



English Schools' Football Association

Membership Matters

A message from the Chairman

REMINDERS AND USEFUL DATES

England U18 Schoolboys v Scotland U18 Schoolboys

Friday 1st April (Spennymoor Town FC)

England U18 Schoolboys v Republic of Ireland U18 Schoolboys

Friday 8th April (Eastleigh FC)

All Centenary Shield fixtures are streamed live on the BBC Sport app and website

Deadline for champions' cups survey: 25th March

ESFA AGM 9th July

I write this as I prepare to accompany our U18 Boys squad for their opening Centenary Shield game in Belfast. Having joined the squad for their training camp at St George's Park as well as enjoying time with them at Rectory Park for the impressive victory against the RAF and at Shrewsbury School for their fixture with ISFA, I know the team bonding and camaraderie required to be successful are well on their way to being established. I look forward to sharing in their journey in the same way as I do with the girls squad. Unfortunately, due to the timing of my half term I was unable to join the U15 Girls camp at St George's Park in full but was privileged to visit on the Tuesday to present the squad with their England shirts and to welcome them to life as international footballers. I know from my time with them there, as well as at the recent ISFA fixture hosted at Charterhouse School, they too have bonded extremely well and are eagerly anticipating the Bob Docherty Cup.

Away from the international stage, five membership consultation events have recently taken place. I would like to place on record my gratitude to the regional secretaries, CSFA and DSFA representatives for their positive engagement during their three respective events regarding the Champions Cup. The meetings were positive and balanced with all participants ensuring a solution focussed approach throughout. As with almost everything in life we know that it is highly unlikely to reach complete consensus on everything but it is by adopting the approach that these groups have that we are most likely to understand the challenges and opportunities from the viewpoints of all parties and therefore achieve the best and most appropriate outcomes. This week, we have hosted two consultations around our volunteering strategy and some really positive discussions and plans were shared and contributed towards.

I would like to finish this edition's opening statement by welcoming three new post-holders to the ESFA family. John Duncan joins council as our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion co-opted member following a competitive interview process. John joins us with a wealth of relevant experience and I look forward to seeing the impact that I am confident he will have. Secondly, Paul Jackson has been appointed to council representing the South-East region and we look forward to working with him moving forwards. Oz Rowley has been appointed as U15 Girls Assistant Manager following the work-related resignation of Adam Jones just a couple of weeks prior to the training camp. As a valued and committed member of the international trials staff, Oz was able to hit the ground running with the squad and management team and has made a really positive impact already. Oz will continue in the role for the remainder of this season. Having mentioned Adam, it would be remiss of me to not recognise his valuable input and contribution during his time with us. It is a huge shame for him personally that he has not been able to progress to the role of Manager but he can be very proud of all that he contributed as Sian's Assistant.

Mark Hignett,
ESFA Chairman



Report of Council– March 2022

Mark Hignett, Chair for 2021/22, welcomed Council Members to their first face to face meeting for two years and thanked Charterhouse School for hosting the meeting to coincide with the international U15 girls' friendly fixture against ISFA, and the CEO and her staff team for making the arrangements.

Council determined that the ESFA AGM would continue to be held in two parts, with part 1 taking place online on 9th July. Member rule changes would need to be submitted no later than Wednesday 1st June to accommodate the 35 day deadline agreed at the last AGM, as 2nd June was a bank holiday. Further discussions were held about the challenges in securing match officials for schools' football, and Members noted that the CEO had approached The FA to reissue previously sent joint correspondence to CFAs which outlined the support expected for the schools' game. A response was awaited. Members noted that the survey following the latest round of Champions' Cup consultations had been issued, with a response deadline of 25th March. Council Members agreed to take part in a new article in "Membership Matters", called "Spotlight On.." to refresh Membership on the roles and responsibilities of both Council Member and staff, following recent changes.

The Rep Committee considered the arrangements for the forthcoming international fixtures and noted that results and forthcoming fixture details were being published on the [ESFA website](#). An update was also received on the progress of rep football competitions. Consideration was given to the Committee's arrangements for next season, and Members expressed their deep gratitude to Owen Aiston, outgoing Chair of the Committee, for his diligence and commitment to the role.

The Football Governance Committee received an update on applications for sanction and on the ongoing work being undertaken with volunteers on the National Working Group for SCORY. The Chair placed on record his thanks to those contributing to the group. The routine discipline report was received and concern was expressed about the implementation of some aspects of the regulations in the schools' game, with FA interpretation to be sought. The Committee recommended to Council that Members should seek feedback from their constituency about how they administered disciplinary cases, if they did, given the low levels of feedback from the survey. This was approved.

The Football Development Committee received an update on the take up of the Development Fund and had a progress report on the planned summer Disability Festivals. The Committee recommended to Council that the Festivals were named in honour of the late Duke of Edinburgh, former ESFA patrol, and Council approved this, subject to permission from the Palace.

The Competitions Committee heard of the plans for National Finals, with the PlayStation Schools' Cup taking place from 23rd – 26th May at West Bromwich Albion. The FA CEO would attend one final and the FA Chair was aiming to attend another, diary permitting. Other finals were to be confirmed. Members also agreed that consideration should be given to those on decelerated learning programmes and how they could continue to take part in schools' football.

Continued...

Report of Council– Continued

The Committee recommended that, should the Champions Cups continue, the U15 girls' competition should be introduced next season, so that the current U14 teams could progress. In principle, without predetermining the continuation and/or format for the Champions' Cups, Council approved the recommendation.

On top of matters reported elsewhere, Trustees updated on the appointment of Lloyd Wilson, new Governance Manager and confirmed that the internship scheme had been re-opened following the re-opening of HQ post-pandemic. Trustees had approved the updated risk assessment for HQ and reviewed the policy for match attendance, which remained unchanged for Membership. A detailed report on sponsorships and partnerships had been received, along with feedback from Schools' Football Week. The intra-school football project ("Hot Shots") had been launched and draft contracts for administrator funding had been approved.

Council Members received the report of the ESFA's rep on FA Council, noting that the new FA Chair had agreed to meet with all education partners as part of her induction, at the request of the ESFA's CEO.

ESFA Champions' Cup– Feedback Survey

Last month the ESFA conducted two Champions Cup consultation meetings with membership and we are now looking to receive feedback on these consultations and the options moving forward with the Champions Cups. If you have not already done so please fill out the survey [here](#), your feedback is appreciated.

ESFA Hotshots

Hotshots is a new initiative created by the ESFA, which is all about intra-school football!

The project's aim is to encourage as many young people as possible into team sport, regardless of ability and we will encourage participating schools to organise intra-school football activity between 14th March 2022 and 27th May 2022. The ESFA is also able to incentivise this activity and each school that signs up and organises intra-schools' football during this period will be entered into a prize draw with the possibility of winning a £3,000 cash prize from their relevant activity category.

More information on the project can be found [here](#). Please make schools in your local area aware of this new campaign and make sure they get involved.





ESFA Spotlight On

This brand new feature for Membership Matters, “Spotlight on”, aims to refresh our members’ minds on the staffing structure of the ESFA team, introduce new staff members and to help you understand the roles of new and existing members of the ESFA Council. Each month we will be featuring a member of staff and a member of the ESFA Council, allowing them to explain their role at the ESFA and tell us a little bit about themselves.

Ian Laithwaite– Commercial Director



“After working within Football clubs for over 10 years from the Premier League down to League 1, joining the ESFA was a refreshing change. The commercial offering at the ESFA comes with strong social values and I have managed to secure commercial partners who enjoy the exposure of being linked with the Three Lions along with the added knowledge of helping to provide young people with sporting opportunity in England. I enjoy the strong team ethic within the ESFA and without their support I wouldn’t be able to do my job. I have been here almost three years now and It is a fantastic place to work. After all my time in football I have never worked with better people. Give me an England international at Eastleigh FC as opposed to having to deal with Manchester United at home any day of the week’

I’ve been successful in securing sponsorship contracts in excess of £100,000 this season, primarily in support of the international programme. I am proactively seeking sponsors for the Champions’ Cups, in whatever format they take place, as well as for our unsponsored national competitions for schools. For those who attended the volunteering strategy consultations you’ll have heard about the possibility of a volunteer reward scheme and celebratory event, if confirmed, commercial sponsorship for that will also be sought.

John Duncan Co-Opted Council Member for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion



I am delighted to have been appointed to the ESFA Council to support on matters around Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. My own background in Equality, Diversity & Inclusion is quite broad, ranging from education to the healthcare sector, though I hope to be able to bring that experience to Council and the work of the ESFA.

I work as a diversity and inclusion specialist, leading on strategy and policy development, with over 15 years substantial experience of providing advice, support and training within the public sector. My work explores core issues driving D&I strategy, from changing demographics to unconscious bias in the workplace, visible leadership commitment, and accountability for results.

I am a keen writer on the subject of equality, diversity and inclusion and publish the [Equality Blog](#) which now has over 80 ED&I discussions, articles and resources. More recently, I have written books that support workplace managers when implementing the Equality Act 2010 as well as the Public Sector Equality Duty.

My interest in supporting the ESFA stems from a passion for reducing the inequalities that are present for many people across the country with a range of protected characteristics. Also, I am ardent football fan with some grassroots experience in supporting local junior soccer. Subsequently, I am keen to see the ESFA reach a wider, more diverse audience across its services as well as to become a more inclusive organisation so that all children, irrespective of background, are able to take part. I hope to be able to influence policy in such areas.

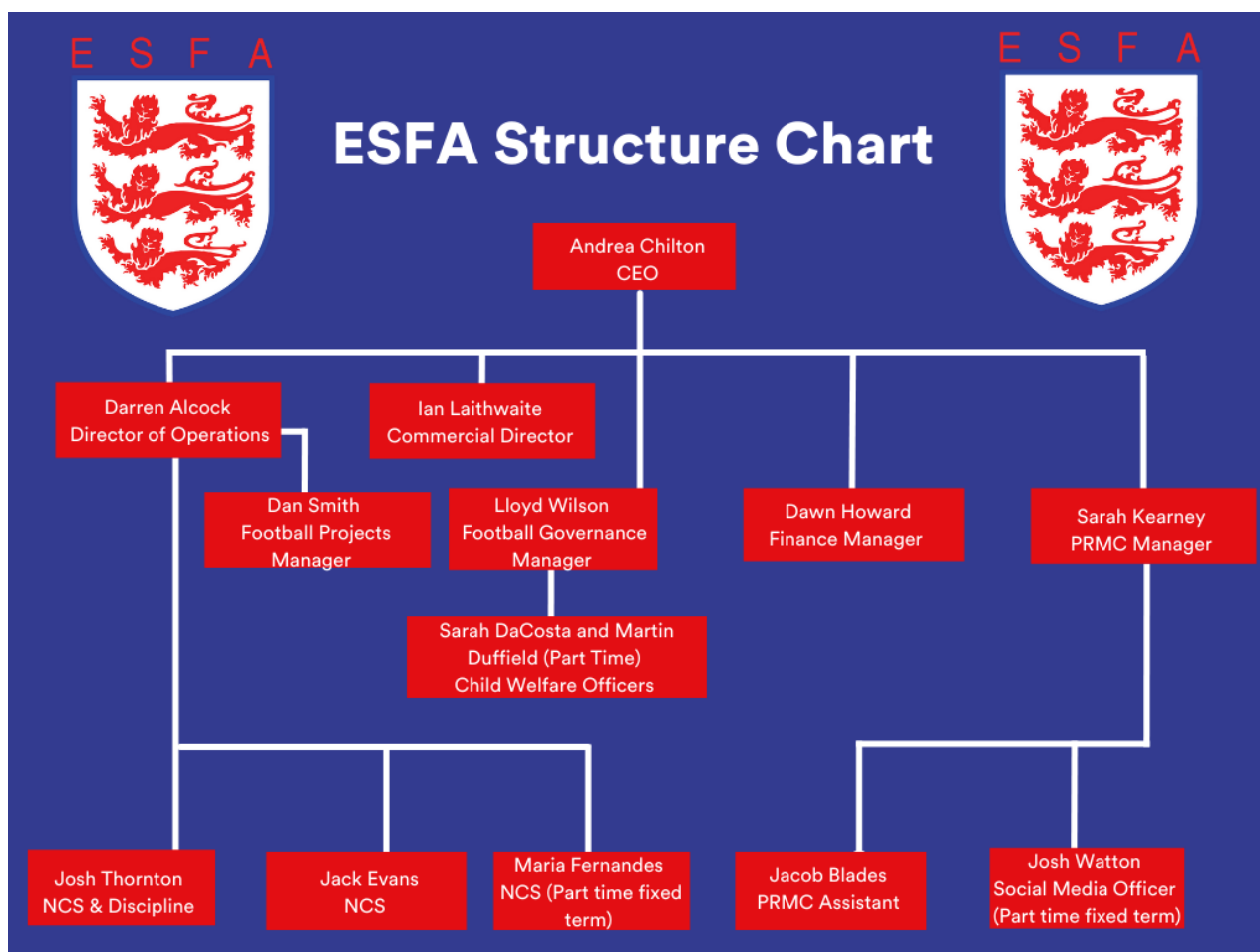
Fundamentally, football should be accessible to all, regardless of a person's start in life or their protected characteristic. I have been impressed by the ESFA's commitment to becoming more inclusive and being prepared to challenge themselves to make progress in this area.

I look forward to working with the ESFA Council and moving this important agenda forward.



ESFA Spotlight On

More ESFA Spotlight On features will follow in the upcoming editions of Membership Matters. Please see below an ESFA Structure chart which will hopefully give you a refresher on the ESFA staff structure, including new starters, and who to contact if you need any support.



Next month the spotlight will be on our new recruit, Lloyd Wilson, the new Football Governance Manager.

ESFA volunteering strategy consultations

The ESFA held two consultation meetings regarding the new Volunteering strategy this month. Please see a recording of these consultations below for your information.

<https://schoolsfootball.org/join-in/volunteers/>

There will be further opportunities to join the discussion in the coming weeks. Further information on how you can help us form this strategy will be forthcoming over the next few weeks.



Talking Heads

If you're not clear about when and how an FA DBS is needed and secured, please visit our short "Talking Heads" video on the subject, which you can find [here](#).

We will shortly be releasing our second "Talking Heads" which will help to understand what training is required for different roles in football, and where that training can be found.

Safeguarding information for your players and parents

The ESFA's website now contains some information directed specifically at children about safeguarding and what it means to them. There is a primary age version and a secondary age version, which you can access here:

[For Players – English Schools' Football Association \(schoolsfootball.org\)](https://schoolsfootball.org)

On the same link, you'll also find a downloadable, credit-card sized document which players and parents can print out and put the Association's CWO details on so they have a personal record readily available to them at all times.

Please feel free to share this information with players and parents, and add a link to your website (or other communication means) direct to these pages.

You may also wish to demonstrate your Association's commitment to safeguarding their children to parents by encouraging all parents to complete the FA's "Safeguarding for All" training, which can be accessed on The FA's website, [here](#). Parents will need to register on the FA website to take part in this course.

Safeguarding Support Visits

With thanks to our new National Volunteer – Safeguarding applicants, we are pleased to confirm that the following have agreed to assume responsibility for conducting some of our Safeguarding Support Visits, designed to support Members to ensure that their safeguarding arrangements are the best they can be. The new appointees are:

Joseph Perkins- Erdington & Saltley/Sutton Coldfield
Chris Daines– Doncaster
Matt Hewinson- Scarborough & District
Keith Steadman- Gloucester Primary
Paul Jackson- Gravesham
Gordon Bryant- Kent

We thank them for their additional contribution to the Association. Please give them a warm welcome if they arrive at one of your fixtures – their role is designed to support you to enhance your practice, and to share the good practice spotted elsewhere – so your help in facilitating their discussions is greatly appreciated.



Desktop Reviews

Our National Child Welfare Officers continue to conduct their desktop reviews at the same time as the support visits are taking place.

From both the desktop reviews and the safeguarding support visits, the most commonly recurring theme is that parents and players do not always know who to contact in the event of concerns.

One Association has addressed this by making sure their CWO name and contact details feature on every team sheet: others add details to programmes when they are produced.

If you have any other great ideas for promoting the role of the CWO to parents and players, please contact Sarah DaCosta (Sarah.Dacosta@Schoolsfa.com) and Martin Duffield (Martin.Duffield@Schoolsfa.com).

Overseas trips

As borders begin to re-open and international travel resumes, a reminder that Associations need to apply for permission to play overseas opposition, as well as to take part in some other “external” fixtures. The guidance, and the document to seek permission to play, can be found here:

<https://schoolsfootball.org/for-associations/resources/>

ESFA International Squads

The England U15 Schoolgirls and England U18 Schoolboys travelled to St George’s Park in February for their preparatory training camps, courtesy of ESFA partners inspiresport. The camps were a huge success with the girls winning 2-1 against Aston Villa U15 whilst the boys won 2-1 against Notts County. Interviews with both sets of players and management teams are available to watch on our YouTube channel [here](#).

The England U18 Schoolboys inspiresport Centenary Shield Campaign kicks off on Friday 25th March with an away game in Northern Ireland before they travel home for their two home fixtures. Information on these two fixtures, including ticket links and how to follow the fixtures can be found here. The Schoolboys will conclude their campaign with an away fixture in Wales on Friday 15th April. All inspiresport Centenary Shield fixtures are available to watch via the BBC Sport app and website and England Home matches will also be streamed via the EFSA’s YouTube channel, ESFA TV.

The England U15 Schoolgirls’ will travel to Cochrane Park in Newcastle for the Bob Docherty Cup on Sunday 10th April where they will play Northern Ireland in their first fixture. They will face the Republic of Ireland on the Monday before progressing to finals day on Thursday 14th April. All these games will be available to watch on the ESFA [YouTube channel](#).



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