of the regulatory and disciplinary processes, as we discuss in more detail in Chapter 7, Governance and Leadership. But it also highlights that senior leadership across the game is not (yet) fully embracing the value of complaints as a driver of improvement, or the commitment to a culture of inclusion.

- 8.2.4 In addition, we received evidence of a tendency to close ranks and become defensive when complaints are raised. Concerns around legal risks, for example, can prevent a swift resolution through the one thing that complainants may want above all else: an apology. Time and time again in our evidence we heard that a swift and genuine apology would have made all the difference – as, for example, Azeem Rafiq has made plain in his public comments. Prompt and sincere apologies accompanied by an acceptance that conduct was inappropriate and a willingness to improve behaviour can be very effective.
- 8.2.5 It is notable that the NHS has introduced a duty of candour for staff, with the requirement to be open and transparent with patients and their families when something has gone wrong. Saying sorry is part of that duty and is always the right thing to do. We would urge cricket’s authorities to embrace a similar approach.

Saying ‘sorry’ and the duty of candour in the NHS

National guidance in the NHS emphasises the importance of ‘saying sorry’.

*“Saying sorry is: **always** the right thing to do; **not an admission** of liability; **acknowledges** that something could have gone better; the first step to **learning** from what happened and **preventing** it recurring.”³⁶⁴*

The guidance also explains the duty of candour in the NHS which “*requires all staff to act in an open and transparent way. Regulations governing the duty set out the specific steps healthcare professionals must follow if there has been an unintended or unexpected event which has caused moderate or severe harm to the patient. These steps include informing people about the incident, providing reasonable support, truthful information and an apology. Saying sorry forms an integral part of this process. Process should never stand in the way of providing a full explanation when something goes wrong.*”

- 8.2.6 Our evidence reveals that there is not enough focus on individuals as potential *victims*, who need both support and a just and appropriate outcome. Equally, there does not appear to be enough support provided for others involved in complaints, primarily the subject of the complaint but also witnesses and indeed those who are responsible for handling and investigating complaints, which can often be stressful and emotionally draining.
- 8.2.7 Those who are the subject of complaints, particularly allegations of racism, often think it is career suicide even to have been accused. Yet anyone who is accused of discrimination should be presumed to be innocent until proven guilty, which should be the bedrock of any complaints system. It is essential that organisations provide appropriate support to them, as well as to complainants, particularly in light of research highlighting the impact on individuals of being accused of discrimination, including negative changes to health and wellbeing.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ NHS Resolution guidance, ‘Saying sorry’.

³⁶⁵ Hirst C, Gill, C. 2019 ‘Being Complained About: Good Practice Principles and Guidelines’, quoted in Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman ‘Making Complaints Count: Supporting complaints handling in the NHS and UK Government Departments’ July 2020, p.19.

- 8.2.8 We are concerned that, in general, the ECB and the wider game do not fully appreciate the role of complaints within the broader context of the fight against discrimination. The ECB appears, for example, to have centred complaints handling in its response to racism in the game, yet it should be clear that complaints will only be one feature (albeit an important feature) of the necessary work to combat racism. Formal complaints are likely to be the tip of the iceberg and even if they are effectively handled, this is unlikely on its own to have the sort of systemic impact that is needed. We believe that genuine and lasting change will only come about through changing attitudes and culture – including how complaints are regarded and addressed, both formally and informally.
- 8.2.9 The game needs high standards that are clearly understood, an open and supportive environment in which individuals feel that concerns can be raised without fear of being victimised, a willingness to learn and improve, and alternative means of resolving issues without requiring individuals to make a formal complaint (where appropriate). Where formal complaints are made, there needs to be proper enforcement, accountability, monitoring and the dissemination of lessons learned to achieve change.

Recommendation 28

We recommend that the ECB reports clearly, publicly and annually on complaints in the professional and recreational game, including numbers, overall outcomes and actions taken to address existing and emerging patterns of concern.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) Counties should be required to report key information about complaints to the ECB.
- b) The ECB and the wider game should develop a comprehensive system to gather insights and promulgate learnings and best practice throughout the game relating to complaints.

8.3 A lack of a shared understanding of discrimination

- 8.3.1 There is a common gulf in perception and experience of discrimination across society, influenced by individuals' different life experiences, expertise and exposure to issues of discrimination. This means that people can hold vastly different views on whether the same conduct or the same evidence constitutes discrimination or not. Even where discrimination is evident to everyone, views can vary significantly on whether the conduct is serious, intentional or warrants significant action or sanction.
- 8.3.2 A shared understanding of what discrimination is, how it is experienced and the impact it can have, is necessary to ensure consistency around complaint reporting, handling, investigation and resolution. Our evidence has shown us that this is clearly absent in cricket. The lack of understanding is particularly acute in the wider game (e.g. among players and parents) but is also a problem for those tasked with investigating complaints.
- 8.3.3 If people don't know what amounts to discrimination, or they don't trust that an allegation of discrimination will be understood and taken seriously, they are unlikely to report it. If those receiving a complaint of discrimination do not understand how discrimination might play out in the context of cricket, or how an allegation of discrimination might be evidenced, they may dismiss allegations without proper consideration. As a result, the lack of shared understanding means that many instances of discrimination may go unchallenged, which denies justice to the victims and allows unacceptable behaviour to continue.

Anti-Discrimination Code and Guidance

- 8.3.4 Partly, it seems, in an attempt to respond to this issue, the ECB introduced an Anti-Discrimination Code and supporting Guidance in 2021 (updated in 2022), which broadly reflects the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. This was a positive step, although it is remarkable that no code focused on discrimination existed previously, even though racism in cricket had been recognised and investigated by a commission set up by the ECB in 1999 (which produced the ‘Clean Bowl Racism’ Report).
- 8.3.5 In 2020, the ECB had introduced a specific Directive for the professional game prohibiting conduct that was improper or may be prejudicial to the interests of cricket or which may bring the ECB, cricket or any cricketers into disrepute “*which includes reference, whether express or implied, to a Protected Characteristic.*” This was replaced in 2021 by a new Directive 3.4 requiring compliance with the Anti-Discrimination Code.
- 8.3.6 Before 2020, the only charge that could be brought in the game for discriminatory conduct was under the general Directive 3.3 prohibiting conduct which is “*improper or which may be prejudicial to the interests of cricket or which may bring the ECB, the game of cricket or any cricketer or group of cricketers into disrepute.*”
- 8.3.7 We believe that the current Code and Guidance are inadequate and need to be strengthened. Taken together, these are the key documents that should help to ensure that a shared understanding of discrimination in cricket exists: helping to guide behaviour by making clear what sort of conduct is unacceptable, assisting people in identifying and bringing forward complaints about unacceptable behaviour, and enabling those handling complaints to understand how allegations of discrimination should be dealt with effectively.
- 8.3.8 Currently, the Code and Guidance do none of these things effectively. That is not just our view: the ECB told us that “*The Anti-Discrimination Code hasn’t landed as well as we had hoped. Some people didn’t understand what it was for or how it would be used. Some parts of the game don’t think there is a problem. The ECB needs to do more education, including getting people to understand what discrimination is.*”
- 8.3.9 We have identified three key respects in which the Code and Guidance can be improved, to provide a more effective safeguard against discrimination in practice. First, the Code should be stronger and more ambitious in its expectations and standards regarding individual conduct. Second, the scope of the Code should be broadened to cover issues of institutional and structural discrimination. Finally, the Guidance should be improved to provide more practical assistance to those making and responding to complaints.

Conduct

- 8.3.10 The Code currently includes no explicit protection against victimisation, something which is covered by the Equality Act 2010. Our evidence has shown that this fear of being victimised for making a complaint is a real concern in cricket and is often one of the main reasons why discrimination is not reported.
- 8.3.11 The Code also misses an important opportunity to go further than the protection afforded by the law to provide a comprehensive and consistent prohibition against all forms of discriminatory conduct. As our Report makes clear, socio-economic circumstances can represent a significant barrier to participation and progression in cricket and are a source of discriminatory and unfair treatment, which cricket needs to eradicate. The Code should cover socio-economic status (which is included in the ECB Policy on Trans People Playing Cricket (the Trans Policy), but was not included in the Code).
- 8.3.12 While discrimination that is malicious or intentional should be seen as particularly serious, unintentional discrimination is still discrimination. Impact on the victim is key: “*I am not a racist*” or “*I didn’t mean to cause offence*” are not defences. Appropriate actions and sanctions should reflect the impact on the victim, as well as any intent. Even where discrimination is not proved, all instances where behaviour is reasonably experienced as discrimination should be taken as an opportunity for improvement and learning.
- 8.3.13 We believe that the Code should also include a duty to speak up (otherwise known as a mandatory reporting obligation) for senior individuals in cricket, on and off the field, with accountability for failure to act. This would help to make it clear that discriminatory behaviour should always be challenged.

Institutional and structural discrimination

- 8.3.14 The Code focuses on discriminatory behaviour, yet discrimination is not always about behaviour by one individual. Discrimination, especially indirect discrimination, can be institutional and structural, as well as interpersonal, and the Code should reflect this.

Improved clarity in the Code and Guidance

- 8.3.15 The evidence we have heard has clearly shown that the complexity of the complaints process is a problem. The Code and the Guidance should provide clear signposting to help participants to navigate their way through the process. For example, rather than simply stating that Participants (the people who must comply with the Code) should “*submit to the disciplinary jurisdiction of the relevant body which applies to them,*” the Code should clearly set out which body has jurisdiction over which category of Participant (e.g. using a flowchart).
- 8.3.16 The Guidance supporting the Code is vague and unclear. It includes suggestions such as “*Think about both direct and indirect discrimination and obtain advice as required...*” or “*Think about whether you need to provide any support to individuals or organisations during the process...*” Rather than simply identifying things to “*think about*”, the Guidance should provide practical assistance, particularly for those who are responsible for handling and investigating complaints of discrimination, often with no specialist expertise.
- 8.3.17 The Guidance should do far more to help people understand what might amount to discrimination by setting out relevant and practical examples and case studies. The current examples in the Guidance are limited to explanations of the different tests for discrimination under the Equality Act. In some cases, the narrowness of the examples risks perpetuating a common misconception that racial discrimination is only about racial slurs, rather than wider unfavourable treatment such as exclusion by teammates, being overlooked for selection, suffering from harsher treatment from umpires or even, as we heard in evidence, physical harassment and abuse.



I am a previous player [...] I will never forget being in my hotel room on the phone leaning out of the window minding my own business when teammates from their room above decided to urinate on my head. I reported this to [an official] who told me not to worry and [they] would deal with it. [They] never did.

Unattributed to protect confidentiality

- 8.3.18 We have found it helpful to compare the style and tone of the Code with that of the ECB’s Trans Policy,³⁶⁶ which is written in a more accessible way, and is more effective in helping people to understand what type of conduct is unacceptable. The use of FAQs to work through explanations is helpful and instructive, and there are references to challenging hostile/discriminatory behaviour towards trans players. This approach should be replicated in the Code.
- 8.3.19 Finally, to position the Code in terms that everyone in cricket should appreciate, it should make clear, up front, that discriminatory behaviour goes against the fundamental principles of fairness and respect that are embodied in the ‘spirit of cricket’.

³⁶⁶ Trans issues themselves are not within our Terms of Reference and we have not assessed, nor make any comment on, the substance of the Trans Policy.

Zero tolerance



The problem is that when people say zero tolerance what they mean is automatic banning, you'll never darken my door ever again, you're never going to be involved in the sport.

Kick It Out

- 8.3.20 We believe that a 'zero tolerance' approach to discrimination is essential, but there is an urgent need to communicate clearly what this means in practice. Sometimes 'zero tolerance' is interpreted to mean that every act of discrimination will automatically lead to the most severe sanction available. This can create an all or nothing scenario where the stakes are so high that people are often not willing to bring a complaint about anything but the most serious conduct. It can also lead to those against whom complaints have been made refusing to accept any culpability when they otherwise might have done.
- 8.3.21 In our view, 'zero tolerance' means that every act of discrimination should be challenged, leading to an outcome that is fair and proportionate. An assessment of seriousness, based on clear criteria, should inform any charges brought and sanctions applied. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) guidance for race discrimination cases, for example, reflects varying severity and recognises outcomes can "*range between a written warning and training to dismissal.*"³⁶⁷
- 8.3.22 Kick It Out has described their approach as follows: what is the level of threat, risk, harm and the impact on the victim? Based on their experiences dealing with discrimination in football, they explained that most victims do not want people to be "*hung, drawn and quartered. They just want the behaviour to stop. And they want to go to work without feeling like they've got to put up with that kind of behaviour.*" They reported that following 60 one-to-one fan education sessions in 18 months, none of those people had reoffended in football. They also recognised that some people and behaviour will always require, or deserve, punishment as part of an escalating range of sanctions, but as they put it "*one guiding principle is that you can't ban your way out of this problem.*"
- 8.3.23 Any complaints system, therefore, needs to allow for a range of sanctions. For unintentional, minor and occasional incidents, support for individuals to learn, grow and develop may be all that is required, whereas in more serious cases, a more punitive sanction is likely to be needed. In cases of structural and institutional discrimination, appropriate action might require changes to policies, practices, education and procedures. Organisations, too, need to be able to learn, grow and develop.

8.4 Discrimination in cricket remains largely under-reported

- 8.4.1 "*Why didn't you report it at the time?*" is a question frequently asked when allegations of discrimination are made long after the event, often with the implication that the delay casts doubt over whether they are true. Yet there are a host of good reasons why people don't come forward at the time, one of the main ones being fear of the consequences. This is likely to be a particular issue at a professional level in a sport like cricket where representing your county or your country is the culmination of a lifelong dream for the fortunate few, ever since they first picked up a bat and a ball.

³⁶⁷ ACAS Race Discrimination: Key Points for the Workplace, Discrimination: What to do if it happens.

- 8.4.2 For those from minoritised groups, there is often also the responsibility that comes with knowing that they are role models, providing a source of hope and inspiration for those who rarely see themselves represented. None of that will be thrown away lightly. Many fear that making allegations against their captain, coach or club could end their career. Even if they do take that risk, there is often the suspicion that nothing will actually come of it, with those accused immediately becoming defensive, 'going legal' and ultimately brushing the whole thing under the carpet so that nothing changes.
- 8.4.3 Unless there is confidence in the system and in the people running it, many complaints will go unreported: there will be no justice for those who have experienced discrimination and no meaningful attempts to prevent it happening to others in the future.
- 8.4.4 Our evidence shows that this is overwhelmingly the case in cricket: of the 2,006 respondents to our online survey who had experienced discrimination in the previous five years, 76% did not complain about it.
- 8.4.5 It is critical that cricket's authorities understand the reasons why this is happening, not only because so many people 'suffering in silence' is damaging for those individuals and for the game, but cricket is also missing out on vital insights that could drive positive change.
- 8.4.6 Respondents to our online survey gave many reasons why they did not report their experiences, including: confusion about how to make a complaint; a lack of trust in decision-makers; not wanting to get people into trouble; lack of support; not regarding the matter as serious enough to warrant a complaint; senior figures failing to stop the behaviour at source (indicating to those who had experienced discrimination that it is an acceptable part of the game's culture and should not be challenged); and a fear of victimisation, both on a personal level from colleagues and in terms of the potential detriment to their future career. Add to these reasons a lack of shared understanding in the game about what discrimination actually is and the type of conduct that would merit a complaint, and the barriers to reporting are substantial.

Confusion about the complaints process

- 8.4.7 The complexity of cricket's governance arrangements can make pursuing a complaint very challenging. An individual needs to establish where jurisdiction lies, who investigates, who makes decisions and who is accountable for those decisions. There is, in most cases, no clear route from incident to outcome and then on to any final appeal stages. Accessing, understanding and navigating the system can be extremely difficult.
- 8.4.8 Respondents to our Call for Written Evidence referred to a lack of clarity, inconsistent details and the absence of clear communication about the complaints process, with respondents questioning whether people would know how to make a complaint if they needed to.
- 8.4.9 It is not only individual players or parents struggling to navigate their way through an opaque system who are confused. We also heard the same from some leaders within cricketing organisations and from those who are tasked with managing complaints.
- 8.4.10 Overall, there was near universal agreement that more needs to be done to make the various complaints processes better known, easier to understand, and generally more accessible, particularly in the recreational game but also in professional cricket. Based on our work, we strongly agree: we have also found the different procedures and how they interact to be confusing, with gaps and contradictions as to who has jurisdiction for what.



We have acknowledged that, in some parts of our game, our handling of complaints historically has not been good enough. In parts of our game, it has not been easy enough to complain and not enough has been done to explain the system for dealing with individual concerns. Particularly in the recreational game, it's been too hard to make a complaint. We expect that you will have heard some painful examples of this during your evidence gathering. During this last year particularly, we have taken steps to standardise and improve the disciplinary processes across the recreational game, but we must go further. We are stronger in the professional game, but failings have still nevertheless occurred in some county organisations. Although we investigate such failings and take action where appropriate, we recognise that we have lost trust in people's confidence, and we must work hard to win that back. In professional cricket, it is clear that people have, over the years, felt uncomfortable in bringing forward their experiences.

ECB

- 8.4.11 It is clear that the ECB has now accepted some of these issues and whilst recent changes have resulted in some improvement, significant further work is needed to get the game to where it needs to be. The new avenues for reporting concerns that have been introduced, such as the central ECB 'Reporting Discrimination' webpage and individual County whistleblowing hotlines, have focused on enabling individuals to make formal complaints and have largely ignored the informal routes that many people would prefer to follow.
- 8.4.12 We would also caution that the idea of a 'whistleblowing hotline' can itself be counter-productive: 'whistleblowing' is strongly associated with high-level, even illegal, conduct that has been carried on in secret and is being covered up. In reality, the behaviour in question might be open and well known, just never challenged. It may also be unintentional and easily remedied through a swift and genuine apology. 'Blowing the whistle' to the national governing body may be the last thing that someone wishes to do, as this could result in far more severe consequences for the person responsible than the complainant may wish or deem necessary.
- 8.4.13 The ability to report via Crimestoppers is also a new avenue that is as yet untested and so it is difficult to comment on whether it is proving to be effective. However, we question whether adopting this route for reporting discrimination is helpful. Crimestoppers is a charity primarily focused on finding criminals and stopping crime. Implicitly placing all discrimination on the same footing as a crime may well act as a further disincentive to people to report anything except the most serious incidents.
- 8.4.14 We recognise, of course, that there will be instances where a whistleblowing, or even criminal, process is appropriate, offering anonymity when local circumstances make raising a complaint against a colleague or teammate particularly difficult. The point is that there should be a variety of options open to individuals depending on the nature of the conduct, their own desired outcome, whether they are willing to be named or wish to be anonymous etc. We will consider what those options may be later in this Chapter.
- 8.4.15 Everyone in the game should be made aware of how to make a complaint, the process that will apply, how they will be investigated, which body will be the decision-maker and what the potential outcomes could be. The relationship between employment policies and game-wide regulations needs to be absolutely clear, and so too does the basis on which charging decisions will be made.
- 8.4.16 There should be greater consistency between Counties and a simplification of the complex complaints-handling structure, especially within the recreational game. Some progress has been made on this front through the introduction of the General Conduct Regulations (GCR) in 2022, but more needs to be done, as we discuss later in this Chapter.



Here's our confidential helpline, it's available to everyone, if you need it crack on. That's the last thing you want to hear when you're struggling: 'there's a number, go ring it'.

Men's Current or Former Professional Player

The futility of speaking up



A high level of complaints is not necessarily a bad thing: it can show that people have begun to trust that the ECB will actually take their complaint seriously and do something about it (whereas in the past, they may not have trusted the ECB to do that and so did not bother bringing a complaint in the first place). Nonetheless, it is clear that there are still large sections of the community who do not trust the ECB and we need to do something about that.

ECB

- 8.4.17 Lack of trust that appropriate action will be taken was the most common reason that people gave for not reporting their experiences, cited by 41% of respondents to our online survey. This is more pronounced among people from ethnically diverse backgrounds, at 58%, rising to 69% among Pakistani/Bangladeshi people in particular. It appears justified by the experiences of those who did report discrimination, whether through informal reporting to a captain, coach or club official, or through formal complaints processes. Hundreds of people said that, when they made a complaint, “*nothing happened*,” things “*fell on deaf ears*” and incidents were “*swept under the carpet*.”³⁶⁸



The concerns I raised to those who had a duty of care fell on deaf ears. I did not even tell my family what I had been through as I did not want to worry them. I was referred to as a wonderkid, a superstar but due to the institutional racism my talent and ability was suppressed. I was used and then discarded. My career was ruined. After giving my blood, sweat and tears winning almost everything for the club/teammates/coaches, I was then released via a letter through the post. No phone call, no meeting, nothing!! [...] Thanks to Azeem and hearing his story, I felt it was my duty to our future generations to speak out. I had my career ruined, I don't want anyone to go through what I/we have! My experiences have taken a toll on me. I basically buried what happened for 20 years and moved on. But all the emotions have come back now.

*Asian (Pakistani) man, former professional player*³⁶⁹



Myself and a fellow player were called terrorists after a game. We complained to the opposition Chair and, after an initial apology, the Chair decided that he wanted to defend the person who made the remark and that we were attempting to defame the club and they were the victims.

Asian (Indian) man, recreational player

³⁶⁸ Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket.

³⁶⁹ The timeframe this response covers exceeds the 'within five years' period our research covered. It has been included on an exceptional basis both to illustrate why talent can be lost and to demonstrate the long term impact of discrimination on victims.



It is shocking that as a child I could be racially abused multiple times by another team, and nothing be done.

Mixed (White and Asian) man, recreational player, volunteer, coach

- 8.4.18 Some respondents to our Call for Written Evidence reported a lack of compassion and understanding from club officials in response to a complaint, compounding the problem. Numerous respondents said their complaints had often been ‘brushed off’ and not taken seriously. Multiple respondents also experienced sexism and misogyny when reporting complaints, acting as a further deterrent.



I am disappointed in how members of the committee have conducted themselves and the inappropriate ‘investigation’ and handling of the statements and communication with the women involved.

Individual

The incident was not considered serious enough to report

- 8.4.19 This was the second most common reason for not reporting discrimination, cited by 38% of the respondents to our online survey who had experienced discrimination in the last five years. These respondents are all people who felt that the conduct was sufficiently important that they answered “yes” to the question “*have you experienced discrimination in the last five years?*” Therefore, rather than the conduct being too trivial to have a discriminatory impact, in our view it is likely that many people did not believe the discrimination was sufficiently serious to warrant engaging with the existing complaints process, in light of the multiple barriers and potential negative consequences to making a complaint discussed in this Chapter.
- 8.4.20 Minor incidents or microaggressions that make people feel deeply uncomfortable need to be stopped, but a formal complaints process may not always feel appropriate as a route to address them. Respondents to our online survey cited a multitude of microaggressions that do not seem to have been reported: the assumption that ethnically diverse people are not British; mistaking female umpires and coaches for mothers of players or “*tea ladies*”; referring to a poor shot by a boy as “*playing like a girl*”; calling some behaviours “*so gay*”; referring to people from any minority group as “*you lot*” or “*your people*”; and making sweeping generalisations about behaviours, such as “*you chaps play wristy shots*”.
- 8.4.21 When people do raise the more minor incidents and they are not taken seriously, it can lead them to think that there is no point raising more significant issues. If there was a way of raising and resolving complaints short of having to trigger the formal complaints process, we believe that far more individuals would be likely to raise their concerns. More generally, if cricket is to effectively address discrimination and provide an equitable and inclusive experience to those within the sport, all incidents that cause concern, even if relatively minor, need to be surfaced and addressed. We discuss later in this Chapter the importance of cricket providing alternative routes to the formal complaints process.

Fear of victimisation



I think a lot of players still feel if they speak out they will be labelled as a bit of a trouble-maker and then they're labelled and they think, well, we might have to get rid of him.

Men's Current or Former Professional Player



I always thought end of the day this is my job, whilst I'm in this environment all I want to do is play games for [...] that's all I want to do. So if I'm going to do something that might jeopardise that by reporting someone that's going to affect my career, whereas if I stay silent and just deal with it internally I'm not causing a problem with anyone else, I'll just deal with it myself, try and deal with it the best I can and to prolong my career. Again probably the wrong mindset because the right mindset would have been 'well you should have nipped it in the bud', but at the time it's very difficult.

Men's Current or Former Professional Player

- 8.4.22 Formal complaints can be difficult to make, particularly in relation to issues of discrimination which can often feel like an affront to the moral character of the person complained about. Simply making a complaint can cause a significant amount of tension and can sour relationships. Power dynamics and the importance of ongoing relationships are an important consideration, particularly where those relationships are necessary to the complainant's future involvement in the game.
- 8.4.23 There are legal protections against 'victimisation' (i.e. retaliation against someone for alleging discrimination).³⁷⁰ In practice, few people bring such claims, not least because it can be even more difficult to prove victimisation than the original instance of discrimination. In the dressing room, and the sporting environment more widely, there are many ways in which an individual can be made to suffer – from subtle exclusion from conversations and events to selection decisions that do not appear justified, but where any retaliatory motive may be difficult to prove.



Cricketers, as you know, are very insecure because it's from summer to summer. You don't know if you've got a contract for a year or two years, and you're trying to look after yourself as well. Cricketers sometimes just kind of put the earphones on and just get on with it and they ignore things that are going on around them because they're trying to secure another contract.

Men's Current or Former Professional Player

- 8.4.24 36% of respondents to our online survey who had experienced discrimination in the last five years were afraid that complaints might lead to victimisation and negative consequences. Again, the figures were markedly different between the different groups: 58%-59% of Black, Indian and Pakistani/Bangladeshi people were afraid of the consequences if they reported discrimination, yet only 14% of respondents who were White, middle class men (largely captured by what we have referred to in the Report as Type K)³⁷¹ shared that fear.

³⁷⁰ See more complete definition in Appendix 7, Key Terms.

³⁷¹ To measure intersectional advantage and discrimination, the research company that conducted our online lived experiences survey created a number of 'personas' or 'types' of which Type K was intended to reflect, broadly speaking, the experience of White, middle class men. A full definition is set out at Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket, in section 12.2.

- 8.4.25 It is clear to us that the intense media scrutiny and online and physical intimidation of those whose complaints have become public have convinced many not to raise their heads above the parapet. The appalling experience, for example, of Azeem Rafiq and his family, which has driven them out of the country, has demonstrated the lengths to which some people will go to discredit someone who has been brave enough to come forward, even where they have been found to have been the victim of racial harassment and discrimination.
- 8.4.26 Many victims of racism and other forms of discrimination quite understandably aren't willing to put themselves through that level of abuse and so do not speak up about past and/or ongoing experiences. That cannot be allowed to continue: the game needs to ensure that their voices are heard and that victims are supported and protected.
- 8.4.27 In the talent pathway, parents may feel that to pursue a complaint about the discriminatory treatment of their child (particularly by a coach or selector) would jeopardise their chance of progressing. Given the sacrifices often made to gain access to the pathway, it is little wonder that many choose to remain silent. Clearly, coaches have a wide range of ways in which to retaliate against someone who they feel has caused trouble: suggesting they don't 'fit in' or aren't mentally strong enough, giving them fewer opportunities to perform on the field, dropping them for occasional matches, which can then become more of a regular occurrence. All of these responses would amount to victimisation and so should be taken very seriously. Based on our evidence, however, many in the game do not feel that they would be.



As a parent of an emerging player, nothing is said as you don't want your child dropped from the system. You would be labelled a trouble-maker and selection would stop. Complaints led to the club closing ranks.

White woman, parent/guardian



[It is] difficult to provide evidence as a lot of actions are conducted behind the scenes. [There are also] consequences of complaints which will always be borne by the child which makes parents wary.

Asian (Indian) man, recreational player, parent/guardian

- 8.4.28 Fear of victimisation is corrosive and damaging to individuals and the wider game. For as long as people fear retaliation, in some form or other, they will be reluctant to challenge discrimination, and the game will fail to eradicate it. Addressing this through the systems and processes that are put in place is a fundamental challenge that the sport needs to meet. For example, any such behaviour should itself trigger disciplinary action, and greater support should be put in place to reassure those who report concerns that they will not suffer as a consequence. As well as having the right systems in place, as a Commission we are strongly of the view that leaders across the game bear the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that there is no victimisation or retaliation against individuals who raise concerns, formally or informally. They should set an example, which the rest of the game can follow.

Other reasons for not reporting complaints

- 8.4.29 Instances of discrimination mentioned in our evidence were often acts of omission rather than commission: being cut off from opportunities, excluded from social activities, not selected, not promoted or being made to feel unwanted. These can be even more difficult to prove than overt acts of discrimination and often go unreported, despite the treatment being clearly experienced as discriminatory.

- 8.4.30 Despite the prevalence of clear, objective performance metrics in cricket (runs, wickets, catches, stumpings etc), decision-making for selection and progression frequently remains subjective – assessments of ‘character’, for example, continue to play a significant role in decisions. (See our recommendations in Chapter 9, Schools and the Talent Pathway, for reducing subjectivity in selection decisions.) Those responsible for investigating and determining complaints must appreciate that discrimination can be quiet and insidious: where decisions are not supported by direct evidence, inferences sometimes can and should fairly be drawn.
- 8.4.31 Broad confidence in the independence and objectivity of any complaints process is essential if it is to tackle discrimination effectively. In Chapter 7, Governance and Leadership, we emphasise the importance of the game’s regulatory function having greater independence from the ECB. The appointment of regional discipline officers by the ECB will help to provide advice and support at regional and local levels but will not solve the problem of independence in complaints handling and decision-making in the recreational game.



The main barrier is that no-one has faith their complaint will be taken seriously. The solution would be to establish a disciplinary panel locally that was diverse in its representation and included people with expertise from beyond the game/league. How can you have faith in making a complaint about a player or umpire to someone directly involved with those people?

Individual

Breaking the pattern of low reporting

- 8.4.32 In our view, it is critical that cricket breaks down the barriers to low reporting if it is to succeed in revealing the true extent of discrimination in the game, and start tackling some of the systemic inequity we have identified.

The game needs to remove barriers to low reporting of discrimination by addressing the following issues:

- Confusion about the process
- The sense of the futility of speaking up
- Fear of not being believed or taken seriously
- Lack of trust and confidence in the process
- Difficult and lengthy complaints process
- Misogyny and sexism within the process itself
- Fear of victimisation
- Lack of anonymity and confidentiality (where necessary and/or appropriate)
- Corruption and nepotism
- Shame
- Lack of compassion

8.5 How well are complaints handled and how can that be improved?



An effective complaint handling system requires all complaints to be resolved via an open, transparent, and responsive process that thoroughly examines the issues raised in a timely and proportionate way. Staff responsible for resolving complaints should be properly trained and ensure that all parties – including staff who are cited in the complaint – are kept involved and engaged throughout.

*Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman*³⁷²

- 8.5.1 Having considered some of the key barriers to the reporting of complaints, we now consider the effectiveness of the systems and processes in place within cricket to address complaints once they have been reported. Efforts to date by the ECB to introduce a more standardised process for complaints have tended to focus on improving *reporting* systems, but these do not address issues with complaints *handling*.
- 8.5.2 Our work has highlighted a lack of professionalism in many areas of the game, and complaints handling is no exception. This is not limited to the recreational game; the professional game also needs to improve. Many of the FCCs that we spoke to were clear that the system is not working. Organisations and individuals are confused about where responsibility sits for handling complaints, and have concerns that they lack the skills and capacity to deal with them. Because there is no clear process to determine who should deal with a complaint, the CEO of an FCC told us that he sometimes spends two to three hours a day dealing with complaints of various kinds, yet he should only really be involved in complaints that are significant enough to need his involvement.
- 8.5.3 The ECB has suggested that they are sometimes criticised for being too ‘command and control’ by the Counties, yet in our discussions with FCCs, many indicated that they are crying out for more help on this issue. Above all, the Counties are looking to the ECB for consistency of advice and support, including on the steps that they are being asked to take under the game-wide 12 Point Plan.



The ECB should say ‘this is what we expect, this is the process for a complaint, this is how you should deal with it, this is the minimum standard and we’ll hold you to account for that.’

FCC

- 8.5.4 In the recreational game, the ECB themselves acknowledged to us there is a lack of clarity about how CCBs, which have responsibility for the complaints process in their Counties, manage complaints (which the ECB says it is reviewing). Furthermore, so far as we can tell, the ECB does not have a clear position on the extent to which it oversees cases at the recreational level. It would be of significant concern if the ECB’s lack of oversight meant that complaints are being lost in the system.

³⁷² Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman ‘Making Complaints Count: Supporting complaints handling in the NHS and UK Government Departments’ July 2020, p. 33.

8.5.5 We also heard evidence that the processes by which charging decisions are made are inconsistent and unclear, whether at the professional or recreational level. The PCA reported difficulty in advising their members who were the subject of complaints about the level of evidence that was needed to justify a charge, who would be making the decision and whether charges were likely. This uncertainty, combined with the sometimes lengthy delays in the investigation process, can have a considerable impact on individuals' mental health whether they are a complainant or the subject of a complaint (which we understand was pointed out to the ECB by the PCA's independent provider of mental health support services).



I think both the complainant and the accused have a right to know what the process is and understand the process and have faith in the process. Being quite honest at the moment I don't think either would or could have.

The PCA

8.5.6 Our online survey revealed extremely high levels of dissatisfaction with complaints handling. Of those who had reported discrimination, only 18% were satisfied with how their complaint was handled, dropping to a mere 9% of ethnically diverse respondents. This experience of ethnically diverse complainants is particularly concerning to us, and should be of great concern to the game. Even among Type K respondents, most (54%) were dissatisfied with the handling of their complaint.

8.5.7 A significant minority of respondents (17% overall, rising to 23% of Pakistani/Bangladeshi people) did not even know how their complaint had been handled. That highlights a lack of communication with complainants that the game needs to address, a point that we come back to when identifying good practice in a discrimination complaints process later in this Chapter.

8.5.8 We are also extremely concerned about the slow pace of improvement. In November 2021, the game-wide 12 Point Plan pledged to introduce a standardised approach to investigating and responding to complaints, allegations and whistleblowing within three months. Yet, by July 2022, eight months later, representatives of the ECB acknowledged to us in our hearings with them that their complaints handling processes were still not up to scratch and it was an area in which they needed further support. Apart from the introduction of the central reporting process described earlier, the new approach appears to remain in development.

8.5.9 It is clear to us that the original timeframe was completely unrealistic. As Kick It Out said to us (following their initial discussions with the ECB about this issue): *"There's no way that we can get a comprehensive [reporting and complaints] process in place that offers true transparency and a good route for victims to report discrimination in [those] timeframes [...] So we didn't participate in that, we said we aren't ready. And if you want us to do this properly, that we have our recommendations, but it's going to take time."*

8.5.10 According to the ECB's Annual EDI Report in December 2022, *"responsibility for the continued development of the centralised complaints process will form part of the remit of the ECB's Anti-Discrimination Unit (ADU)."*³⁷³ Under the game-wide 12 Point Plan, the ADU was originally supposed to have been established by May 2022 but *"full delivery has taken longer than anticipated"* – as noted elsewhere in this Report, a recurring theme in many of the ECB's commitments. According to the EDI Report, *"The ECB anticipates that the first phase of the implementation plan [for the ADU] will be operational by the end of December 2022 followed by phase two by Spring 2023."*

8.5.11 The EDI Report says that the aims of the ADU are *"to ensure better visibility of all reported concerns, investigations and outcomes across the game; deliver improvements to the way people can make complaints and are communicated with; and continue to improve consistency of processes for dealing with discrimination across the game."* These are laudable aims, but more than 18 months after the launch of the game-wide 12 Point Plan, we have not seen any hard evidence of how they are being turned into reality.

³⁷³ Annual ECB EDI Report December 2022, p. 6.

Challenges of handling discrimination-related complaints

- 8.5.12 We do not underestimate the difficulties of devising and operating a good complaints process for a single organisation let alone across an entire sport. Finding examples of good practice in other walks of life is not easy: many organisations are grappling with the issue of how best to encourage a positive culture towards complaints whilst avoiding anything that could expose the organisation to legal risk. Here, we focus on three aspects of the complaints handling process that we believe can be improved in cricket: the evidential threshold, the need for relevant skills, experience and training, and the importance of support and guidance.
- 8.5.13 Reaching the evidential threshold to prove discrimination can be challenging given the fact that it can happen by omission, in the form of microaggressions and/or without the intention of causing harm. Just because the threshold for evidence cannot be reached, it does not mean that discrimination or poor conduct has not taken place. Organisations need to understand people's lived experience and address the issues that lead to it, even where it may not be possible to prove discrimination through a formal process.
- 8.5.14 Discrimination allegations are sometimes said to boil down to one person's word against another's, representing a stalemate that cannot be resolved. In our experience, such cases are far rarer than is commonly believed. The relevant test is 'the balance of probabilities' (in other words, is it more likely than not to have happened). A range of evidence can support a judgement that one person's account is more likely to be true than someone else's: one person may be a credible witness when the other isn't; there may be third party witnesses who can provide relevant evidence; or emails or other documents may provide relevant information or context. Those responsible for assessing and investigating allegations of discrimination need sufficient expertise and experience not to fall at the first hurdle of 'he said, he said'.
- 8.5.15 Relevant expertise and experience are of course essential in all aspects of complaints handling, because discrimination investigations are often complex and time consuming. They must be delivered to a high standard if complainants, and indeed the subjects of complaints, are to have confidence in their findings. Investigators need to understand the nuances of discrimination allegations, and that it is the **impact** on the complainant that is key, not the intent behind the language or behaviour. Malice would be relevant to the seriousness of the discrimination, and therefore to any potential sanction, but not to whether something amounted to discrimination in the first place.
- 8.5.16 Relevant discrimination expertise is also extremely important for the ultimate decision-makers, so they can form proper and appropriate judgements about the evidence, understanding that many cases of discrimination do not involve evidence of direct abuse, and can draw inferences where they are justified. If additional expertise is needed, decision-makers should have the ability to (and indeed sometimes already do) co-opt specialists onto Panels or engage expert advisers to assist with understanding the issues, assessing the evidence and making decisions. (See Recommendation 32 in relation to the Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) later in this Chapter.)
- 8.5.17 Delivering quality and consistency in complaints handling across the multiple organisations involved in cricket is challenging, particularly given that many of those involved in delivering the game are volunteers. But the challenge should not be avoided: the damage to individuals who suffer discrimination in the game is too great, and the benefits of making cricket truly a sport for everyone are too important.
- 8.5.18 The ECB has acknowledged to us that they need to support the c42,000 volunteers in the game, both to educate them as to what is discriminatory behaviour and what isn't, and to help professionalise the workforce. They report that training on the Anti-Discrimination Code is mandatory for paid staff and available for volunteers. In our view, training on the Code and discrimination more widely should be mandatory for all volunteers involved in an official capacity in the game, given that the overwhelming majority of cricket taking place in England and Wales is recreational.

Recommendation 29

We recommend that, given the scale and scope of volunteers in cricket, the ECB, in collaboration with County cricket organisations, develops a game-wide volunteer strategy that includes how volunteers will be encouraged to contribute to cricket's EDI aims. In developing this strategy:

- a) The ECB should utilise the significant learning and best practice developed in the charitable sector.
- b) The strategy should make clear how volunteers will be trained and supported to develop their EDI knowledge and skills, including specific training on discrimination and sexual harassment.

- 8.5.19 We have been surprised by the lack of specialised discrimination or wider HR resource in the game, including among the larger FCCs. This points to a legacy of amateurism in the game's approach to EDI and HR issues generally, a wider issue that we have identified in other contexts in this Report.
- 8.5.20 Improving EDI knowledge among those who assess and investigate complaints is essential, so that they understand the various discrimination-related concepts involved (direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, harassment, microaggressions, stereotyping etc.) and are able to identify these even if explicit labels are not used by complainants. It should not be essential for a complainant to produce definitive evidence when they first make a complaint, and they should not need to specifically allege discrimination in order for it to be investigated as such if appropriate.
- 8.5.21 The evidential challenge is not only that the complainant may not be able to produce clear evidence (given, for example, the likelihood of a 'she said, she said'), but that the nature of discrimination will often mean that such evidence (for example, the use of obviously discriminatory language) doesn't in fact exist. It may, instead, be necessary to draw inferences by looking at patterns of behaviour or by comparing behaviour directed at one person to the behaviour directed at others.
- 8.5.22 There is a further challenge, as previously noted, that discrimination can be unintentional (but no less damaging): well-meant comments can amount to discrimination. It is the impact on the victim that must be assessed, which can present difficulties both for proving discrimination and evaluating the appropriate level of sanction to be applied.
- 8.5.23 Finally, we believe that the Regulations of the CDC and the GCR should include a clearer explanation of the investigation process, with detail of the steps to be taken and a guide to likely timeframes. The ECB told us that this had been considered, but deemed too difficult due to the variety and complexity of complaints. We think that was a mistake. There can and should be room for some flexibility, but without clearer guidance the challenges and stresses of an already difficult process will only be exacerbated.

Recommendation 30

We recommend that the ECB ensures that centralised training and specialist support is available to all cricketing organisations (including leagues and clubs) so that they are properly equipped to deal with complaints relating to discrimination, whether informal or formal, and any associated complaints process.

Sub-recommendation:

- a) The professional game (i.e. First Class Counties, Women's Regional Teams and teams in The Hundred) should invest in high quality HR and EDI expertise within their staff.

The role of senior leaders

- 8.5.24 Senior support is critical to ensure that the management of complaints is given appropriate prioritisation and support across the game. Leaders across the game also bear a responsibility to ensure that sufficient resources, both personnel and financial, are devoted to the management and investigation of complaints. Without this investment, the system simply cannot operate effectively, whatever the intentions and aspirations of those who have set it up might be.
- 8.5.25 Cricket is a small world. Complaints handlers may be seen as making trouble, and it can be personally challenging to be investigating people working within the same sport. Even where the investigators themselves are external to the game, the people responsible for managing the complaint will be working within cricket. In those circumstances, it is very important that they have – and are seen to have – the full support of senior leaders. Conversely, any negative or dismissive comments by leaders can be highly damaging.
- 8.5.26 Senior leaders must be involved in identifying the lessons to be learned from complaints, particularly where wider trends and systemic issues emerge. Information derived from complaints must be of direct concern to those responsible for assessing risk, up to and including those at Board level.

Putting complaints at the heart of governance³⁷⁴

The NHS and Parliamentary Ombudsman gave an example of how one NHS Foundation Trust established a regular ‘Complaints Panel’ meeting between senior staff to discuss complaints. The aim of the Panel is to make sure that momentum is maintained on learning from complaints and monitoring how the Trust is performing. The Panel meets monthly to scrutinise a range of formal complaints, and review actions and procedural changes to be implemented as a result. Quantitative data is presented regarding the number of complaints, the number of cases re-opened and whether acknowledgement and final response deadlines have been achieved. Delayed responses and bottlenecks within the complaint process are identified. Any recommendations as a result of final reports are shared with the Panel with an update on completed actions.

The Panel is able to identify any high-risk complaints and those which require wider discussion. Through this structure, senior leaders come together regularly to oversee what feedback and complaints data is telling them, and what action is being taken on the learning that arises. It keeps complaints high up the agenda for leadership, which in turn has a positive impact on staff when they see the importance that leadership places on learning from complaints.

- 8.5.27 The lack of diversity across management structures in cricket at all levels presents a risk in terms of recognising, and effectively and sensitively handling, issues of discrimination. One of the many likely benefits of increasing diversity amongst leaders in the game is that it should help to reduce this risk. On its own, however, this is not enough. Processes for diversifying leadership should be accompanied by developing specific sources of expertise and advice around the handling of discrimination complaints.
- 8.5.28 As mentioned earlier, we understand that the ECB’s new ADU is intended to provide a centre of specialised expertise that can offer both proactive and reactive advice across the ECB’s operations, including in relation to complaints and disciplinary procedures. In principle, we support this, but it is regrettable and concerning that the ADU has not been established to the timetable originally envisaged.
- 8.5.29 Moreover, we would caution that, to succeed in implementing positive change and sharing good practice and learning, the ADU must be properly resourced, championed at senior level within the ECB, and, critically, not be left to carry the burden of ‘solving’ discrimination in cricket in isolation. This is an issue that should remain a fundamental part of every Board’s and Committee’s responsibility, at every level of the game.

Officials as gatekeepers

- 8.5.30 Combatting discrimination must start on the field. Match officials have a unique and significant responsibility for managing players’ on-field behaviour. Umpires in professional and league cricket are in a position to ensure early intervention, preventing issues from escalating.³⁷⁵ For more serious issues, the game looks to the umpire to report inappropriate behaviour to the relevant authorities – and the lack of such a report has the potential to undermine any subsequent complaint made by a player.
- 8.5.31 Moreover, during the match itself, discriminatory conduct and/or inaction by officials can encourage others to carry on without fear of sanction, and sends a strong and deeply unnerving signal to those on the receiving end that the umpire will not protect them.

³⁷⁴ Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman ‘Making Complaints Count: Supporting complaints handling in the NHS and UK Government Departments’ July 2020, p. 16.

³⁷⁵ We are referring only to qualified umpires rather than umpires in lower leagues who may, for example, be members of the batting team.



I was playing for an all-black team in a cup match [...] Their opening bowler beat my outside edge with the first ball of the match. He stood with his arms on his hips glaring at me. The next ball was exactly the same and he shouted: "Someone give the monkey a barn door". I asked the keeper, did he hear that? He shrugged. This was the start of abuse throughout my innings and no one - not the umpire - said anything.

Black (Caribbean) man, county age group player

- 8.5.32 Our evidence reveals widespread concern that umpires regularly ignore abuse and dismiss complaints in both the professional and recreational game. Even worse, there are concerns that umpires themselves are sometimes guilty of bias in their decision-making in relation to players of colour.
- 8.5.33 Both are wholly unacceptable. Umpires are there to uphold and apply the Laws of the game, including the 'spirit of cricket'. They should protect players against discriminatory behaviour just as they are duty-bound to protect them against physical abuse such as dangerous short-pitched bowling. The length of cricket matches provides a much greater on-field opportunity for unacceptable behaviour than in other sports, making intervention all the more important. Furthermore, the sport's historic emphasis on 'sledging' and other forms of verbal exchange only exacerbates these risks.
- 8.5.34 Umpires and other match officials are under the same on-field obligations as cricketers in relation to discrimination and other relevant conduct (e.g. conduct that may bring the game, the ECB or any cricket or group of cricketers into disrepute). Given the unique and important role that umpires in particular fulfil, we would urge the ECB to consider whether umpires (and all match officials) should in fact be placed under additional obligations, in order to ensure compliance by players with relevant conduct rules (e.g. the Anti-Discrimination Code).
- 8.5.35 In relation to off-field obligations, the obligations on representatives of cricketing organisations (e.g. CCBs) are the same as for cricketers, coaches, officials etc, yet the introduction to the GCR states: "*There is **reduced scope** for bringing disciplinary action against representatives of cricket organisations, as opposed to cricketers, coaches and officials, given the role they play within cricket.*" We are not clear what is meant by this, especially given that, arguably, the Chair of a CCB, National County or Premier League could easily do more damage through a discriminatory tweet than a junior player. We suggest, therefore, that the ECB looks at whether that comment in the introduction to the GCR is appropriate or sufficiently clear.
- 8.5.36 We have not analysed the process by which umpires are appointed, trained or assessed and so cannot comment on its adequacy in terms of EDI, but given their importance we would urge the game to ensure that umpires are properly equipped to spot, deal with and, where appropriate, escalate issues of discrimination - and to hold them accountable if they do not.
- 8.5.37 It should also be made clear to every player how to complain about any discrimination by an umpire, and not just through relying on a captain's match report. Whilst that report would be one route for an issue to be raised, it should not be the only one. The captain may, for instance, take a different view from an individual player about whether the relevant conduct amounted to discrimination and its level of seriousness.

Recommendation 31

We recommend that leaders of cricketing organisations and match officials should be required to uphold high standards of behaviour, and be accountable for their failure to do so.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) There should be a mandatory reporting obligation for leaders and match officials in relation to discrimination.
- b) Leaders of cricketing organisations should properly oversee and support complaints handling processes, and be involved in learning lessons and driving change.

8.6 The benefits of complaints

Gathering insight



Within safeguarding we always say if a county doesn't get any safeguarding concerns brought to them by a club, or generally, it is not because they are brilliant in their county, it is because they are not open enough or people don't know how to reach out to them and talk to them.

FCC

- 8.6.1 Whilst our evidence suggested that some of cricket's leaders see the opportunity to improve and learn from complaints, it appears to us that the prevailing attitude is that a lack of complaints equates to a lack of problems. Yet formal complaints will usually be the tip of the iceberg, with a much larger volume of unreported issues lying beneath the surface. The aim should be to reduce the number of *problems* about which people need to complain, not to reduce the number of *complaints* themselves.
- 8.6.2 Organisations should use feedback from those who have been through the complaints process and make sure that the problems underlying the complaint are addressed, whether they relate to an individual or the wider culture. An effective complaints system should include transparent reporting and monitoring, with senior oversight to ensure accountability. Creating space for people to raise issues outside a formal complaints process is also essential to ensure that cricket's leaders have the necessary insight into what is really happening in the game.
- 8.6.3 Analysing trends is particularly critical to understanding where there are **systemic** problems. This is especially important when trying to address discrimination, as issues can be easier to identify through trends in disproportionate outcomes rather than based on individual case assessments. Taking such an approach also starts from the assumption, quite rightly, that issues of inequity, exclusion and discrimination are not caused only by a few 'bad apples' but by unequal and discriminatory structures.

- 8.6.4 It is also important to move away from the idea that there always has to be a single, named ‘perpetrator’ on the other end of a complaint. This can help to address one of the reasons why people sometimes do not report their concerns – because they do not want to get individuals into trouble, particularly for more minor incidents caused by lack of awareness or ignorance that something is discriminatory. Instead, often they would like the relevant organisation to know there is a problem in order to bring about change at an institutional level.
- 8.6.5 Part of the process of gathering such insights includes having an effective system for recording and monitoring information on complaints. In our view, however, the current processes and requirements for recording and monitoring complaints in cricket are insufficiently clear and consistent. So far as we are aware, there is no requirement for FCCs, CCBs or any other cricketing organisations to submit management information regularly to the ECB relating to discrimination concerns and complaints that have been raised, either formally or informally. This appears to be a particular issue in the recreational game, where there is no proactive scrutiny by the ECB over how complaints are handled and resolved.
- 8.6.6 Against this backdrop, the game needs properly resourced systems for monitoring complaint handling, and for identifying trends and recurrent/unaddressed concerns. Regular and proportionate collection of data about both formal and informal complaints needs to become ingrained amongst FCCs, CCBs and other key institutions within the sport, with investment in systems to allow that to happen – such as a system to flag issues at an early stage, particularly those that indicate a trend. Alongside information about the complaints themselves, EDI data about complainants, subjects, investigators and decision-makers should be collected and monitored, from which any disproportionate impact on particular groups can be identified.

Learning



Unless more effective action is taken by leaders to embed a culture that sees complaints as a tool to promote change, the status quo will do nothing to resolve current problems.

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman³⁷⁶

- 8.6.7 Data monitoring of complaints by organisations, generally, tends to focus on the receipt of a complaint, and tracking its progress and final outcome, without going the necessary step further to learn from that information to improve behaviours and systems. Cricket needs to use the data it collects to identify the lessons that need to be learned, and then actually use this insight to drive meaningful change, with those responsible for doing so being held to account. There is little point resolving lots of complaints if nothing changes for the better.



What you do is pay people off and never hold yourself accountable, never hold the light to yourself. When there is a problem you try to isolate the problem and blame it on the individual when as a game you need to take control of it as a whole.

Current or Former Senior Cricket Leader

³⁷⁶ Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman ‘Making Complaints Count: Supporting complaints handling in the NHS and UK Government Departments’ July 2020, p. 9.

- 8.6.8 We heard evidence from the ECB about the ways in which they currently consider and act on insights gained from complaints. This includes a review session by the ECB's Integrity Team and Regulatory Committee at the end of each season to consider investigations in detail, and any relevant changes to regulations that may be needed. The ECB appears to regard this learning as mainly for its own benefit, although relevant information may be fed back to a County. We consider that these review sessions should happen more frequently to ensure that learnings can be identified more quickly.
- 8.6.9 We also heard evidence of the very limited interaction between the CDC and the ECB about lessons learned from the cases that the former hears. In our view, this should happen far more routinely, especially around any changes to regulations or processes that would improve the system in the future.
- 8.6.10 The Annual ECB EDI Report published in December 2022 stated that *"Learnings from investigations are collated centrally by the ECB to support future education and awareness programmes and to continually improve the service provided to anyone experiencing discrimination in the game."*³⁷⁷ However, this does not match our findings. We found little evidence of learnings being disseminated to the wider game and the 'learnings' appear to us to be focused principally on the complaints handling processes involved, rather than the underlying issues leading to complaints being raised in the first place.
- 8.6.11 CDC decisions are published on the ECB website (unless the CDC exercises its discretion not to publish in full for any reason), but it appears that these are not actively used to support learning. As a Commission, we consider that they could be used much more effectively to spread awareness of what is or is not acceptable conduct. We understand that the CDC used to send an annual report to teams covering themes from CDC cases but that no longer happens. The ECB has told us that teams receive briefings on conduct issues arising from the previous season and any changes to Regulations before the season, but we believe that a direct communication from the CDC to the wider game would be beneficial.
- 8.6.12 Overall, we strongly believe that the learnings, both about processes and the underlying issues, that are gained from complaints must be shared throughout cricket. This requires planning and resources so that awareness-raising and education programmes are meaningful and appropriate to the target audience. Education programmes should use suitable real life examples from cricket itself. This will enable participants to relate to the circumstances and to understand both the types of behaviour that can be discriminatory and what sanction is likely to be appropriate. Our Report and Annexes contain a wealth of real life testimony that can be used to support this work.
- 8.6.13 We did hear positive evidence from some of the FCCs that they regard complaints as an opportunity to gain feedback. One FCC told us that *"if we don't understand what is happening out there, we won't be able to address it."* However, these insights often seem to remain siloed when there would be great benefit to the game as a whole if they could be shared: we have heard a clear desire from several Counties for greater cooperation on handling complaints about discrimination, where the issues are often not unique to one County but apply across cricket. Our evidence suggests that, collectively, FCCs are largely unaware of good practice cited by individual organisations in our focus groups, but they were keen to learn more and many look to the ECB to help facilitate this.



We need to learn and we need to be able to share. If I am having these issues here, is [X] having the same at [Y] CCC? If so, how can we learn from that? How do we address it nationally? Is that something we need to raise with the ECB, or collectively as the whole game, to address it and tackle it head on?

FCC

- 8.6.14 The game should use the evidence we have gathered about discrimination in cricket, both at an individual and systemic level, as well as information that its complaints processes generate in the future, to develop solutions, implement them and monitor their impact. Visibly demonstrating a willingness to learn and change will increase confidence and should empower more people to come forward.

³⁷⁷ Annual ECB EDI Report December 2022, p. 6.

- 8.6.15 As a Commission, we believe it is very important that the ECB should report clearly, publicly and annually on complaints in the professional and recreational game, including the level of complaints, the nature of the outcomes, and the themes and trends that the complaints reveal.

8.7 Are the existing complaints processes and related regulations fit for purpose?

- 8.7.1 Within the regulations covering complaints processes and the underlying standards of conduct, we were concerned to find a range of problems, including inconsistencies, duplication (causing confusion), mistakes and provisions that we consider to be wrong as a matter of principle. Going into too much detail about individual regulations is not appropriate in what is, we acknowledge, already a very lengthy Report, so we have limited ourselves to a few key points that emerged from our work.
- 8.7.2 We would, however, urge the ECB to comprehensively revise the regulations governing both the professional and recreational game, with the assistance of subject-matter experts, to ensure that they are fit for purpose and that all levels of the game have the structures in place to meaningfully respond to discriminatory conduct. These revisions should take into account both the points we have included below and any other relevant suggestions relating to the nature of complaints handling processes that we have outlined in this Chapter.

CDC Regulations

Jurisdiction

- 8.7.3 We have a number of concerns about the CDC Regulations. Foremost among these relates to the fact that the CDC does not have jurisdiction over everyone in the professional game. At present, they can hear cases involving those most closely associated with the **playing** of the game: registered cricketers, coaches, umpires and match referees, along with certain other categories of people (registered agents, ECB committee members and anyone else who has agreed in writing to be bound by ECB rules and regulations).
- 8.7.4 In terms of organisations, the CDC has jurisdiction over all professional teams (FCCs, Regional Host Teams (i.e. the WRTs) and teams in The Hundred), as well as MCC, members of the National Counties Cricket Association (NCCA), the NCCA itself and any other team taking part in an ECB recognised competition.
- 8.7.5 The most striking gaps in jurisdiction relate to senior figures within cricketing organisations. Chairs, Chief Executives and other senior leaders of the FCCs or any other County organisation are not covered in their own right (unless they have agreed in writing to be or happen to fall into one of the other categories such as sitting on an ECB committee). Their County is responsible for what they say or do in their roles, but they cannot be charged personally – unlike, for example, a cricketer playing for the same County. A tweet sent by the most junior member of an FCC’s playing staff could result in a CDC sanction, but the same tweet sent by the FCC’s Chief Executive could not (at least in their capacity as Chief Executive). Given the higher status and profile of senior leaders of the game compared with many players, and the potential damage they could do by breaching the Anti-Discrimination Code or otherwise “*bringing the game into disrepute*,” the current position is completely inappropriate, and should be changed.
- 8.7.6 We note, too, that despite other organisations in the professional game being subject to the jurisdiction of the CDC, the ECB itself is not. We have not been provided with a sensible reason for why this is the case and strongly believe that the position should be corrected.

- 8.7.7 Similarly, except in circumstances where they have expressly agreed in writing to be bound by ECB rules and regulations, none of the ECB's staff or officers is subject to the jurisdiction of the CDC (unless they fall into one of the other categories of people covered by the CDC Regulations). The most relevant of those categories, but also a very limited one, would be anyone who is a member of an ECB committee. The term is not defined: it may mean a committee established by the ECB Board under its Articles of Association, such as its Remuneration or Audit Committee, the ECB Board itself, or both, but that is not explained in the CDC Regulations.
- 8.7.8 If members of the Board itself are **not** included in this definition, an ECB executive or Board member who sits on a committee established by the ECB Board **would be** subject to the jurisdiction of the CDC, but another executive or Board member who does not happen to sit on any such committee **would not be** (unless they have agreed in writing to be bound by ECB rules and regulations). As senior ECB individuals join and leave committees, they would alternate between being subject to charges before the CDC, or being free of that risk. If this is the case, it seems entirely unjustified and ought to be changed immediately.

Recreational cricket

- 8.7.9 As well as jurisdiction over (parts of) the professional game, the CDC currently has a limited role under the CDC Regulations which involves hearing appeals from the recreational game that involve professional cricketers who are registered with the ECB. We heard evidence, however, that this role is more theoretical than practical and is rarely, if ever, called upon. We believe that the CDC should play a much greater role in hearing appeals from decisions about complaints within the recreational game, but its jurisdiction in the recreational game needs to be clarified before it can do so.
- 8.7.10 At present, as mentioned, the CDC Regulations cover the NCCA and members of the NCCA. Those members are the teams from the National Counties that play in NCCA competitions. Those teams are separate from the 39 CCBs that organise recreational cricket in the National Counties and the FCCs (in some FCCs, the FCC club has merged with the CCB). Therefore, the CCBs and people working for the CCBs do not appear to be subject to the CDC's jurisdiction.
- 8.7.11 As this summary demonstrates, the position with respect to the CDC's role in recreational cricket is confusing and should be clarified. If, as we believe it should, the CDC is to have a role as an appeal body for cases in recreational cricket, that should cover any individual and any organisation involved in the recreational game, rather than some and not others.

Sanctions

- 8.7.12 Under Regulation 8.2 of the CDC Regulations, when assessing the level of sanction the CDC Panel may take into account the effect on a cricketer of a suspension. In itself, that makes sense but there is no reference to assessing the effect on the victim of the conduct, and as such there is a lack of balance. Just as the impact of a suspension on a cricketer could result in, presumably, a reduced suspension, so too should the impact on a victim be relevant to the assessment of the appropriate sanction (potentially increasing or, conceivably, reducing it). More generally, the CDC should develop clear guidelines for its decisions on sanctions.
- 8.7.13 The range of sanctions available to the CDC is, in our view, too limited. In the well-publicised case of Yorkshire CCC, we were struck by the fact that the most effective sanction was, arguably, the suspension of Yorkshire's right to host a Test Match in 2022 (a point we also discuss in Chapter 7, Governance and Leadership). That seemed to be one of the main catalysts for Yorkshire to take action, yet it was crucially not a sanction available to the CDC, only to the ECB.

- 8.7.14 The use by the ECB of such a powerful incentive to force change may have been effective in that instance, but placing this power only in the hands of the ECB (and not the CDC) has the potential to lead to the sort of conflict we have previously discussed between the ECB's two roles as regulator and promoter of the game. Whilst there may be occasions in which a host venue's right to hold a Test Match or other high profile match may need to be suspended by the ECB (e.g. if the venue breaches its obligations under the high profile match hosting agreement), we believe that the CDC itself should have the power to suspend or cancel a high profile match, or at least recommend to the ECB that it be suspended/cancelled. It should be made clear that serious breaches of EDI-related regulations would be one of the situations in which such a sanction may be imposed.

Publication of decisions

- 8.7.15 Whilst the CDC usually publishes the reasons for its decisions via the ECB website, as well as the identity of the 'accused', it has the ability under Regulation 7.14 of the CDC Regulations not to publish in full, or at all, for "any reason." We believe that the process should be driven by the principles of transparency and fairness, and that decisions should be published in full save in exceptional circumstances. We accept that sometimes the CDC may have good reason not to publish certain information, but the CDC Regulations should clearly specify what those (very limited) reasons can be (e.g. safety, health etc).
- 8.7.16 Rather than having to publish its decisions through the ECB website, the CDC should have its own website on which to publish decisions and communicate directly with the game.

CDC resources

- 8.7.17 As well as lacking its own website, we heard evidence that the CDC is inadequately resourced: it has no dedicated administrative support (relying on help from ECB employees and some external resource); Panel members have to communicate with people involved in their cases (individuals, organisations and their legal representatives) via their own personal email addresses or the email address from their 'day job'; it has no office or base; and CDC Panel members work on a voluntary basis, fitting in their CDC commitments as they can (often working in the evenings, at weekends and during holiday leave from their other roles). We heard evidence about the length of time that it can take for CDC cases to reach a conclusion – concerns that have been aired in public recently – and believe that the lack of resources devoted to the CDC may well have contributed to the time taken.
- 8.7.18 Given the importance of the issues that the CDC often considers, which may have a significant impact on careers and reputations, it is clear to us that this needs to change. The role of a tribunal hearing important issues of discipline and integrity in cricket needs to be managed and resourced on a far more professional and sustainable basis than it is at the moment. We appreciate that financial resources would have to come from the ECB or from the wider game, and whilst some may argue that payment to CDC Panel members would make them beholden in some way to their 'paymasters', we do not believe this to be a significant risk. As a Commission, we are clear that the benefits of professionalising the CDC and ensuring it has the necessary tools to do its work properly – and promptly – will be of great benefit to the game.
- 8.7.19 As well as ensuring adequate financial and administrative resources, the CDC Panel should include members with specialist EDI expertise and there should be an appropriate level of diversity among Panel members to reflect the wider game over which they have jurisdiction. The process of appointments to the Panel needs to be revised to ensure it is fit for purpose, and maximum terms should be introduced.

Recommendation 32

We recommend the following changes with respect to the Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) or any future adjudication body if it is replaced and/or renamed:

- a) The CDC's jurisdiction should cover everyone working in the professional game, including Chairs, Chief Executives and all other 'off field' staff.
- b) The sanctions available to the CDC should be strengthened, including the power to suspend or cancel the right to host high profile matches (see Recommendation 19).
- c) CDC Panels in discrimination cases must have specialist EDI expertise or access to specialist EDI support, and there should be appropriate levels of diversity amongst those who can sit on such Panels.
- d) The CDC must be properly resourced by the ECB (in terms of personnel and finance). In particular, Panel members should be paid and dedicated administrative resources should be provided.
- e) The CDC should have its own website on which it should publish full written reasons for every decision, save in exceptional circumstances which should be clearly defined.
- f) There should be greater communication between the CDC and the ECB about cases that the former has handled, and the lessons learned.
- g) Chairs of the CDC should be appointed by the ECB using expert external recruitment assistance to run an open and transparent recruitment process with lay involvement to provide independent scrutiny and quality assurance.
- h) The Chair of the CDC should appoint remaining Panel members using the same process. Panel members must have an appropriate balance of skills, expertise and, importantly, diversity.
- i) The Chair and Panel members should be appointed for a four-year term and serve a maximum of two terms.

The General Conduct Regulations (GCR)

- 8.7.20 The General Conduct Regulations (GCR) have applied in recreational cricket since the 2022 season.³⁷⁸ They were made mandatory for CCBs and Premier Leagues in each County, and other organisations under the ECB's jurisdiction were encouraged to implement them.
- 8.7.21 Provided that they meet the GCR's minimum standards, organisations that are subject to the GCR can amend and/or supplement some of the provisions of the GCR, and are able to use their established disciplinary and appeal Panels to conduct the processes under the GCR. They can also stipulate additional categories of on-field and/or off-field behaviour that will be breaches of the GCR, according to the Guidance in Appendix 4 of the GCR.

³⁷⁸ Available here: <https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/policies-and-regulations/regulations/non-first-class-county>

- 8.7.22 We understand the view that if a process is felt to be working well, it shouldn't be changed lightly or just for the sake of it (provided that it meets minimum standards). However, there are two problems with that approach in the context of complaints handling in cricket. First, our evidence from many individuals and cricket organisations is that the current processes are, on the whole, not working well. Second, it reduces the benefits of adopting a consistent approach across the country, which the ECB itself set out in the Introduction to the GCR when describing their purpose: *"to set consistent standards of conduct and behaviour and provide a single set of regulations which can be applied consistently at the top end of recreational cricket, to ensure that disciplinary matters are dealt with in a fair, efficient and consistent manner by cricket organisations."*
- 8.7.23 Cricket suffers from its complicated structure in many ways, particularly in relation to complaints handling, and in our view, the ECB and the wider recreational game should be striving for greater consistency in all respects, so that a complaint brought in one County will be subject to the same rules as one brought elsewhere. Players can move between Counties, including in the recreational game, and they may have complaints against more than one County. Differences between processes and the rules governing conduct may cause unnecessary confusion.
- 8.7.24 Greater consistency should also make it easier (and therefore cheaper) for the ECB to provide the support and resource that many in the game are seeking: the ECB would not have to be familiar with multiple different processes, and lessons learned in one area could be applied directly throughout the County network. If the differing levels of resource at large compared with small Counties prevent a completely consistent approach across the whole network, Counties could be clustered together by region, depending on size and available resources. Similar levels of resource and procedure could then be applied to each cluster.
- 8.7.25 We understand that the ECB is moving in this direction, to an extent, through the recruitment of regional discipline officers to help County organisations with complaints handling and disciplinary processes, reporting into a regional Head of Discipline at the ECB. The underlying processes set out in the GCR have not been changed but support will be available regionally, which we welcome in principle. The GCR require each organisation that is subject to the GCR to appoint a disciplinary officer to deal with cases including discrimination, yet so far as we can see the ECB does not, as standard practice, provide any training for those individuals; instead, they have to ask for it if they want it. In our view, it is essential that those disciplinary officers receive appropriate training when they are first appointed and on an ongoing basis. Learning in the area of complaints should never stop.

Recommendation 33

We recommend that the ECB revises the game's regulations, in particular its discrimination-related regulations, to ensure that they are capable of adequately addressing complaints (including discrimination-related complaints), and provide an appropriate range of potential sanctions.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) The Anti-Discrimination Code (the Code) should be expanded beyond the characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 to include socio-economic status.
- b) The Code should explicitly cover victimisation and make clear that it would be grounds for disciplinary action.
- c) The Guidance to the Code should be rewritten to create a shared and better understanding of what discrimination is, using examples to illustrate unacceptable behaviour, describing conduct that would lead to escalating sanctions, and making clear what 'zero tolerance' actually means.
- d) The ECB itself, and its Board members and staff, should be subject to the same regulatory obligations and jurisdiction as everyone working in the professional game.
- e) There should be greater clarity on how charging decisions are made, by whom and against what criteria.
- f) Seriousness assessments should be made against clear criteria when complaints are received to help determine how to respond.
- g) There should be consistency between complaints processes throughout the game, with the ECB setting minimum standards that Counties must comply with.
- h) There should be clear and accessible guidance for how complaints will be handled and what the process will involve, including which body will make decisions, the indicative timescales (allowing flexibility for more complex cases), the support available and the potential outcomes.
- i) The ECB and wider game should adopt the 'good practice in discrimination complaints process' that is set out at section 9 of this Chapter.

8.8 What other mechanisms exist for resolving issues apart from making formal complaints, and how can those mechanisms be improved/expanded?



There has got to be an understanding that all complaints are not formalised.

FCC

- 8.8.1 In seeking to respond to the recent crisis, it seems to us that the game's authorities have focused almost exclusively on **formal** reporting and complaints processes at the expense of more informal mechanisms. Indeed, we were told in our hearings with the ECB that *"there are no informal ways of resolving complaints within the regulatory process: if it's a breach, it's a breach."* Whilst we understand the importance of treating a regulatory breach with due seriousness, we strongly believe that relying to such an extent on a formal complaints process to solve discrimination in the game will not work.
- 8.8.2 We have highlighted the reasons why people are often reluctant to make formal complaints. Some of these will persist regardless of improvements in the formal complaints process. The formal route certainly has its place, but it is essential that the game offers people the opportunity to raise issues and concerns without having to engage in a formal, adversarial and legalistic complaints process.



I didn't want to do a legal case. All I wanted was to sit in a room, them to hear what I'm saying, some answers as to why certain – not all of them – but how certain people behaved...and why they did that. Or why I was treated differently to white people in similar situations. And that is it. But the institution was more worried about the legal risk right from the word go.

Men's Current or Former Professional Player

- 8.8.3 The high threshold for proving discrimination is a significant barrier in a formal process, with the ECB's own figures showing how few formal complaints are eventually substantiated. Of 208 complaints of alleged discrimination in 2021, *"36 separate cases in respect of recreational cricket (some involving multiple allegations) were referred for further investigation, of which 24 have been concluded and 12 remain under investigation. The 24 concluded cases involved 65 allegations of discrimination, of which 14 were substantiated during the investigation process, 47 were unsubstantiated and 6 withdrawn or undetermined."*³⁷⁹
- 8.8.4 We are concerned at the extremely low proportion of substantiated allegations: only 14 from 208 complaints, that will have involved many more than 208 individual allegations.
- 8.8.5 Alternatives to the formal process are also important where people want their concerns to be addressed and not repeated but without any individual being punished as a result, or where there is no individual perpetrator at all and the concern is more structural or systemic. Sometimes the prime motivation for someone raising an issue is neither to seek personal redress nor to punish; instead, they wish to be heard, and to ensure that no one else has to go through what they have experienced. In other words, they want recognition that change is needed and that it does actually happen.

³⁷⁹ Annual ECB EDI Report December 2022, p. 6.

When does ACAS recommend an informal approach?

- 8.8.6 It can feel challenging for an organisation to know where to draw lines between formal and informal approaches on an issue such as discrimination, but there are established points of reference and guidance to cricketing organisations facing this challenge.
- 8.8.7 ACAS, the independent public body tasked with providing advice to employers, employees and their representatives on workplace disputes, has guidance on the issue of handling discrimination complaints, which emphasises the need to consider a range of factors when deciding on a formal or informal approach, including any statutory or contractual obligations, the seriousness of the complaint, precedent from previous cases, intention (on the part of the ‘perpetrator’), the complainant’s views and the actions that may be needed to resolve the issue.³⁸⁰
- 8.8.8 We agree that a range of factors need to be considered when deciding if a complaint is suitable for informal resolution, and that, in particular, there should be a seriousness assessment in every case, using a clearly defined approach and set of criteria. The outcome of the seriousness assessment should then inform how the complaint is handled.
- 8.8.9 Against this backdrop, we believe that the game, and the ECB in particular, needs to commit itself to developing alternative, informal mechanisms for responding to discrimination complaints.

Having someone to turn to

- 8.8.10 We heard evidence that when players are experiencing racist or other discriminatory treatment in a dressing room or elsewhere, they often initially just want someone they can trust to talk to for advice and guidance - ideally someone who can empathise with what they are experiencing. It can be extremely isolating when a player, particularly a young player, feels that there is no one that they can confide in. They may experience a range of emotions: wondering if they are imagining the abuse, feeling that they should be able to cope and would be seen as weak if they can’t, or deciding that putting up with it is a price worth paying for their future.



I thought if I report this then I’m the weakling because I’ve not been able to be tough and handle this.

Men’s Current or Former Professional Player

- 8.8.11 We heard examples where this isolation and vulnerability is exacerbated when the victim is from an ethnically diverse background in an all-White or predominantly White environment. One former professional player spoke about the importance of there being more ethnically diverse people in cricket not only as players but also as support staff, so that a young player from an ethnically diverse background who is struggling with his or her treatment can confide in them.
- 8.8.12 We heard distressing evidence from one former player whose treatment from some teammates and fans was so bad - and so blatantly based on the colour of his skin - that he found himself sitting emotional, distraught and isolated in his hotel room. He had no one to turn to at the County and could not bring himself to risk the end of a professional career, for which he had worked so hard, through a formal complaint. So he suffered in silence, trying to cope with the mental anguish on his own.
- 8.8.13 Another former player gave evidence of one teammate making discriminatory remarks in front of the club captain, who “*just stood there and let it happen*” and even joined in with the laughter himself. When the senior person in the dressing room visibly endorses discriminatory behaviour, it is very difficult for any player to make a complaint. Even worse, when a senior figure in an organisation fails to act in circumstances where they are supposed to uphold that organisation’s values, and where they have the power and responsibility to protect vulnerable players, it can be immensely distressing.

³⁸⁰ ACAS Discrimination: What to do if it happens, p. 11, Choosing an informal or formal approach.

- 8.8.14 We did hear some encouraging evidence from a current professional male player that efforts have been made at his County to give players more of a voice within a team environment so that younger, less established players have become more willing to speak up, even to question behaviour that would previously have gone unchallenged. It is important that those efforts are proactively supported and expanded.



You would like to think that if you create an environment where everybody is a decent human being, that if that person hears something which was inappropriate, he would speak out, and that's what we've got to create more and more.

Men's Current or Former Professional Player

Freedom to Speak Up Guardians

- 8.8.15 It is not only cricket that is wrestling with the problem of how to create an environment in which people feel able to raise concerns. Again, we can point to a parallel experience in the NHS, where Sir Robert Francis KC conducted an independent review in 2015 *"into creating an open and honest reporting culture."*³⁸¹
- 8.8.16 Among the many valuable insights from that review, we are particularly drawn to the recommendations covering different routes to raise concerns. These included new Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardians, who could provide an independent and impartial source of advice to staff and would have access to senior leaders and external advice. Sir Robert said he believed *"such a role [could] make a huge contribution to developing trust within an organisation and improving the culture and the way cases are handled."*³⁸²
- 8.8.17 Individuals could speak to an FTSU Guardian anonymously if they wished, or they could identify themselves. They would not have to name a particular person as the 'accused' and could be raising a structural or systemic issue. They may simply wish to speak to the FTSU Guardian so they feel that they have been heard, or they may seek guidance on how to handle a situation themselves. Alternatively, the FTSU Guardian may be asked to pursue the issue within the organisation, seeking a resolution for the individual. We believe that incorporating a similar role within cricketing institutions would be of great benefit.
- 8.8.18 We understand from the ECB that Freedom to Speak Up programmes based on the NHS approach have been piloted at some County and other organisations, and they hope that the programme will be rolled out across the County network. We would welcome that.



Somebody's got a role as an independent body to say 'we will support the victim' [...] The victims knowing that they've got someone independent and a voice that's just purely there to support them, listen to them, acknowledge what they're saying and make sure it's heard.

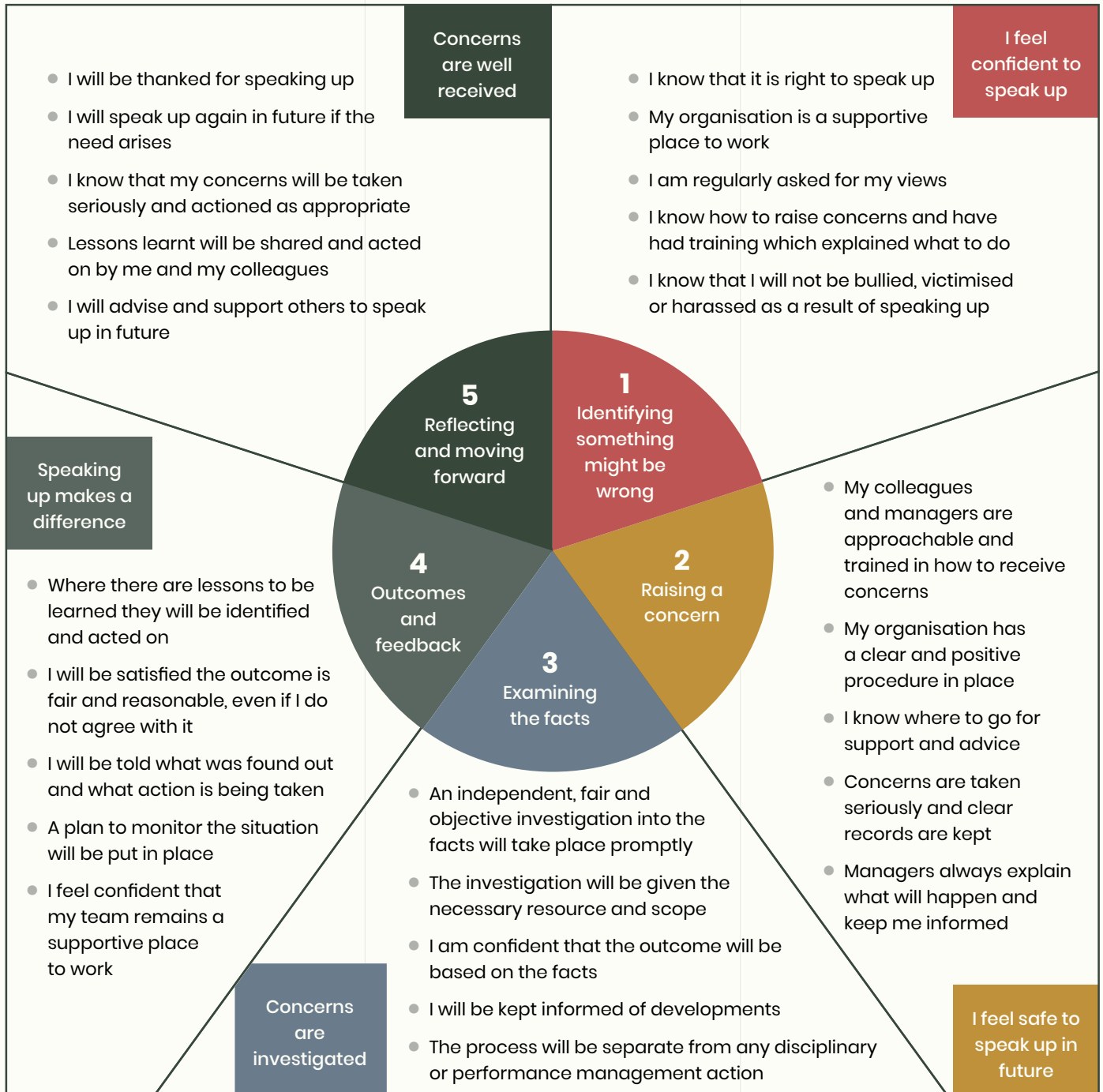
Kick It Out

³⁸¹ 'Freedom to Speak Up – An independent review into creating an open and honest reporting culture in the NHS' Sir Robert Francis KC February 2015.

³⁸² Executive Summary of 'Freedom to Speak Up', p.16.

Our overall vision for raising concerns

8.8.19 The Table below has been adapted from a diagram in Sir Robert Francis' Report that set out a vision for raising concerns in an organisation.³⁸³



³⁸³ 'Freedom to Speak Up – An independent review into creating an open and honest reporting culture in the NHS' Sir Robert Francis KC February 2015 p. 91.

Alternative ways of resolving complaints

- 8.8.20 Although we heard evidence of some isolated examples, alternative dispute resolution such as mediation seems to be largely missing from the game's complaints processes. This is an important gap. As already discussed, resolving issues informally and by agreement can often deliver the best outcome for all concerned, maintaining relationships between players, officials and organisations in contrast to punitive sanctions imposed by third parties such as the CDC, which can have the opposite effect.
- 8.8.21 Mediation also allows for more victim-centred outcomes, which may require no more than for someone to realise that the way that they are acting is making other people uncomfortable, and offer a genuine apology and a commitment not to repeat the objectionable behaviour. Dealing with suitable cases quickly and effectively should minimise stress on all sides and achieve more effective outcomes.
- 8.8.22 It is important to make clear that mediated outcomes do not involve people 'getting away with' unacceptable conduct; real behaviour change is an important part of a mediated outcome. When people appreciate that change is possible through mediation, that may well result in more issues being raised and resolved, rather than the 'all or nothing' scenario that can characterise a formal process.
- 8.8.23 There may be lessons that can be learnt from how cricket handles similarly sensitive issues around safeguarding.³⁸⁴ We have been told by the ECB that they have been trying to educate everyone in the game about the standards they expect in relation to safeguarding, and have been encouraging what they described as 'softer' reporting: a willingness to come forward and say *"that's not right, that doesn't sit well with me."* They observed an increase in reporting of low-level concerns that indicates the education process is working. They also acknowledged that in tackling discrimination, the game should not rely solely on individuals to recognise and report issues themselves – everyone should be made aware of the standards that the game expects.
- 8.8.24 There will, regrettably, always be those for whom more significant action is needed – for more serious conduct and for repeat perpetrators. But, in our experience, and consistent with much of the evidence we have heard, many incidents of discrimination may well be capable of informal resolution or, ideally, of being nipped in the bud if someone in authority on or off the pitch intervenes when they observe offending behaviour.
- 8.8.25 Leaders across the game need to establish and support a culture of 'calling out' discriminatory behaviours and conduct without only relying on formal complaints to be made by aggrieved parties to surface issues and drive change and improvements. This is clearly not happening enough in cricket at the moment, as evidenced extensively by respondents to our Call for Evidence. That culture needs to be developed locally, regionally and nationally, in every recreational club in the country, and throughout the professional game.



Cricket must continue to champion the rights of people to feel included and call out discrimination or unfair treatment at all levels.

FCC

³⁸⁴ We have not examined the substance of the safeguarding processes in cricket in any detail because they are not within the scope of our work, and only use the comparison to highlight the benefits of encouraging the reporting of low-level concerns.

Recommendation 34

We recommend that the ECB and wider game put in place processes to ensure that complaints can be raised and addressed by informal (as well as formal) means, including through the use of mediation before or after a formal process has started and through the introduction of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians across the ECB, MCC and the Counties (where not already in place).

8.9 Good practice

- 8.9.1 Ultimately it is for the ECB and the wider game to consider and implement the necessary steps to improve complaints handling processes in cricket, in the light of the findings and recommendations we have made in this Chapter. To assist in the process, on the next page we set out what we consider to be some key elements of an effective process to deal with discrimination-related complaints. Those in positions of power and responsibility across the game would do well to keep these principles at the forefront of their minds as they go about developing systems that genuinely offer those involved in discrimination complaints a fair, effective and reliable system.

Good practice in discrimination complaints process



Codified provisions and supporting guidance that provide a shared understanding of what discrimination is, with specific reference to the context of cricket.



Clear, easy-to-understand guidance about the process.



Transparency about what happens at the different stages, including who is involved.



A basic timeline for the process and the investigation, which allows for flexibility for complicated cases.



Good and regular communication with all involved – especially complainant and subject but also witnesses – noting that:

- There is always something to communicate, even if just an update to say “no news”
- Be sensitive to the recipient, bearing in mind the stress of the process and the underlying emotion
- The presumption should be to share information, unless there is a good reason not to (e.g. if some information is confidential)
- Communication is particularly important in lengthy investigations.



Ensure that responses are not defensive.



Appropriate support for all involved in the process, especially the complainant and subject e.g. a nominated colleague who can provide advice and support, but also those involved in handling the complaints.



Allow protected time for staff to investigate complaints (rather than having to fit them in around their usual day-to-day responsibilities), provide them with administrative and emotional support (discrimination issues can be distressing to deal with), and ensure they have respect and status within their organisations (especially when investigating senior individuals).



Be open to the possibility that discrimination (even if unintended) might be a factor in poor treatment and seek to address impact of incidents that are experienced as discrimination.



Provisions for alternative forms of resolution such as mediation, which may be particularly important in discrimination cases where solutions may need to be more flexible than in other conduct cases especially where there are interpersonal relationships that ideally should continue (e.g. between teammates).



Appropriate specialist discrimination expertise among investigators and decision-makers (e.g. on the CDC Panel).



The ability to co-opt specialists on to Panels or act as expert advisers to help Panels assess evidence and make decisions.



Ensure appropriate communication of outcomes, especially to the complainant as well as the subject of the complaint.



Provide clarity about what the complaints process can achieve compared with what the complainant may want.

Chapter 9: Schools and the Talent Pathway



When I look back on my life I think, if I didn't have cricket, what would I have done, who would I be? I can't even imagine a life without it [...] but fact is you've got to be lucky or privileged to play. Why? [...] It shouldn't be like that.

Freddie Flintoff³⁸⁵

9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 A 2019 report on “Elitist Britain”³⁸⁶ by the Sutton Trust and the Social Mobility Commission named professional cricket (England Men) as one of most elitist professions in Britain. Whilst this picture was not quite replicated for England Women, privately educated female players were also reported to be significantly overrepresented. There has also been widespread media coverage and concern about the reduction in the number of Black cricketers in English and Welsh cricket³⁸⁷ and the fact that despite South Asian players making up around 30% of the game’s adult recreational base, the representation of South Asians in the professional game is far lower than this.³⁸⁸ In cricket, like in other spheres of life, it appears that ‘talent is everywhere but opportunity is not’.
- 9.1.2 Many involved in cricket have been working to understand and respond to these issues. Alongside existing game-wide initiatives, such as the South Asian Action Plan (SAAP) and the Transforming Women’s and Girls’ Cricket Action Plan (TWGCP), the game announced further steps as part of its game-wide 12-Point Plan to “*aid progress into professional teams of people from diverse backgrounds (especially South Asian, Black and less privileged youngsters)*.”³⁸⁹
- 9.1.3 Our Terms of Reference charge us with examining issues of equity in relation to race, gender and class within cricket. Specifically, we have considered access to the sport, the talent pathway for junior players and progression into the professional women’s and men’s game.³⁹⁰ We have assessed a wide range of data and evidence, including the lived experiences of former and current players (and their parents/guardians) and of those who work in the game to enable us to identify barriers and how they can be removed.

³⁸⁵ Field of Dreams BBC1 2022.

³⁸⁶ The Sutton Trust and The Social Mobility Commission, Elitist Britain (2019) [Elitist-Britain-2019.pdf](#)

³⁸⁷ <https://www.skysports.com/cricket/news/12123/12399822/why-has-the-number-of-black-cricketers-in-england-dropped> & <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/get-inspired/44533717>

³⁸⁸ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/sportsnews/article-10287409/Yorkshire-Crickets-failure-engage-local-Asian-players-smacks-racism-say-MPs.html> & <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/20/young-british-asian-cricketers-research>

³⁸⁹ Action 6 - <https://www.ecb.co.uk/news/2369919>

³⁹⁰ We have not assessed the talent pathway for players once they reach professional level (e.g. the pathway into national teams).

What is the talent pathway and why does it matter?



We must ensure that a positive, inclusive culture exists in talent pathways before athletes get anywhere near international level [...] we want to see sports teams that reflect the best of our nation and our population, in all its diversity. We have a concern that not only the culture of talent pathways, but also the sheer cost of being talented, may be a real barrier to this. [...] We believe that how we win is as important as what we win.

Sport England 2019: 'The Talent Plan for England'

- 9.1.4 The talent pathway in cricket typically refers to the structures and processes in place that allow talented junior players to progress from recreational club or school cricket into performance environments, representative teams and eventually professional cricket. Sport England describes the England Talent Pathway as “*the route relating to the development of talented athletes, about which the stages, structures, policies, practices and partners/stakeholders are organised.*”³⁹¹ The Sport England ‘Talent Plan for England’ recognises that the potential pool of talent is narrowed in sports if they are unsuccessful in identifying and recruiting talent from underrepresented groups, and that addressing inequities not only enhances performance but also makes national teams “*more reflective of the population so they are more relevant to the nation.*”
- 9.1.5 We agree with this description and believe that to be equitable, the cricket talent pathway should level the playing field so that **all** talented cricketers, whatever their age or background, have the opportunity to be identified and then enabled to progress and reach their full potential. It must also ensure that young people’s first experiences of the game are positive, inclusive and fun so that their love for cricket is nurtured, developed and transformed into a sustained relationship with the game at all levels.
- 9.1.6 Defining ‘talent’ itself is complex and contested. Sport England describes this as “*a multidimensional package of characteristics and abilities.*”³⁹² They acknowledge the need to take a broad and long-term view to talent identification, given that talent and ability may not be easily identifiable until maturity, or may only develop with the right coaching and training environment. There is a considerable body of research that points to the different patterns of pre-adolescent development, the difficulties of identifying sporting talent in young children, and the dangers of an overemphasis on early selection and deselection.³⁹³ Taking a holistic approach to identifying and developing talented players, one that recognises the barriers to access and inclusion faced by some, goes to the heart of our examination of equity within cricket’s talent pathway.

What do we already know about inequality in the talent pathway?

- 9.1.7 We began our work by commissioning a literature review to identify what was already known about inequality in cricket. We identified research that examined the ethnicity of, and wealth gap in, men’s professional cricket in England and Wales over the past 10+ years. It revealed that progression rates into the professional game differed depending on ethnicity and schooling.

³⁹¹ ‘The Talent Plan for England – creating the world’s best talent system’ 2019 Sport England <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/the-talent-plan-for-england.pdf?VersionId=FMAAxsgrkyJ0hXIJQl2aB7s9uIpV.uN> p. 6.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁹³ Granados, Andrea, Achamyeleh Gebremariam, and Joyce M. Lee. ‘Relationship between timing of peak height velocity and pubertal staging in boys and girls.’ *Journal of clinical research in pediatric endocrinology* 7, no. 3 (2015); Albaladejo-Saura, Mario, Raquel Vaquero-Cristóbal, Noelia González-Gálvez, and Francisco Esparza-Ros. ‘Relationship between biological maturation, physical fitness, and kinanthropometric variables of young athletes: A systematic review and meta-analysis.’ *International journal of environmental research and public health* 18, no. 1 (2021); Toselli, Stefania, Mario Mauro, Alessia Grigoletto, Stefania Cataldi, Luca Benedetti, Gianni Nanni, Riccardo Di Miceli et al. ‘Maturation Selection Biases and Relative Age Effect in Italian Soccer Players of Different Levels.’ *Biology* 11, no. 11 (2022): 1559.

- 9.1.8 The challenges identified within mainstream cricket talent pathways have resulted in targeted initiatives designed to improve engagement and remove barriers. We have examined their impact and sought to assess whether they have been successful. We have also explored the distinction between participation and progression on the talent pathway and the fact that an increase in participation in and of itself doesn't address the barriers to progression.
- 9.1.9 There is far less research and analysis available in relation to gender within cricket, but much of the evidence we saw and heard was common to both girls and boys, women and men. Where there are distinctions between them, we draw these out. We have also explored whether any of the issues identified in the boys' pathway risk being reproduced in the girls' pathway.
- 9.1.10 A 2021 study on "Relative access to wealth and ethnicity in professional cricket" in the men's game concludes: *"Socioeconomic and racial biases, predominantly favouring privately educated and white cricketers, were identified within senior professional cricket in England and Wales. These findings prompt future inquiry into identifying the barriers that [British South Asian] cricketers face throughout their transition from [county age group] levels to senior [professional status], and further investigation concerning the barriers to [Black British] players' selection into [county age group] level."*³⁹⁴
- 9.1.11 In common with the Sport England 'Talent Plan for England', the 2021 study concluded that widening the talent pool to identify more players in currently underrepresented groups (by reference to wealth and/or ethnicity) *"could prove beneficial to further develop the performance level and inclusivity of talent development programmes and professional cricket in England and Wales."*

The ICEC's approach to examining the talent pathway

- 9.1.12 We sought to understand barriers to progression into and through the girls' and boys' talent pathways, and potential solutions, in relation to:
- Those who have attended state school compared with those who have attended private school.
 - Cricketers from ethnically diverse communities, in particular Black and South Asian players.
 - Those with lower socio-economic status.
- 9.1.13 We have undertaken a detailed document review and have heard from people who work in or have experienced the pathway such as players, parents/guardians, coaches (both connected to the pathway and independent of it), and cricketing organisations. In this Chapter, we answer the following key questions aligned to our Terms of Reference:
- Who plays cricket?
 - How is the talent pathway structured?
 - What are the costs associated with the talent pathway?
 - How do Counties find their players, and what impact do schooling and networks have on player progression within the talent pathway?
 - What is talent, how is it identified and by whom?
 - What steps have already been taken to address inequalities in the talent pathway?
- 9.1.14 We considered these issues in the context of the structure, culture and operation of the talent pathway for girls and boys, including grassroots programmes, the link (or otherwise) between participation and progression, and the selection process (including the individuals tasked with identifying 'talent', the routes into selection and the fairness of the decision-making process).

³⁹⁴ Brown, T. & Kelly, A.L. (2021). Relative access to wealth and ethnicity in professional cricket (Chapter 10). In Kelly, A.L., Côté, J., Jeffreys, M. & Turnnidge, J. (Eds.) *Birth Advantages and Relative Age Effects in Sport: Exploring Organizational Structures and Creating Appropriate Settings* (1st ed.), Routledge, New York, USA.

- 9.1.15 We explored specific issues such as relationships between, and the influence of, schools, Counties and coaches; the impact that cost, time and geographical location may have on an individual's ability to access and progress through the pathway; and the consistency of approach across different Counties and regions. We highlight areas of good practice that should be replicated across the game and make recommendations to remove existing barriers and ensure a more equitable approach to selection for, and progression through, the talent pathway.
- 9.1.16 The talent pathway has many elements to it and we have endeavoured in this Chapter to move logically through the process, from positive initiatives to encourage greater participation, to the structure and costs of the pathway, sources of talent and talent identification, the role of coaches, finishing with the steps that have been taken to try to address some of the inequalities in the pathway. In places where we have felt it helpful to do so, we have set out some background to put into context the conclusions we have reached.
- 9.1.17 Whilst we make individual findings in each section, there is so much connectivity between the various findings that we also outline some overarching conclusions at the end of the Chapter. We make a series of recommendations throughout the Chapter, and have one fundamental and overarching recommendation that we set out below – the reasons for which will become obvious as the reader progresses through the Chapter.

Recommendation 35

We recommend that the entire talent pathway structure should be overhauled to make it more meritocratic, inclusive, accountable, transparent and consistent. The new structure should deliver a systematic approach across all Counties, including with respect to: the relationship between Counties and schools, direct and indirect costs of participation, the stages of the pathway, talent identification methods, where talent is sourced, selection and deselection, and appeals processes. These should be enforced through the County Partnership Agreement (CPA) between the ECB and individual Counties.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) The ECB, within the next 12 months, should put in place a State Schools Action Plan. ECB money allocated to cricket below the U14 level should explicitly be re-allocated with the aim of 'levelling the playing field', delivering the investment, organisational structures, and approaches to talent identification necessary to ensure that there exists an equal pathway into professional cricket for the very large majority of the England and Wales population that attend only a state school.
- b) The Action Plan should be properly resourced, with appropriate levels of leadership and key performance indicators built into each County's CPA.

9.2 Participation: who plays cricket?

- 9.2.1 Like most sports, cricket is a pyramid: a wide base of participation from which, in theory, the most talented players should progress through a gradually narrowing talent pathway to reach the professional game and, ultimately, the national teams. Unless that pathway is equitable at the bottom, and throughout its various stages, there will be inequity at the top. It is equally important for the game at a recreational level to be fun and encourage participation in order to maximise the opportunities to engage children with cricket and thereby have a wider pool of talent wishing to progress onto the talent pathway itself.
- 9.2.2 According to the most recent Sport England data from their ‘Active Lives Survey’,³⁹⁵ 530,400 children³⁹⁶ said that they had played cricket at least once in the previous week during the academic year 2021-2022: 175,600 were girls (33.1%), 349,700 were boys (65.93%), and 5,100 (1.0%) described their gender “*in another way*”.
- 9.2.3 There are a number of excellent grassroots initiatives to encourage participation in cricket, which are examples of some of the best EDI practices within cricket. All Stars and Dynamos are ECB initiatives aimed at 5-8 and 8-11 year olds respectively and delivered through club networks. The aims of the programmes are to introduce children to cricket and develop their skills and enjoyment of the game.³⁹⁷ The ECB recommends that clubs charge £40 per child, but also provides a significant number of bursaries and free places (for example, in 2021, through their partnership with Sky, the ECB offered 10,000 free places on Dynamos).³⁹⁸ The ECB told us that in 2021, 71,000 children participated in All Stars, of which almost 26% were girls, and almost 15% were from ethnically diverse communities. 34,000 children participated in Dynamos, with just over 28% and 19% respectively being girls and children from ethnically diverse backgrounds.
- 9.2.4 Chance to Shine, which was originally the charitable arm of the ECB known as The Cricket Foundation, is an independent national charity predominantly working in state schools and with County Cricket Boards (CCBs) across the country. They provide coaches and help to support teachers with cricket provision. According to the latest Chance to Shine impact report,³⁹⁹ 453,617 children took part in schools during the academic year 2020-2021, across 3,985 state primary schools and 166 state secondary schools.
- 9.2.5 This is an overwhelmingly primary school-oriented initiative. We understand that because of funding constraints and therefore the need to allocate resources in a particular way, Chance to Shine’s only involvement in state secondary schools amounts to a relatively small programme with secondary school girls. Other than through its Street programme (see below) Chance to Shine has no involvement with state school boys (and only a small amount with state school girls) beyond the age of 11.
- 9.2.6 Chance to Shine also runs Chance to Shine Street, targeting children and young adults in inner city areas with a different way of getting into the game. Sessions are run after school or at weekends in sports halls and community centres, played with a tapeball (a tennis ball wrapped in tape) and plastic bats, with a 20 minute game format which Chance to Shine describes as “*cricket’s answer to 5-a-side football*.” Their impact report⁴⁰⁰ highlighted that in the 2020/2021 academic year, 4,008 children and young people took part in 130 Street projects, where 79% of participants were from ethnically diverse communities and 63% lived in the most deprived areas of England.

³⁹⁵ Sport England, ‘Active Lives Survey’. <https://activelives.sportengland.org>

³⁹⁶ Children are recorded as 5-16yrs.

³⁹⁷ <https://www.ecb.co.uk/play/dynamoscricket/faqs>

³⁹⁸ <https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/media/newsroom#/pressreleases/over-100000-kids-make-2021-a-record-breaking-summer-of-cricket-3122361>

³⁹⁹ <https://www.chancetoshine.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=ecb8cbcb-2124-4b4c-8954-dafeb33140aa>

⁴⁰⁰ <https://www.chancetoshine.org/news/chance-to-shine-impact-report-published>

- 9.2.7 The MCC Foundation told us that it runs a network of 74 cricket hubs, providing 2,800 state-educated young cricketers with free-to-access training and matchplay in 2022. 31% of participants were girls, of which 21% were from ethnically diverse backgrounds. 34% of boys were from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Through their London Action Plan, 500 players attended 14 London hubs, of which 67% were from ethnically diverse communities.⁴⁰¹ In 2022, around 200 MCC Foundation beneficiaries were selected by their County, regional or district team.⁴⁰²
- 9.2.8 Wicketz is a community cricket programme delivered by the cricket charity Lord's Taverners for young people aged 8-19 living in deprived communities. There are currently 19 Wicketz projects running across the UK.⁴⁰³ Their latest impact report said that 1,925 children (of which 17% were girls and 72% from ethnically diverse communities) had participated across 1,219 weekly coaching sessions and 97 life skills workshops.
- 9.2.9 According to the ECB there are over 5,000 cricket clubs in England and Wales that cater for players of all ages, genders and abilities.

Disparities by ethnicity

- 9.2.10 There is a stark disparity between the number of South Asian players in recreational cricket and those who make it to the professional ranks. The ECB told us that between 2017-2021, 26-29% of adult recreational cricketers in England and Wales were British South Asian, yet only 5.2% of professional cricketers in 2021 were British Asian and 2.2% 'other Asian'.
- 9.2.11 A 2019 study⁴⁰⁴ into the socio-demographic profile of male youth and professional cricketers in England and Wales noted that privately educated White British cricketers are 34 times more likely to convert to professional status compared to British South Asians who attended state school; and regardless of schooling background, White British players are three times more likely to reach professional status compared to their British South Asian counterparts.
- 9.2.12 We have been able to identify far more research, both by academics and from within the game itself, into levels of representation of South Asian players in professional cricket compared with Black players. That may reflect the greater numbers of South Asians who play cricket, from which it is possible to identify the stark difference between their representation in recreational and professional cricket. The lower numbers of Black recreational players mean that it is harder to see any contrast with the low numbers in the professional game. What is clear is that not enough has been done to understand why those numbers are so low, particularly given the higher levels of representation of Black British professional players in the 1990s: our work found 26 Black British male professional players in 1992 and less than half that number in 2021 (12).
- 9.2.13 While there are challenges common to both South Asian and Black players, especially when linked with lower socio-economic status particularly in urban areas, there is a significant difference: the main issue for South Asian players is not participation, but progression through the talent pathway into professional cricket, whereas Black players often do not reach the talent pathway in the first place. We have noted that there are a number of unexamined assumptions about why Black and South Asian players are underrepresented at the professional level – South Asians are more interested in studying, Black children are more interested in football – that are anecdotal, not evidence-based and damaging, especially when expressed by people in leadership roles. At section 7 of this Chapter we look in more detail at the initiatives in hand to try and address the challenges of underrepresentation.

⁴⁰¹ <https://www.lords.org/mcc/mcc-foundation>

⁴⁰² https://lords-stg.azureedge.net/mediafiles/lords/media/images/mccf-2022-review_4.pdf

⁴⁰³ <https://www.lordstaverners.org/how-we-help/charitable-programmes/wicketz/>

⁴⁰⁴ Brown, T., Jackson, D.T., Khawaja, I. & Greetham, P. (2019) Sociodemographic profile of England's cricket talent pathways and first-class counties, Paper presented at 5th annual Cluster for Research for Coaching (CRIC) and Sports Coaching Review International Coaching Conference, Worcester.

- 9.2.14 The ECB described how participation is the first step to progression on the talent pathway, and in the following sections we endeavour to follow that pathway to understand how it is structured, where and how it sources its players, and how it identifies players with the apparent potential to progress. We critically appraise some of the key challenges to achieving equity in cricket, in particular the costs associated with the pathway, the dominance of private schools, the influence of networks, and the difficulties of talent identification in younger children. Later in this Chapter we explore whether grassroots initiatives and other tailored participation programmes, established in response to equity challenges identified in the past, have also led to improved progression through the talent pathway.

9.3 How is the talent pathway structured?

Background

- 9.3.1 The talent pathway provides a route for talented young players to progress from recreational cricket into performance environments and potentially to professional cricket. We asked all Counties and Women's Regional Teams (WRTs) about the stages of the pathway they run. The ECB provided us with documentation explaining the pathway from the Counties and the WRTs to playing for England for both boys and girls. We also received detailed local pathway plans from a select cohort of nine First Class Counties (FCCs), giving us insight into how the girls' and boys' pathways operate across England and Wales. In this Report, whilst we provide an explanation of the pathway all the way to professional/national player status, our focus has been on the entry into the talent pathway and progression up to Academy level. We start by looking at the structure of the talent pathway itself.

Structure of the talent pathway

- 9.3.2 At the entry point, both the boys' and girls' talent pathways for players under 18 follow the same basic structure organised by the Counties and the WRTs. There are three main stages in the pathway, described in the box below.

(i) Pathway - County Age Group Squad

The most common first step is to be selected for a County Age Group (CAG) squad. The ECB told us that there were 4,680 boys in the U13-U18 CAG squads and 3,647 girls in the U11-U18 CAG squads. Our data starts at U13 although as we see later in this section, some Counties run CAG squads at a younger age.

Under the existing structure, players train collectively in their age group, play intra-County regional matches, and play for their County team against teams from other Counties. CAGs involve winter as well as summer training programmes. Players progress through the various age groups, unless they drop out or are deselected. New players can, in theory, join at any stage of the CAG structure, although, in practice, late entry into the system can be difficult.

(ii) Pathway - Emerging Player Programme

Alongside the CAGs, Counties (for boys) and WRTs (for girls) run Emerging Player Programmes (EPPs). Essentially, the EPP was described to us as the programme which provides extra training and support to players identified as having potential to progress onto the Academy programme (see below). EPPs on the girls' pathways were launched in October 2022. The ECB told us that there were currently 360 boys and 174 girls in EPPs. Currently, EPPs typically start at the U13 level.

In some Counties, there are additional stages such as an initial step preparing players to join a CAG, or different developmental programmes prior to the EPPs.

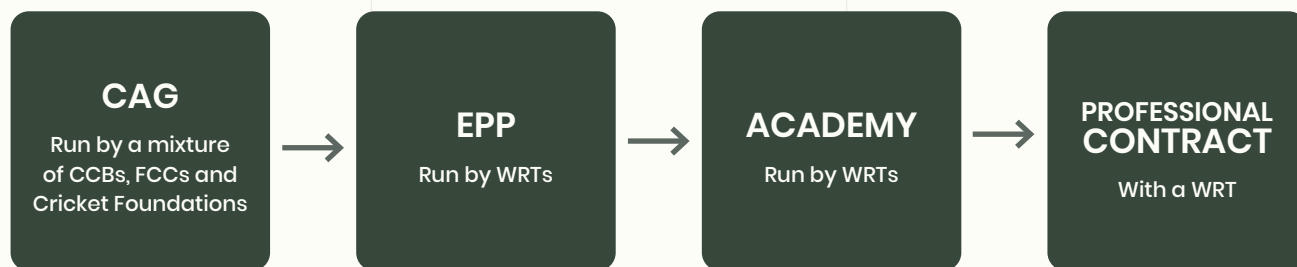
(iii) Pathway - Academy⁴⁰⁵

The next and final stage of the talent pathway is the Academy, for those players thought to have the most potential to become professional cricketers. Academies provide a more intensive and individualised development programme, focusing on developing technical, tactical, mental and physical skills as a foundation for future high-performance play.

Academies are all run by FCCs (for boys) and WRTs (for girls). The ECB told us that there were 175 boys and 103 girls in Academy programmes.

Girls' talent pathway

9.3.3 The girls' pathway exists across the Counties, being run by CCBs, Cricket Foundations, FCCs and WRTs. Women and girls will always finish their pathway in one of the eight WRTs because only they run Academies. Because of this structure, girls will always have to move organisations between CAG and EPP/Academy.



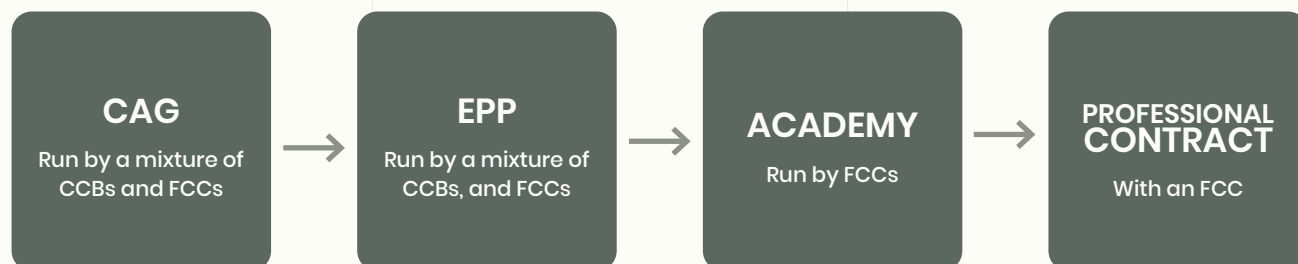
9.3.4 The eight WRTs were set up in 2020 and provide focused Academies for female players to develop. Each WRT is a conglomeration of multiple Counties and they are hosted by one or more FCCs. WRTs do not have their own home, grounds or facilities.

9.3.5 The pathway has only recently started to become more accessible for girls, with more clubs and Counties offering training for girls. Due to the long-term lack of focus on women's and girls' cricket, the ECB told us there was a limited participation base, which led to their decision to create only eight WRTs, and despite growing interest in the girls' game, they have no future plans to increase the number of WRTs. The ECB told us that it has tripled its investment in women's and girls' cricket as part of its Inspiring Generations strategy (under the TWGCP), with investment in the women's regional structure, girls' talent pathway, gender dedicated recreational facilities, community development officers and secondary school programmes.

⁴⁰⁵ Note that whilst some CCBs may also run their own Academies and EPPs, the references here are to ECB funded programmes.

Boys' talent pathway

- 9.3.6 If a boy is in a National County (NC) (as opposed to an FCC), their CAG and EPP will be administered by the local CCB. Since the Academies are all run by the FCCs, if they are selected for an Academy, a boy from an NC will typically move to one of the closest FCCs. If a boy is within an FCC, then they are likely to go through the whole pathway within that one County.



- 9.3.7 The boys' pathway has more players, receives significantly more resources and is more historically rooted than the girls', with most Counties having a wider range of CAG teams for boys than they do for girls.

Pathway – age groups

- 9.3.8 Whilst the ECB funds the U13-U18 boys' CAGs and the U11-U18 girls' CAGs, some Counties offer additional age groups beyond the ECB funded CAGs. Based on what we were told by the Counties, one runs an U9 boys' CAG, 15 Counties run U10 boys' CAGs and two run U10 girls' CAGs. Therefore, with some exceptions, the CAGs and EPPs run from ages 9 to 18 for boys and girls.
- 9.3.9 The ECB told us that boys' Academies run from ages 15 to 18. The survey data we received indicated that in fact the age grouping in some FCCs could range from 14 to 22.
- 9.3.10 The WRT Academies are 'open age' and so do not have a formal entry or upper age limit, although WRTs' current cohorts spanned from age 14 to 22.

Geography

- 9.3.11 The structure of the pathway means that many players must travel to participate. There is the obvious travelling to training and fixtures, but there is additional travel for those who have to move from one County to another as they progress.

Progression

- 9.3.12 Beyond talent selection, how a player moves through the pathway depends on two key factors: gender and/or location. Girls in NCs in particular may sometimes have to move County as well as travel significant distances to attend either EPPs or Academies, subject to the location of their closest WRT. For example, the nearest WRT for Shropshire is Central Sparks, co-hosted by Warwickshire CCC and Worcestershire CCC. The same also applies for boys in NCs who are selected for an FCC Academy. For example, in Norfolk the nearest boys' Academies are run by Middlesex CCC, Nottinghamshire CCC or Northamptonshire CCC.

ECB talent pathway

- 9.3.13 The most talented Academy players are selected for England training camps and junior teams. These start at U17 for boys and U19 for girls. England Men's and Women's junior teams compete internationally at U19 level. There is also an England Men's Lions team, effectively the England Senior 2nd team, and an England Women's 'A' team.

ECB oversight of the talent pathway

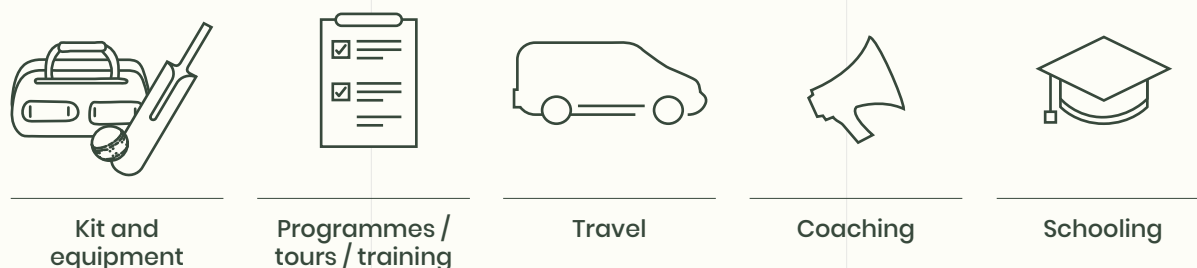
9.3.14 ECB oversight of the talent pathway in each County is via the County Partnership Agreement (CPA) which outlines the requirement for the provision of CAGs (for boys and girls), and EPP and Academy programmes (for boys only). The provision of EPP and Academy programmes for girls is overseen through the Regional Host Agreements (RHA).

Costs of the talent pathway

9.3.15 The various programmes available along the talent pathway, and the geographical challenges presented by those programmes, inevitably require major financial costs for those participating (or aspiring to participate) at a representative level.

9.3.16 Within the pathway itself, participants are often required to pay fees to Counties for attending training sessions, trials, festivals and camps, as well as for coaching and kit, in addition to the costs for travel to training and for personal equipment (e.g. bats).

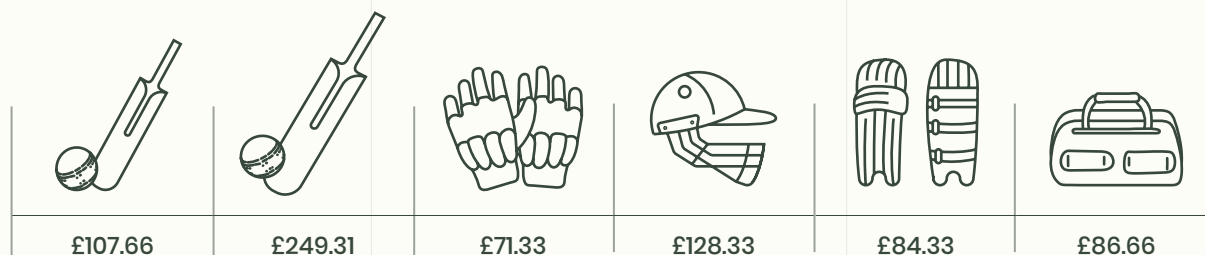
Figure 16: Type of costs associated with the talent pathway



(i) Kit

Figure 17: Typical price of equipment⁴⁰⁶

(junior bat, adult bat, batting gloves, helmet, pads, kit bag)



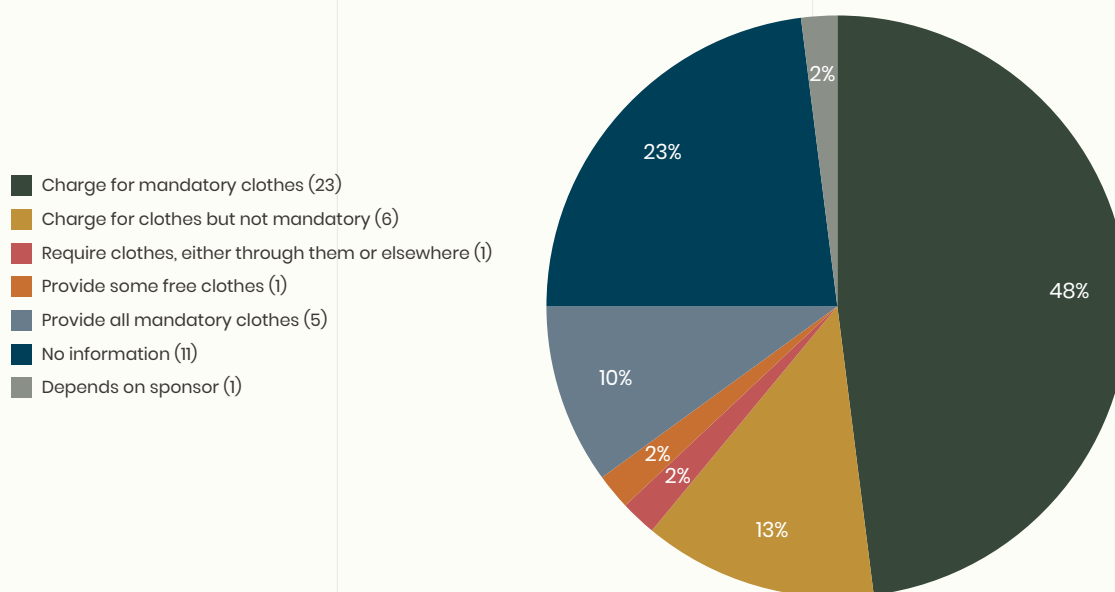
Adult equipment = **£620.29**

Junior equipment = **£478.64**
(up to around age 15 depending on height)

⁴⁰⁶ Identifying the average price on each of three different websites, and then averaging the sum of those three prices.

9.3.17 In our County Survey, we asked whether Counties charged participants in their talent pathway for any mandatory clothing and/or equipment. Forty-eight organisations replied: 22 CCBs, 11 FCCs, 7 FCCs combined with a CCB, and 8 WRTs.

Figure 18: Mandatory kit



9.3.18 Although the cost of kit (clothing) differs by County, only five Counties told us that they provided players with all mandatory kit for free. Nearly half (48%) of Counties told us they charged for all mandatory kit. The mandatory kit often costs more than £100. One FCC charged a total of £150 for two essential items: one for training and one for playing. Another FCC charged for separate kits for training (£109) and matches (£114), totalling £223. Other Counties required a limited amount of mandatory kit: for example, one CCB charged £25 for a playing shirt.

9.3.19 Eleven Counties (23%) gave us no information about kit. The rest either provided some kit, but charged for other items, or did not require any mandatory kit, but kit could be bought at the club. Even those Counties providing mandatory kit for free offered an option to buy further kit. Where Counties do not require mandatory kit, it is still needed and has to be bought (or otherwise sourced) from somewhere, so still represents a cost.

(ii) Cost of participation

9.3.20 Once a player is kitted out, usually at their own cost, they often also have to pay fees for winter and summer training programmes, as well as fixtures/match fees, tours and festivals. According to the responses to our County Survey, all CCBs and 16 out of 18 FCCs charge fees for various elements of the pathway. These costs vary between Counties. The CPA stipulates that there should be no charge for the boys' EPP and Academies. Similarly, the WRTs do not charge for their Academies.

9.3.21 In some Counties, players have to pay a fee even to be considered for the talent pathway. One County told us that they charge £75 for a player to be observed, and £20 to participate in trials. Another charged between £15 and £30 for a player to undergo a trial. From 2023, the ECB is investing £1 million per year to reduce costs in CAG programmes, including a requirement that no County charges fees for trials. This is an important step in the right direction, although we have set out our views on this commitment in greater detail elsewhere in the Report.

9.3.22 Counties told us that the fees for playing festival cricket ranged between £200 and £455, with the same four private schools quoted multiple times as destinations.

9.3.23 Many Counties also organise tours, costing between £1,000 and £3,000 per player. The high cost was recognised by several Counties who told us that they would help by fundraising (for example, one County charged the parent £500, and fundraised the remainder). Again, the cost and approach varied between different Counties.

9.3.24 One CCB describes the funding of the pathway as follows: *“Our Pathway is a predominantly self-funded talent development programme and there is subsequently a charge per player, per phase to participate. The player charge per phase contributes to various costs associated with the Pathway, including facility hire, coaching and staffing costs, equipment and administration.”*

(iii) Travel costs

9.3.25 Travel, which will vary depending on location, brings further direct costs as well as the potential indirect cost of time and lost earnings in circumstances where a parent/guardian is responsible for accompanying a player to and from a training session or a game. Often the only way to get to grounds is by car, limiting access to those who own or have regular access to a car and can afford the fuel to run it.

(iv) Coaching

9.3.26 Many of those giving evidence cited the necessity of private coaching for both girls and boys to progress through the pathway. We understand that the typical cost of a coaching session is around £50/hour, with the cost of private coaching across a season in the region of £400–£450.

(v) Schooling

9.3.27 As discussed in more detail later in the Chapter, attendance at private schools with strong cricket connections and provision significantly benefits players in both accessing the talent pathway and progressing within it. Day fees for private schools range from £11,000 to £33,000 annually. Boarding fees range from £24,000 to £45,000 annually. For many private schools, these costs include cricket coaching with ex-professional players and current/former County staff, extensive cricket facilities, and access on a daily basis.

(vi) Club fees

9.3.28 The costs of playing for a club may also be prohibitive. The Lord’s Taverners told us that *“we have noticed that a key issue for many of our participants within our Wicketz programme that prevents them moving into a club environment begins with socio economic barriers. The cost of membership or access to colts’ sections is often far too much for families to afford and this is before investing in any new kit...”*

Conclusions



So that's kind of what I mean by a postcode lottery because sometimes you might live just down the road from a really brilliant club and sometimes you'll live miles and miles away, and that's where the class element comes in because if you live miles and miles away from a good club you can't get there, you have to have a parent and basically a cricket parent who's willing to take you [...] if both your parents work shifts or they don't have a car, they can't afford the petrol, they can't afford the club fees [...] then it's totally inaccessible to you.

Academic

The structure of the pathway is a barrier to equity and inclusion across gender, class and race

9.3.29 As a Commission, we are clear that the current structure of the talent pathway creates particular challenges for ethnically diverse communities and those from lower socio-economic status backgrounds. In doing so, it repeats and reinforces wider structural inequalities that exist in England and Wales.



At County level cricket, I have seen how children from BME backgrounds never progress beyond a certain level. There is no recognition that, if you are from a minority group and a poor family, you may have particular difficulties with travel, fees, culture, belonging, etc.

Asian (Pakistani) volunteer

9.3.30 The geography of the talent pathway presents a major barrier to access, in the context of these structural factors and inequalities, by requiring those on the talent pathway to travel long distances for trials, training and games.

9.3.31 The need to travel regularly to training and coaching, which may be some distance away due to limited facilities (particularly for Academy players), can be difficult for many families. This presents particular challenges where both parents/guardians work and for single parent families where the parent works and/or has other children to care for.

9.3.32 Players living in large urban areas can be disadvantaged, given that so many of the grounds and training facilities used are located outside the city centre. This is bound to have a differential impact along ethnic lines, in particular, given the much greater proportion of those from ethnically diverse communities who live in inner city areas. Some grounds are not well served by public transport. Even where there is public transport, parents/guardians may understandably be reluctant for their younger children to use it alone, nor is it easy to travel when carrying cricket kit bags.

9.3.33 Unless the County provides transport, the problems can be exacerbated for away fixtures, which will be in other Counties, and tours and festivals, which could be anywhere in the country.



As parents, we gave up many weekends to transport the children to matches. We would lose whole weekends as the girls' matches were on Saturdays and the boys' on Sundays. There were midweek matches during school holidays and festivals. It wasn't unusual to drive more than 300 miles in one weekend.

White woman, grammar school, parent/guardian and official

- 9.3.34 Parents/guardians often stay for the matches, particularly when they are far away, which means one game can take up a whole day (or a whole weekend if children are playing on Saturday and Sunday).
- 9.3.35 Many matches – especially at County level – are inevitably far from home grounds. Even weekly training at a home ground can be a long distance away and, with heavy equipment, is difficult to negotiate without private transport. Therefore, to play cricket requires access to private transport, the ability to pay for the cost of fuel, and parents willing and able to drive children to training sessions and matches.
- 9.3.36 It was also apparent to the Commission that the structure of the pathway is even more of an obstacle for girls than boys. There are fewer Academies for girls (eight compared with 18 for boys) and so girls are much more likely to have to travel further to training and matches. Moreover, the pathway is more time and cost demanding for both boys and girls in an NC, or for a girl in an FCC that does not host a WRT, given they have further to travel.

The different approaches between Counties creates an inconsistent level of access for all players



What we are seeing across the country is just very different and it is disparate in terms of a young person's experience.

Chance to Shine

- 9.3.37 As a Commission, we were struck by the lack of consistency between Counties in terms of the costs and operation of the pathway. There were inconsistencies in the ages at which players could join each stage of the pathway, the number of girls' CAG teams in each County and the existence of additional stages in the pathway. Charges for participation varied significantly, as did approaches to scouting and talent ID, which we discuss in more detail later in this Chapter.
- 9.3.38 The system is also structured so that the County pathway available to any given child or family is connected to the location of their local school or club, through which nominations for pathway selection flow. This means it is very difficult for anyone dissatisfied with their experience, or the options available to them, to join a different County's pathway.
- 9.3.39 In our view, the inconsistency between Counties is unfair, confusing and ultimately creates a postcode lottery where the ease of access to pathway programmes, and the nature of the experience within them, is determined by where a person lives. Moreover, the inconsistencies mean that the system can feel impenetrable for some, unless you are fortunate enough to have connections (through school, family or friends) to help you navigate it. Those links are likely to be more prevalent amongst players with existing networks, creating yet another barrier for those from ethnically diverse and/or lower socio-economic backgrounds.



[talent identification in County cricket] is different across the country. So it is still a postcode lottery for many different reasons depending on where you live as to the quality, accessibility and supportive nature of a young person's journey in the talent pathway [...] From a state school perspective, you can be in a state primary or secondary and you could not even have a clue about how you enter the talent system if you are a talented young person. You also might not have others around you that know how to do that or support you so it very much depends on what the links are in your school and obviously at the moment the cricket system is heavily swayed towards independent schools having that kind of knowledge and that kind of access. You are even less likely if you are sitting outside of a traditional club system to be recognised as part of the pathway [...].

Chance to Shine

The costs associated with the talent pathway exclude many from taking part and progressing

- 9.3.40 We are unequivocal as a Commission that as a matter of principle, any charges for participation in the talent pathway are inappropriate. We cannot reconcile the ECB's aspiration for cricket to be a 'game for all' with the fact that talented young players, or more likely their parents/guardians, have to pay for that talent to be developed. There is a clear misalignment between the stated aim and the reality: a system that effectively excludes those from a lower socio-economic background, irrespective of their talent, is blatantly inequitable.
- 9.3.41 Whilst one FCC has already made the talent pathway completely free, the Commission recognises that for some Counties the income from the talent pathway is one of their key sources of funding, and that making it free will pose significant challenges. That, however, doesn't mean it shouldn't be done.



In simple terms you are not selecting the best, most talented cricketers, you are selecting the ones that can afford it.

Matt Prior, BBC Sport⁴⁰⁷

- 9.3.42 It is clear to us that the costs associated with the talent pathway represent a significant financial commitment. The Commission was alarmed by the repeated references to the so-called 'bank of mum and dad': players and former players stressed to us that financial support from parents/guardians was the difference between whether they made it as a cricketer or not. A parent of a player in the talent pathway told us that they know lots of parents/guardians who were passionate about supporting their children to play cricket, but who could not afford to let them continue. The evidence we gathered highlighted a widely shared feeling that the structure of the talent pathway means that it is largely reserved for those from families with the necessary funds, whilst excluding those from a lower socio-economic background.



The size of your wallet determines if your children progress or not, which is a clear indication that it's not a sport for everyone but for a privileged few.

Unknown ethnicity man, parent/guardian, county age group player



My godson, a black boy his dad remortgages the house to make sure this young boy gets through to play good cricket.

Men's Current or Former Professional Player

- 9.3.43 The current position points to an urgent need to reform the talent pathway. For as long as it remains this way, cricket will never achieve the aim of being *"the UK's most inclusive sport."*⁴⁰⁸

(i) Costs of kit, equipment, and participation

- 9.3.44 We recognise that participating in any sport will carry costs. However, we were told that the standard kit and equipment necessary to play cricket is far more extensive, and expensive, than for many other sports: clothing, boots, kit bags, bats, pads, helmets and gloves. Even if only the cheapest kit was bought, the cost would still easily be several hundred pounds.

⁴⁰⁷ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/cricket/60071225>

⁴⁰⁸ <https://www.ecb.co.uk/news/2773318/richard-thompson-ecb-chair-my-vision-for-cricket>

- 9.3.45 Succeeding (and participating safely) in the talent pathway is more difficult for those who have the cheapest equipment: for example, the quality of cricket bats varies enormously and the higher-quality, more expensive bats enable players to hit the ball significantly further with greater ease than the cheaper, entry-level ones. The quality of protective wear also varies dramatically. One County told us that the helmet they expected players to purchase cost around £200 (that County offered a 50% discount, reducing the price to around £100).
- 9.3.46 Equally, if a child starts playing at a young age, items of equipment and clothing will require replacing on a number of occasions as they grow. We also heard from many parents who felt that Counties rebranded their clothing or changed styles too often, or asked for additional items (for example, coloured clothing instead of whites), or additional 'training wear' which seemed unnecessary. Others complained of a lack of choice and transparency about where cricket kit could be purchased, especially clothing.
- 9.3.47 We also received evidence that there was a cultural expectation that players would have good kit, and those that did not stood out. For example, one respondent to our online survey said: *"The coaching staff at [X] CCC singled out the fact that I was from a poor background by making fun of my trainers and 'cheap' cricket equipment."*⁴⁰⁹ We look in more detail later in this Chapter at the issue of stigmatisation of people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.
- 9.3.48 One amateur coach told us they had bought kit and shoes for players and paid for their subs and match fees, so that they could continue to play. A staff member in cricket similarly told us that coaches often cover costs for children given the expense and that many coaches (both paid and unpaid) pay for their own kit and travel expenses.
- 9.3.49 Although it is positive that the EPP and Academies are free, the extensive costs incurred in the earlier stages of the talent pathway mean players unable to afford these are likely to have already left the pathway before reaching Academy level. As noted earlier, these include extensive direct participation costs (e.g. fees for winter and summer training programmes, as well as fixtures/match fees, tours and festivals).
- 9.3.50 As mentioned earlier, there are also other extensive (indirect) costs which we have concluded are closely linked with success on the talent pathway, and which put those from a lower socio-economic background at a disadvantage.

(ii) Indirect costs - schooling

- 9.3.51 As we conclude later in the Chapter, private school attendance increases a player's chances of accessing and progressing through the talent pathway. As such, private school fees are a clear barrier to access and progression for the many who cannot afford them. Even for the tiny minority who are awarded scholarships, whilst some may be awarded full fee remission, others may only be awarded partial reductions in fees, which will not be enough to enable many families to send their children to private school.



As a single parent, I cannot afford to send [my children] to the expensive coaching academies so, again, they receive less coaching and are hindered from progression. Three of my children were awarded cricket scholarships at a private school of 50% each, but this still left £30,000 a year in fees, which is more than I earn in a year. So although they have been identified as gifted, they are disadvantaged due to social circumstances.

White woman, recreational player, parent/guardian, volunteer, board or committee

⁴⁰⁹ Asian/Asian British (Pakistani) man, recreational player, county age group player, academy player.

(iii) Indirect costs - coaching

- 9.3.52 It was also clear to us that there is often pressure to pay for extra coaching that is supplemental to the talent pathway. This may be to help state school players compete with the advantages of their private school contemporaries, or the use of private coaches' contacts to facilitate progress onto and through the talent pathway. Either way, this creates a cycle and system that disadvantages those from a lower socio-economic background.
- 9.3.53 The evidence we have heard also suggests that this additional coaching has a deeper impact on fairness. As noted above and later in this Chapter, many of those coaching on the pathway also offer additional private coaching, either on their own or as part of a private academy or private school. This creates obvious concerns about potential conflicts of interest or favouritism.
- 9.3.54 Paying for additional coaching is, of course, also likely to increase the skill development of the child in question, and so makes them more likely to be selected into a County pathway or retain their place on it. Coaches who invest time in individual players in their early years of development are also more likely to maintain an interest in seeing them succeed over time. We look at this in more detail later in this Chapter.

(iv) Indirect costs – travel

- 9.3.55 We have already explained how girls and players from ethnically diverse backgrounds are particularly impacted by the need to travel long distances, given the structure of the talent pathway. The costs of travel are significant and for some will undoubtedly present a barrier to participation on the talent pathway.



To be totally honest, it has cost an absolute fortune for the children to get where they are. The mileage on my car has been totally ridiculous. For training and matches, my previous vehicle had 75k on the clock and it was 3 years old.

White (British) woman, grammar school, parent/guardian and official



It seems to me it's only for the people who can afford it. I struggle financially to keep my two girls in cricket, I calculated it costs me £7,000 per year with lost days at work, club and county memberships which are extortionate, festival cricket payments, kit supplies and travel expenses.

Parent/Guardian of a player in a County Age Group, Emerging Player Programme or Academy

- 9.3.56 Finally, we heard evidence of a player having to drop out at club level because she had to work to support her mother: “she kind of fell away [from cricket] because she had to support her mum and had to earn money at the weekends.”⁴¹⁰ This points to the fact that the time and monetary demands of cricket can make it especially inaccessible for those players who at a young age have to work themselves and/or support their families.
- 9.3.57 England’s Director of Men’s Cricket, Rob Key, in a 2022 Sky Sports interview prior to his appointment said: “We talk about cricket for everyone, we talk about diversity – all these types of things, bringing the game to every person, well, you’re just pricing a lot of people out the market with the way you price it.”⁴¹¹ The ECB similarly recognised this problem, providing evidence that financial costs were a barrier to progression through the talent pathway, and we examine the steps they have taken to address this later in this Chapter.

⁴¹⁰ Women’s Current or Former Professional Player.

⁴¹¹ <https://www.skysports.com/cricket/news/12123/12522087/unchecked-cost-of-elite-youth-cricket-in-england-is-pricing-people-out-says-rob-key>

- 9.3.58 As a Commission, we believe very strongly that the costs associated with participation in the talent pathway are one of the most significant barriers to equity in cricket. It will never be ‘a game for all’, at least at the professional level, when large parts of society simply cannot afford to get their foot on the ladder, no matter how talented they may be. If an appeal to equity and fairness isn’t enough, cricket in England and Wales is losing talented, potentially great, players simply because of the financial barriers the game puts in their way – and cricket is all the weaker for it.
- 9.3.59 Being selected to play for your County should not come with a cost attached – it should be a reward for your talent and the game should be making an investment in your future. All direct costs charged by Counties for participation in representative cricket and the talent pathway should be removed, and far more support should be provided to overcome other, often indirect financial barriers such as travel costs. Doing so is an essential part of the game’s journey towards becoming truly equitable.

Recommendation 36

We recommend that, to increase equity and reduce barriers to access, particularly for children from lower socio-economic and state school backgrounds, participation in the talent pathway should be made entirely free of direct costs charged by Counties so that no player trialling for or participating in the 2024-25 pathway needs to pay.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) Financial assistance should also be made available where necessary to cover other costs incurred by participants in lower socio-economic groups (e.g. travel, cost of equipment) and practical steps should be taken to provide free transport to training/trials/matches.
- b) Much clearer and more stringent requirements should be included in the County Partnership Agreement about the provision of this financial assistance (currently referred to as ‘hardship funds’) along with an effective monitoring system to ensure that Counties are held accountable in this regard.

9.4 Sources of talent

9.4.1 In this section we explore where cricket looks for its players for the talent pathway, and what the processes are by which those individuals are identified. Although we started our work with a general understanding of the dominance of private schools in the talent pathway, we were nevertheless shocked by the starkness of the class divide and the gulf between state and private school provision. The lack of cricket provision in state schools, the way the pathway is structurally bound up with private schools, and the apparent reluctance for cricket to move away from this as a model: these issues present significant barriers which are more likely to impact ethnically diverse communities and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. For as long as the system relies as heavily as it does on its links to private schools, there will never be meaningful equity in the talent pathway.

Background

How are players selected for the talent pathway?

9.4.2 When we asked the FCCs/CBBs/WRTs to identify their top three sources of talent (e.g. name of local club/schools etc), we were told that cricket clubs were their primary source of talent, followed by private schools. In contrast, the predominant view of other evidence givers was that players are in fact primarily being selected from private schools. We did not examine access to clubs themselves as part of our work, although we did hear evidence suggesting that in many Counties private school players tend to dominate those clubs that have the best links to Counties.

9.4.3 The following methods were most commonly used by Counties to identify players for the talent pathway:

- **Nominations:** A player is nominated to be observed or attend a trial with the aim of joining or progressing through the pathway. Nominations can come from coaches at local clubs, schools (often private schools) or a County's own staff, as well as Community Talent Champions (CTCs – see paragraph 9.7.4 below). We heard helpful and candid evidence from a number of FCCs, which acknowledged that nominations tend to come from private schools and clubs with existing links to the Counties.
- **Trials:** A selection method used by some Counties that involve players demonstrating their abilities in front of pathway coaches over a period ranging from a few hours, to days, to weeks. From this, a shortlist is drawn up to invite players to join the talent pathway. Some trials are 'closed', meaning that only those nominated can participate, and others are 'open' where anyone can register to attend, no matter their skill level, experience, or whether they have been nominated or not.
- **Observations:** These generally involve coaches or scouts going out into the County to observe potential players in their own environments, instead of the players attending a trial at a set time at one location. For those players who are not privately coached by staff working in the pathway or face difficulties travelling to trials, observations are another opportunity to be seen.
- **Festivals:** A common source of showcasing talent. There are, for example, numerous inter-County (boys and girls) festivals, generally at private schools.

9.4.4 The ECB told us that all Counties use video footage to support player recruitment. Accessibility has been improved by an ECB-funded digital platform, Depth, which allows Counties to upload and observe matches from various places. In its latest EDI report in December 2022, the ECB outlined how one FCC has been piloting allowing **anyone** to submit video footage of themselves to give more aspiring cricketers the opportunity to showcase their talent and to improve accessibility to the pathway beyond the more traditional routes outlined above. We are also aware of another FCC that was planning to introduce video footage as part of its CTC programme. Both of these are positive steps.

- 9.4.5 The ECB acknowledged that “*people will typically keep looking for talent where they find it easiest to find talent [...] they are typically looking at schools and clubs.*” They noted that Counties decide on a local level where to look for talent, and that they have conversations with regions about where they are looking “*guided by us but decided by them.*” Through the CPAs, however, the ECB does provide funding for the FCCs to develop their player identification resources and processes, including the ability to recruit independent scouts. The ECB has also recently started to roll out the CTC programme, in an attempt to connect South Asian (and, since 2022, other ethnically diverse) communities from non-affiliated cricket environments to the talent pathway.
- 9.4.6 We know from the evidence we examined that the significant majority of the schools to which the Counties look for their nominations are private schools. With that in mind we turn now to the difference in cricket provision between state and private schools, and we explore the links that mean the Counties look primarily to certain private schools to find new talent.

Schooling and networks

- 9.4.7 Whilst only 7% of the British population is privately educated, the 2019 Sutton Trust report on Elitist Britain⁴¹² highlighted that 43% of the England men’s cricket team had attended private school. The same proportion, 43%, attended (non-grammar) state school with the remainder being made up of grammar (3%) and international (11%) schools. This was the highest level of privately educated internationals of the three men’s team sports (rugby, football and cricket) considered in the study. 35% of England women cricketers attended private school, compared to 50% (non-grammar) state school and 15% grammar.
- 9.4.8 A separate study noted that privately educated White British cricketers are 13 times more likely to convert to professional status than their state educated peers.⁴¹³ With this in mind we set out to understand not so much ‘if’ but ‘how’ schooling and related networks present barriers to access and progression through the talent pathway.

(i) School participation

- 9.4.9 As we have already outlined above, according to statistics from Sport England, 530,400 children said that they had played cricket at least once in the previous week during the 2020/2021 school year. Private school children were 2.5 times more likely to play cricket at school in an average week than children attending academy or state-maintained schools.
- 9.4.10 Cricket is historically linked with private schools in more ways than directly sourcing talent: for example, the annual Eton and Harrow match at Lord’s creates a potent symbolic link between cricket and the prestige of the most expensive private schools, with many other historic matches and competitions being played year-on-year at certain private schools. We have already recommended (Recommendation 18) that the so-called ‘Historic Fixtures’ between Eton and Harrow, and between Oxford and Cambridge Universities, are no longer played at Lord’s after 2023.

(ii) State v private schools: facilities

- 9.4.11 It is clear from our evidence that the school that a child attends is key to their prospects of success within the talent pathway. That is partly due to obvious factors such as the quality of facilities and coaching that some schools can provide, but it is also because of the often less obvious connections between Counties and many, usually private, schools. Whether a school has decent cricket facilities is not the direct responsibility of the ECB and Counties, but their choice of maintaining relationships with some schools rather than others certainly is.

⁴¹² [Elitist-Britain-2019.pdf](#)

⁴¹³ Brown, T., Jackson, D.T., Khawaja, I. & Greetham, P. (2019) Sociodemographic profile of England’s cricket talent pathways and first-class counties. Paper presented at 5th annual Cluster for Research for Coaching (CRIC) and Sports Coaching Review International Coaching Conference, Worcester.

- 9.4.12 To determine which schools were most closely connected to cricket, we used 'The Cricketer Schools Guide' and asked Counties themselves which schools they were connected to.
- 9.4.13 The Cricketer Schools Guide is an annual publication by the magazine, The Cricketer. Each issue lists the top 100 schools for cricket, with schools submitting their entries "*judged against an extensive set of criteria, which included a compelling commitment to cricket in the curriculum, facilities, fixture programmes and coaching.*" There are 14 state schools in the 2022 Guide to the top 100 cricket schools in the UK, not a single one of which is a comprehensive school. Of those 14, seven are selective schools (by either gender or entry exams), five are mixed gender Academies, and two are colleges. One of the six mixed schools only had cricket provision for boys.
- 9.4.14 The facilities available at the schools on this list can be extensive, with multiple indoor and outdoor nets, several pitches, cages, and bowling machines. For example, one school had two indoor nets, a bowling machine, four cricket pitches, 16 practice nets, two mobile net cages, and 10 training/match pitches. A different private school for boys had access to four indoor bowling machines including one Merlyn 'spin machine', six indoor nets, 18 outdoor nets (seven grass nets, 11 artificial nets), nine cricket pitches and a "*wonderful pavilion.*" Another had 19 cricket pitches.
- 9.4.15 One of the state schools connected to cricket operates what it calls an Elite Cricket Academy (supported by an FCC and WRT). The Academy is run by and within the school to help A level students develop their cricket and continue to study. The school has four indoor bowling lanes, video technology analysis, bowling machines, a coaching suite, eight grass wickets and a cricket pitch. They state on their website that they were able to provide their "*outstanding facilities*" through their work with Sport England, a local FCC, the Football Association and the local council. Another Academy had similarly excellent facilities, plays host to an Elite Cricket Academy, is the County state school partner, was the home of the County women's team, and the local venue for the MCC Foundation hub. It was launched, and is supported by, a charitable foundation in partnership with the County.

(iii) State v private schools: coaching resource and playing time

- 9.4.16 All but one of the schools in the 'Top 100' had a Director of Cricket, at least 70 of whom were connected to the wider game, usually because they were a former professional player. Other links included either currently or formerly working for a County, the ECB or another entity in cricket, or being a former player for MCC or a County second team. A significant number had additional coaches, with many boasting professional players and County coaches on their staff. One private school had three additional staff who were former professional players for two FCCs, a current coach for another County and a current CAG coach for an FCC.
- 9.4.17 On top of the facilities and coaching, many private schools run extra training programmes for those with the potential to develop their cricket further, and often those already on the talent pathway. This might include pre-season and pre-school day training, strength and conditioning sessions, and individual one-to-one sessions. A common name for this programme was a 'Talented Athlete Programme', described by one private school as "*open to those who are already involved in sporting governing bodies' performance pathways*" and "*aimed at providing pupils with an opportunity to train and perform at performance level.*"
- 9.4.18 State school teachers are less likely to have the same level of cricketing experience as the ex-professionals recruited by the private schools, who don't need or necessarily possess the teaching qualification required by state schools. Cricket is not compulsory within the National Curriculum and if it is selected by teachers, it is only played in the summer term, the shortest of the three terms and competing with GCSE and A-Level exams. In contrast, the flexibility over curriculum, dedicated coaching roles and extensive facilities in private schools mean that in many private schools cricket can be played all year long. In addition, the nature of boarding schools means longer hours to play and practise, with easy access to high quality facilities that are usually on site.

9.4.19 A number of parties reported to us through our Call for Written Evidence how a lack of funding and government resourcing of Physical Education (PE) within the National Curriculum have resulted in the sports curriculum not holding the same value within state-funded schools, with little flexibility or opportunity for specialist sports provision and in some cases a complete lack of cricket provision for girls. Research reported that state secondary schools in England taught c.290,000 hours of PE in 2021 – down 13% from c.326,000 hours in 2011.⁴¹⁴

(iv) State v private schools: opportunities to play competitively

9.4.20 Fixtures organised through school enable a significant amount of competitive experience for players, which benefits their development. A County Cricket Foundation told us that “*private schools have multiple teams in each year group and each school has more than 100 fixtures each summer*”, with the 1st XI alone at one school playing more than 20 fixtures. Not only is this a significant number of fixtures with other schools, but multiple teams within one school also allow for in-house matches and therefore additional match experience.

9.4.21 Many of the top schools for cricket take their students on tours to experience cricket elsewhere in the UK or overseas. 82% (67) of the private schools and 79% (11) of the state schools in the Top 100 noted going on tours. Destinations included Sri Lanka, Dubai, Spain, South Africa and the Caribbean.

Patronage networks: links between cricket and schools

9.4.22 The game of cricket in England and Wales is linked to many private schools through an extensive network of formal and informal connections. Connections to state schools do exist, but in far smaller numbers.

9.4.23 The types of links we identified are as follows: the County/WRT uses the school's facilities; the County/WRT staff regularly visit the school and/or provide training to the students; a member of the County/WRT staff is either contracted with the school as a coach or has an informal affiliation; there exists a formal partnership or sponsorship; the Director of Cricket is connected to the wider game (e.g. the ECB or the County cricket network); another member of the school cricket staff is connected to the wider game; the Director of Cricket or other member of the school cricket staff runs or works for a private cricket academy.

9.4.24 Through multiple avenues of research,⁴¹⁵ we found 252 of these links between cricket and secondary schools. The vast majority of these links were to private secondary schools.⁴¹⁶ We found that County organisations had 196 links to 127 private schools (i.e. some schools had multiple links), compared with 56 to state schools (spanning 52 schools).

9.4.25 Moreover, out of the 179 schools that we identified had links to County cricket, 52 of those schools had links to more than one County. Of those 52 schools with multiple links, only two were state schools compared with 50 private schools. Private schools, therefore, were not only more likely to be connected to Counties, but they were also more likely to have multiple, layered connections.

9.4.26 Some Counties had far more links to private schools than others, with Counties in the South of England generally having more links than Counties in the North, especially with private schools. Some Counties had a relatively balanced number of state and private school links, whereas others had overwhelmingly more private school links. No County had significantly more state school links. Taking four Counties as examples, we identified one FCC as having links with 16 private schools and two state schools and another as being linked with 10 private schools and no state schools. We also found a third FCC to have links with four private schools and one state school, whilst our research indicated that a fourth FCC is linked with five of each.

⁴¹⁴ Youth Sport Trust: PE and School Sport in England – Annual Report 2022 <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/news-insight/research/pe-school-sport-the-annual-report-2022>

⁴¹⁵ Links were identified through County websites, The Cricketer Schools Guide and Counties' responses to an ICEC survey. It is possible – indeed, highly likely – that more links exist.

⁴¹⁶ We also found further links to private preparatory (prep) schools, but many of these were prep schools that were attached to the private secondary schools, and we decided to focus our research on education at secondary school level.

Conclusions

There is a lack of diverse routes into the talent pathway

- 9.4.27 To have cricket teams that, as Sport England aspires towards, “*reflect the best of our nation and our population, in all of its diversity*” requires cricket to ensure that the talent selection process has a wide reach and offers an opportunity for all aspiring cricketers to be seen, regardless of their background.
- 9.4.28 Whilst we will later describe some examples of emerging good practice indicating where improvements are starting to be made, there continues to be a lack of diverse routes into the talent pathway. This makes it more difficult for children from lower socio-economic groups and those who do not attend private schools to access and progress within the pathway. Importantly, factors that disadvantage players from lower socio-economic groups are also likely to disproportionately impact those from ethnically diverse communities.
- 9.4.29 Whilst much of our evidence was derived from the men’s game, we note that the women’s game appears to be mirroring the same trends. The women’s and men’s professional game both contain a disproportionate number of private school educated players compared to the general population, and the ECB has told us that they are seeing increasing numbers of girls on scholarships to private schools because so many have replaced rounders with cricket as part of their sports curriculum. As such, we are confident that our conclusions and recommendations apply equally to the men’s and women’s games.



The consistent narrative emerging is that coaches and scouts are ‘lazy’ in their approaches. By this I mean they only go looking for talent in the areas they expect to find it. This invariably takes them to private schools and other privileged spaces.

Individual

- 9.4.30 As a Commission we are unequivocal in our view that there will never be equity in cricket as long as the Counties continue to rely primarily on the existing structures of clubs and, in particular, private schools to source talent. Doing so has a detrimental impact on efforts to widen the sources of talent, meaning that it is very likely that many Counties are not identifying the potential talent outside their existing networks. This creates a real risk of exclusion for those who either do not have access to those cricket clubs with links to the Counties and/or attend state schools.



These players do not have the network or connections to be able to access the elite level. How many players slip through the net through being invisible to the top-level academies? Somebody like [Pakistani individual] runs an academy in Bradford but how many of those Asian children will find a route into the county youth set up? Very few. Do counties have a diverse scouting network, or do they rely on the usual talent network? No.

White man, parent/guardian

- 9.4.31 This inequity is compounded by the time and knowledge required to carry out the talent pathway nominations process. Chance to Shine told us that “*state school teachers do not have the time and the resources to put a huge amount of effort into talent ID for cricket*” and also that “*it is incredibly difficult for [state school] teachers to be able to make the decision, or make some assumptions, on who they put through for those talent pathways.*”

- 9.4.32 Counties must reach out proactively to a far wider network of schools and alternative providers to seek nominations. Alternative selection processes and non-traditional routes must be used to widen the pool of talent. We did receive evidence of some improved practices, such as the introduction of open (rather than closed) trials, resulting in a 50% increase in attendance compared to the previous year as well as more players attending from a more deprived area with a high South Asian population. CTCs – an initiative aimed at bridging the gap between South Asian cricketing communities and the talent pathway – have also started to create stronger links between Counties and the local South Asian community. Other Counties have expanded their networks to reach out to ‘non-traditional’ environments, using initiatives such as Wicketz and tape ball to develop participation. The introduction of video submissions is also a positive step.
- 9.4.33 Given their relative infancy, we are not yet in a position to assess whether these initiatives have been (or will be) successful. Nonetheless, we were encouraged to see some of the Counties actively reflect on their networks and improve efforts to reach out to underrepresented communities to expand their talent pool. The evidence we received indicates that this is not yet widespread and ingrained in procedure and therefore the methods by which talent is sourced remain inequitable. More time is needed to establish whether these steps have improved equity in the pathway. In the meantime, there needs to be a continued drive to promote and utilise alternative initiatives and other forms of cricket as a means of identifying talent.
- 9.4.34 We note that the ECB has taken some steps to begin to address this. They told us that *“Through the ECB County Partnership Agreement and the Regional Host Agreement, funding has been provided to counties and regions to develop their Player Identification resources and process. This includes the ability for counties and regions to recruit and employ scouts to provide independent observation of players with a view to identifying players with potential. The aim of this was to move away from a traditional ‘trial based assessment process which has inherent flaws and biases [...] Alongside this the ECB has been providing workshops and individualised support to counties and regions in the development of this initiative, which serves as a guidance to the processes counties and regions employ. Examples of this would be sharing the ECB’s Principles of Player Identification, one of which is Multiple-Eyes Multiple-Times.”*
- 9.4.35 Although this is a positive step, we heard evidence of some Counties selecting their County squads – following on from autumn regional group sessions – on the basis of a single 3-hour indoor session, where many of the players involved would not have previously been seen by one or more of the coaches involved in the decision-making process. Clearly work needs to be done to address these local variations.
- 9.4.36 We are clear that good practice needs to be taken up consistently by all Counties and enforced consistently by the ECB. This requires sustained data and insight gathering in order to hold Counties (and the ECB) to account. It also needs to be supported by meaningful investment. By way of example, if the ECB really wants CTCs to have an impact diversifying the sources of talent, there needs to be more of them and they need to be paid well enough that the role can be undertaken full-time and will attract lots of high-quality candidates.



Real investment into communities is key. The plan to install non-traditional playing facilities in urban areas is welcomed. However, there should be accessible opportunities to be scouted in underrepresented communities too.

The Runnymede Trust

State school provision compares poorly to private schools and is a barrier to progression



We have seen many state school pitches decline in standard gradually over the past 20 years or be sold off. As well, over the last 20 years, less state schools have started entering into cricket competitions (reduced by approximately 1/3).

FCC

- 9.4.37 It is no surprise that private schools have better facilities than state schools – net private school fees were effectively double state school spending levels per pupil in 2019–20, a gap that had increased significantly over the course of the previous decade.⁴¹⁷ The Sutton Trust report referenced above⁴¹⁸ highlighted the relevance of access to facilities to progression in the game, observing how private schools have the funding to invest in high quality indoor and outdoor facilities. Indeed, private schools will often emphasise their facilities (as well as breadth of teaching/sports coaching) as a selling point.



No state school in the city of [X] has a grass pitch at its disposal. Private schools have, meanwhile, been able to retain their green spaces and have the expertise to maintain grass pitches.

FCC

- 9.4.38 In their research on relative access to wealth in cricket, Tom Brown and Adam Kelly analysed the recommendations that the Department for Education presented in 2019 on how state schools should spend their sport budget, concluding that there was an emphasis on *“increasing sporting participation, but little in the way of developing skill and transitioning talented students to professional athletes.”* By comparison, the multi-sport focused environment at some private schools, with access to better facilities and more time to participate both in terms of practice, coaching and competition in various different sports, pointed to a *“range of developmental opportunities [for those who are privately educated] compared to those who are state educated.”*⁴¹⁹



...the more you play [cricket] the more you understand it, the better you get at it, the more you enjoy it, it's that kind of revolving circle, so people who don't have that access, they don't get better at it, and they don't necessarily evolve and improve at the rate some other players are doing. And I think it's a huge issue generally for the game.

FCC

- 9.4.39 Based on the evidence we reviewed, we are satisfied that the observations made by Brown and Kelly are right. In our view, the average state school cannot compete with private schools in circumstances where it is more likely to be constrained by a combination of a lack of funding, poor facilities and a less flexible curriculum, as well as an inability to take on former players/coaches without appropriate teaching qualifications (even if they could afford to), as private schools do. In broad terms this has been corroborated by the game itself during the course of our review, as we detail below.

⁴¹⁷ <https://ifs.org.uk/articles/growing-gap-between-state-school-and-private-school-spending>

⁴¹⁸ [Elitist-Britain-2019.pdf](#)

⁴¹⁹ Brown, T. & Kelly, A.L. (2021). Relative access to wealth and ethnicity in professional cricket (Chapter 10). In Kelly, A.L., Côté, J., Jeffreys, M. & Turnnidge, J. (Eds.) *Birth Advantages and Relative Age Effects in Sport: Exploring Organizational Structures and Creating Appropriate Settings* (1st ed.), Routledge, New York, USA.



...if you go to some private schools, if you just play cricket, so you don't play rugby or football but if you just play cricket, from September to July you probably have a minimum of about 10 hours of contact time a week. So whether that is before school clubs, lunchtime clubs, after school clubs, their own year group training, academy training, matches so you know from September to July you can get at least 10 hours minimum of cricket contact which whether that is formal or informal you are going to have more opportunities, the more times you bowl, the more times you bat, so that plays a bigger part. You are never going to compete against it [if you go to a state school].

Coach

- 9.4.40 Earlier observations regarding the low level of PE training given to state primary school teachers were reiterated by Chance to Shine, who told us that state primary school teachers do not feel confident teaching PE and cricket in particular, and therefore tend to choose other sports in preference. Even where cricket is played in state schools, shorter lessons and a lack of time dedicated to cricket do not allow for focused training. We were told how there wasn't time available to teach cricket skills and so the nuances of the game were difficult to teach.



In effect, cricket is a sport that is not played [at state school]. In my experience, cricket is introduced to children out of school at a club or recreational level. [...] The equipment, facilities, staff etc are out of budget for many. [...] State schools generally don't have the facilities. You cannot teach in a state school by being 'good at sport'; you have to have a government recognised teaching qualification. So even if a state school did want a cricket specialist teacher, they would not be able to hire one or probably compete with wages required.

White woman, parent/guardian, coach

- 9.4.41 Whilst a handful of state schools were in the 100 schools listed in The Cricketer Schools Guide for 2022, these schools remain the exception, and we saw evidence that a number of them benefited from a level of support that is not ordinarily available in the mainstream state education sector (for example, support from wealthy benefactors, Sport England and other targeted funding for cricket facilities). The bottom line is that cricket facilities are expensive, and without the benefit of fees from parents/guardians, many state schools cannot afford them.



This [private school] people resource, facility resource and time resource come as a consequence of fees that children pay, meaning the funds are there to provide a high-level cricketing resource to any young person who wants it.

CCB

- 9.4.42 One Cricket Foundation told us that "State schools cannot match these facilities or this provision. Parents of state-educated players may seek to provide supplemental development through private 1:1 coaching, but this can be expensive (often £30-50 per hour) and is unlikely to compensate for the additional opportunities available to players at private schools." An evidence giver told us that "The facilities, specialist coaching and time available to children attending private schools far outweighs the opportunities to practise and play for those who attend state schools. A child attending private school will be able to practise on better facilities and have more time to practise with most private schools allowing more curriculum time for specialist sports."



Some of the [private school] facilities are first class. World class facilities. Countries will come over touring and will use some of those facilities from the schools that I mentioned. You know they are multi-million pound facilities, better than some counties. Arguably, some of those schools I mentioned their facilities are better than the indoor centre at The Oval in terms of technology and the access they have so you are always going to be competing against that.

Coach

- 9.4.43 Testimony received through our Call for Written Evidence also suggested that County training sessions were sometimes held during the extra weeks of the longer private school holidays, and so excluded state school children.



One example: last year, a three-day training session was arranged at a time which was during the private school holidays while it was still term time for state schools!

White man, parent/guardian

- 9.4.44 One FCC told us that “cricket is quite a difficult sport in that if you want to play it in the elite pathway and not just at recreational level, you’re going to have to play hard-ball cricket.” Yet, as we have already seen, the investment in kit for hard ball cricket can be very expensive. There is also the safety issue to consider: a hard ball can inflict serious injury and can only be played safely on a properly prepared wicket, and on adequate practice facilities, both which require significant investment both up front and through ongoing maintenance. In addition, partly because of the safety risk, hard ball cricket needs specialised coaching from teachers.

- 9.4.45 We also heard how, importantly, state school cricketers are less likely to have experience of the longer game format.



Once we reached aged 16-18, the state lads were exposed to men’s cricket, and it was a big jump. Going from 20 over games to 45-50 over games was hard to manage physically and mentally, whereas the private school lads were very comfortable in this format having been exposed to it from a younger age. This also meant that they were ahead in the selectors’ minds before the state school lads. The same was true of the District games, it was a shock to the system and private school lads dominated the teams.

White man, recreational player

- 9.4.46 It was suggested through our online survey that club cricket, which might offer an alternative route for receiving coaching/competitive games for aspiring cricketers who attend state schools, could sometimes be dominated by children and young people from grammar or private schools.



As a junior I played for my club, captained my school and represented District level. I loved it, however within the club/District group, there was a big split between State and Private school lads. Over the years, the private school group dominated as they had more coaching and exposure at school level. More of the private school lads joined the club so they could all play together with their mates, which put the state lads under pressure for places and led to most of them giving up or moving to other clubs for an opportunity. My honest opinion is the talent level aged 7-11 was similar (a few lads reached county level but majority were par) but once we reached under 13s-15s, the gap opened and I would equate that to the increased level of exposure to quality coaching and better level of match play. At state school, you would play some competitive games but there would be a big variation in ability whereas the private school games were almost akin to club level for age group cricket.

White man, recreational player

- 9.4.47 It is perhaps understandable that many of the people that we heard from regarded the lack of cricket in most state schools as an almost impossible obstacle to overcome in the quest to make the sport more equitable. There appeared, at times, to be a sense of passive acceptance within the game that state school provision has become inadequate when compared to private schools, and is likely to remain so. Chance to Shine noted, for example, that the dependence on private schools has become “*ingrained*” and has been “*the path of least resistance*.” Similarly, one Cricket Foundation told us that the disparity between state and private schools cannot be tackled in the short term, and to be addressed “*a huge amount of resource would need to go in state schools to be able to provide what most private schools can offer through cricket*.”
- 9.4.48 Although we understand that the game cannot, on its own, solve the problem, it is our view that cricketing organisations have largely failed to find systemic solutions to the unacceptable level of inequity between state and private schools.
- 9.4.49 We do not wish to detract in any way from the encouraging initiatives to bring cricket to state schools that we did see, particularly in the work being done by Chance to Shine. Crucially, we would love to see increased investment in secondary state schools, for example by introducing (for boys) and expanding (for girls) Chance to Shine programmes to further increase participation between the ages of 11-14. If, as we recommend, the need to organise aspects of representative cricket at the U10-U13 level were to be removed, Counties would be able to do much more to deliver training and development within the state sector at the U10-U13 age groups (see Recommendation 40 later in this Chapter). Fundamentally, however, there is a distinction between participation, where we have seen these initiatives having a positive impact, and progression into and through the talent pathway. Even with increased participation, there are still significant barriers to progression for those who only attend state schools. Despite the excellent work done by Chance to Shine, most primary school children will not have played competitive, hardball cricket and almost none will have access to high-level cricket coaching within the school context, by the time they go to secondary school.



My son and daughter attend a state school which does not play cricket, so this has impacted on their development. Of my son's teammates, 90% attend a selective grammar school which plays cricket and has numerous cricket facilities, so this has certainly been a barrier for working class children to play the sport in a mainstream school.

White woman, parent/guardian

Talent pathway connections to private schools are extremely widespread, creating a huge web of connections over England



This [private schools' connections to professional cricket] in itself, is alienating a huge proportion of the population from having a viable entry into professional cricket and this applies to the white working classes in addition to those from an ethnically diverse background.

Sporting Equals

- 9.4.50 As well as the often vast disparity in opportunities and resources, our research into links between cricket and schools set out earlier highlights the extremely close and deep-rooted connection between the private school sector and professional cricket across England (we acknowledge that is not the case in Wales), which is not replicated for state schools.
- 9.4.51 As a Commission, we are extremely concerned that these connections create a pervasive web of patronage networks, which have a significant bearing on decisions around talent ID and selection, to the detriment of those 'on the outside' – often simply by reason of birth and family circumstances.
- 9.4.52 This was borne out repeatedly in the evidence we received from players, coaches and parents/guardians alike.



The feeder academies for cricket are all at private schools (state schools don't have the facilities or staff) and a lot of the PE staff at private schools are ex-prof players or coaches themselves.

White woman, parent/guardian

- 9.4.53 We heard how a lot of the County coaches working in the talent pathway were also Directors of Cricket at private schools, benefiting from access to the nets, and able to run one-to-one coaching sessions.
- 9.4.54 One FCC told us that “we are very heavily loaded with independent schools, high independent schools. And all of our best coaches basically end up [...] coaching in the independent sector.”
- 9.4.55 We also heard evidence that Directors of Cricket and other coaching staff at private schools were instrumental in helping their players progress in the game. One former professional player told us that their move to a private school, which is linked with an FCC, provided a “massive boost” for their cricket, mainly due to the impact of the Director of Cricket and coaches at the school.



You'll find that the coaches of the private school will also be the coaches of the [county] regional areas and coaches within the clubs. It's all very, very incestuous. You see the same faces, the same people, in the same teams everywhere you go.

Cage Cricket

- 9.4.56 Multiple evidence givers, including coaches and parents/guardians of players, told us that players from private schools with links to Counties had a greater opportunity to progress in the talent pathway, particularly where cricket coaches at the schools know the CAG selectors and coaches, often because they used to play together in the same County teams. This could include more chances to play, to bat higher up the order and to bowl more.



In my son's case - because the coaches who made the selections were associated with a private school and their associated club - they knew those players and treated them preferentially over 'ordinary state school kids' who were White as well. I don't know how non-White state schools' kids fared but the one season my son was associated with county there were none.

Multiple ethnic groups (other), woman, parent

- 9.4.57 Connections between former players and the professional game may well remain strong long after their playing days are over. They provide an avenue for private school cricket coaches to alert County selectors to talented young players that are generally not open to teachers at state schools, who are far less likely to enjoy those sorts of trusted personal connections. It is clear to us that these connections between Counties and (usually) private schools can be a significant advantage for those who benefit from them, and a serious obstacle for the majority of players who do not.
- 9.4.58 We recognise the incentives for former professional cricketers to seek work in private schools once their playing days are over, particularly since they often do not require a teaching qualification to do so. They cannot be expected to abandon relationships they have with their former teammates who may remain part of the talent pathway. However, having members of staff in schools with these connections who may also be (partially) responsible for talent identification on the pathway creates a key actual and/or potential conflict of interest that must be recognised and actively managed. We examine this in more detail in section 6 of this Chapter.
- 9.4.59 We did see evidence of good practice in one County which told us that they employ all their coaches full time, and do not allow them to work at private schools at the same time. Conflicts of interest need to be declared and coaches cannot observe players that they have previously coached. However, they noted *"this comes down to resources"* and highlighted the importance of extra funding to overcome the problem.
- 9.4.60 As well as seeking to mitigate the effects of these patronage links, it is also imperative that more work is done to **increase** and **improve** the connections between state schools, clubs and the talent pathway. Likewise, connections between private schools and state schools - such as the use of facilities - could also be improved, so that aspiring cricketers have more opportunities to play, train and improve and to be identified by the talent pathway.
- 9.4.61 The connections between the talent pathway and private schools are currently entrenched, significantly determining who is seen to have, and who is given the opportunity to demonstrate, 'merit' - and so ultimately determining who can and who cannot 'make it'. That is deeply unfair and cricketing authorities have a responsibility to put it right. Our recommendations in this Chapter are aimed at addressing this unfairness.

Co-dependency between the talent pathway and private schools: private school attendance increases a player's chances of continuing on the talent pathway

- 9.4.62 It is an almost inevitable consequence of all the advantages detailed above that pupils attending private schools are going to be in a dominant position when it comes to the talent pathway. This is exacerbated by the co-dependency between many Counties, WRTs and private schools, with private schools regularly supplying facilities to Counties and hiring County coaches (or former County players), many of whom are responsible for both tailored coaching of pupils and talent identification on the pathway. In these circumstances, Counties can (and do), to a greater or lesser extent, rely upon private schools as an intrinsic feature of the talent pathway itself.

- 9.4.63 This co-dependency not only creates a readily identifiable pipeline of talent from private schools into the County system, providing an easy option for the Counties to identify and select talented young players, it also incentivises the reproduction of this system. If it is in the interests of the Counties, from a coaching and resource perspective, for private schools to take on much of the burden of the talent pathway, then where is the incentive within the system to push for change?
- 9.4.64 Against this backdrop, tinkering around the edges will never be enough. A radical change in approach, underpinned by considerable investment in alternative routes into and through the talent pathway for those who never go to a private school, is required if the system is to become genuinely fair and equitable.

Case Study: Private School in County A⁴²⁰

- Independent, fee paying
- Mixed school, nine boys' teams, three girls' teams
- Day fees – c.£27,000
- Boarding fees – c.£40,000

Cricket scholarship – fee remission of up to 20%

Cricket scholarship – means tested up to 50%

Cricket scholarship for girls – 20% of boarding or day fee

Provides bursaries up to 100%

Links to Cricket:

- Partners with County A CCC to help players get scholarships to the school
- Professionals and coaches from County A CCC train players at the school
- Hosts County-wide talent pathway festivals

Facilities and Provision:

- Indoor cricket facility
- Six artificial nets, 16 grass nets, three separate grounds
- Runs a Performance Pathway which includes strength and conditioning, mentoring and performance monitoring
- School team tours

Director of Cricket and staff:

- Director of Cricket – former professional player for County B CCC
- Coach – played for two different County Cricket Boards
- Coaches and Professionals from County A CCC

Players:

- School has produced at least seven professional players
- At least three current students are on the County A, County B, and County C pathways

⁴²⁰ All of the information in this case study derives only from publicly available information.

- 9.4.65 Being able to commit more time to practising and playing the game benefits development. We have seen how private schools have more time to commit to cricket. This is especially the case in boarding schools, where those who are keen to play and practise could do so almost every day if they wished. As a result, the resources and support for children to help develop talent at private schools are, as Chance to Shine suggested, “*off the scale in terms of difference*” compared with state schools.
- 9.4.66 Sport England told us how players who benefit from the additional investment in cricket at private schools can develop skills earlier than their state school peers and so can *appear* to be more *talented* or to have greater ‘*merit*’ (and, therefore, are more likely to be selected) than those who have had less exposure to the game, even where that person may in fact have more *potential*.



As players from independent schools have had these advantages, they often present as having more skill or being at a higher level at an earlier age compared to people who haven’t experienced these advantages. Bias in selection often compounds this issue as clubs and selectors look for what they perceive as “*talent*” but should instead be looking for potential. Many young people (often from state school) who have had less playing time, less coaching, and less experience of competition will miss out, despite theoretically having more potential.

Sport England

- 9.4.67 This was also reiterated in responses to our Call for Written Evidence.



Kids from private schools get different treatment in county setups. The coaches know all the kids and they take no account of the fact that the private school players have had years of coaching and playing, and the state school children have had almost none, so talented raw state school players are dropped in favour of well coached private school players. The set up assumes that players are in private school and parents have the money and time to attend every session.

White man, parent/guardian

- 9.4.68 Our lived experience report describes how “*hundreds of survey respondents of all backgrounds describe how decisions about which children will be selected, trained, coached and progressed are driven by ‘favouritism’ based on connections with children and families that are developed through the private school network and associated coaches.*”⁴²¹
- 9.4.69 Equally, we heard a similar story from parents/guardians. One told us that their first child had gone through the pathway whilst being educated at state school, and that as a parent they felt that the children on the pathway from private schools enjoyed much better opportunities, mainly down to the “*tight community*” between those children and the pathway coaches. The same parent, therefore, decided (and was in the privileged position of being able) to put their second child through private school and concluded that it did offer further opportunities: in particular, through the connections between the school and County coaches and scouts.

⁴²¹ Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket.

9.4.70 Another parent told us how he was told his child would fall behind if he didn't go to a private school.



...the coaches came over and said apparently he's really good [...] and he was 11 at the time so just about due to go into the senior school. And he said 'what school is he going to?', I said I haven't really decided. He said 'have you considered possibly [X] or [Y]?', private schools. And I said well obviously I am because of the cricket. He said 'well I think that's best because otherwise he's just going to fall behind so quickly.'

There is a culture of elitism fuelled by the overreliance on private schools



Cricket is not inclusive. It's exclusive and the sport is missing out on a huge pot of untapped talents. Money, contacts, private schools: that's what cricket looks like at County level.

White man, parent/guardian

9.4.71 We are extremely concerned as a Commission that not only does the current system favour those with the financial means, it creates two categories of participants, the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', stigmatising those from poorer backgrounds. When a majority of players attend private school, it can create a culture that systematically excludes those from different backgrounds. We heard evidence from one former player and coach that when there were only one or two state school educated players in a team, it could be "an isolating place" – he said that the state school players may not understand some of the jokes and sometimes the private school players would mimic what they considered to be a working class accent, even if the state school players did not actually speak in that way.



County coaches themselves – probably unconsciously – reinforce these stereotypes, prejudices and hierarchies by revealing their own connections to and fondness for particular private schools. At the start of his U13 pathway, my son's coach asked all the boys "which school do you go to?" and then went on to praise the people and facilities at a few of the private schools. When it came to my son's turn to name his state school, the coach replied: "never heard of it."

White British man, parent/guardian



Public school boys mickey taking about state schools.

White man, recreational player, parent/guardian, official or umpire



At county sessions, comments from the other children have included calling children attending state schools 'peasants'.

White (Gypsy or Irish traveller) man, parent/guardian



I was from a poor background. I couldn't afford the kit and was looked down upon when I turned up in non-whites, no protection, etc.

White man, recreational player, parent/guardian

9.4.72 Some state school players also described feeling 'tolerated' for superficial inclusion reasons.



My son has taken part in the pathways scheme. The coaches were bad tempered and rude to boys and their attitude seemed to say that the boys should be grateful to be there and that it was a waste of the coaches' time. Hardly the best way to get the most out of boys already intimidated by arrogant private school boys who knew the coaches well as they taught at their schools. As a parent, it feels like a box ticking exercise and a way to milk parents for money to fund the academies.

White woman, parent/guardian

9.4.73 As well as constituting financial and practical barriers themselves, the high costs and significant time commitment can contribute to a culture of elitism within the talent pathway, dominated by people from certain backgrounds. The evidence we have seen indicates an assumption that parents/guardians can afford to pay for all cricket-related expenses, and have both a car and the time to take children to trials, training and matches.



As a younger player, once county coaches understood that my parents didn't drive or were not as affluent as other parents, I was discounted as a cricketer and did not get to represent my county, regardless of ability.

Mixed ethnicity (White and Asian) man, recreational player, parent/guardian, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation), volunteer, board or committee member, coach, official or umpire

9.4.74 As an academic in this field highlighted in evidence to us: "Cost' is not just income, but also how accepted children with different economic and social capital are."

Cricket likes to think that it's a meritocracy – this is a myth

9.4.75 The head of one County pathway told a parent that "if a kid is really good, they're going to make it", saying that they had been to state school themselves. In fact, we heard this over and over again from those within the system. Based on the totality of evidence we received, however, we reject this assessment: it ignores the odds stacked significantly in favour of those attending private schools as we have identified earlier in this Chapter.

9.4.76 The idea that a talented state school player who works hard will succeed may be true in some cases, but it ignores the very real advantages enjoyed by young cricketers at private schools – either for all of their education or for the latter part of it on a scholarship or bursary – and the barriers often faced by those who are not. There are undoubtedly very many with great talent and potential who are deprived by the system of the opportunity to flourish. To say that all it takes is to 'be good enough' is absurd. Cricket is very far from being a genuine meritocracy and, whilst the myth that it is one continues to be perpetuated, it is difficult to see that changing.



We were divided into 'Chavs' and 'Public School Boys'. I averaged over 40 (with [thousands of] runs for the county) but only got 1 second team game. Other private school lads had similar stats and had about 40 second team games by the time I left. I left after scoring [a large hundred] and was told, in front of the group, that to get into the second team I needed to score 'big', which meant more than [that]. (Only 3 players in 20 years had done that, so I was clearly being told that I was not wanted.)

'Other' ethnicity, man, academy player



My son has never played cricket at school at all. Just his club and got through the pathway on merit. This year, we got a survey sent to parents asking for details of their school cricket coach so that they can ask about his performance. We put N/A. It's embarrassing. State schools don't have one. [...] The private school system is interwoven into the fabric of the county game. If the County sends out a questionnaire asking who your cricket coach is, they are either ignorant of state schools set ups or are just writing this with only private school kids in mind.

Asian (Indian) man, parent/guardian, county age group player

Recommendation 37

We recommend that the ECB and the Counties proactively seek to expand **how** they source 'talent' and **where** they source 'talent' from, to include those who come through 'non-traditional' routes.

Sub-recommendation:

- a) Nominations by schools/clubs should be abolished and replaced with open trials.
- b) Counties should expand their sources for spotting talent to focus more on state schools and local clubs.
- c) The resources, recognition and promotion of 'non-traditional' formats of cricket (e.g. Cage Cricket) should be increased, and those who excel within such formats should be incorporated within the talent identification process.
- d) The ECB should dramatically scale up investment in accessible, free, year-round community cricket provision (e.g. Chance to Shine Street) for those living in areas where access to cricket is otherwise limited (e.g. areas of inner-city deprivation).

Recommendation 38

We recommend that, by the start of the 2025 season, the ECB introduces accessible County – and national – level T20 competitions for state school boys’ and girls’ cricket teams in the U14 and U15 (school years 9 and 10) categories, to incentivise participation and aspiration in the state sector. Winners of the County-level competitions in school year 9 (U14s) would progress to national-level competitions in school year 10 (U15s). A national finals’ day for the state school U15 competitions should replace the annual Eton v. Harrow match at Lord’s (see Recommendation 18).

9.5 Talent identification and selection

- 9.5.1 Having examined where cricket predominantly turns in order to identify talented players, we now look at how individual players are identified as having potential or being talented. Talent identification encompasses the methods used to find and then select players to join the talent pathway. Talent identification also continues throughout the pathway, with decisions about who should be picked to play or to progress to the next stage or, indeed, be deselected.
- 9.5.2 The ECB told us that *“we are a coach heavy model, so we develop talent but [I am] not sure we spend enough on finding the right talent for a start.”* Our own review confirms this. We saw a much greater focus on developing the talent **on** the pathway than on identifying talent and getting the right players **onto** the pathway. Some Counties recognised this, advancing the view that the system had shortcomings in terms of a lack of both objectivity and sufficient depth of information on the individuals being reviewed.
- 9.5.3 Our conclusions with regard to talent identification are not intended as a comprehensive appraisal of the relative merits of the different metrics being used – others in the game are far better placed to provide this. What we highlight in this section is how the risks that are inherent in any talent identification process were reflected in the evidence we received regarding the talent identification and selection processes on the cricket talent pathway and how in turn that impacts on equity.
- 9.5.4 It is clear to us that there is an inconsistent approach to talent identification, with evidence that biases (conscious or otherwise) are operating to the detriment of those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and Black and South Asian players, compounding the structural inequalities produced by the private school advantage that we have already discussed. The level of ‘cultural competency’ and understanding of bias, so important for ensuring equitable selection, varies across the Counties. The position is exacerbated by a talent identification framework that in our view does not adequately embed principles that proactively mitigate against the sort of biases that, based on our evidence, appear to operate within the talent pathway. Moreover, the ECB’s processes for assessing the Counties’ approach do not go far enough for us to have confidence that the ECB is ensuring fair, equitable and consistent talent identification across the country. We take each of these elements in turn below.

The current approach to talent identification is inconsistent and prone to bias

9.5.5 The ECB has guiding principles for how to approach talent identification which are shared regularly with FCCs, CCBs and WRTs, and as part of coach education:

- Use multiple eyes, multiple times
- Create opportunities to confirm talent
- Collect rich information and use it
- Follow a structured process and timeline
- Follow an evidenced based approach
- Adopt a targeted approach
- Understand future needs
- Record observations, judgements and decisions.

9.5.6 The ECB's guidance document containing these principles and setting out the 'Player Identification Process' contains a mixture of objective and subjective criteria, with 'culture and values' mixed in later with 'playing styles' and data analysis.

9.5.7 Our understanding from the evidence received is that, for a number of Counties, talent identification is an evolving area both in terms of how talent is identified, and who is responsible for doing so. Counties described how a number of staff, including internal and other County coaches, local club coaches and occasionally independent scouts, all have a role in identifying talent and reporting to the head scout/ performance manager of a County.

9.5.8 The evidence we gathered on talent identification indicated a concern over the type and balance of subjective and objective factors used to identify talent and assess players.

(i) Objective metrics are valuable but fail to take into account the potential of players who are newer to the sport

9.5.9 Objective metrics are those that can usually be quantitatively measured. Cricket is a very statistical game, especially batting and bowling. Fielding and wicketkeeping can also be measured by statistics to an extent (e.g. number of catches taken or dropped). Other factors can also be assessed to provide objective benchmarks of performance across a group of players. One FCC supplied their Women & Girls Player Benchmarks, split by age, which are rated from one (little or no evidence) to three (consistently evidenced). For example, a bowling benchmark for U11s is "*able to keep their wrist behind the ball at point of release (grip).*"

9.5.10 Objective measurements are therefore an important and valuable input into player assessment, but can fail to take into account the potential of players who are newer to the sport: players who have not had the means to access the sport or benefit from coaching and facilities at a young age, and players who are younger within their age group. These can be highly relevant contextual factors that can lead to the misidentification of 'talent'. It is also highly relevant when taking account of the private school advantages we have identified in the previous section.



Bias in selection often compounds this issue as clubs and selectors look for what they perceive as 'talent' but should instead be looking for potential. Many young people (often from state school) who have had less playing time, less coaching, and less experience of competition will miss out, despite theoretically having more potential.

Sport England

- 9.5.11 The so-called ‘Matthew effect’ describes how individuals who are initially advantaged in relation to their peers are then provided with further resources – in cricketing terms, more coaching, including winter coaching; access to the best training facilities; sometimes ‘sponsorship’ deals with equipment providers – all of which accelerate their development and further their advantage. Academic research suggests that *“these cricketers are most likely to be selected for early talent development programmes.”*⁴²² It is to be expected, therefore, that young cricketers at many private schools are likely to enjoy considerable benefits compared with most of those in the state system, and it is to be expected that their achievements, in terms of statistics and other ‘objective’ criteria, will often outpace those of their peers without similar advantages.
- 9.5.12 Relying too heavily, therefore, on objective markers without considering the context in which cricketing development has occurred will likely favour those who have already had more opportunities, who may not necessarily be those with the greatest actual talent or potential, and will disadvantage those with fewer opportunities, such as state school pupils, further compounding the inequity we have already described.



I remember when I started at [county] [...] and I was raving about one of the players, and one of the coaches said to me, well what’s his coaching age? And I didn’t understand what he meant by that at the time, but he was effectively saying this player’s been relentlessly coached for 9 years, vs. a player who’s only had 1 or 2 years’ experience, and athletically they were quite similar. So I think the understanding from coaches and staff just in terms of what good looks like and why and how they can present and promote opportunities for young cricketers will go a long way in terms of help understanding the equity in talent pathway.

FCC

(ii) Subjective metrics are exposed to the risk of bias

- 9.5.13 Subjective assessments (for example, assessing resilience, ‘character’ or the question of whether someone is a ‘good team player’) bring with them a considerable risk of bias. In our opinion, there is a lack of sufficiently clear guidance within the ECB’s existing talent identification framework as to how to mitigate against bias and to ensure that those responsible for talent identification take into account the full range of contextual factors that should have a bearing on player analysis, and there were varying accounts from Counties, the ECB and evidence givers as to their approach.
- 9.5.14 Selecting on the basis of ‘attitude’ and ‘character’ was often mentioned in evidence. One FCC told us that *“We are also looking at their character. The three characteristics that we – we don’t tell them this, but sometimes we are looking for – would be humble, hard-working and people smart...”* A different FCC told us that at a young age they focus on players’ athleticism, hand-eye coordination, responsiveness to coaching, and *“their attitude and character.”*
- 9.5.15 Unsurprisingly, therefore, a predominant concern amongst parents/guardians, players, and even coaches, was the impact of bias. The risk of bias was acknowledged by one FCC: *“You know somebody walks up to a trial, you may be biased towards certain attributes because of your own upbringing, personality and characteristics. Digging deeply into that, listening to all of your pathway, and understanding it is really important because definitely historically we have been biased towards certain attributes.”*



My team coaches and earlier age group coaches openly indulge in selection based on which schools you came from, how well you knew the coaches, whether you were White, and whether you were part of elite academies run by other senior coaches. So, by the time all the filters were applied, you would either not get picked, or get picked but have a minimal to insignificant role to play.

Asian (Indian) woman, county age group player

⁴²² Kelly, Adam L, Thomas Brown, Rob Reed, Jean Côté, and Jennifer Turnnidge. ‘Relative age effects in male cricket: a personal assets approach to explain immediate, short-term, and long-term developmental outcomes.’ Sports 10, no. 3 (2022).



Decisions are made by coaches – all White men – who only know the kids who they have coached in private schools, and they use information about these kids to make decisions about their involvement in county cricket [...] If you don't have that connection, your chances are very slim indeed.

Asian (Pakistani) man, official or umpire

(iii) The issue of bias is **not** theoretical

- 9.5.16 Those who gave evidence regularly noted bias (whether conscious or not) in favour of White and privately educated players having a very real impact on the way decisions are made in practice (in respect of both the boys' and the girls' pathways), to the disadvantage of state educated and/or Black and South Asian players. As one Academy player told us: *"It is clear from so many angles that those who attend private schools are given more time and opportunity than those who are seen as "rough" and from a state school."*



County age group cricket is completely biased against less wealthy families and children from state schools. Coaches even work at the private schools they choose squads from, resulting in a biased selection process.

White man, recreational player, parent/guardian



During county trials practice and trial games, plus outscoring peers consistently in league cricket, I was told that I wasn't skilled enough for a 1st XI call up. This was despite outperforming a White peer in my local team consistently who was selected as a batter. When questioned, was told that 'He gets it - you don't'. Questioned my supportive local coach who happened to be on the selection committee, and he told me, 'They just don't like you! You go to a state school', implying that my education and background was hampering me.

Black (Caribbean) man, county age player



Having access to valued networks, knowing others in cricket may support progression from schools/ areas where people are like those already in the game. These forms of social reproduction often result in a case where people look for people like them, and this can replicate current inequalities.

Academic

- 9.5.17 The responses to our online survey revealed multiple experiences of stereotyping, exclusion and racism towards South Asian and Black players, in both the talent identification and subsequent selection processes. A recurring theme was of Black and South Asian players not progressing through the pathway despite out-performing their White peers. Being dropped suddenly with little or no feedback was often mentioned. Evidence givers also built up a strong picture of Black and South Asian female and male players feeling undervalued, being overlooked, not supported, and discriminated against within the talent pathway, despite strong performances. In respect of South Asian groups, for example, the research team analysing the responses to the online survey described how *"there are hundreds of accounts, from across the game, exemplifying how selection was curtailed, despite strong performance."*⁴²³

⁴²³ Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket.

9.5.18 We, therefore, make no apology for the breadth of quotes we have included here from our lived experience research to convey the extent and strength of feeling that was reported on this subject.



As a Black cricketer, I had to be 3 x better than my White counterparts. Schooling: facilities were poor. No PE teachers with a cricket focus. No school team at secondary level. Class: Playing England schools coming from an inner London Comprehensive school.

Black (Caribbean) man, former professional player, coach



My son was overlooked for County match selection despite being the highest scorer and the highest average. When asked for a reason why, was told that other players were better than him. The statistics show otherwise.

Asian (Indian) man, coach, parent/guardian



I trialed back in my home county in 2019. I have a close friend who I also got to trial at the county. In 5 games he scored 2 100's and he also scored an 80*. With this he took wickets in the white ball games whenever we had t20's. The stats are there for all to see. He never got signed but another batter got signed after scoring maybe 1 or 2 fifties in the same period. He was white. Going earlier in 2011/2012, there was a conscious bias towards those who were not of South Asian background. It was clear as those players still got their chance in second team games, but I was always told that I'll be batting down the order because of pro's taking priority. How is this the case when my white academy team mates still open the batting and have their spots.

Talent Pathway Participant



[My family] decided to keep records of my performance in the games this year. I am one of only 3 non-White kids in the entire age group, and the other two go to elite private schools. I was the only player to get out the son of a former pro-cricketer in my age group the whole summer and was dropped from the pathway. I took the second most wickets of everyone in my age group. Over 60 players. Still, I was dropped.

Asian (Indian) man, recreational player



We have noticed a shift in the handling of my son. There is a feeling of differential treatment during training, matches and the level of criticism levelled when compared to others. We cannot say that there has been one clear cut example of an action which would amount to racism, but the feeling of inclusion and fair opportunities has not felt right. My child's statistics and performance have been at the level expected and has, in our opinion, certainly warranted exposure to the next level which is Second XI cricket. However, this opportunity has not been provided. There have been examples of other Academy players who have either performed at the same level or even not at the same level but have been pushed and backed to be given second XI opportunities. This has caused a sense of lack of inclusion and my son asking the question as to why his treatment is different.

Asian (Pakistani) man, parent/guardian, state school



No record is kept of the kids' performance at [First Class County]. Decisions on their future are taken exclusively by White coaches (there is not a single non-White coach and zero Black players) and the feedback from the school coaches.

Asian (Indian), woman, parent/guardian, county age player



With [my daughter] being a young Muslim girl, she now understands why she never progressed further in district cricket and feels hurt that it was not her skills at cricket but her ethnicity or religion that stopped her from progressing.

Asian (Pakistani) woman, parent/guardian

9.5.19 We were also told how the experiences of discrimination led to many players choosing to leave the game. As one former talent pathway player puts it: "How can you expect a young South Asian boy to still want to carry on when all these things [incidents of inequality and discrimination] are already at a disadvantage to you?"



As a mother of two [Indian] children who absolutely love this sport and play it at the club level, I have been witnessing the reasons for this [underrepresentation of South Asians in professional cricket] each year during the cricket season. More training and match opportunities that private school kids enjoy end up giving them the edge. Add to this the homogeneity-led group thinking and we have a perfect recipe for divisiveness. Captains giving preferential treatment to their own private school mates when it comes to batting or bowling order in games, having nets sessions together and segregating others etc. are all a result of this homogeneity-led thinking. This is made worse by the fact that it is almost considered acceptable behaviour and ignored by coaches, managers and training staff. Favouritism and nepotism are all by-products of this divisive culture. The excluded population then comes to a point where they wonder if it is all worth it or better to concentrate their efforts on other areas/ interests, as progress in cricket is not currently solely dependent on talent but also on one's financial background or parents' background, or who they are friends with or where they study.

Asian (Indian) woman, parent/guardian



Since the experience I had with my child who played 7 years at [First Class County] junior, I have not put my younger one through this. I feel it's pointless as he would never compete with the system.

Asian (Pakistani) man, parent/guardian

(iv) Typecasting and stereotyping is an issue that needs to be urgently addressed

9.5.20 There was plenty of evidence provided about South Asians feeling or being excluded for a variety of reasons (including as a result of the impact of stereotyping and assumptions being made about them).



You hear that a lot as an excuse when it comes to Asians: 'you are not fit enough', or 'you're a hot-headed lot' to imply that we don't have the right temperament for the game.

Asian (Pakistani) man, recreational player, parent/guardian, official



You never hear an Asian kid being described as 'a good lad' or a 'good egg'. Unconscious biases in how people assess character and 'coachability' that put some groups at a disadvantage.

Asian (Indian) woman, coach

- 9.5.21 We heard from one South Asian former player and coach about a former student who was told “*you bat too much like an Indian*” and who felt he was never welcome in the changing room.



[I was told:] 'You chaps play wristy shots'.

Asian (Pakistani) man, recreational player, coach, volunteer



[South Asian players] get pigeonholed into certain roles. They [coaches] can't see them outside of those roles.

Asian (Pakistani) woman, parent/guardian

- 9.5.22 In a similar vein, approximately half (51%) of the Black respondents to our online survey reported stereotypes and assumptions being made about them, with damaging consequences for their progression through the system.



Countless microaggressions, from stereotypical suggestions about eating habits or cultural differences to lack of support in professional and tactical development, which in turn pigeonholes you into a certain role within a team.

Black (Caribbean) man, coach, former professional player, parent/guardian

- 9.5.23 The Commission is strongly of the view that these pervasive and harmful stereotypes, often based on perceptions of a person's class and ethnicity, and the issue of bias more generally need to be addressed if the talent pathway is to become a genuinely equitable system. An important step to achieving that is to increase diversity amongst those responsible for selection and coaching, as we discuss further below. In the meantime, enhanced training to mitigate risks with existing selectors should be implemented and the ECB needs to improve its guidance and oversight in order to drive up standards in talent identification, addressing the issues we have outlined in order to ensure an informed and balanced approach to player assessment, and to ensure a consistent approach from all Counties, as we turn to next.

The sophistication of approach to talent identification varies between Counties

- 9.5.24 We were encouraged that one FCC told us that those identifying talent need to be “*really clear on what characteristics and attributes you deem to be talent*” whilst being aware that “*different family dynamics are going to impact, and different cultural dynamics are going to impact definitely on some traditional characteristics that we might have found preferable.*” This particular FCC recognised that the game needs to do work to understand this issue and to become much more objective in the assessment of players.

- 9.5.25 Another FCC talked of “*the massive socio-economic and geographical factors that we need to take into account*” (alongside attributes and character). As an example, they referred to the need to be aware if someone relies on public transport to get to a long-distance venue rather than having a lift from parents/guardians, and so not being quick to judge on punctuality.
- 9.5.26 Despite these comments by some FCCs, in general we did not see evidence that these factors were being systematically incorporated into assessments. Our concern was reinforced by a degree of complacency amongst some cricketing organisations (revealed through their responses to our Call for Written Evidence) who believed that their processes were focused solely on ability and did not discriminate at all. One CCB said: “*We are a National County and have enjoyed relationships with four different First Class Counties. Not once have we felt race has been a factor, nor school or wealth. There might be reasons why the coaches tend to pick certain groups more than others and they may not even know they are doing so. They may also have reasons – just or unjust – as to why out of two identical talents they pick one over the other. However never have we felt there has been discrimination in our dealings with the professional Counties.*” We were alarmed that this CCB both appeared to be describing discrimination yet singularly failing to recognise that it was happening.
- 9.5.27 The discrepancy between how Counties view the fairness and impartiality of their processes and how these are experienced by the individuals subjected to them implies that Counties are, to a greater or lesser extent, not fully aware of the ways in which bias, cultural competency and/or wider structural inequalities impact on their talent identification processes. This is concerning. Whilst we understand that different organisations are at different stages of their journey to EDI competency, the belief for some that there was no bias in the system will present a further obstacle to making meaningful progress in this area. In part this can be addressed by education, but in our view a significant element of change needs to come from the ECB itself, as we detail below.

There is insufficient detailed guidance and qualitative oversight in relation to talent identification

- 9.5.28 We set out in the introduction to this Chapter how **defining** talent itself is complex. We agree with Sport England’s description of it as a “*multidimensional package of characteristics and abilities.*” It follows that **identifying** talent is also complex and, therefore, requires clear guidance and a consistent approach to ensure fairness and objectivity.
- 9.5.29 The ECB described to us how it was “*working with counties and the broader game to enhance the sophistication of player identification and selection at their level so that we have a larger and higher quality talent pool to pick from at England level [...] [we] still have much to do and hopefully, in coming years we can make further improvements with things like our scouting infrastructure, digital data platforms, player ID education and also finding players from underrepresented areas and communities.*”
- 9.5.30 At present, the CPAs require Counties to “*maintain a whole pathway strategy enabling the identification, selection and confirmation of talent*” as well as comply with the ECB Guidelines on player identification, providing education and training for all player identification personnel and using the ECB Player Data Management System to enhance player identification. However, we did not see evidence that the ECB was proactively monitoring talent identification processes across the Counties.
- 9.5.31 The ECB told us that it has a number of methods of oversight regarding the Counties’ adherence to the talent pathway elements of the CPAs:
- Via submission of County self-assessment against the CPA to the ECB
 - Self-assessment surveys with all players and parents/guardians
 - Focus groups with EPP and Academy players, and through parent interviews
 - Through a third party, independent reviewer who interviews key stakeholders (such as Director of Cricket, CEO, Safeguarding Officer)

- 9.5.32 Whilst some FCCs provided us with their most recent pathway CPA review from which we gained insight into the approach of individual Counties, we did not review any examples of the other methods of oversight and so are unable to form a view on their effectiveness. Having said that, we consider that whilst self-assessment against the CPAs will give the ECB some comfort that a County is following the relevant requirements, neither such assessment nor the alternative oversight methods would give the ECB a qualitative assessment, or any insight into the fairness of, a County's talent identification process. Crucially, we also note that the criteria in the CPA for the Counties' self-assessments do not mention key performance indicators or objectives related specifically to EDI.
- 9.5.33 In our view, it is imperative the ECB ensures that all Counties are consistently using a fair and systematic approach to talent identification. This should include the ECB's existing guiding principles as well as additional principles, as follows: taking into account (particularly at the early stages of the pathway) the full range of contextual factors that should have a bearing on the analysis of a player's 'talent' or their 'potential'; being clear about which 'subjective' factors are **relevant** and avoiding those that tend to increase the risk of bias; and trying, as far as possible, to find consistent ways to test or measure those important, but less tangible, attributes that promote better, fairer overall talent identification. The framework must proactively mitigate against the sorts of biases (whether conscious or not) that are liable to operate within the talent pathway (or indeed any talent identification process).
- 9.5.34 Nevertheless, on their own these overarching principles will not be sufficient. For example, as we will discuss below, diversity amongst those responsible for selection is critical. It is also important that genuine accountability is embedded within the talent pathway, with reasoned, evidenced decisions recorded and communicated to players (and, where appropriate their parents/guardians), as well as the ability to review or appeal the decisions that have been made to ensure that the system is operating fairly.



There's no objectivity or transparency. You can't challenge decisions because the criteria are not clear and therefore not open to scrutiny and challenge if one feels that they have not been applied fairly.

Asian (Pakistani) man, parent/guardian, recreational player, coach

- 9.5.35 We also consider that the ECB should introduce a more rigorous system for assessing the effectiveness of the Counties' approach to talent identification, with some form of audit or enhanced oversight in place at least until it has confidence that the system has been embedded in every County's process and is producing more equitable outcomes.

Recommendation 39

We recommend that the ECB, in collaboration with the Counties, develops a more robust and systematic approach to talent identification to be used on the talent pathway.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) Develop a 'charter of best practice' for the engagement of coaches, which includes declaring and managing conflicts of interests, and explore expanding the good practice in some Counties (including removing private coaches from the County Age Groups and barring those who have privately coached individuals from involvement in selection decisions).
- b) Introduce mandatory training for scouts, coaches and selectors encompassing how to recognise and manage bias, understand environmental factors and make contextual selection decisions based on a holistic view of a player's potential and merit.
- c) Develop and increase the use of open and transparent selection and deselection criteria, providing clear explanations with visual evidence where possible (such as video and photographs identifying individual strengths and weaknesses, areas for development etc).
- d) Ensure that there is an appropriate appeals process, and that processes are in place to hold decision-makers within the talent pathway accountable for unfair and/or discriminatory decisions.
- e) Take proactive steps to increase the diversity (gender, race, class) of scouts, coaches and selectors at all levels (i.e. at grassroots and within the talent pathway).

Reducing the scale of selection and deselection will give scope to equalise opportunities

- 9.5.36 We have already identified how most state educated schoolchildren have little or no access to cricket compared to their privately educated peers. Despite the excellent work done by Chance to Shine, most primary school children will still not have played competitive, hardball cricket or had significant access to high-level cricket coaching at school. In contrast, children educated in private 'prep' schools often play competitive and organised cricket matches from as early as school year 4, aged 8 or 9. We have already described the structural inequalities produced by private school advantages in terms of cricket development.
- 9.5.37 Overwhelming research evidence supports a conclusion that sports talent development systems "*perpetuate systematic biases affecting who has access to sporting opportunities*" and that, in particular, "*several biases emerge from talent identification practices that target those at young ages.*"⁴²⁴ Confirmation bias in talent identification implies that coaches and selectors may seek out and prioritise information that reinforces their initial assumptions, again favouring those who enter the system through early selection.

⁴²⁴ Wattie, Nick, and Joseph Baker. 'An uneven playing field: Talent identification systems and the perpetuation of participation biases in high performance sport.' *Sport and physical activity across the lifespan: Critical perspectives* (2018): 117-133. (our emphasis)

9.5.38 Such inequities are further compounded by the so-called ‘Matthew effect’ which we have described earlier in this section. There is also strong evidence to suggest that the psychological effect of early selection is positive for those who are included in elite pathways. For example, the ‘Pygmalion effect’ describes the positive benefits derived from any person being told by an external person, such as a teacher or a coach, that they are good at something. The ‘Galatea effect’ seeks to account for the more internal psychological effects experienced by a person in terms of confidence, enjoyment and so on.⁴²⁵

9.5.39 Our evidence gathering suggests that these problems, which are common to a wide range of selection and talent development processes, can be exacerbated by the CAG selection process. The tendency to select a relatively small group of players to form the representative County team, typically from the U10 age group upwards, means that a small group of players, who will often already have access to some of the best resources, are then given the added confidence boost of being placed in a special category above their peers. An FCC told us how *“the moment we selected the county junior squad, within a week every single one of them was offered a scholarship to an independent school.”*

9.5.40 A further prominent theme raised by many County pathway coaches related to the issue of late development and access to the game. County coaches, club coaches and former professional players frequently referenced the need to observe and develop talent in the later teenage years and in the early 20s. There was frequent discomfort expressed by County pathway coaches that *“we select too early”*, and a willingness to explore alternative options.



I think we do have too much rigidity in our system because we can only select up to 18 years old. By definition, our talent pathway is discriminatory by age. The majority of talent research suggests we should really encourage late developers, but if you do try to recruit at 17 or 18, you don't have a lot of time. We should have a system whereby if we spot someone in their early 20s, we should be able to engage with that person, and develop them.

FCC

9.5.41 We believe the evidence provides a basis to ask a challenging question: what purpose does representative CAG cricket serve, specifically at the U9 to U13 level? The evidence suggests that from an equity perspective, the current approach entrenches inequalities between the state and private sectors, and compounds already existing advantages obtained by those who benefit from early selection.

9.5.42 Recognising the profound private school advantages and biases in talent ID and selection, we are proposing a recommendation to mitigate the structural inequities of the current County pathway system. Our objectives here are to broaden the base of players playing a good standard of cricket and to avoid a number of blockages within the pathway system.

9.5.43 Instead of minor mitigations for selection bias, we believe the system would benefit greatly from a dramatic reduction in the scale of selection and deselection in the earlier years of development. Clearly, any County pathway requires a degree of selection, but the pool of players kept within the system should be much larger, and crucially those players should be treated equally, with a view to their future development, rather than ranked as ‘County’, ‘development’ or ‘deselected’.

⁴²⁵ Kelly, Adam L., Thomas Brown, Rob Reed, Jean Côté, and Jennifer Turnnidge. ‘Relative age effects in male cricket: a personal assets approach to explain immediate, short-term, and long-term developmental outcomes.’ *Sports 10*, no. 3 (2022).

Recommendation 40

We recommend that selection for representative, inter-County cricket should begin at the U14 level and not before. This recommendation will mean that the widely documented challenges associated with talent identification in younger children are removed for the first three years of a typical pathway programme (U10-U13). Placing less emphasis on selection and deselection from U10 age groups onwards mitigates the very significant structural advantages that young children who attend private schools have over their state school counterparts. Coaches, children and parents will be relieved of many of the pressures and liabilities associated with the current system. Importantly, indirect costs such as travel and parental time will be further reduced, enabling more children to play a high standard of cricket locally, lowering the barriers to participation.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) County pathway cricketers in the U10-U13 age categories should be selected for enlarged 'district' or 'regional' squads, and play intra-County 'district' or 'regional' matches, depending on the size and local needs of each County. The numbers involved in intra-County training squads and matches will inevitably vary, but the overarching aim should be to involve as many young players with potential as possible.
- b) Children in the U10-U13 age groups should not take part in residential tours or cricket festivals organised by their County to free up resources and the cost barriers associated with these.
- c) Intra-County cricket at the U10-U13 age groups should be played in generic 'whites', without the need for County-branded kit.
- d) When organising intra-County fixtures, Counties should explore options for 'bio-banding' (by physical maturity) and structure match-play in the interests of a balance between teams and the widest range of experiences in terms of batting and bowling for all players.

Recommendation 41

We recommend that, with the need for Counties to allocate resources to training a narrow County squad now removed (see Recommendation 40), County Age Group coaches and pathway leaders should be tasked, as part of the State Schools Action Plan (see Recommendation 35), with delivering a positive state school cricket offering at the U10-U13 level. This should enhance existing provision in primary schools (year 5 and year 6) and fill a significant gap in secondary state school cricket provision in school years 7 and 8. These new training and coaching options in state schools should be delivered by qualified County coaches, enabling them to reorient their engagement towards the state sector, and to develop a better appreciation of cricketing talent there.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) In addition, Counties and the ECB should invest substantially in increased Chance to Shine provision in state secondary schools, providing more opportunities for secondary school boys and girls to continue playing cricket at or through school beyond the age of 11 (particularly between the ages of 11 and 14).
- b) Counties, in collaboration with the ECB, should further develop meaningful partnerships with local cricket clubs to make their facilities available to children attending local state schools, for example through clubs offering their net facilities and outfielders for weekday 'after school clubs' at times when local club facilities are often unused. Where ground maintenance presents barriers to achieving this, additional investment should be delivered to support the club.

9.6 The role of the coach in promoting equity on the talent pathway

Coaches and selectors hold significant power and play a key role in ensuring the talent pathway is fair and equitable

- 9.6.1 It is widely accepted that coaches play a uniquely important role in the talent pathway and the progression of those within it. The ECB has acknowledged the 'coach heavy' infrastructure that exists within the junior game, and it was apparent from the testimonies we received just how much power sits with coaches. In these circumstances, it follows that coaches also play a fundamental role in ensuring that the talent pathway is fair and equitable.
- 9.6.2 Players who spoke to us also often talked about how their relationship with their coach had a significant impact on their progression and experience of the pathway. A good coach who is supportive and understands a player's individual needs makes a significant difference. Indeed, Chance to Shine's own research shows the impact of a good coach on a young player's enjoyment of, and enthusiasm for, the game. One former pathway player told us that the only time they enjoyed cricket and the game felt inclusive was when they played under impartial coaches and selectors.



...we know that, for many, the most important role model is their coach. We asked 1,200 school children, 'Which cricketer has most inspired you to want to play and succeed in the game?' It was an open response question - 33% wrote their CTS coach and 18% named a friend/peer. We know that having a coach as role model is an important factor for those who play cricket via Chance to Shine Street, where 79% are from an ethnically diverse community and 1/3 coaches are former participants. In a survey of 1,140 Street participants, 90% agreed 'I look up to my coach' and 95% agreed 'My coach inspires me to do my best'.

Chance to Shine

- 9.6.3 Despite this, we heard accounts of the unfair, biased and discriminatory approach taken by some coaches responsible for identifying and progressing talented young players, as we have already detailed in the previous section. In addition, we heard widespread concern about the conflicts of interest of coaches responsible for identifying talented players, which we turn to below.

Conflicts of interest need to be identified and managed

- 9.6.4 In our view, given the nature of the system, actual or potential conflicts of interest will inevitably arise within the talent pathway. It is, therefore, critical that conflicts are identified and managed appropriately to ensure an equitable approach to selection.
- 9.6.5 We were told of coaches who work within the talent pathway and, at the same time, run external private academies. We also received evidence, as we have outlined earlier in the Chapter, that many County coaches work in private schools and so know those students when they are assessed for the pathway. This clearly creates conflicts of interests and an uneven playing field, significantly disadvantaging those players, often from lower socio-economic backgrounds, who have not had access through their schooling to those particular coaches.
- 9.6.6 We also noted concerns about conflicts of interest arising when coaches from within the County pathway structure provide private, one-to-one or group coaching for children either already in, or seeking admission to, the pathway. In more than one instance we found that not just CAG coaches but even the head of the County pathway provided one-to-one coaching for individual children on the pathway.
- 9.6.7 We should emphasise that the points we are making here relate to the generic risks associated with potential conflicts of interest, and we are not making allegations against any individuals.
- 9.6.8 To try to address the problem, one FCC's new policy is that coaches are not allowed to observe or determine the selection of players whom they have privately coached. This to a certain extent mitigates bias towards players that these coaches know and means that those who do not have that personal connection can be assessed more fairly. We believe that this approach should be adopted by all Counties. They should have clear policies to ensure that decision-makers in the talent pathway are not in a position where any of their roles can conflict (or be seen to conflict). That may require not using coaches who work across multiple settings (e.g. school and private coaching academies as well as working within the County pathway). This will require investment in training a larger network of qualified coaches, which should be aimed at resolving the lack of diversity in coaching staff outlined below.
- 9.6.9 If conflicts of interest cannot be avoided, steps must be taken to mitigate their effect (e.g. the relevant individual should play no part in selection decisions). A 'charter of best practice' should be produced to which all Counties must commit, enforced through the CPA and which parents/guardians can use to hold Counties to account. We have addressed the issue of managing conflicts in Recommendation 39.

The relative absence of diversity amongst coaches/selectors/scouts disadvantages players from ethnically diverse communities and from lower socio-economic and/or working class backgrounds

- 9.6.10 The ECB told us that they have not collected ethnicity data specifically for coaches, but they have collected ethnicity data for staff at the ECB, FCCs and CCBs. Game-wide, cricket's workforce is 90% White, 5% South Asian, 2% Mixed/Multiple ethnicity, 1% Black, and less than 1% Asian (excluding South Asian). Only 26% of the whole workforce are women.⁴²⁶ We also know from 2019 data that as at that time, 6% of all qualified cricket coaches were female, and there were seven female coaches with a level 4 qualification.⁴²⁷ Considering these statistics, the likelihood of being coached by a White female, a Black male or female, or a South Asian male or female coach is remote. Much of our evidence painted a picture of a mainly White and male coaching staff at Counties.
- 9.6.11 The lack of diversity amongst selectors and coaches is a further driver of inequity. Whilst diversity does not *guarantee* anything at the scale of the individual, greater ethnic and socio-economic diversity amongst decision-makers is likely to ensure stronger recognition and understanding of important contextual attributes relevant to player assessment across a talent system and mitigate the risks of bias along the lines of race and class.
- 9.6.12 In addition, having a diverse set of coaches increases the likelihood of providing role models to a broader spectrum of players. A fair system is one that enables everyone, regardless of their background, to flourish and role models are an important part of this process. A 2020 study commissioned by the five UK Sports Councils exploring racial inequalities in sport emphasised the importance of representation as one of its key themes, highlighting how *"a lack of visible role models also reinforces negative stereotypes and the perception that ethnically diverse participants have limited skills and abilities."*⁴²⁸ In these circumstances, the relative absence of diversity among coaches likely further disadvantages those from ethnically diverse and lower socio-economic backgrounds.



If you can't see any players that look like you, if you can't see any coaches that look like you, you can't see anyone in any senior roles like you then why would you be going into that or want to gravitate to it?

Coach

- 9.6.13 The Female Coaching Network was one of many organisations and individuals to point out that if the decision-makers (from club level up to the ECB) are *"of one gender and one race, this will reflect in the make-up of team selection."* This detrimental impact of the homogeneity across the coaching staff was reflected in players' experiences on the pathway.



Being a minority player, coming from a state school, being a non-white, not being a favourite of the coaches, not attending one to one with any of my county coaches -all of these combined ensure I will not progress forward. There is no incentive for any of my county team managers to push my case, as I do not satisfy any of the unwritten criteria. It is an open secret as to how many players from my team alone attend private schools and private coaching, and have progressed.

Recreational player, volunteer, professional coach

⁴²⁶ ECB EDI census,

⁴²⁷ <https://platform-static-files.s3.amazonaws.com/ecb/document/2019/10/22/c571ece1-5b0a-42cb-9575-34d83ac76238/Transforming-Womens-and-Girls-Cricket-Action-Plan-2019.pdf>

⁴²⁸ https://www.sportengland.org/funds-and-campaigns/equality-and-diversity?section=race_in_sport_review#asummaryofthefindings-14195

- 9.6.14 Of course, we recognise that there are huge numbers of brilliant, inspirational coaches, with great integrity, in both paid and voluntary roles, who do all they can to support the journeys of young players irrespective of their background. Nothing that we have said is intended to suggest otherwise. Nevertheless, given the uniquely pivotal role that coaches play in cricket's talent pathway and the progression of those within it, we feel that it is vital that the sport does everything it can to ensure that the role of coaches in promoting equity is properly understood and the barriers to equity associated with that role are removed. Meanwhile, and as we have already indicated, we believe that it is essential that there is a programme of training and awareness raising amongst existing coaches in an attempt to mitigate the current lack of diversity. We do note, encouragingly, that in December 2022, the ECB announced that 33% of ECB coaching course participants were from 'ethnically diverse backgrounds'.⁴²⁹

Coaches from underrepresented groups face challenges obtaining roles

- 9.6.15 Whilst the focus of this Chapter and our work in this area has been on access to cricket and the talent pathway for players, we received considerable evidence that opportunities to coach as well as promotions are often unfairly denied to people from ethnically diverse backgrounds. This links strongly to our previous finding on the lack of diversity, and therefore of role models, among coaches and selectors as well as findings on elitism more generally. Therefore, we flag this as an important point for the ECB and the wider game to review in more detail.



I have been overlooked for promotions, jobs, coach education courses and my identity mistaken on numerous occasions - the only thing I could find as an issue had to be my race and class status, as I was more than qualified, overqualified in some instances, and still overlooked.

Black (Caribbean) man, coach, recreational player, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)



I had to leave my County to commence my level [X] course. I also witnessed White guys who had done [lower level course] with me who ended up being assistant head coach for the County. I can't even coach a County age group team.

Black (Caribbean) man, coach, former professional player



Being the only black coach and at the time the second-longest serving, I was never given the opportunity to coach for the club during the indoor season, although every other coach, irrespective of tenure, was able to. I was constantly side-lined with phrases such as 'there is no money in that buddy, so no need to apply'.

Black (Caribbean) man, coach



I was working with district squads and asked many times if I could be awarded with the chance to coach county squads as I believe I am adequately qualified as I am a Level [X] coach. But was ignored time and time again. Eventually, I became so disheartened I could no longer keep coaching.

Asian (Pakistani) man, parent/guardian, coach, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation)

⁴²⁹ <https://resources.ecb.co.uk/ecb/document/2022/12/07/9d53a6ec-17af-401c-979c-fca3aabb10ef/Annual-ECB-EDI-Report-1-FINAL.pdf>



Being an [Indian] female coach, a lot of people tend to undervalue my knowledge or my ability to teach. Being young is another factor in this.

Asian (Indian) woman, recreational player, coach



[I have experienced racism] plenty of times. I was asked by the Director of Cricket 'When will you guys learn to fall in line?'. [...] He tried to stop my business by threatening me and spread rumours about me.

Asian (Indian) man, parent/guardian, former professional player, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation), coach, official or umpire

9.7 What steps have been taken to try and encourage wider participation and address inequalities in the pathway?

Background

9.7.1 A number of actions taken forward over recent years to raise participation and address inequalities more broadly have included action to increase interest in and access to the talent pathway. We outline some of these initiatives below to highlight the work that has been done and/or the initiatives that are currently held out as intended to address inequalities.

(i) South Asian Action Plan (SAAP)

9.7.2 The SAAP⁴³⁰ was launched by the ECB in 2018 with the express purpose of better engaging with South Asian communities, creating opportunities, removing barriers and building stronger relationships between South Asians and the cricket network. It identified several potential barriers to progression within the boys' talent pathway (the girls' pathway was still in development in 2018 and was not the focus of that aspect of the SAAP) and identified interventions to address them.

(ii) Dream Big

9.7.3 As part of the SAAP, and funded by Sport England and the ECB, Dream Big launched across eight ethnically diverse urban centres. More than 2,000 South Asian women volunteers have been trained to deliver All Stars and Dynamos Cricket over the past four years. 2,750 people from ethnically diverse backgrounds have become accredited cricket coaches, with 100 scholarships providing opportunities for those coaches to progress through the game. The ECB told us that, as of May 2021, 12 of the individuals from Dream Big had secured paid employment roles in cricket: four at the ECB, five within County cricket and three as coaches. Dream Big also saw the introduction of modest apparel kit for volunteers, specially tailored to South Asian cultures.

⁴³⁰ <https://platform-static-files.s3.amazonaws.com/ecb/document/2018/05/09/5c30a116-33f0-4b3e-8874-c0948f0eb0ae/Engaging-South-Asian-Communities-An-ECB-Action-Plan-2018.pdf>

(iii) Community Talent Champions (CTCs)

9.7.4 As part of the SAAP, the ECB piloted an initiative in 2021 in three urban areas to help bridge the gap between South Asian cricketing communities and the talent pathway, creating a role for a CTC to connect non-affiliated cricket environments into the talent pathway. This is now being rolled out to reach a total of ten areas across both the boys' and girls' pathways.

(iv) Transforming Women's and Girls' Cricket Action Plan (TWGCP)

9.7.5 This ten-point action plan was launched by the ECB in 2019 with the stated goal of making cricket a "gender balanced sport". It is focused on increasing recreational participation, developing aspiring female cricketers, driving the performance of England Women's cricket via the WRT structure, elevating the profile of women's cricket and increasing the representation of women across the workforce.

(v) The ACE Programme

9.7.6 The ACE Programme was originally launched by Surrey CCC in January 2020, led by Ebony Rainford-Brent, in "response to the decline of the black British professional players by 75%" and the fact that Black players represent "less than 1% of the recreational game."⁴³¹ The charity was designed to engage young people of African and Caribbean heritage and from lower socio-economic areas into cricket and "aims to support diverse talent from the grassroots to the elite." It does so by, amongst other things, providing elite academy programmes to talented players to allow them fulfil their potential and to support the development of coaches, volunteers and mentors in the community.

9.7.7 With funding from Sport England, ACE launched as an independent charity in October 2020 and was supported by ECB funding to expand beyond London in December 2020. Since then, ACE has engaged over 10,000 young cricketers in London, Bristol and Birmingham, accepted 141 scholars to the ACE Academies as well as achieving over 300 trials for County talent pathways. Following additional funding from the ECB the programme has expanded to Nottingham, Manchester and Sheffield as well as more London Boroughs.

(vi) South Asian Cricket Academy (SACA)

9.7.8 SACA is a non-profit organisation established in 2021 to tackle the inequalities within the talent development systems in cricket regarding the lack of South Asian representation in professional cricket. It aims to disband its programmes by 2028, by which time the intention is that changes to the game nationally will have rendered the Academy unnecessary.⁴³² In 2022, three SACA players received professional County contracts. As far as we are aware, SACA does not receive any funding from the ECB.

Initiatives aimed at people with low socio-economic status

9.7.9 In section 2 we touched on initiatives such as All Stars, Dynamos, Chance to Shine Schools and Chance to Shine Street, MCC Foundation Hubs and Wicketz. The ECB told us that they had made c30,000 free places available on the Dynamos and All Stars national programmes for individuals from underrepresented groups across 2021 and 2022. Across the top 20% most deprived areas of the country they saw a 70% increase in the number of programmes and a 100% increase in the number of participants from 2019-2021.

⁴³¹ <https://aceprogramme.com/about/>

⁴³² <https://www.sacca-uk.com>

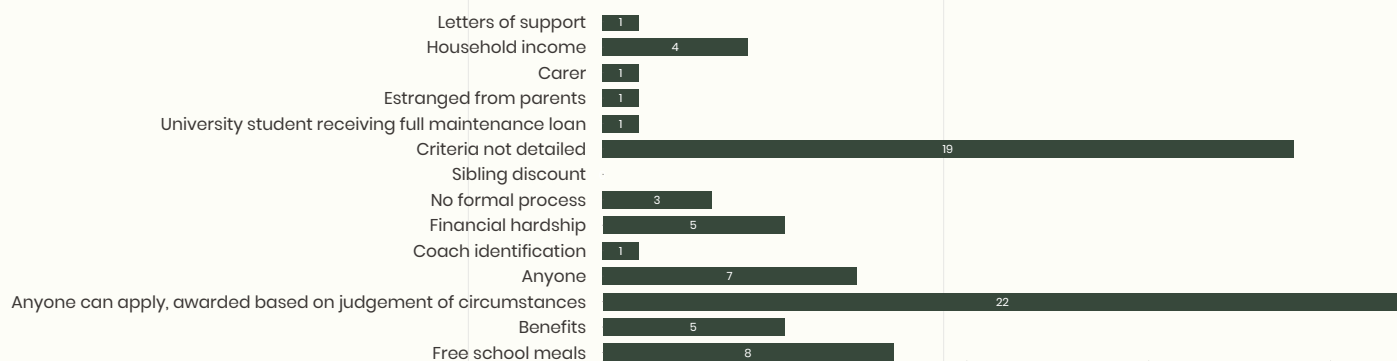
- 9.7.10 The ECB also increased investment in Chance to Shine from £2.5m to £2.9m for the 2022/23 academic year with the introduction of the Youth Strategy. Its mission is to “*use cricket as a vehicle through which we add social value to the lives of young people.*” In November 2022, the ECB announced additional expanded programmes in conjunction with Chance to Shine and the Lord’s Taverners to take cricket to an additional 55,000 children from underserved communities, and those attending special educational needs and disability (SEND) schools. With Chance to Shine they are aiming to deliver cricket in up to 300 more schools where at least 40% of the student population qualifies for free school meals, with the Lord’s Taverners hoping to reach another 200 extra SEND schools by 2024.
- 9.7.11 The ECB also told us that they were launching their Diploma in Sporting Excellence (DiSE) aimed at state school boys and girls to bridge the gap between the provision of education in state and private schools. They told us that the intention was to provide a series of development camps for state school boys and girls attending CAGs, augmenting their existing County programmes. As these were being launched in the course of our review, we have no further information on which to assess the effectiveness of the initiative.
- 9.7.12 As set out in section 2 of this Chapter, the MCC Foundation provides 3,000 state-educated young cricketers with free-to-access training and match play through a network of 74 cricket hubs. The MCC Foundation has told us that it aims to increase the proportion of girls in its programmes to 50% by 2027 and to increase representation in the game. It plans to open new hubs in strategic locations and recruit more female and ethnically diverse coaches.
- 9.7.13 In addition to its national hub programme, the MCC Foundation has recently launched a pilot across London in strategic locations, supporting coaches from underrepresented backgrounds to obtain Foundation 1 or Core Coach qualifications, funding a mentor to provide additional support, and running specialist training led by inspiring role models (in 2021, these included Mark Ramprakash, Ajmal Shahzad and Monty Panesar).
- 9.7.14 The ECB, Chance to Shine and the Lord’s Taverners also support Capital Kids Cricket, a charity that has reached 8,427 participants (30.8% girls) across 113 locations in London, with a mission to establish cricket in state schools (now expanded to include initiatives in hospitals and working with refugees).

Other initiatives: hardship funds

- 9.7.15 Counties were required by the ECB to establish **hardship funds** by October 2021 to help both girls and boys on the talent pathway from lower socio-economic status backgrounds. However, other than needing to put in place a hardship fund, there were (as far as we could tell from evidence), limited requirements on Counties around how large the fund needs to be, the process for applications, the criteria by which awards will be made, how to make people aware that the fund is available or to monitor or report on levels of take up.
- 9.7.16 All but four Counties told us through our County Survey that they offer hardship funds, as do four of the WRTs. The four WRTs and two FCCs that do not charge for the talent pathway do offer financial assistance for kit, travel expenses and attendance at festivals.
- 9.7.17 Our County Survey asked about the assessment criteria for applications for financial assistance. The most common response was that anyone could apply, and then the assistance was awarded based on judgement of individual circumstances (see Figure 19). The second most common response was that there were no specified criteria. Where there were criteria, they included players being on free school meals, receiving benefits, financial hardship and levels of household income.

9.7.18 In general, there is a lack of research and evidence on the take up of hardship funds and their overall impact on equity.

Figure 19: Criteria for financial assistance



9.7.19 As we discuss in Chapter 6, Approach to EDI in Cricket, the ECB also recently committed an initial amount of £1 million as part of its stated aim to reduce financial barriers that prevent young people from disadvantaged backgrounds from being able to progress through the talent pathway, particularly at CAG level.

Scholarships

9.7.20 Evidence collected from both Counties and the ECB confirmed that scholarships are a pervasive feature in the talent pathway and are often perceived as a means of addressing inequalities. The ECB told us, for example, how a 2021 survey of regional U18 and U19s in FCCs showed that 59% of the 81 players surveyed and attending private schools had moved from state school education. That isn't to say that all of those who moved from state primary to private secondary schools were necessarily on (or required) scholarships; many middle class parents/guardians choose to send their children to state primary schools before moving them into private secondary schools. Nevertheless, we are aware that a number of these young players will have been offered some form of financial assistance to enable this to happen.

9.7.21 Through our research we found that 90% of the private schools in The Cricketer's Top 100 schools for 2022 offered a sports scholarship.

9.7.22 Those players who are offered and accept financial assistance to attend private secondary schools are likely to benefit from high-quality coaching and mentorship year-round, along with use of the extensive training and match facilities available to players at the school (as discussed earlier).

Conclusions

Initiatives for promoting participation outside of traditional routes have had good feedback. However, it is not clear whether, and we should not assume that, increased participation at a grassroots level will translate into pathway progression

9.7.23 In their latest EDI report (December 2022) the ECB reported that 26,819 people from South Asian and ethnically diverse communities engaged with core cities activity (part of the SAAP) in 2022. There had been a 75% increase in women's and girls' teams across England and Wales compared to 2019, with 12% more clubs offering women and girls the chance to play than in 2019. These are encouraging statistics. Equally, through the responses to our online survey and other evidence that we received, there were some very positive reviews of the various alternative routes into cricket, which are seen as both needed, and successful. We provide a flavour of these below.



ACE is a new programme I have recently come across precisely set up to address the lack of African and Caribbean representation in cricket at all levels. From my point of view, this is a vital programme - that shouldn't exist if the cricket world was fair, equal, diverse, open and transparent.

Multiple ethnic groups (White and Black African) woman, state school, volunteer, recreational player, parent



The All Stars initiative run by the ECB was brilliant in pulling new kids into the game. It's how my son entered and helped his development and inclusion into our local club brilliantly.

Asian (Pakistani) man, state school, parent



Lord's Taverners, Inner City Cricket. Giving opportunity to ethnic minority groups to challenge themselves at a higher level.

South Asian man, state school, recreational player, volunteer, coach



This Girl Can, Cricket All Stars. My daughter started playing cricket at a local club aged 9 due to these and has played at county level for the last 3 years.

South Asian woman, state school, parent



MCC Foundation hubs - fabulous for developing young talent in areas without significant funding. County disability cricket - the most welcoming environment I've been involved with within cricket.

White (other) Jewish man, private school, recreational player, staff member (at the ECB or County organisation), volunteer, coach, official



Progress is evident at Surrey CCC where Ebony Rainford Brent, Chevy Green and the ACE Team have been able to build close relationships with the CEO and selectors to create real understanding around the bias that exists in the game. Scouts and coaches have witnessed players with huge potential attend ACE talent ID days, after being deselected from another club. Those players have then developed in the ACE academy as it's an environment that is free from bias, which provides high support and allows space for people to be themselves.

Sport England



Developing community hubs at old facilities now brought back to life, linked in with focused Chance to Shine programmes. The development of hubs in east London linked to Essex Development team has enabled us to see late developing Boys and Girls.

Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities



MCC Hubs for state school children an excellent idea. My daughter had free, quality coaching in Southampton.

Talent Pathway Parent



The MCC Foundation programme has helped to increase the amount of young people from across the County (both boys and girls), this is specifically targeted to those who are from state school backgrounds and not in County pathway programmes. The value of this is then to offer sessions free of charge to participants.

Individual



Soft Ball Cricket has provided an opportunity for women and girls in particular to experience cricket together, encouraging them to continue playing in Softball leagues as well as progressing onto hardball cricket.

CCB



The ACE programme has significantly shown that a distinct programme can be set up to allow access for children from an underrepresented group to a cricket development opportunity and incorporate a connection to allow the most talented to access a pathway that links to the professional game.

FCC



Chance to Shine Street has played an important role in making cricket accessible by removing barriers of cost, space and social class. The free programme aims to engage participants from areas within the 10% most deprived in the country where opportunity and access may be a barrier to participation. Participants do not require any equipment to play, and participants can simply turn up each week and play cricket in a safe environment. There are examples nationally where participants have gone on to play professional cricket or take up employment within cricket.

Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities



Chance to Shine was particularly successful in introducing my state school daughters to cricket & joining county pathways 6 years ago...

Individual

- 9.7.24 The progress made by ACE and SACA is incredibly encouraging. The ACE Programme has recently reported that it has reached over 10,000 children, and has 141 academy scholars training twice a week, 44 of whom are now involved in CAG cricket.⁴³³ In 2022 several SACA players trialled for County second teams, and as mentioned earlier, three players received professional County contracts.
- 9.7.25 Members of the Commission attended one of the Dream Big Desi Women events and were very impressed with the great turn out of South Asian women of all ages. The women that the Commission spoke to were uniformly positive about the initiative, feeling a deep sense of ownership of it. Many said participating in the programme had transformed their lives. Aligned with the programme, the ECB was the first national sporting governing body to introduce a 'modest apparel kit', which includes hijabs, longer t-shirts and looser jogging bottoms, which the Commission considers is a brilliant initiative.
- 9.7.26 The CTC initiative is also, at least in theory, a really positive step which should have greater impact as it is rolled out over a wider geography. It is imperative, however, that the ECB and Counties invest meaningfully in the role and that it forms an integral part of the scouting and talent development process. To be truly effective, it must be part of a *systematic* change in cricket's approach to sourcing and identifying talent, not simply a 'nice to have' add-on.
- 9.7.27 We also heard evidence of certain Counties connecting more proactively with non-traditional routes into the talent pathway. Chance to Shine highlighted examples of two Counties, in particular, that have worked hard to get their young people 'seen', by variously utilising Chance to Shine Street, ACE and MCC Foundation hubs. They described to us how one FCC had put together a short six-week talent pathway programme for Chance to Shine Street projects with representatives from the FCC's performance team coming along to view the players.
- 9.7.28 These examples show how participation and talent pathway progression can overlap in important and exciting ways. Fundamentally, however, we consider there to be an important distinction to be drawn between participation - with the initiatives we have described undoubtedly expanding the game in this regard - and progression within the talent pathway.
- 9.7.29 Whilst the Commission strongly believes that widening participation is vital, in and of itself, we should not assume that increased participation at a grassroots level will translate into pathway progression. The South Asian experience in cricket speaks to this clearly. Increased participation alone cannot and will not address many of the barriers we have identified, which are specific to the issue of the progression of young players.

⁴³³ <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2023/jan/26/rainford-brent-ace-progress-cricket-racism-report>

- 9.7.30 In our view the link between participation and progression should not be overstated. Moreover, we consider that the failure to recognise this can actually reduce the impetus to make targeted interventions to increase equity *within* the talent pathway. Increasing participation is not the same thing as making the system fair and the two should not be conflated.

The ECB has been too slow to engage with a number of initiatives

- 9.7.31 It is almost universally acknowledged that the initiatives outlined in this section are much needed and long overdue, which begs the question: why has it taken so long for these changes to be initiated? The ACE Programme, we understand, only attracted meaningful support from the ECB once it had established a track record of its own. Why did the ECB not itself respond to the significant and well-known decline in cricket in Black communities, or fund efforts to do so, at an earlier stage?
- 9.7.32 Similarly, whilst the ECB did develop the SAAP to better engage with South Asian communities, as far as we understand, it chose not to provide any funding for SACA. This was despite SACA's specific focus on developing young talent to help address the significant disparity between South Asian participation in recreational cricket and, to a lesser extent, the talent pathway, and their representation among the professional ranks, which was again well known.
- 9.7.33 A number of interviewees also told us they had either struggled to get the ECB to listen to their ideas or the ECB didn't seem willing to bring in new programmes that could genuinely challenge the status quo. The founders of Cage Cricket told us that they had been given repeated encouragement over a number of years to seek funding from the ECB and other organisations for an exciting product for promoting inner-city cricket, only to be knocked back, seemingly without good reason or justification, over and over again. We found this alarming, particularly given the apparent benefits that this product could have provided to those from lower socio-economic and/or ethnically diverse backgrounds.
- 9.7.34 Whilst we accept that the ECB and others have to make difficult funding decisions when there are competing priorities, and that consequently some great initiatives will miss out, the hoops that people seem to have to jump through before obtaining ECB funding risk stifling innovation at exactly the time it is needed. Sometimes, organisations need to be prepared to take a risk (particularly with smaller grants) and support start-up initiatives before they have built up a track record - so that they have the opportunity to develop one. Otherwise, it will tend to be only the established charities and initiatives (and/or those with well-known and well-connected champions) that secure financial support. Cricket needs urgently to shake up the status quo - and sometimes it will be the 'new kids on the block' who are best placed to achieve this.

There is insufficient strategic thought and action across the game dedicated to addressing financial barriers

- 9.7.35 We were troubled by the apparent lack of rigour applied to date to both understand and respond strategically to cost barriers restricting access to the talent pathway. Indeed, whilst the ECB's decision to commit £1 million to **reduce** financial barriers within the CAG system undoubtedly represents an important step in the right direction, it is unlikely to be anywhere near enough to **eradicate** these barriers altogether. We highlight our concerns about what this decision suggests about the ECB's strategic approach to EDI in Chapter 6.
- 9.7.36 We also have significant concerns about the current (over)reliance on hardship funds as the primary mechanism to address the financial barriers that currently exist. The evidence we received from Counties showed that their financial assistance budgets were largely inadequate and their approach to allocating this assistance was often inconsistent and unclear. Many Counties, in fact, had no official budget, instead considering each request on a case-by-case basis. Those that did have an official budget quoted numbers ranging from just £100 to £1,000 per player per year, which when set against the costs incurred for participation in the talent pathway are unlikely to be sufficient to remove the financial burden of the pathway for a large number of people.
- 9.7.37 As a Commission, we are also very conscious that the description of this support as 'hardship funding' can create stigma for those who require the help. Some people, quite understandably, simply do not want to be thought of as suffering from 'hardship' or highlight themselves as 'an outsider'.
- 9.7.38 This view was supported by the evidence of one County, which had made its talent pathway free at the point of use (with additional support available if required). It told us that requiring individuals to ask for financial assistance, in their experience, created a further barrier to those who are already more likely to be excluded from the pathway.
- 9.7.39 We also found that the lack of transparency around the process for applying for hardship funding presents a potential further obstacle, because many people who could benefit from support do not know about the fund and/or how to access it.
- 9.7.40 Whilst acknowledging that hardship funds do have *some* merit, it is difficult to see how they could ever represent a genuinely systemic response to the cost barriers faced by people from lower socio-economic backgrounds on the talent pathway. Indeed, by their very nature, they provide an individualised response that places the onus on those who need assistance to seek out support in particular circumstances. The scale at which this operates is, therefore, inevitably going to be limited.
- 9.7.41 Against this backdrop, we believe that the game must move beyond hardship funds as the *only* answer to the problem of cost. In our view, the only way to genuinely and systematically remove cost as a barrier is to do just that: remove direct costs associated with the talent pathway and ensure that those who cannot afford the indirect costs are properly supported (through a hardship fund or some other clear, easily accessible, non-stigmatising, process). We accept that this would place a significant financial burden on Counties and that considerable investment would be required from the ECB, but when set against the scale of the inequity within the pathway caused by financial barriers, as a Commission we are unequivocal that it is an investment that has to be made.

Scholarships reinforce the dominant link between private schools and the talent pathway

- 9.7.42 It is clear that the access to facilities, coaching, connections and other benefits that many private schools offer is a huge advantage when it comes to progressing onto and through the talent pathway. However, scholarships can provide this advantage to only a very small group of talented young cricketers from lower socio-economic groups, because the number of scholarships is limited.
- 9.7.43 There will be countless young players with great talent and potential who do not receive a scholarship. They may not have been seen. They may not have reached the level required to obtain a scholarship by the age of 10 or 12. They may be competing with the next Joe Root. The point is: sports scholarships are extremely hard to come by and many very talented players will never get one. They are by no means a systemic response to the class and socio-economic inequities within the game that often have a disproportionate impact on ethnically diverse communities.
- 9.7.44 Furthermore, relying on scholarships to enable a lucky few to progress reinforces a system in which your prospects of becoming a professional cricketer are closely linked to whether you have attended a private school. This has two obvious, and very concerning, effects.
- 9.7.45 First, removing some of the most talented young players inevitably results in an overall lowering of cricketing standards within the state school system. Those who remain are no longer playing with or against some of the best of their contemporaries. The lowering of standards widens still further the gulf in performance between state and private schools, making it even harder for state schools to compete with private schools.
- 9.7.46 This reinforces private schools' domination of school competitions, making it even clearer to parents/guardians who want their child to succeed in cricket that their best chance of doing so is to get them into the private system. You only have to look at The Cricketer Schools Guide to see the overwhelming representation of private schools: 86 out of 100 in 2022. Moreover, the incentive to invest in state school cricket is reduced if it is felt that the best cricketers are no longer there, so those with potential are deprived of the opportunity to develop it.
- 9.7.47 Secondly, scholarships reinforce the dominant link between private schools and the talent pathway. If it is assumed that the best young cricketers are all to be found in the private school system, where is the incentive to go looking elsewhere? Many young players with great potential, but who aren't fortunate enough to be offered a scholarship or to have access to the financial resources to attend private school, are much more likely to be missed. This creates a vicious cycle.
- 9.7.48 In any event, not all children want to move away from family and friends, especially if they are expected to board. The culture at private school, and the backgrounds of the pupils with whom the child would be mixing, may well be very different from what they are used to, which can be daunting and off-putting for some. We spoke to a professional player who had turned down a scholarship for those very reasons.
- 9.7.49 We heard mixed views about scholarships from people working in cricket. Whilst many were positive about the impact scholarships could have on individual players' prospects, some staff members at Counties and the ECB did acknowledge that moving to a private school on a scholarship was not always the right option. In fact, the ECB went as far as to accept that *"the need, in general, for talented youngsters to be picked up on scholarships in order to play and progress at school is hampering the bigger picture of the talent pathway."* We applaud them for acknowledging this.
- 9.7.50 Importantly, too, scholarships are not exclusively used to address financial barriers. Some scholarships are awarded specifically to players from lower socio-economic backgrounds, but others are awarded purely on the basis of cricketing talent without any means-testing element. We were told of an entire CAG team that were offered scholarships within a week of selection (presumably regardless of financial circumstances).

- 9.7.51 For all of these reasons, we consider it critical that steps are taken to ensure scholarships are not the only way that talented state school cricketers can progress into the professional game. Quite apart from issues of equity, it is in the game's own interests: there are nowhere near enough scholarship places at private school to provide meaningful opportunities for all the young cricketers in this country who have the talent to succeed. The game needs to ensure that alternative paths are available for state school children to develop, otherwise it will be restricting its own talent pool and failing to ensure that cricket, in particular at professional level, is truly a game for everyone.

9.8 Final conclusions



There are so many hurdles to overcome to just play. There's no support in schools. No facilities. No cricket coaching. The cost is prohibitive for most people in our community. The equipment, subs, transport, etc: it's just a deterrent for most people of colour. There are no coaches or role models left either. You have to have a passion for cricket already, otherwise you wouldn't bother.

Black (Caribbean) woman, parent/guardian

- 9.8.1 In this Chapter we have explained why we consider that the way in which the talent pathway model has been operating to date has unquestionably presented, and continues to present, a significant level of exclusion for players from underrepresented communities and lower socio-economic backgrounds. We believe inequity permeates every aspect of the pathway and, whilst we saw evidence of pockets of good practice being introduced, much more needs to be done.
- 9.8.2 In examining the question of equity within the talent pathway, the testimonies we received bear out the existing academic research on the subject. They point to the fact that ethnicity has a significant influence on prospects of entering and progressing through the pathway, that class, schooling and socio-economic background have, arguably, even more of an impact, and that the intersection of ethnicity plus class can make a dramatic difference.
- 9.8.3 The scarce provision of cricket in state schools, the way the pathway is structurally bound up with private schools, the cost and time associated with playing youth cricket, the lack of a systematic, contextual process for talent identification, the relative absence of diversity amongst coaches on the pathway: these are all significant barriers that are more likely to impact ethnically diverse communities and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. They also mean the majority of people we heard from have little confidence in the fairness of the talent pathway as it currently operates.
- 9.8.4 We have already said, and believe it is worth restating, that although we started our work with a general understanding of the dominance of private schools in the talent pathway, we were nevertheless shocked by the starkness of the class divide and the gulf between state and private school provision. We would fully expect private schools to produce talent, given the investment they make in facilities, coaches and time. These schools have produced some amazing players. But for as long as the system relies as heavily as it does on its links to private schools, there will never be meaningful equity in either the talent pathway or English and Welsh cricket more broadly, regardless of any diversity programmes or initiatives.
- 9.8.5 Equity in the talent pathway isn't just saying 'anyone can attend a trial'. It isn't the launch of a one-off EDI initiative. It isn't a hardship fund. And it isn't the benevolence of a scholarship system. Those might be positive steps but what is required is a fundamental change in attitudes, an acceptance of the barriers that exist and a systematic, proactive and game-wide change in approach to break down those barriers.
- 9.8.6 As we have suggested already, one key element is making the talent pathway far more financially accessible. Families should not have to pay for the privilege of a child progressing on the talent pathway and playing representative cricket.

- 9.8.7 The excellent initiatives we have mentioned, intended to drive increased participation at a grassroots level, are, on their own, not going to be enough to ensure progression onto and through the pathway. This requires expanding where ‘talent’ and ‘potential’ is sourced beyond the traditional pool of (primarily) private schools and top cricket clubs.
- 9.8.8 Routes from state schools and through alternative, non-traditional, pathways must become embedded in the talent identification and selection process rather than being seen as merely supplementary to the existing or core school and club links. This also requires **new** links to be created that match and compete with those that have developed over decades between County youth teams and the private school sector.
- 9.8.9 At the same time, cricket must ensure that talent identification and selection processes are systematic and consistent, documented, and, where appropriate, capable of challenge and appeal to ensure fairness. Equally, those responsible for talent identification and selection must be free of any conflicts of interest, ensure that biases and negative stereotypes do not affect their decisions, and build context into assessments of ‘merit’.
- 9.8.10 Addressing the barriers we have outlined in this Chapter should, as a matter of course, increase diversity within the talent pathway. But proactively ensuring diverse role models in every element of cricket – players, coaches, volunteers and staff – should also be at the front and centre of all initiatives in order to accelerate more equitable progression through the talent pathway.
- 9.8.11 In the course of gathering evidence, we have seen examples of good practice that cause us to be optimistic that a shift has started to take place already. Many of these were introduced only recently, and so it is not yet possible to assess their effectiveness. We can say, however, that in the main they tend to be relatively small and isolated examples that would need to be reproduced systematically and on a far larger scale to redress the imbalance that currently exists across cricket.
- 9.8.12 Ultimately, we believe that the entire talent pathway structure needs to be overhauled to make it more meritocratic, accountable and transparent. Without this, the existing discrimination and inequality will be perpetuated and there will never be equity in the talent pathway.

Recommendation 42

We recommend that the ECB and wider game develop a system to regularly collate and monitor EDI data with respect to entry into and progression through the talent pathway (with respect to race, class and gender).

Recommendation 43

We make the following recommendations to Government:

- a) To collect and monitor data on how much cricket is being played in state schools.
- b) To require and resource significantly higher levels of cricket in state schools.
- c) In partnership with First Class Counties, County Cricket Boards and the ECB, actively work with private schools on opening up their cricket facilities and gifting a minimum (and significant) number of coaching hours to children who attend local state schools.

Chapter 10: Recommendations

The recommendations listed below are largely grouped in accordance with the Report's Chapter headings. There are 44 recommendations, many of which are accompanied by sub-recommendations.

Overarching Recommendation

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the ECB makes an unqualified public apology for its own failings and those of the game it governs. The apology should acknowledge that racism, sexism, elitism and class-based discrimination have existed, and still exist, in the game, and recognise the impact on victims of discrimination. It should include, in particular, a direct apology for the ECB's and the wider game's historic failures in relation to women's and girls' cricket and its failure to adequately support Black cricket in England and Wales.

State of Equity in Cricket

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the ECB publishes an updated 'State of Equity in Cricket' report every three years, using as a benchmark our assessment of the State of Equity in Cricket in Chapter 4.

Culture

Recommendation 3

We recommend that, within the next 12 months, the ECB, in collaboration with its stakeholders, develops a set of cultural values (i.e. principles and expected behaviours) to guide organisations and individuals participating in English and Welsh cricket. These should form the basis of a game-wide values and behaviours framework which is explicit about the culture the game aspires to build and the behaviours it expects and rejects.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that the ECB develops a programme of ongoing 'culture health checks', similar to those UK Sport has undertaken, to ensure that it can track and monitor the progress of its initiatives to improve the cultural health of the game. This should include an ongoing mechanism to understand the lived experiences of people across the professional and recreational game.

Approach to EDI in Cricket

Recommendation 5

We recommend that:

- a) Within the next six months, the ECB puts in place mandatory, specialist, high-quality training to support the development of racial literacy amongst its leadership (Executive and Board) and the most senior leadership of the wider game (as defined in Chapter 4, State of Equity in Cricket).
- b) A continuous programme of education and training to build competency in leading EDI in cricket should be put in place for the most senior leadership of the game.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the ECB commits to being an anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-classist organisation and encourages all other cricketing organisations to do the same. The ECB should ensure that this is reflected in its strategic approach to EDI, including the development of new, or revision of existing, game-wide strategies or plans, and the development of its game-wide values and behaviours framework.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the ECB adopts a clear and consistent strategic approach to issues of EDI. To achieve this:

- a) Advancing EDI should not be relegated beneath or subsumed within commercial or other considerations, including the protection of reputation and public relations.
- b) There should be greater emphasis specifically on equity, alongside diversity and inclusion, when EDI decisions are made.
- c) The ECB must be willing to unambiguously name discrimination (e.g. racism, sexism and class-based discrimination) and include clear commitments to tackle the issue, within its strategic documents, where the evidence indicates that it is a problem.
- d) Identity holders must no longer be relied upon to highlight failures and drive change within cricket.
- e) The ECB should consider EDI in all aspects of its operations by carrying out EDI impact assessments for its existing and new programmes, initiatives and policies.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the ECB substantially increases the money allocated towards advancing EDI in all areas of the game, particularly at recreational and talent pathway level.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that the ECB complies with the Public Sector Equality Duty wherever possible, given its management of a public asset, its receipt of significant amounts of public funds and, most importantly, the benefits that doing so will have on advancing EDI across the game.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that, within the next six months, the ECB establishes an Executive-level Chief Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Officer role with a singular focus on EDI, and puts in place sufficient resources to support EDI delivery. We recommend that the Chief EDI Officer sits on the ECB Board for the short to medium-term and/or until there is improved performance across EDI outcomes described in our assessment of the State of Equity in Cricket in Chapter 4.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that, within the next 12 months, the ECB undertakes an in-depth examination of the decline of cricket in Black communities in England and Wales and develops a targeted action plan to reverse that decline. This should include:

- a) Providing increased and sustained funding for the very successful ACE Programme.
- b) The identification of Black-led cricket clubs across England and Wales and an offer of financial support and capacity building to develop targeted programmes in their local communities.
- c) Proactive and extensive engagement with stakeholders from Black communities when developing the plan, using the evidence-based and user insight-led approach taken under the South Asian Action Plan.

Recommendation 12

We recommend that, within the next 12 months, the ECB undertakes an in-depth examination of the class barriers that exist in cricket and develops a game-wide strategy to remove them.

Recommendation 13

We recommend that the ECB introduces gender-based budgeting into their next, and future, business planning cycle to analyse the fairness of their resource allocation decisions and the impact they have on gender equality. Spending and investment decisions can have very different impacts on women and men, because of different starting points, needs and priorities. The analysis conducted to inform decision-making should adopt an intersectional approach that considers race, class and gender.

Recommendation 14

We recommend that the ECB and the wider game increase, at pace, the levels of investment in the core infrastructure and operations of the women's and girls' game, reflecting the outcome of gender-based budgeting.

Recommendation 15

We recommend that there should be a fundamental overhaul of the professional women players' pay structure within English and Welsh cricket and that there should be equal pay at domestic level by 2029 and at international level by 2030, as follows:

International and domestic level

- a) With immediate effect, there should be equality for all working conditions between women and men.
- b) The approach to the calculation of remuneration (i.e. through a three year agreement/Memorandum of Understanding) should be equal and standardised between men and women.

International level

- a) Match fees between England Men and England Women should be equalised with immediate effect.
- b) Other forms of England Women's pay/fees, including average salaries, captain's allowances and win bonuses, should be equal to the England Men's white ball team by 2028.
- c) England Women's average commercial pay (i.e. payment for promotional appearances) should be equal to England Men's average commercial pay by 2028.
- d) England Women's prize money for the ICC ODI World Cup and T20 World Cup should be topped up by the ECB in line with England Men's until the ICC makes these equal.
- e) There should be overall equal pay at international level by 2030. By this, we mean average pay, because we recognise that there will be different levels of pay within the teams, with the top players (men or women) being paid the most.

Domestic level

- a) Rookie contracts should be introduced to the Women's Regional Teams (WRTs) and minimum salaries for WRT players should be equal to First Class County players by the start of the 2024 season.
- b) WRTs should be fully professionalised by the start of the 2025 season by increasing the number of WRT contracts to 15 to make a full squad.
- c) Average pay and prize money should be equal by 2029 based on the following schedule (in this context, average pay includes both red and white ball cricket):
 - ◆ 50% of the men's by 2025
 - ◆ 75% of the men's by 2027
 - ◆ 100% of the men's i.e. equal by 2029
- d) The women's salaries for The Hundred are currently 25% of the men's in terms of overall salary pot, captain's bonus and the amounts in each of the salary tiers. These should all be equal by 2025.

Governance and Leadership

Recommendation 16

We recommend that the women's game should have equal representation to the men's game throughout English and Welsh cricket's governance structure, as follows:

- a) Direct representation, in the same way as FCCs, within the ECB's membership structure and Articles of Association, the ECB Board, and Committees and Sub-Boards.
- b) Any Professional and Recreational Game Committees and Assemblies should cover both men's and women's cricket, which should be represented equally.

Recommendation 17

We recommend that the ECB's Articles of Association should be amended within the next six months to better reflect its role and responsibilities as the sport's national governing body in relation to EDI. Amendments should include the following:

- a) It should be a fundamental 'Objective' for the ECB to promote and deliver EDI in professional and recreational cricket (with the necessary ancillary powers to do so at pace, including holding members to account for meeting minimum standards).
- b) There should be a specific obligation to promote, develop and grow women's and girls' cricket.
- c) The references to upholding the spirit and traditions of cricket should be revised to be subject to the overriding duty to promote EDI.
- d) The annual reappointment of Directors should be removed given the fact that it likely has a limiting effect on the governing body's ability to lead the medium-to long-term strategic level change required to improve EDI across the game.

Recommendation 18

We recommend to MCC that the annual fixtures between Eton and Harrow and between Oxford and Cambridge are no longer played at Lord's after 2023. These two events should be replaced by national finals' days for state school U15 competitions for boys and girls (see Recommendation 38) and a national finals' day for competitions for men's and women's university teams.

Recommendation 19

We recommend that the ECB revises and clarifies its processes and criteria for allocating, suspending, cancelling and reinstating high profile matches to place greater emphasis on EDI. There is clear evidence that being allocated such matches, or having the right to host them withdrawn, is a powerful tool to encourage compliance with EDI. The current process for match allocation (via a tender process against six criteria) expires in 2024 and we have not identified any formal process for deciding to suspend or cancel matches. The revisions should:

- a) Ensure greater emphasis on EDI in the criteria for allocation, giving EDI criteria equal status to the most important of the other criteria.
- b) Consider making a bidder's performance on EDI a 'gateway criterion' requiring hosts to meet stretching minimum EDI standards in order to be able to bid for a high profile match.
- c) Introduce a clear and transparent decision-making process for suspension, cancellation and reinstatement of high profile matches.
- d) The Cricket Discipline Commission (or any future adjudication body if it is replaced and/or renamed) should have the power to suspend or cancel the right to host high profile matches for regulatory breaches, in particular related to EDI.

Recommendation 20

We recommend that stronger and clearer EDI standards are included in the next iteration of the County Partnership Agreement (CPA) and in the County Governance Framework (CGF), and are introduced into the Regional Host Agreements relating to Women's Regional Teams where appropriate. These should include, as a minimum:

- a) An increased gender target for First Class County (FCC) and County Cricket Board (CCB) representation (50%, as already in place for the ECB itself) and a formal, specific ethnicity target for each FCC and CCB that reflects their County demographic.
- b) Introducing FCC and CCB Board targets by reference to socio-economic diversity.
- c) Game-wide targets to increase diversity at Chair and Chief Executive level across the County game, particularly by reference to ethnicity, gender and class/socio-economic status.
- d) A requirement to improve the diversity and inclusivity of County memberships focusing particularly on ethnicity, gender and class/socio-economic status, with targets based on each County's demographic. Measures should include reviewing the types and cost of memberships available and targeted community engagement programmes.
- e) Financial incentives for Counties that meet their EDI targets.
- f) Enhanced mechanisms for collecting and monitoring EDI data at all levels of County organisations to ensure consistent reporting and analysis across the game.

Recommendation 21

We recommend that the available sanctions for failing to reach EDI standards within the next iteration of the County Partnership Agreement should be widened and strengthened, and that the game should report publicly on performance against those standards.

Recommendation 22

We recommend that, within the next 12 months, a new regulatory body should be established, independent from the ECB. The new regulatory body, not the ECB, should be responsible for investigating alleged regulatory breaches and for making decisions about whether to bring charges.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) The new body should comprise a Regulatory Board with its own Executive Regulatory Team.
- b) The new body should be in a subsidiary company with its own ring-fenced budget, and its own legal counsel and investigatory staff, rather than sharing the ECB's legal and investigative resources.
- c) The ECB should appoint the first Chair of the Regulatory Board using expert external recruitment assistance to run an open and transparent recruitment process, with lay involvement to provide independent scrutiny and quality assurance. Future Chairs should be appointed by the Regulatory Board itself.
- d) The Chair of the Regulatory Board should appoint remaining members of the Regulatory Board using the same process. Board members must have an appropriate balance of skills, expertise and, importantly, diversity.
- e) Individuals within the new regulatory body charged with carrying out investigations must include people with specific experience of investigating discrimination complaints.

Recommendation 23

We recommend that, as far as possible, there should be a single set of regulations, and non-regulatory standards, which apply across both professional and recreational cricket, made by the ECB (in collaboration with the wider game).

Recommendation 24

We recommend that **regulatory** matters should be reserved to cover only rules relating to discipline and integrity. The precise scope of rules relating to discipline and integrity should be resolved by the ECB in collaboration with the wider game, but should certainly include anti-discrimination and safeguarding rules.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) There should be substantially greater clarity on what is or is not a regulatory matter, and the process for dealing with it. All current regulations that do not relate to discipline and integrity (for example, pitch regulations) should be renamed so they are no longer called 'regulations', to avoid confusion.
- b) The Cricket Discipline Commission (or any future adjudication body if it is replaced and/or renamed) should continue to hear cases involving regulatory matters (see also Recommendation 32).

Recommendation 25

We recommend that **non-regulatory** matters should be redefined as all other rules and standards etc. within the game that are not 'regulatory' matters (i.e. they do not cover rules relating to discipline and integrity). They would include, for example, **standards** in the County Partnership Agreement (CPA), including EDI-related standards.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) As well as dealing with regulatory matters, the new, independent regulatory body should be responsible for investigating, and making recommendations with respect to, the compliance by relevant cricketing organisations with **non-regulatory matters where they relate to EDI**, such as the EDI-related minimum standards within the CPA and County Governance Framework. This is necessary to ensure that any conflicts of interests that may arise between the promotion of EDI and the promotion of the ECB's other interests (e.g. its commercial considerations) are avoided.
- b) The ECB should determine the consequences for breaches of non-regulatory matters. However, non-regulatory matters that relate to EDI would follow the compliance and recommendation process by the independent regulatory body described above.

Recommendation 26

We recommend that all strategic and operational decisions made by the ECB Executive Management Team and/ or ECB Board (or other governance committees) should take account of any EDI implications. To enable this, the ECB should create standard templates for decision-making reports that include the following:

- a) The outcome of the EDI impact assessment conducted to inform the development of the proposal (see Recommendation 7).
- b) Where appropriate, explicit reference to how the proposal is aligned to the ECB's core purpose and values (see Recommendation 3).

Recommendation 27

We recommend that the ECB strengthens the diversity of its Board and Executive Management Team across ethnicity, gender and class/socio-economic status, achieving demonstrable progress within the next 24 months and introducing longer term targets.

Complaints

Recommendation 28

We recommend that the ECB reports clearly, publicly and annually on complaints in the professional and recreational game, including numbers, overall outcomes and actions taken to address existing and emerging patterns of concern.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) Counties should be required to report key information about complaints to the ECB.
- b) The ECB and the wider game should develop a comprehensive system to gather insights and promulgate learnings and best practice throughout the game relating to complaints.

Recommendation 29

We recommend that, given the scale and scope of volunteers in cricket, the ECB, in collaboration with County cricket organisations, develops a game-wide volunteer strategy that includes how volunteers will be encouraged to contribute to cricket's EDI aims. In developing this strategy:

- a) The ECB should utilise the significant learning and best practice developed in the charitable sector.
- b) The strategy should make clear how volunteers will be trained and supported to develop their EDI knowledge and skills, including specific training on discrimination and sexual harassment.

Recommendation 30

We recommend that the ECB ensures that centralised training and specialist support is available to all cricketing organisations (including leagues and clubs) so that they are properly equipped to deal with complaints relating to discrimination, whether informal or formal, and any associated complaints process.

Sub-recommendation:

- a) The professional game (i.e. First Class Counties, Women's Regional Teams and teams in The Hundred) should invest in high quality HR and EDI expertise within their staff.

Recommendation 31

We recommend that leaders of cricketing organisations and match officials should be required to uphold high standards of behaviour, and be accountable for their failure to do so.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) There should be a mandatory reporting obligation for leaders and match officials in relation to discrimination.
- b) Leaders of cricketing organisations should properly oversee and support complaints handling processes, and be involved in learning lessons and driving change.

Recommendation 32

We recommend the following changes with respect to the Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) or any future adjudication body if it is replaced and/or renamed:

- a) The CDC's jurisdiction should cover everyone working in the professional game, including Chairs, Chief Executives and all other 'off field' staff.
- b) The sanctions available to the CDC should be strengthened, including the power to suspend or cancel the right to host high profile matches (see Recommendation 19).
- c) CDC Panels in discrimination cases must have specialist EDI expertise or access to specialist EDI support, and there should be appropriate levels of diversity amongst those who can sit on such Panels.
- d) The CDC must be properly resourced by the ECB (in terms of personnel and finance). In particular, Panel members should be paid and dedicated administrative resources should be provided.
- e) The CDC should have its own website on which it should publish full written reasons for every decision, save in exceptional circumstances which should be clearly defined.
- f) There should be greater communication between the CDC and the ECB about cases that the former has handled, and the lessons learned.
- g) Chairs of the CDC should be appointed by the ECB using expert external recruitment assistance to run an open and transparent recruitment process, with lay involvement to provide independent scrutiny and quality assurance.
- h) The Chair of the CDC should appoint remaining Panel members using the same process. Panel members must have an appropriate balance of skills, expertise and, importantly, diversity.
- i) The Chair and Panel members should be appointed for a four-year term and serve a maximum of two terms.

Recommendation 33

We recommend that the ECB revises the game's regulations, in particular its discrimination-related regulations, to ensure that they are capable of adequately addressing complaints (including discrimination-related complaints), and provide an appropriate range of potential sanctions.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) The Anti-Discrimination Code (the Code) should be expanded beyond the characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 to include socio-economic status.
- b) The Code should explicitly cover victimisation and make clear that it would be grounds for disciplinary action.
- c) The Guidance to the Code should be rewritten to create a shared and better understanding of what discrimination is, using examples to illustrate unacceptable behaviour, describing conduct that would lead to escalating sanctions, and making clear what 'zero tolerance' actually means.
- d) The ECB itself, and its Board members and staff, should be subject to the same regulatory obligations and jurisdiction as everyone working in the professional game.
- e) There should be greater clarity on how charging decisions are made, by whom and against what criteria.
- f) Seriousness assessments should be made against clear criteria when complaints are received to help determine how to respond.
- g) There should be consistency between complaints processes throughout the game, with the ECB setting minimum standards that Counties must comply with.
- h) There should be clear and accessible guidance for how complaints will be handled and what the process will involve, including which body will make decisions, the indicative timescales (allowing flexibility for more complex cases), the support available and the potential outcomes.
- i) The ECB and wider game should adopt the 'good practice in discrimination complaints process' that is set out in Chapter 8, Complaints.

Recommendation 34

We recommend that the ECB and wider game put in place processes to ensure that complaints can be raised and addressed by informal (as well as formal) means, including through the use of mediation before or after a formal process has started and through the introduction of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians across the ECB, MCC and the Counties (where not already in place).

Schools and the talent pathway

Recommendation 35

We recommend that the entire talent pathway structure should be overhauled to make it more meritocratic, inclusive, accountable, transparent and consistent. The new structure should deliver a systematic approach across all Counties, including with respect to: the relationship between Counties and schools, the direct and indirect costs of participation, the stages of the pathway, talent identification methods, where talent is sourced, selection and deselection, and appeals processes. These should be enforced through the County Partnership Agreement (CPA) between the ECB and individual Counties.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) The ECB, within the next 12 months, should put in place a State Schools Action Plan. ECB money allocated to cricket below the U14 level should explicitly be re-allocated with the aim of 'levelling the playing field', delivering the investment, organisational structures, and approaches to talent identification necessary to ensure that there exists an equal pathway into professional cricket for the very large majority of the England and Wales population that attend only a state school.
- b) The Action Plan should be properly resourced, with appropriate levels of leadership and key performance indicators built into each County's CPA.

Recommendation 36

We recommend that, to increase equity and reduce barriers to access, particularly for children from lower socio-economic and state school backgrounds, participation in the talent pathway should be made entirely free of direct costs charged by Counties so that no player trialling for or participating in the 2024-25 pathway needs to pay.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) Financial assistance should also be made available where necessary to cover other costs incurred by participants in lower socio-economic groups (e.g. travel, cost of equipment) and practical steps should be taken to provide free transport to training/trials/matches.
- b) Much clearer and more stringent requirements should be included in the County Partnership Agreement about the provision of this financial assistance (currently referred to as 'hardship funds') along with an effective monitoring system to ensure that Counties are held accountable in this regard.

Recommendation 37

We recommend that the ECB and the Counties proactively seek to expand **how** they source 'talent' and **where** they source 'talent' from, to include those who come through 'non-traditional' routes.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) Nominations by schools/clubs should be abolished and replaced with open trials.
- b) Counties should expand their sources for spotting talent to focus more on state schools and local clubs.
- c) The resources, recognition and promotion of 'non-traditional' formats of cricket (e.g. Cage Cricket) should be increased, and those who excel within such formats should be incorporated within the talent identification process.
- d) The ECB should dramatically scale up investment in accessible, free, year-round community cricket provision (e.g. Chance to Shine Street) for those living in areas where access to cricket is otherwise limited (e.g. areas of inner-city deprivation).

Recommendation 38

We recommend that, by the start of the 2025 season, the ECB introduces accessible County - and national - level T20 competitions for state school boys' and girls' cricket teams in the U14 and U15 (school years 9 and 10) categories, to incentivise participation and aspiration in the state sector. Winners of the County-level competitions in school year 9 (U14s) would progress to national-level competitions in school year 10 (U15s). A national finals' day for the state school U15 competitions should replace the annual Eton v. Harrow match at Lord's (see Recommendation 18).

Recommendation 39

We recommend that the ECB, in collaboration with the Counties, develops a more robust and systematic approach to talent identification to be used on the talent pathway.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) Develop a 'charter of best practice' for the engagement of coaches, which includes declaring and managing conflicts of interests, and explore expanding the good practice in some Counties (including removing private coaches from the County Age Groups and barring those who have privately coached individuals from involvement in selection decisions).
- b) Introduce mandatory training for scouts, coaches and selectors encompassing how to recognise and manage bias, understand environmental factors and make contextual selection decisions based on a holistic view of a player's potential and merit.
- c) Develop and increase the use of open and transparent selection and deselection criteria, providing clear explanations with visual evidence where possible (such as video and photographs identifying individual strengths and weaknesses, areas for development etc).
- d) Ensure that there is an appropriate appeals process, and that processes are in place to hold decision-makers within the talent pathway accountable for unfair and/or discriminatory decisions.
- e) Take proactive steps to increase the diversity (gender, race, class) of scouts, coaches and selectors at all levels (i.e. at grassroots and within the talent pathway).

Recommendation 40

We recommend that selection for representative, inter-County cricket should begin at the U14 level and not before. This recommendation will mean that the widely documented challenges associated with talent identification in younger children are removed for the first three years of a typical pathway programme (U10-U13). Placing less emphasis on selection and deselection from U10 age groups onwards mitigates the very significant structural advantages that young children who attend private schools have over their state school counterparts. Coaches, children and parents will be relieved of many of the pressures and liabilities associated with the current system. Importantly, indirect costs such as travel and parental time will be further reduced, enabling more children to play a high standard of cricket locally, lowering the barriers to participation.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) County pathway cricketers in the U10-U13 age categories should be selected for enlarged 'district' or 'regional' squads, and play intra-County 'district' or 'regional' matches, depending on the size and local needs of each County. The numbers involved in intra-County training squads and matches will inevitably vary, but the overarching aim should be to involve as many young players with potential as possible.
- b) Children in the U10-U13 age groups should not take part in residential tours or cricket festivals organised by their County to free up resources and the cost barriers associated with these.
- c) Intra-County cricket at the U10-U13 age groups should be played in generic 'whites', without the need for County-branded kit.
- d) When organising intra-County fixtures, Counties should explore options for 'bio-banding' (by physical maturity) and structure match-play in the interests of a balance between teams and the widest range of experiences in terms of batting and bowling for all players.

Recommendation 41

We recommend that, with the need for Counties to allocate resources to training a narrow County squad now removed (see Recommendation 40), County Age Group coaches and pathway leaders should be tasked, as part of the State Schools Action Plan (see Recommendation 35), with delivering a positive state school cricket offering at the U10-U13 level. This should enhance existing provision in primary schools (year 5 and year 6) and fill a significant gap in secondary state school cricket provision in school years 7 and 8. These new training and coaching options in state schools should be delivered by qualified County coaches, enabling them to reorient their engagement towards the state sector, and to develop a better appreciation of cricketing talent there.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) In addition, Counties and the ECB should invest substantially in increased Chance to Shine provision in state secondary schools, providing more opportunities for secondary school boys and girls to continue playing cricket at or through school beyond the age of 11 (particularly between the ages of 11 and 14).
- b) Counties, in collaboration with the ECB, should further develop meaningful partnerships with local cricket clubs to make their facilities available to children attending local state schools, for example through clubs offering their net facilities and outfielders for weekday 'after school clubs' at times when local club facilities are often unused. Where ground maintenance presents barriers to achieving this, additional investment should be delivered to support the club.

Recommendation 42

We recommend that the ECB and wider game develop a system to regularly collate and monitor EDI data with respect to entry into and progression through the talent pathway (with respect to race, class and gender).

Recommendation 43

We make the following recommendations to Government:

- a) To collect and monitor data on how much cricket is being played in state schools.
- b) To require and resource significantly higher levels of cricket in state schools.
- c) In partnership with First Class Counties, County Cricket Boards and the ECB, actively work with private schools on opening up their cricket facilities and gifting a minimum (and significant) number of coaching hours to children who attend local state schools.

Recommendation 44

We recommend that the ECB publishes a detailed and considered response to this Report and each of its recommendations within the next three months, reflecting game-wide discussion on their implementation and including clarity on accountability for delivery.

Sub-recommendations:

- a) The ECB should establish, within the next six months, an independent steering group to monitor progress made in implementing the ICEC's recommendations.
- b) The Chair and members of the steering group should be fully independent of the ECB, have the trust and confidence of communities that have experienced discrimination, and include expertise in cultural and organisational change, discrimination and cricket.
- c) The steering group should publish an independent assessment of the ECB's and wider game's delivery against its commitments by the end of 2025.
- d) The ECB should provide ongoing updates on progress implementing the ICEC's recommendations to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Acknowledgements

A great deal of dedication and collective effort enabled the production of this Report.

We would firstly like to emphasise our thanks to the thousands of people who chose to share their insights and experiences with us. For many, coming forward to share these stories took a great deal of courage. We were moved by their drive to improve the game and overcome the challenges faced by cricket communities. To those who responded to our lived experiences survey or other calls for evidence, those who participated in online qualitative research, and the many who took time to meet with us, we are deeply grateful for your invaluable contributions.

We also appreciate the contributions made by those organisations that responded to our extensive requests for information. We recognise the burden that this will have placed on those with responsibility for gathering and delivering this evidence. Thank you for your considerable efforts.

Many individuals contributed to the direction of the work outside the formal evidence giving processes. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to them for directing their expert knowledge and insights into the shape of our endeavour.

We would like to thank the researchers we commissioned to conduct and analyse our lived experiences survey, which received responses far in excess of expectations. Their commitment to bringing these thousands of stories to life on our behalf was remarkable.

We are particularly grateful to those that were gracious in permitting us to access their knowledge, resources and networks to encourage as many people as possible within their communities to make contributions to this work. These include the leaders and staff in cricketing organisations who promoted evidence gathering and government officials for sharing their informative work.

The Commission extends its thanks to all ECB staff who helped facilitate our task. We reserve particular thanks to Richard Thompson and Clare Connor, and wish to express our gratitude to David Mahoney and Jon Deacon for their diligence in supporting a thorough and robust approach to help guide lasting change. The Chair would also like to acknowledge the commitment and personal support she received from the highly respected and sadly departed ECB Senior Independent Director, Brenda Trenowden.

Finally, the Commission would like to extend a special thank you to the partners and staff of Travers Smith, who hosted us and provided significant administrative assistance pro bono, and to Sir John Major and Michael Holding for their support for this work.

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Equality and Human Rights Commission

Officials at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Officials at the Department for Education

Sport England

⁴³⁴ Over the course of its work the Commission was supported by a number of individuals for a range of durations.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference

- 1.1 The Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (the Commission) was announced by the England and Wales Cricket Board (the ECB) on 2 March 2021 to examine issues of equity in the ECB led sport of cricket (the sport).
- 1.2 The Commission will examine questions of equity in relation to race, gender and class within the sport including access to the sport, the pathways to professional level cricket, and barriers to access and progression through such pathways.
- 1.3 The Commission will examine and consider written and oral evidence, whether current or historical. It will encourage and take evidence from all those who wish to give it so that it can listen to and record the lived experiences of those who have been subjected to, or have witnessed discrimination or prejudice based on race, gender and class. However, the Commission will not investigate individual complaints.
- 1.4 The Commission shall also review the strategic decision-making and approach of the ECB in relation to its work on race, gender and class. It will consider the types of data collected, and how that data is used by the ECB to support its strategic decision-making.
- 1.5 The Commission will also examine, in the context of race, gender and class:
 - i) the historic and current culture within the sport;
 - ii) the current governance and leadership of the ECB and within the sport;
 - iii) the efficiency, effectiveness and application of the current grievance, disciplinary and complaints handling processes, whether formal or informal;
 - iv) the whistleblowing procedures that are in place and whether or not they are appropriate and effective.
- 1.6 The Commission will highlight areas of good practice, as they relate to issues of race, gender and class, whether within the sport or from other sports.
- 1.7 The Commission will produce a written report once it has completed its work. If appropriate it will make practical recommendations as to how the ECB, and the sport, can make good on the issues that are identified. Where issues are drawn to the Commission's attention that are outside its current scope (race, gender and class) and they relate to protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act 2010, the Commission will highlight these within its report and make further recommendations to the ECB in this regard.

Appendix 2: Commissioner Biographies



CINDY BUTTS (Chair)

Cindy has over 20 years of experience improving access to justice, tackling inequality and complaints handling. She currently has a portfolio career which includes being a Lay Member of the House of Commons Speaker's Committee for the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority and a Lay Member of the House of Lords Conduct Committee.

Cindy previously held a Crown appointment as a Commissioner at the Criminal Cases Review Commission and formerly served as a Commissioner at the Independent Police Complaints Commission. Prior to this she was the Deputy Chair of

the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) where she had responsibility for setting the strategic direction of the Metropolitan Police Service. As the MPA Deputy Chair she led on organisational and culture reforms following the Stephen Lawrence (Macpherson) Inquiry and chaired a range of inquiries into equalities issues. Cindy previously served as a Trustee of the charity Kick it Out which is striving to eradicate all forms of discrimination in football.

Cindy has advised various international Governments on police oversight and citizen engagement.

She is a Visiting Fellow of BPP University.



SIR BRENDAN BARBER

Brendan Barber currently serves on the Joint Industry Board for the electrical contracting industry. He served as the Chair of the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service from 2014 to 2020 and as General Secretary of the TUC from 2003 to 2012.

He has also served on the Financial Services Culture Board, the Court of Directors of the Bank of England, and the boards of Transport for London, Openreach and Sport England. He was knighted in 2013 for services to employment relations.



MICHELLE MOORE

Michelle Moore is a multi-award-winning leadership coach, author, educator and international speaker with vast experience of leading initiatives at the intersection of sport and social change. Voted as one of the 50 most influential women in sport in the UK, she is a globally recognised executive on leadership, strategic partnerships and race equity.

Based on a twenty year career in senior leadership roles across sport, government and education, her pioneering advocacy work and coaching and leadership programmes have transformed the lives of professionals, young people, athletes, and the culture of many organisations. Winner of four national changemaker awards, Michelle combines her campaigning roles with a senior honorary associate lecturer role at the University of Worcester.



DR MICHAEL COLLINS

Dr Michael Collins is Associate Professor of Modern British History at University College London (UCL).

Since 2007, he has taught and published research on the history of the British Empire, decolonisation, national identity, immigration, race and racism in postwar Britain. From 2019-2022 he served as a vice dean in the Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences at UCL, working on a range of issues closely related to diversity and inclusion.

His current research project looks at the history of cricket in the context of Caribbean migration to England since 1948. His book - *Windrush Cricket: Caribbean Migration and the Remaking of Postwar England* - will be published by Oxford University Press (OUP) in 2024.

He has previously served on Middlesex County Cricket Club's diversity & inclusion committee and coached junior cricket at Chesham Cricket Club, Buckinghamshire.



ZAFAR ANSARI

Between 2010 and 2017, Zafar played professional cricket for Surrey County Cricket Club, having been involved with the Club's age-group teams since the age of 8. He made 175 first-team appearances for Surrey across all formats. In 2015, Zafar made his debut for England in a one-day international against Ireland. The following year he was picked to tour Bangladesh and India, where he played three Test Matches.

After retiring from professional cricket, Zafar worked as a youth advocate for the charity Just for Kids Law, supporting young people in disputes relating to housing, immigration, school exclusions and the provision of social care. Between 2018 and 2020, alongside training to become a lawyer, Zafar also volunteered for the charity Inquest and the Refugee Council's Refugee Cricket Project, and wrote a series of columns for Wisden Cricket Monthly Magazine. Since September 2021, Zafar has been practising as a barrister at Blackstone Chambers, specialising in public, employment and sports law.

Appendix 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This Appendix describes the formation and scope of the Commission and how our substantial research programme was conducted.

3.2 Formation of the Commission

Appointing Commissioners

- 3.2.1 The Chair was appointed by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) in March 2021 to lead an independent Commission.
- 3.2.2 The Chair sought to appoint four Commissioners based on a specification developed to ensure expertise in cricket, equity and organisational change. An open recruitment process was run with the assistance of an agency and interviews were conducted with the support of an independent panel member. Whilst Commissioners were not classed as public appointees, the recruitment process was conducted in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments 2016 and in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life (The Nolan Principles).¹
- 3.2.3 Prior to appointment, Commissioners were required to declare any interest which might result in perceived or actual conflict with the role. Possible conflicts were considered and managed as they arose throughout the life of the Commission in accordance with the ICEC conflict of interest policy. The appointment of four Commissioners was finalised in July 2021 and our biographies, alongside the Chair's, can be found in Appendix 2.

Commission support

- 3.2.4 We were supported by a small Secretariat team. The Head of Secretariat was appointed by the Chair and the remaining appointments were made jointly. Our values were established at the outset to guide our formation. These were: independent; inclusive; evidence based; transparent; and collaborative.
- 3.2.5 In July 2021, we launched a website announcing our formation and intention to operate and publish independently of the ECB. During August 2021 we procured a press office for media strategy and engagement. This service was provided by Coldr, a strategic and inclusive business communications consultancy.
- 3.2.6 We also received pro bono services from the law firm Travers Smith, who provided meeting spaces and a substantial amount of administrative support.

Terms of Reference and research priorities

- 3.2.7 From the outset, the need to examine the lived experiences of people who had faced discrimination in cricket and the legacy this had created for the game was placed at the heart of the Commission's work. Lived experience approaches, in the most basic sense, are an attempt to hear the voices of people who experience discrimination in their own words, without a preconceived framework of interpretation.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>

- 3.2.8 We developed our own Terms of Reference having received broad proposals from the ECB. We focused on the most important areas deliverable within resource capacity and given work conducted by others in and around cricket.
- 3.2.9 The decision to focus primarily on ‘race’, ‘gender’ and ‘class’ was taken following a refinement process which included meeting a range of stakeholders to identify the most commonly called for actions to improve equity, a preliminary study of documents and data provided by the ECB, and a literature review. The literature review was undertaken by the research agency Versiti. The objective was to gain an understanding of existing research relating to equity in cricket, and in areas where insight was unavailable for cricket, work which was transferable from other sports. This process also helped to inform the key lines of inquiry within the research themes.
- 3.2.10 Commissioners met on 24 June 2021 to consider the outputs of the refinement process and agree the Terms of Reference. These were ratified by the ECB Board in July 2021 (see Appendix 1).
- 3.2.11 Later that month, Commissioners conducted a workshop to identify the key research priorities and the evidence gathering needed to deliver against the Terms of Reference. This highlighted four key themes: governance and leadership (including the ECB’s approach to EDI), complaints and discipline processes, the talent pathway into professional cricket, and cricket’s culture. Analysis of good practice was also included, across all these themes. These themes informed the design of the Commission’s research programme. Our Terms of Reference did not extend to investigating individual complaints.

Consideration of evidence

- 3.2.12 We met in excess of 60 times between July 2021 and May 2023 to review research, agree stakeholder engagement, oversee risk management, hear direct oral evidence and finalise conclusions. Meetings ranged from half to full day formal and informal sessions.
- 3.2.13 In total, in addition to the thousands of responses to the lived experiences survey, we received evidence from more than 126 people and organisations. This figure includes those who provided oral evidence, those who responded to our Call for Written Evidence, and County and Regional Survey respondents.
- 3.2.14 We considered it paramount to identify accountability and learnings for the game as a whole, as opposed to focusing on specific individuals or organisations. Our view was that this enabled fulsome and open sharing of in-depth insights and facts and ensured that our work was genuinely systemic. We established an aligned naming policy whereby individuals and specific County cricket organisations would not be named or linked to evidence or research gathered by the Commission. An exception to this was established for use if key leaders in the game failed to respond to our requests for information without reasonable explanation. This was communicated to FCCs during early engagement and each of them delivered on all requests. The policy did allow for naming individuals and organisations linked to publicly available information. The ECB and MCC were also excluded from anonymisation due to the unique nature of each of these organisations.

3.3 Evidence gathering

Document requests to the ECB

- 3.3.1 We made a series of document and information requests to the ECB.
- 3.3.2 In March 2021, an initial request was made aimed at providing the Commission with a full understanding of the landscape of cricket in England and Wales. Alongside detailing the stakeholder map, it covered previous, current and planned strategies, policies and activities relating to equity, diversity and inclusion from the ECB and the wider game. In April 2021, this initial request resulted in 80 documents being provided by the ECB.

- 3.3.3 The ECB has launched and updated many action plans and strategies throughout the life of our work. The ECB informed us about actions they considered as examples of good equity, diversity and inclusion practice throughout. They also provided media monitoring to supplement that undertaken by the Secretariat and Coldr.
- 3.3.4 Between April 2021 and Autumn 2022, we submitted a series of information requests to resolve gaps in knowledge and evidence from the ECB. We set 5 September 2022 as the deadline for conclusion of evidence gathering. Later that month, the ECB requested that further information relating to complaints and discipline processes and oversight be accepted into evidence. We agreed given the crucial nature of the content to the successful conclusion of our objectives. Submissions relating to this extension concluded on 23 December 2022.
- 3.3.5 The Secretariat reviewed all documents and information provided by the ECB, remitting key material for Commissioners' attention. In total, in excess of 150 individual ECB documents were used to inform our work.

Calls for Evidence

- 3.3.6 Our formal Call for Evidence ran in two phases.
- 3.3.7 The first stage was a call to hear lived experiences from as many people as possible in cricket. This was conducted through an online survey, open from 9 November 2021 to 21 December 2021. The survey included questions on how participants self-identify, their lived experiences and the views they held on equity and leadership in cricket. The survey was anonymously completed unless participants volunteered for follow up qualitative research contact.
- 3.3.8 4,156 responses were received, a far larger volume than had been anticipated during design. This significant response was propelled by the timing of the first DCMS Select Committee Hearing into Racism in Cricket, which took place on 16 November 2021.
- 3.3.9 The online survey was publicised through press and major broadcast outlets including Sky Sports and BBC Sport. The Chair conducted television and radio interviews to emphasise the importance to the work of the Commission of hearing lived experience from as many as possible with an interest in the game. Specific media outreach was conducted to reach Black and South Asian communities and others underrepresented in areas of the game. The survey was promoted in tandem via ECB social media channels and distributed to stakeholders via their mailing lists. This activity targeted ECB staff, ECB contracted players, the professional and recreational game and ECB partners. It was also distributed to the Professional Cricketers' Association (PCA), Women's Regional Teams (WRTs) and County cricket organisations with the request that they promote the opportunity to contribute on their websites and directly to their stakeholders.
- 3.3.10 Two research agencies, Versiti and The Foundation, were commissioned to execute the survey and analyse responses. The resultant 'It's Not Banter' Report in Annex 1 sets out the methodology and approach to this significant study.
- 3.3.11 The second stage of evidence gathering was the 'Call for Written Evidence' which ran between 10 March 2022 and 20 April 2022. This focused on specific aspects of the Terms of Reference and was targeted primarily at organisations with relevant information and expertise in cricket and equality. A set of 22 detailed questions organised under the Commission's key themes was used alongside free text opportunities to submit matters for our attention. It ran as an online survey on the ICEC website. The option to email submissions was also available. The Call for Written Evidence was also distributed directly to the ECB, FCCs and CCBs, MCC and a range of cricketing and equalities organisations. A total of 96 responses were received. 49 of these came from organisations, including all 18 FCCs, 10 CCBs, the ECB and MCC. The research organisation TONIC was commissioned to analyse responses and report on findings. Their report can be found at Annex 2.
- 3.3.12 These two reports substantially informed our findings and recommendations.

Oral evidence sessions

- 3.3.13 Commissioners met with a variety of stakeholders in cricket to hear oral evidence via semi-structured interviews that sought to standardise open ended questions to similar types of interviewees whilst allowing space to raise and explore topics related to the Terms of Reference. The Secretariat also met a number of stakeholders. Evidence givers included former and current players, coaches, organisations with a focus on equity and inclusion, senior leaders in cricket and sports governance bodies. In total the Commission held 47 oral evidence sessions.
- 3.3.14 Oral evidence sessions were mainly conducted remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions in force for much of the time, and for efficiency. Sessions were recorded and transcribed with the consent of the evidence givers for internal use only in accordance with the ICEC data privacy arrangements.
- 3.3.15 Evidence givers completed a consent declaration indicating how they wished their evidence to be treated. Evidence givers who consented to having their details shared are listed as contributors to the Report in Appendix 4. This list includes oral and written evidence givers.
- 3.3.16 Additionally, the Chair met with Government Ministers responsible for sport and their opposite numbers. The Secretariat met with Government officials on a number of occasions. Contact was made with the All Party Parliamentary Group for Cricket and meetings were held with a number of parliamentarians and public leaders with strong interest in the Commission's work.

Well being support and raising complaints

- 3.3.17 Throughout our work, we were mindful of the distress that reliving personal experiences of discrimination can often trigger and the severity of many cases we heard. Whilst the Commission did not have the requisite resources to provide direct support to evidence givers, individuals were signposted to specialist organisations offering assistance. A number of support services were published on the ICEC website including Citizens Advice, Stop Hate UK, Acas, the Samaritans and the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Those that sought assistance in raising a formal complaint relating to discrimination in cricket were signposted to the ECB.

Focused work with cricket organisations

County and Regional Survey

- 3.3.18 We developed a survey aimed specifically at the leadership of FCCs, WRTs and CCBs. This was distributed on 28 April 2022 and ran until 9 June 2022. The objective of the County and Regional Survey was to ensure that we considered specific evidence, perspectives and insights from cricket's current senior leaders.
- 3.3.19 The County and Regional Survey included multiple choice and free text questions under the themes of the Terms of Reference and included a data section to develop an overview of what equity, diversity and inclusion data is currently collected across the game. It was completed by all 18 FCCs, the eight WRTs and 27 CCBs.

First Class Counties

- 3.3.20 We carried out in depth work with a cohort of nine FCCs to help ensure our recommendations reflect the reality across the professional game. These nine FCCs were selected to represent the diversity of FCCs in size, budget and geography.
- 3.3.21 Additional documentation and data requests were made to examine these FCCs' approaches to the talent pathway and progression into professional cricket, and discrimination related complaints, discipline and whistleblowing processes. These documents, alongside evidence gathered from other aspects of our research programme, were used to inform the design of three focus groups held with this FCC cohort in June 2022.

3.3.22 The focus groups aimed to understand the County leadership's perceptions of the challenges and opportunities for improving equity within talent pathways and complaint processes, why these mattered and what could be done to tackle and optimise these. Up to three FCCs participated in each group, with representatives including the CEO, staff with expertise on girls' and boys' talent pathways and staff involved in running complaint processes.

3.3.23 The focus groups were run by an external facilitator from The Foundation, with Commissioners in attendance. Eight FCCs attended and one contributed via a semi-structured interview.

Women's Regional Teams

3.3.24 Whilst the FCC focus groups included discussion on both the men's and women's game, Commissioners held a separate meeting with the leadership of the eight WRTs to focus specifically on aspects of the women's game. Regional Directors of Women's Cricket were asked to attend due to their role as both decision-makers and the ECB's first point of contact with the Women's Regional Host FCC(s). Alternates were asked to attend if the Regional Director was not available.

3.3.25 The question set was informed by analysis of evidence received to date and desktop research comparing the women's game in England and Wales to Australia, India and New Zealand. The outputs informed findings and recommendations across the breadth of our Report.

Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC)

3.3.26 We recognised the importance of MCC's unique history and remit within cricket and met with their senior leaders for an oral evidence session on 26 September 2022. This aimed to hear their perceptions of equity in cricket and how this could be improved, and was informed by a review of requested documentation on our key themes.

Research and analysis of the talent pathway

3.3.27 The Secretariat undertook primary research relating to the talent pathway and progression in cricket.

Talent pathway literature review

3.3.28 An academic literature review of cricket's talent identification and development pathways was conducted to supplement our understanding of existing approaches and to interrogate assumptions about these systems. It sought to identify literature in existence up to October 2021 and the main frameworks of analysis in use in the field. The review was subsequently extended across sport due to limited publication covering these elements within cricket.

3.3.29 The review contributed broadly to our considerations and specifically assisted in forming questions for the County and Regional Survey and focus groups.

Historic professional player demographic data

3.3.30 Desktop research was conducted to collect demographic data for professional cricketers at international and domestic levels in England and Wales. The research aimed to establish any significant trends and findings relating to race, class and gender.

3.3.31 For England Men and Women, two sets of data were collated: all those who played for England teams in a Test, ODI or T20 match between 2012 and 2021, and all those that captained England Men and Women between 1992 and 2021.

- 3.3.32 For domestic cricket the data set was all men that played for an FCC 1st XI team between 2012 and 2021, alongside a comparison sample from 1992 and 2002.
- 3.3.33 As the women's domestic game did not have any professional structures until 2016 and is still being fully professionalised, the data set for the women's domestic game begins from 2016 and includes players who had professional contracts and those who played for a professional team, but did not have a professional contract. Data was therefore analysed for all women who played in the Kia Super League, that ran between 2016 to 2019, and those who played for a WRT in 2020 and 2021 following the establishment of the WRT structure in 2020.
- 3.3.34 The data sets for domestic players include details of ethnicity, schooling, playing position, captaincy, whether they played for England and, in relation to women players, whether or not they had a professional contract. As far as we have established, this is the first time data of this nature and time period has been collated. Multiple external sources, including CricketArchive, ESPNcricinfo, Wikipedia, county websites and media reports, were used and cross referenced with one another where possible. Sample data checks were conducted by members of the Secretariat to enhance the accuracy of the data from these publicly available sources. Validation of gender, schooling and ethnicity via self-declaration was not completed.

Cricket in schools

- 3.3.35 A research project was conducted to provide an overview of how County cricket organisations are connected to private and state schools. Connections included sharing of facilities and staff, ECB or County cricket staff visits (for coaching or scouting), sponsorships, and partnerships and affiliations declared by cricket or schools.
- 3.3.36 The research scope also included identifying sustained links between schools and the wider game, such as school staff and coaches being former professional players. For private schools, published information on fees, scholarships and bursaries for cricket players was collected. When possible, the provision of cricket facilities at each school was also noted. The data, covering 2021 and 2022, was collected via desktop review of County websites, review of The Cricketer Schools Guide and responses to the County and Regional Survey. It was validated through a process of recollection and cross-checking within the Secretariat team.

ECB Hearings

- 3.3.37 The Commissioners met with members of the ECB Board and Executive Management Team for five informal briefings on 1 November 2021, 4 November 2021, 12 January 2022, 28 March 2022 and 17 May 2022. These were for information purposes, allowing early explanation of strategy, policies and processes related to our key themes and to assist us throughout our work. The Secretariat also received a series of informal briefings from ECB staff on areas including the talent pathway.
- 3.3.38 57 Advanced Written Questions (AWQs) and 13 data and document requests were submitted to the ECB on 20 May 2022, to assist preparation for the formal hearings. A formal oral briefing on the ECB's finances was held on 12 July 2022. The AWQs and hearing questions were compiled with the intention of giving the ECB the opportunity to inform the Commission of all evidence they wished to be considered during our work. The AWQs were informed by our undisclosed preliminary findings. Final responses were received from the ECB on 10 August 2022.
- 3.3.39 Two full-day, formal, face-to-face hearings were scheduled with the ECB for 18 and 19 July 2022. The second day was rescheduled to 12 August 2022 due to extenuating circumstances.

3.4 Analysis of evidence

3.4.1 In total, over 636 documents were collected by the Commission from cricketing organisations and other experts. To accurately inform our conclusions, this evidence along with material from oral evidence sessions and focus groups was coded and analysed using the qualitative research programme Nvivo.

3.5 Production of Report

Legal review

3.5.1 The Commission received independent pro bono legal and proofreading support from Matrix Chambers.

Peer review process

3.5.2 To ensure the robustness of our Report, a small number of experienced individuals across a range of issues pertinent to our work were assembled to act as peer reviewers. A list of peer reviewers can be found in our Acknowledgements.

Fact checking and right to reply

3.5.3 Pre-publication, data and facts relating to ECB evidence and ECB-governed and supported cricket were provided to the ECB for them to check to provide assurance on accuracy. We engaged in a 'right to reply' process (i.e. where those who are subject to potential criticism are given the opportunity to make representations in response) with the ECB and other relevant parties, and their feedback was considered.

Commission close down

3.5.4 The Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket will cease to exist shortly after publication of our Report, which will remain live on the ICEC website for three months from publication date. Responses should be directed to diversitymatters@ecb.co.uk.

3.5.5 Following this period, the Report will be accessible via the ECB website² for a minimum of five years.

² www.ecb.co.uk

Appendix 4: Contributors

Those that consented to being named when submitting evidence to the Commission, both written and oral, are listed here. In total, we received contributions from over 4,400 individuals and organisations, including 4,156 individuals who shared their lived experiences through the anonymous survey that formed part of our Call for Evidence.

The Commission is immensely grateful to all those, whether or not they are named below, who contributed towards the shaping of our Report, its findings and recommendations.

Whilst some evidence was on areas outside our scope, all experiences and insights were carefully reviewed and provided an invaluable bedrock to this Report.

Organisations

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. African Caribbean Cricket Association | 26. Gloucestershire Cricket Foundation |
| 2. Coach Core Foundation | 27. Greenhouse Sports |
| 3. Bristol Commission on Race Equality | 28. Hampshire Cricket Board |
| 4. Buckinghamshire Cricket Board | 29. Hampshire Cricket |
| 5. Cage Cricket | 30. Hertfordshire Cricket Ltd |
| 6. Cambridgeshire Cricket Ltd | 31. Isle of Wight Cricket Board |
| 7. Central Sparks | 32. Kent Cricket |
| 8. Chance to Shine | 33. Kick It Out |
| 9. Cheshire Cricket Board | 34. Lancashire County Cricket Club |
| 10. Cornwall Cricket Board | 35. Leicestershire County Cricket Club |
| 11. Cricket East | 36. Leyton Cricket Hub |
| 12. Criced Cymru / Cricket Wales | 37. Lightning Cricket-Loughborough University ³ |
| 13. The Cricket Discipline Commission | 38. The Lord's Taverners |
| 14. Crouch End Cricket Club | 39. Marylebone Cricket Club |
| 15. Cumbria Cricket Ltd | 40. Marylebone Cricket Club Foundation |
| 16. Derbyshire County Cricket Club | 41. Middlesex Cricket |
| 17. Derbyshire Cricket Foundation | 42. National Asian Cricket Council |
| 18. Devon Cricket Board Limited | 43. National Counties Cricket Association |
| 19. Durham Cricket | 44. Norfolk Cricket Board |
| 20. The England and Wales Cricket Board | 45. Northamptonshire County Cricket Club |
| 21. Essex Cricket | 46. Northants Recreational Cricket |
| 22. Essex Cricket in the Community | 47. Northern Diamonds |
| 23. The Female Coaching Network | 48. Northumberland Cricket Board |
| 24. Glamorgan County Cricket Club | 49. Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club |
| 25. Gloucestershire County Cricket Club | 50. Pakistani Express CC |

³ Lightning Cricket has now been replaced by 'The Blaze', hosted by Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club.

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|---|---|
| <p>51. The Professional Cricketers' Association</p> <p>52. Race Equality First</p> <p>53. Shropshire Cricket Board</p> <p>54. Somerset County Cricket Club</p> <p>55. Somerset Cricket Foundation</p> <p>56. South Asian Cricket Academy</p> <p>57. South East Stars</p> <p>58. Southern Vipers</p> <p>59. Spirit of 2012</p> <p>60. Sport England</p> <p>61. Sporting Equals</p> <p>62. Staffordshire Cricket Limited</p> <p>63. Stump Out Sexism</p> <p>64. Suffolk Cricket Limited</p> <p>65. Sunrisers</p> | <p>66. Surrey County Cricket Club</p> <p>67. Surrey Cricket Foundation</p> <p>68. Sussex Cricket Limited</p> <p>69. The Runnymede Trust</p> <p>70. Thunder</p> <p>71. Warwickshire County Cricket Club</p> <p>72. Warwickshire Cricket Board</p> <p>73. Western Storm</p> <p>74. Wiltshire Cricket Limited</p> <p>75. Women in Sport</p> <p>76. Worcestershire County Cricket Club</p> <p>77. Yorkshire County Cricket Club</p> <p>78. Yorkshire Cricket Board</p> <p>79. Youth Sport Trust</p> |
|---|---|

Individuals

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>80. Chris Abbott⁴</p> <p>81. Mark Alleyne</p> <p>82. Irfan Amjad</p> <p>83. Kiran Carlson</p> <p>84. Neil Carraway</p> <p>85. Raj Chaudhuri</p> <p>86. Alan Clark</p> <p>87. John Claughton</p> <p>88. Kate Cross</p> <p>89. Dr Thomas Fletcher</p> <p>90. Derek Foster⁵</p> <p>91. Patrick Gada</p> <p>92. Chevy Green</p> <p>93. Isa Guha</p> <p>94. John Holder</p> <p>95. Brian Hudson</p> <p>96. Ashfak Hussain</p> <p>97. Roger Hutton</p> | <p>98. Joanne Jones</p> <p>99. Heather Knight</p> <p>100. Praveen Kumar</p> <p>101. Priyantha Siriwardana</p> <p>102. David Lawrence</p> <p>103. Sophie Leonard</p> <p>104. Matthew Loukes</p> <p>105. Hemant Maisuria</p> <p>106. Naveed Marzook⁶</p> <p>107. Devon Malcolm</p> <p>108. Terry Mitchener</p> <p>109. Eoin Morgan</p> <p>110. Louise Nathan</p> <p>111. Rafaele Nicholson</p> <p>112. Dilip Parthasarathy⁷</p> <p>113. The Lord Patel of Bradford OBE</p> <p>114. Danica Perrin</p> <p>115. David Perrin</p> | <p>116. Dr Philippa Velija</p> <p>117. John Phillips</p> <p>118. Vanessa Picker</p> <p>119. Rajiv Radhakrishnan</p> <p>120. Azeem Rafiq</p> <p>121. Joe Root</p> <p>122. Dr Adeela Shafi</p> <p>123. Adeel Shafique</p> <p>124. Owais Shah</p> <p>125. Phil Shayler</p> <p>126. Christopher Shokoya-Eleshin</p> <p>127. Ben Stokes</p> <p>128. Dr Duncan Stone</p> <p>129. Sangy Theivendra</p> <p>130. Darren Vann</p> <p>131. Ed Wilson</p> |
|---|---|---|

⁴ Collective submission on behalf of an unnamed group.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

Appendix 5: What is EDI?

5.1 What is EDI?

5.1.1 Whilst we hear a lot about EDI, it is very important to be clear about what it actually is. Self-evidently, EDI contains three elements: equity, diversity and inclusion. All three are complex terms with contested histories and meanings. Whilst we cannot capture the full complexity of the terms here, we draw out some of their key features below.

Equity

5.1.2 For our purposes, equity concerns the process by which differentiated and targeted strategies are used to redress historic and existing forms of unfairness, inequality and injustice. Chapter 3, Historical Context, describes the development of cricket in England and Wales and provides an account of the historic exclusion and unfair treatment of women, people from ethnically diverse communities and those from working class backgrounds. In the context of cricket, 'equity' therefore concerns the intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems and structures to reduce (and ultimately eliminate) inequalities and injustices faced by these groups, and others who, as a result of their identity and/or background, have historically been marginalised and/or discriminated against within or by the sport.

5.1.3 The 'E' in EDI is sometimes understood as standing for 'equality' rather than 'equity'. Whilst equality can mean many different things, this distinction contrasts equality as the process of treating everyone in the **same** way regardless of their different circumstances and needs with equity, which takes as its starting point a recognition that people's circumstances and needs are **different** and that these differences must be taken seriously when seeking to promote true equality of opportunity and treatment.

Diversity

5.1.4 Promoting diversity is often at the core of an organisation's EDI agenda. In the first place, diversity simply describes a situation in which the organisation in question is comprised of a range of individuals who are, in terms of their background, characteristics and/or identity, different from one another. An organisation will, therefore, have diversity if, for instance, it is comprised of people from a range of different social and ethnic groups. As well as its descriptive function, the language of diversity is also frequently used as an expression of the priorities, values or commitments of an organisation. In this sense, to be a 'diverse' organisation can mean to positively reflect the diversity of the society in which the organisation exists, and to commit to making the organisation one that accepts and includes people from all backgrounds.

5.1.5 Achieving, or increasing, diversity is a vital and laudable objective, which the Commission fully supports. True diversity is, first and foremost, about fairness – it implies that individuals are not being excluded because of their background, characteristics and/or identity. It is also widely accepted that there is a real and significant business case for fostering diversity within an organisation.

5.1.6 We note, however, that critiques of EDI strategies which centre diversity do exist – particularly when diversity is treated as an alternative, and not a complement, to terms like equity, anti-racism or anti-sexism. It has been widely argued, for example, that attempts to promote diversity can involve prioritising the appearance of difference (and particularly ethnic or racial difference) at the expense of dealing with the underlying systems and structures of inequity within an organisation. This reflects a concern that diversity work, if approached narrowly, can become about the 'branding' of an organisation rather than reflecting an attempt to genuinely re-make an organisation through the redistribution of power and resources.

Inclusion

- 5.1.7 Simply put, inclusion relates to the act of taking steps to include those who have historically been, and are still, excluded because of their background, characteristics and/or identity. It involves creating and sustaining practices and conditions that enable each individual – notwithstanding their differences – to be themselves fully and to feel welcome and safe in a particular organisation or environment.
- 5.1.8 As with both equity and diversity, as a Commission we believe that promoting inclusion and inclusive practices is an essential component in the pursuit of tackling unfairness, inequality and injustice within English and Welsh cricket.
- 5.1.9 We do acknowledge, though, that the idea of inclusion is premised on a distinction between those with the power to include (as host) and the formerly or still excluded (as guest). To be ‘welcomed’ through inclusive practices is, in some sense, to be positioned as originally an outsider. That doesn’t make inclusion and inclusivity bad, far from it. But it is important to recognise that the idea of inclusion throws up, and requires confronting, other important questions like: who has the power to include; where does that power come from; what can be done, beyond practising inclusion, to redistribute that power fairly; and on what, if any, conditions are those to whom the practices of inclusion are directed, included? These are by no means easy questions with straightforward answers. But without facing up to them, the best efforts at inclusion may come up short.

Doing EDI badly

- 5.1.10 Our definitions of equity, diversity and inclusion show that they are distinct terms with distinct meanings. Organisations, for example, may seek to develop inclusive practices in the hope that they will create greater diversity and more equity. But it is possible to create a more inclusive organisation without it becoming more diverse or equitable, and vice versa.
- 5.1.11 It is the Commission’s view that, when it is done well, much of the power of EDI work comes from the fact that it demands concerted and specific action in relation to each of these distinct elements.
- 5.1.12 There can be, however, a tendency to conflate them. This is partly due to the fact that, despite their important differences, equity, diversity and inclusion do all interact and overlap with each other. Because of this, it is easy for them to all get bundled up together. It is, also, in part, thanks to the slippage that occurs when individuals and organisations go from using and thinking in terms of the individual words – equity, diversity and inclusion – to using the shorthand EDI. Whilst we accept that this is, to some extent, inevitable, a slippage in language can cause a slippage in approach and strategy. When this happens, EDI can stop being equity, diversity and inclusion and become the undifferentiated catch-all EDI.
- 5.1.13 Through this process, attention to each element of EDI can be lost, leading to a centring of the ‘D’ (diversity) and/or the ‘I’ (inclusion), with the ‘E’ (equity) going missing. Indeed, ‘D&I’ is now regularly used by organisations as shorthand instead of ‘EDI’.
- 5.1.14 While this may appear to be a minor shift, without a clear and specific focus on the ‘E’ (equity), the scope of EDI work is likely to be substantially narrowed and its potential to deliver meaningful change diminished. There is a risk, for instance, that EDI without equity can de-prioritise – or even neglect – systems and structures of unfairness and inequality relating to factors like gender, class and socio-economic background.
- 5.1.15 Focusing on EDI (or, in fact, just D&I) can also lead to an important shift in the use of language. Part of the appeal of the concepts of ‘diversity’ and ‘inclusion’, it seems, is how they are experienced by many: as relatively positive and comforting terms when compared to the more confronting language of racism, sexism and class/socio-economic inequality. The consequence is that the particular problems that those more ‘difficult’ words mark may be either underestimated or even go unnoticed.

- 5.1.16 Another, connected, challenge to the EDI agenda is the suggestion that it is, above all, about public relations; that EDI often has more to do with nice words than tangible actions. This criticism emerges, to some extent, from the fact that, despite the growth of EDI strategy documents and commitments, organisations repeatedly fail to deliver significant change. We appreciate that this divergence probably reflects, in part, just how embedded systems of injustice and inequality can be: they are not easily disrupted. But another explanation is that the production of those EDI strategies and commitments sometimes has as much (or more) to do with how an organisation seeks to present itself – as modern, diverse and inclusive – as it does with bringing about tangible, widespread transformation.
- 5.1.17 As a Commission, we fully acknowledge that EDI work and public relations may, and in many cases will, align. But, when EDI is seen principally through the lens of public relations, the process of drawing up an EDI strategy or making an EDI commitment can become a substitute for, and in some cases undermine, the act of delivering meaningful and sustainable improvements on the ground. In those circumstances, what is presented as EDI will fail to advance, and may obstruct, real progress on matters of equity, diversity and inclusion.
- 5.1.18 We are very clear that it is, of course, possible to do EDI well and for EDI to be highly effective. In fact, we believe that effective EDI work is critical to making cricket the type of sport that we all want it to be: fair, fun, open, accessible, safe and free from discrimination. Doing EDI well, however, means proactively avoiding these pitfalls. In our view, good EDI work, for example, involves unambiguously facing up to and confronting the realities of racism, sexism and other forms of social and economic inequality wherever they exist, whether at an interpersonal, institutional or structural level.
- 5.1.19 Similarly, we believe that for EDI work to be effective, it must be focused, above all, on what is good for equity, diversity and inclusion. When thinking about EDI, other considerations, whether commercial, political or reputational (or a combination of these) should come second. Good EDI work has to be, for instance, about much more than good public relations. Indeed, sometimes good EDI practice will be, or will appear to be, bad public relations. Acknowledging that there is a problem that requires addressing might, at least in the short- to medium-term, damage the reputation of an organisation, but enable it to confront issues of inequality and injustice resulting in improvement for the long term. We are not naïve about the important role that communications play in promoting and embedding positive change, but when EDI becomes too closely aligned with public relations, its potential is diluted.
- 5.1.20 There is, of course, no one-size-fits-all approach and each organisation must take its own ‘EDI journey’, continually renewing its focus and priorities based on the evidence available. They must define why EDI matters, what their goals are and how they will achieve them, how EDI contributes to meeting their wider objectives as well as identifying the systems and structures they need to put in place to deliver them.
- 5.1.21 It is also important to be clear that, while the ECB and other cricketing organisations under its jurisdiction will be at varying levels of ‘EDI Maturity’ – from only just becoming “*aware*” of EDI (often in response to a trigger event or crisis) to operating at a “*sustainable*” level where they are “*best in class*”⁸ – the work of EDI is never ‘done’. It is an ongoing and continuous process requiring constant vigilance, sustained commitment and dedicated resources alongside careful strategic planning, delivery and evaluation.

⁸ <https://hbr.org/2022/11/the-five-stages-of-dei-maturity>

Appendix 6: Complaints Background

6.1 What are the current EDI-related standards/regulations?

- 6.1.1 In the professional game, a set of ECB Directives cover a range of topics including rules on conduct and behaviour that apply to individuals and organisations.⁹ Directive 3.3 covers conduct that is improper, may be prejudicial to the interests of cricket or may bring the ECB, the game of cricket, any cricketer or group of cricketers into “*disrepute*”, which we understand can include discriminatory conduct (although it is not specified). Directive 3.4 requires compliance with the ECB’s Anti-Discrimination Code.
- 6.1.2 In recreational cricket, before the 2022 season, the ECB introduced the General Conduct Regulations (GCR)¹⁰ to replace the model Discipline Regulations and Guidelines for non-First Class County cricket. The GCR are mandatory for CCBs and premier leagues, and other organisations under the ECB’s jurisdiction were encouraged to implement them. Individuals covered by the GCR include anyone under the jurisdiction of the organisations that are subject to the GCR, including cricketers, volunteers, officers, employees, contractors, members, match officials and coaches.
- 6.1.3 According to the introduction to the GCR, the ECB had intended to roll out the GCR more widely in the recreational game in 2023. However, the ECB decided that the GCR should not be extended more widely, other than becoming mandatory for the National Counties who had already voluntarily adopted the GCR for the 2022 season, and instead, new Recreational Conduct Regulations (RCR)¹¹ were introduced for the 2023 season. The RCR apply to all leagues in recreational cricket that are within the jurisdiction of the ECB and are not covered by the GCR. It is a breach of the RCR for any cricketer, coach, match official or club official to breach the ECB Anti-Discrimination Code, but we have not considered the RCR in any detail because our Report reflects the position at the end of December 2022 (apart from some specific exceptions).
- 6.1.4 The GCR cover on-field and off-field behaviour (such as inappropriate comments on social media). There are provisions in the GCR referring to breaches of the ECB’s Anti-Discrimination Code.
- 6.1.5 In 2021, the ECB introduced the Anti-Discrimination Code across the professional and recreational game. The Code applies to all cricket organisations under the jurisdiction of the ECB or its Members (including the FCCs, CCBs, NCs, Regional Hosts of the WRTs, leagues and clubs) and individuals working for those organisations.
- 6.1.6 No one covered by the Code (whether an individual, group or organisation) may discriminate on the basis of any of the nine ‘protected characteristics’ set out in the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act). Of the issues covered by our Terms of Reference, race and gender (referred to in the Equality Act as sex) are included in the nine protected characteristics, but not class.

⁹ Available here: <https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/policies-and-regulations/regulations/first-class-county>

¹⁰ Available here: <https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/policies-and-regulations/regulations/non-first-class-county>

¹¹ Ibid.

6.2 What are the current processes for making complaints, conducting investigations, considering whether to bring ‘charges’ and deciding whether complaints are upheld?

Processes for making complaints

Game-wide

- 6.2.1 When the ICEC was first established in March 2021, we asked the ECB for a weblink to direct people to if they had complaints about discrimination in cricket. There was no such link and the ECB had to create one for us.
- 6.2.2 In the game-wide 12 Point Plan published by the ECB on 26 November 2021, the first commitment was *“Adoption within three months of a standardised approach to reporting, investigating, and responding to complaints, allegations, and whistleblowing across the game.”* As part of that commitment, the ECB established a central ‘Reporting Discrimination’ webpage that encourages people who experience or witness discrimination to report it: *“Discrimination of any kind is unacceptable. If you are aware of or witness discrimination at any level of cricket in England and Wales, we want to hear from you.”*¹²
- 6.2.3 A report can be made either anonymously or by providing a name and contact details. Reports are reviewed by members of the ECB staff in order to decide which organisation should deal with them: all complaints in the professional game will be handled by the ECB and complaints in the recreational game will be referred to the relevant organisation, usually a CCB.

Professional game

- 6.2.4 As well as the game-wide Reporting Discrimination process, complaints in the professional game can be made to a dedicated ECB mailbox (equality@ecb.co.uk), anonymously via www.cricketintegrityline.co.uk or to Crimestoppers. The PCA also has a dedicated mailbox (equality@thepca.co.uk). FCCs and Regional Hosts of the WRTs also have their own internal reporting processes.

Recreational game

- 6.2.5 The situation in the recreational game is more fragmented. The ECB has acknowledged to us that prior to 2022, there was *“a lack of clarity for the recreational game to raise complaints about discrimination of unfair treatment”* and that the relevant process has not *“been easy to find.”* The Annual ECB EDI Report in December 2022 also recognised that there were issues with reporting complaints in the recreational game and a need to *“help to create a better culture of reporting and complaint management.”* The answer to that described in the ECB EDI Report appears to be creating a dedicated recreational discipline team *“to oversee the investigations process and assist County organisations with access to advice and support from independent experts.”*¹³
- 6.2.6 The introduction of the central Reporting Discrimination process on the ECB website has provided a standard route for everyone in the game to report discrimination.
- 6.2.7 Once a complaint through that process has been assessed by the ECB, and with the permission of the complainant (if they have provided their details), the complaint is passed to the CCB with jurisdiction over the complaint. The CCB in turn will then assess whether the CCB itself should deal with it, or whether it should be delegated to the relevant league within the County.

¹² <https://www.ecb.co.uk/reporting-discrimination>

¹³ Annual ECB EDI Report December 2022, p6.

6.2.8 If a complaint is about the CCB itself, the ECB has said that they will retain responsibility for conducting the investigation. They may also do so if the ECB is not confident in the ability of the CCB to conduct the investigation.

Conducting investigations

6.2.9 Where the ECB is handling a complaint in relation to the professional game, the ECB's Integrity Team will be responsible for carrying out an investigation. The ECB has told us that those staff generally have extensive experience in complex investigations, usually gained in a legal, police or regulatory environment. Sometimes specialist EDI expertise is needed for the more complex discrimination cases (either internal or external expertise).

6.2.10 For cases in the recreational game, the ECB provides support to the CCBs through independent specialists, Red Snapper, who can provide advice and investigate specific issues if requested by the CCB.

Process for bringing 'charges'

6.2.11 In the professional game, after completing its investigation the ECB's Integrity Team will decide whether it is appropriate on the evidence for a disciplinary charge to be brought. They may liaise about and/or escalate that decision to the ECB's Regulatory Committee which itself may set up a sub-committee containing individuals with relevant expertise (e.g. EDI expertise).

6.2.12 In relation to cases conducted under the GCR in the recreational game, decisions about whether to issue a charge are made by the Disciplinary Officers appointed by each cricketing organisation under the GCR.

Deciding cases

6.2.13 The Cricket Discipline Commission (CDC) hears cases in professional cricket (including The Hundred) involving breaches of "any of the ECB's rules, regulations or directives."¹⁴ These include breaches of the Anti-Discrimination Code and the relevant obligations under the Directives. The CDC Regulations set out the CDC's jurisdiction over certain categories of people, principally those most closely associated with the playing of the professional game such as registered cricketers, coaches, umpires and match referees, as well as certain other individuals. The CDC's direct jurisdiction does not include most administrators and leaders of the game off the field (unless they fall into another category of person who is covered, or they have agreed in writing to be subject to the CDC's jurisdiction).

6.2.14 The CDC also has jurisdiction over "Members" which includes the FCCs, Regional Hosts of the WRTs and The Hundred teams, who are responsible under the CDC Regulations for the actions of their employees, officers etc. Therefore, any act or comment by an FCC's Chair or CEO, for example, could potentially result in proceedings against the FCC itself, but not against the Chair or CEO (unless they were covered by the CDC's jurisdiction in some other way, e.g. they had agreed in writing to be bound).

6.2.15 The CDC has the power to impose certain sanctions, including suspensions (in the case of players) and points deductions and expulsion from ECB competitions (in the case of FCCs/teams). Any party, whether an organisation or an individual, may be issued with a fine and/or formal reprimand.

6.2.16 Cases in the recreational game will be heard by the relevant body with jurisdiction over the complaint, usually the CCB or the relevant league in the County. The CDC also has a role as an appeal body from cases in the recreational game which involve professional cricketers who are registered with the ECB, which we understand from the CDC has rarely been used, if ever.

¹⁴ CDC Regulations 2022 available at <https://www.ecb.co.uk/about/policies-and-regulations/discipline>. Cases involving corruption or doping are dealt with separately under the ECB's Anti-Corruption Code or Anti-Doping Rules respectively.

Collecting data

- 6.2.17 The ECB has told us that they encourage the use of the central Reporting Discrimination platform, regardless of whether people wish to proceed to a formal complaint, because it allows them to monitor themes and trends, which in turn allows them to address issues proactively through education and awareness-building.
- 6.2.18 In recreational cricket, the organisations subject to the GCR are required to provide details in relation to disciplinary matters if requested by the ECB (but there is no requirement proactively to provide information unless the case involves a professional cricketer who is registered with the ECB).¹⁵
- 6.2.19 We have been told by the CDC that no data, certainly no EDI-related data, is collated by the CDC or by the ECB arising from CDC cases (e.g. EDI data related to people who had raised complaints or the 'accused').

¹⁵ Regulation 2(f) of the GCR.

Appendix 7: Key Terms

All references to ‘cricket’ in these Key Terms and throughout this Report are references to cricket in England and Wales, unless otherwise stated.

These Key Terms are divided into three sections:

A: Acronyms/names

B: Definitions/descriptions

C: Structure of cricket in England and Wales

Section A: Acronyms/names

ACAS: The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service

ACE: The ACE Programme Charity

ADU: Anti-Discrimination Unit

BLM: Black Lives Matter

CAG: County Age Group

CCB: County Cricket Board

CCC: County Cricket Club

CDC: Cricket Discipline Commission

CEO: Chief Executive Officer

CfWE: Call for Written Evidence

CGF: County Governance Framework

CPA: County Partnership Agreement

CRG: Compliance Review Group (for the CPA)

CTC: Community Talent Champion

Cts: Chance to Shine

DCMS: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

ECB: The England and Wales Cricket Board

ECB EDI Plan: ECB’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2021

EDI: Equity, diversity and inclusion

EHRC: Equality and Human Rights Commission

EMT: Executive Management Team

EPP: Emerging Player Programme

FCC: First Class County

FTSU Guardian: Freedom to Speak Up Guardian

Game-wide 12 Point Plan: A plan first published by the ECB in November 2021 to tackle racism and all forms of discrimination in cricket.

GCR: General Conduct Regulations

HPR: High Performance Review

ICC: The International Cricket Council (known as the Imperial Cricket Conference until 1965)

ICSA: The Chartered Governance Institute

KPI: Key performance indicator

MCC: Marylebone Cricket Club

NC: National County

NCC: National County Club

NCCA: The National Counties Cricket Association

NGB: National Governing Body

NS-SEC: National Statistics Socio-economic Classification

ODI: One Day International

ONS: Office for National Statistics

PCA: The Professional Cricketers’ Association

Portas Consulting: A sports management consultancy appointed by the ECB to undertake a review of governance and regulation in cricket

PRP: Partnership Review Process (for the CPA)

PSED: The Public Sector Equality Duty

RHA: Regional Host Agreement

SAAP: South Asian Action Plan

SACA: South Asian Cricket Academy

SEND: Special educational needs and disability

SGM: Special General Meeting

SID: Senior Independent Director

TCCB: The Test and County Cricket Board, the body responsible for professional domestic cricket and the England teams until 1997, when its responsibilities transferred to the ECB.

TWGCP: Transforming Women’s and Girls’ Cricket Action Plan

Type K: To measure intersectional advantage and discrimination, the research company that conducted our online lived experiences survey created a number of ‘personas’ or ‘types’ of which Type K was intended to reflect, broadly speaking, the experience of White, middle class men. A full definition is set out at Annex 1, Lived Experiences of Discrimination in Cricket, in section 1.2.2.

WCA: Women’s Cricket Association

WRT: Women’s Regional Team

Section B: Definitions/descriptions

Black cricket: When we refer to ‘Black cricket’ we are referring to cricket in Black communities, and we use the expressions interchangeably.

Cricketing organisations: These include any organisation that regulates, administers or organises cricket in England and Wales, including the ECB, FCCs, WRTs, NCs, CCBs, leagues and recreational cricket clubs.

Discrimination:¹⁶

- **Direct discrimination:** This means treating one person worse than another person because of a protected characteristic. For example, a promotion comes up at work. The employer believes that people’s memories get worse as they get older so doesn’t tell one of his older employees about it, because he thinks the employee wouldn’t be able to do the job.
- **Indirect discrimination:** This can happen when an organisation puts a rule or a policy or a way of doing things in place which has a worse impact on someone with a protected characteristic than someone without one. For example, a local authority is planning to redevelop some of its housing. It decides to hold consultation events in the evening. Many of the female residents complain that they cannot attend these meetings because of childcare responsibilities.
- **Harassment:** This means unwanted behaviour that you find offensive that violates your dignity, or creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating, intimidating or offensive environment, where the behaviour is connected with a protected characteristic. For example, a man with Down’s syndrome is visiting a pub with friends. The bar staff make derogatory and offensive comments about him, which upset and offend him.
- **Victimisation:** This means that people cannot treat you badly if you make a claim or complaint of discrimination, or if you are helping someone else who is doing so. For example, an employee makes a complaint of sexual harassment at work and is dismissed as a consequence.

Diversity: Diversity describes the extent to which an organisation is composed of individuals with different backgrounds and identities. When we refer to diversity in this Report, it is also used as an expression of the priorities, values and commitments of an organisation – a ‘diverse’ organisation reflects the diversity of society. In this sense, diversity commits organisations to accepting and including people from all backgrounds, and is therefore about fairness.

ECB-governed and supported cricket: The ECB regulates and funds most (but not all) organised cricket across England and Wales. ECB-governed and supported cricket includes England international teams, domestic professional clubs and teams, and the network and infrastructure of the majority of the recreational game.

Equality: Equality involves treating everyone in the same way regardless of different circumstances and needs, compared with equity which recognises that people’s circumstances and needs are different and that these differences must be taken seriously when seeking to promote true equality of opportunity and treatment.

Equity: Equity relates to the use of targeted and differentiated strategies to redress current and historic unfairness, inequality and injustice. In the context of cricket and this Report, ‘equity’ means the intentional and continuous practice of changing policies, practices, systems and structures to reduce (and ultimately eliminate) inequalities and injustices faced by people who have been marginalised and discriminated against within the sport due to their background or identity.

Ethnically diverse: People who do not identify as White or a White Minority.¹⁷

¹⁶ These descriptions are based on the EHRC’s explanations of the terms used in the Equality Act 2010. <https://equalityhumanrights.com/en>

¹⁷ With the exception of Roma, Gypsy and Traveller groupings, which we include within ethnically diverse.

Inclusion: Inclusion means the actions taken to include people who are excluded because of their background or identity, both currently and historically. It involves creating and sustaining an environment where each individual can be themselves fully and feel welcome and safe, regardless of differences.

Professional (cricket, game etc): Under the regulations governing the qualification and registration of cricketers, this means all competitive formats of cricket played by teams of a professional standard or in which the cricketer is being paid to participate as a professional player. For both cases, this is regardless of whether cricketers are playing under formats recognised as official cricket by the ICC.

Recreational (cricket, game etc): Recreational cricket refers to cricket where its primary purpose is participation that is not paid or considered professional cricket. Recreational cricket is overseen by the 39 CCBs that are primarily funded by the ECB. Many recreational clubs play cricket in local leagues run by volunteers. The highest level of recreational club cricket is run by 29 premier leagues across England and Wales which are directly affiliated to and funded by the ECB but managed independently.

Stakeholders: A stakeholder is an individual, group or organisation that has any interest in any of the decisions or activities of an organisation. In the context of cricket and the ECB, these may include cricket fans, journalists and media, players and coaches, cricket clubs, officials, governmental bodies such as DCMS, sporting non-governmental organisations and equalities lobbying groups.

Talent pathway: The structures and processes in place to allow talented junior players to progress from recreational club or school cricket into performance environments, representative teams, and eventually professional cricket. For boys and girls, these may include County Age Group teams, Emerging Player Programmes and Academies.

Wales: We generally include Wales in our references in this Report to 'the Counties' for convenience, but in doing so do not detract in any way from its status as a separate nation.

Section C: Structure of cricket in England and Wales

The way in which cricket is organised in England and Wales is complicated. It is primarily based on the 38 historic Counties of England, plus Wales as a single region. There are 18 Counties that contain a First Class County club (FCC) and 21 National Counties (NCs),¹⁸ making 39 Counties in total.

Professional cricket

Men's domestic professional cricket comprises the 18 FCCs and the eight men's teams that play in The Hundred competition.

Women's domestic professional cricket comprises the eight Women's Regional Teams (WRTs) and the eight women's teams that play in The Hundred competition. The eight WRTs are 'hosted' by one or more of the FCCs. The hosts provide administrative, logistical and other support.

¹⁸ Formerly known as Minor Counties.

Recreational cricket

Recreational cricket is overseen by 38 County Cricket Boards (CCBs) and Cricket Wales. The CCBs (or equivalent) operate within the FCCs and the NCs. Within each County, there are a number of recreational leagues and clubs. There are 5,000+ local clubs across England and Wales and the game is supported by c. 42,000 volunteers.

In the NCs, the National County Clubs (NCCs) run a non-professional team that represents that County.

In some Counties FCCs and NCCs have joined with the local CCB to become single entities that oversee all professional and affiliated recreational cricket in a County.

First Class Counties	National Counties	Women’s Regional Teams	The Hundred Teams (Men’s and Women’s)
Derbyshire	Bedfordshire	Central Sparks	Birmingham Phoenix
Durham	Berkshire	The Blaze	London Spirit
Essex	Buckinghamshire	Northern Diamonds	Manchester Originals
Glamorgan	Cambridgeshire	South East Stars	Northern Superchargers
Gloucestershire	Cheshire	Southern Vipers	Oval Invincibles
Hampshire	Cornwall	Sunrisers	Southern Brave
Kent	Cumberland/Cumbria	Thunder	Trent Rockets
Lancashire	Devon	Western Storm	Welsh Fire
Leicestershire	Dorset		
Middlesex	Herefordshire		
Northamptonshire	Hertfordshire		
Nottinghamshire	Huntingdonshire		
Somerset	Isle of Wight		
Surrey	Lincolnshire		
Sussex	Norfolk		
Warwickshire	Northumberland		
Worcestershire	Oxfordshire		
Yorkshire	Shropshire		
	Staffordshire		
	Suffolk		
	Wiltshire		

School cricket

Cricket is played in the state and private school sectors. There are a number of programmes that are designed to expand cricket in and out of schools including All Stars and Dynamos. A number of charities support cricket for children, inside and outside of school, including:

- a) Chance to Shine (cricket in schools and street cricket)
- b) The Lord's Taverners (cricket for young people with a disability and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds)
- c) The MCC Foundation (hubs for state school cricketers).

The ECB

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is the national governing body for cricket in England and Wales, overseeing all international, domestic and recreational cricket. It was established in 1997, replacing the Test and County Cricket Board, the National Cricket Association and the Cricket Council. The Women's Cricket Association was integrated into the ECB in April 1998.

The ECB's purpose, role and responsibilities are set out in its Articles of Association.¹⁹ They include leading, administering and regulating the game, encouraging participation, improving playing standards, and marketing, promoting and developing the sport. The ECB represents the English and Welsh game internationally through its membership of the International Cricket Council (ICC).

The ECB runs the England international teams: men's, women's and disability. It also runs The Hundred competition.

MCC

Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) is a private members' club that owns Lord's Cricket Ground. MCC is the 'guardian' of the laws of cricket worldwide.

PCA

The Professional Cricketers' Association is a registered trade union that represents past and present professional men and women players in England and Wales.

Cricket outside the ECB structure

Throughout England and Wales, there are also leagues and clubs that sit outside the ECB structure, often formed by ethnically diverse communities. These are predominantly based in and around urban areas.

¹⁹ Available at <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/03251364/filing-history>

ICEC

Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket