



# A ROADMAP FOR FOOTBALL

IRISH FA CORPORATE STRATEGY

## 2022-2027







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# Chairman's Message



**Stephen Martin**  
Chairman  
Irish Football Association

## A Roadmap for Football

The Board is delighted to publish this new and ambitious strategy to guide the Irish FA over the next five years.

It covers all aspects and levels of the game we love, across all of Northern Ireland.

It seeks to increase the number of young boys and girls playing football, introducing them to its positive health and social benefits; improve our stadia and the spectator experience; enhance our system of coaching; and create the conditions for more competition success with our senior men's, senior women's and other international teams.

We will live up to our corporate social responsibility to help all areas of our community.

We want to use our influence and resources to promote a healthy lifestyle

from an early age and encourage good citizenship and inclusion, confronting issues such as sectarianism and racism. Recognising the impact we can have on future generations, this strategy – for the first time – sees the Irish FA committing itself to the critical goal of sustainability.

This strategy is progressive and will require determined effort from everyone at the Irish FA, supported by leagues, clubs and the entire football family.

As you read the strategy you will see that before each listed objective is our stated vision, mission and values. This is vital because it reminds us, amid our everyday activity, that our job is to “promote, foster and develop football for all across Northern Ireland”.

As we enter this new and exciting five-year cycle, we will never lose sight of this crucial purpose.



# A Word from the CEO

## Meeting Our Targets

A company without a strategic plan is like a boat without a rudder; it will be at the mercy of the prevailing economic winds and social tides and will almost certainly not get to do what it wants to do.

Therefore I am delighted that the Irish FA has agreed this new five-year strategy, which takes our thinking up to 2027.

Building on the progress made in our two most recent plans, this strategy has been developed by our board and senior leadership team members. It has also involved extensive consultations with stakeholders from all aspects of football in Northern Ireland.

The vision, mission and values contained in this strategy will serve as daily reminders of why we are here and what is expected of us.

The targets contained in seven strategic pillars and four enablers, explained further in this document, set out what we want to achieve over the next five years.

After careful consideration the board has set us these targets. It is now down to us to achieve them.

We will work in collaboration with all of our stakeholders and will focus on achieving the objectives set out in this document. As a staff team we are excited by the challenges ahead.



**Patrick Nelson**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Irish Football Association



**Conrad Kirkwood**  
President  
Irish Football Association

# A Message from the President

## Changing Lives Through Football

No matter what your role in the game is, you will have a passionate sense of what football means to you and how the Irish FA can make things better.

Players, coaches, administrators, supporters, match officials and volunteers all have valuable insights. As part of the development of this strategy we reached out to as many stakeholders as possible to present our thinking and to listen to their views. We were delighted to hear many positive contributions.

We can only achieve success through this strategy if everyone with a passion for football works together with the best interests of the game at heart.

Football in Northern Ireland has the ability to cross all divides. It has the power to bring about great change. It can help educate, promote health and wellbeing, and give everyone a sense of belonging. Most importantly football can promote inclusivity like no other sport.

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented real challenges for us all. As we emerge from the worst of those challenges everyone with a passion for football has a real opportunity to improve people's lives. I hope that this strategy will serve as a roadmap to deliver those improvements.

**“Football in Northern Ireland has the ability to cross all divides. It has the power to bring about great change”**

Conrad Kirkwood



# Captains' Messages



**Jason Browning**  
Northern Ireland Powerchair national team player/assistant coach & Irish FA Disability Access Officer

## A Game for All

Disability football is developing apace in Northern Ireland. I am confident that, with the ongoing support of the Irish FA, many more people with disabilities will be given the opportunity to play football in the coming years.

Northern Ireland already has Powerchair Football, Cerebral Palsy and Learning Disability teams who compete on the international stage.

There are also more than 50 clubs across the country that are offering services for those with a disability, from weekly coaching sessions to taking part in the Irish FA Disability League.

Being involved in football can play a vital role in players' personal development, helping to build confidence and self-esteem as well as improve social skills and general fitness.

It's also a great way to meet new friends, and there's nothing better than sharing

the football experience with teammates. First and foremost, however, it's about enjoying the game.

When I was growing up I never thought I would get the chance to play football, never mind represent my country on the international stage. Powerchair Football has provided me with so many opportunities, including competing at a Powerchair World Cup. I am delighted that the Irish FA is continuing to support disability football in its various forms.



**Steven Davis**  
Northern Ireland senior men's national team captain

## A Bright Future

There's no better feeling than pulling on the Northern Ireland jersey and stepping into a stadium to represent your country.

I have had the honour of doing so on many occasions – at both senior and youth level – and I hope to be able to continue for as long as I can.

I still get a thrill from playing football and, no matter your level, I hope you do, too.

Through this strategy the Irish FA is looking to increase participation in the sport across all age groups and to improve facilities, among other objectives.

Getting more people to take up coaching, as well as extra support for the grassroots game, is paramount if football is to continue to thrive in Northern Ireland. We have made great strides in recent years in encouraging boys and girls to get involved in the game and in providing the support to help them develop as players. This has included Small-Sided Games Centres, a raft of youth leagues and cup competitions, and the Irish FA Academy in collaboration with UEFA.

And, of course, the Irish FA has also enhanced its support of the senior game. Long may it continue.



**Marissa Callaghan**  
Northern Ireland senior women's national team captain & Girls' Participation Officer with the Irish FA Foundation

## An Exciting Time for Women's Football

I wish I was at least 15 years younger. And that's got nothing to do with the fact I am classed as a veteran these days!

It's simply because women's and girls' football are really taking off in Northern Ireland, especially for those starting out in the game.

When I was in primary school there was very little scope for girls, or women for that matter, to play football.

But thanks to Irish FA investment that has all changed. There are various initiatives to encourage young girls to play the game, leagues and cup

competitions for girls' and women's teams at all age levels, plus pathways to nurture players who have the potential to shine on the international stage.

This latest strategy not only cements that progress but promises to do even more to support the development of girls' and women's football. Naturally, that's something I applaud.

The success of the Northern Ireland women's national team in recent times has, of course, helped to boost the popularity of the sport among women and girls. Reaching UEFA Women's Euro 2022 is hopefully a first step towards even more success in the future.





# Following the UEFA blueprint

We have followed the UEFA Grow blueprint to develop the new Irish FA strategy. The different steps are outlined below:





# Irish FA Strategy

The Irish FA's vision, mission and strategic pillars have been drafted by the Strategy Leadership Group

## Our Mission

To promote, foster and develop football for all in Northern Ireland

## Our Vision

A world-class and progressive organisation; inspiring every child to be part of the Northern Ireland football family and to wear their green shirt with pride

## Our Values

- P** Progressive
- I** Inclusive
- T** Transparent
- C** Collaborative
- H** Healthy & Safe
- E** Excellence
- S** Socially responsible



# Strategic Pillars and Objectives



## PERFORMANCE

- Challenge every time, qualify every other time
- Transform the football pyramid to create a clear pathway for ambitious clubs
- Deliver a consistent and comprehensive approach to elite talent identification across Northern Ireland
- Continue to grow and embed the Irish FA Academy in collaboration with UEFA
- Continue to improve the standard of coaching across all levels in Northern Ireland



## PARTICIPATION

- 100,000 young people participating in football by 2025
- 50,000 adults participating in football by 2025
- Increase the quality and quantity of coaches, officials and administrators across the game



## FACILITIES

- Build an international-class training and development centre
- Deliver at least three Category 3 UEFA stadia
- Enhance spectator experience at all top-level clubs across Northern Ireland through the delivery of best-in-class minimum standards
- Ensure playing surfaces at the top level are consistently high quality to facilitate enhanced performance
- Support ambitious clubs who wish to progress through the football pyramid in Northern Ireland while ensuring continuous improvement and availability of facilities at the everyday game level



## REVENUE

- Generate revenues in excess of £100m over five years to reinvest in the game
- Make the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park a premium venue for conferences and entertainment events and enhance the matchday experience for all fans
- Optimise the international match ticketing strategy to provide value for money for our fans, remaining consistent with economic conditions
- Maximise commercial partnerships and retail opportunities, identify new revenue streams and protect existing ones
- Double the level of grant funding in the next five years and seek to create partnership programmes with local councils and government departments



## ENGAGEMENT

- Develop tools and applications to provide a 'digital first' approach to supporting, participating in and administering football
- Build excellent working relationships with the entire local government to collectively support the football community
- Refresh the Irish FA brand identity in line with our values
- Deliver a best-in-class fan experience for all national teams



## WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' FOOTBALL

- Create a top-class women's competition and pathway
- Embed the new Director of Women's Football role across the Irish FA
- Introduce licensing for women's clubs and a Club Mentor programme at all levels of the game
- Recruit and retain women in coaching, match officiating and administration roles at all levels of the game
- Create a bespoke communications plan for the women's game with every youth programme having specific advertising and publicity to encourage girls



## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) & SUSTAINABILITY

- Generate £3bn in Social Return On Investment (SROI) value over five years for our community
- Become a leading organisation on sustainability, including a national stadium powered by renewable energy
- Become an exemplar governing body, championing equality, diversity and inclusion

## Enablers



### PEOPLE & OPERATIONS

Resource accordingly to support strategy delivery



### GOVERNANCE & REGULATION

Devise relevant policies to support delivery of the strategy



### PERFORMANCE & TRACKING

Implement methodology and process to track delivery against objectives



### DATA ANALYSIS & INSIGHTS

Introduce methodology for gathering data and feedback to support and evidence strategy delivery and positive outcomes





## PERFORMANCE

It is vital we get maximum value from the time and resources we invest in the growth and development of football in Northern Ireland. For elite domestic and international football to flourish we need as many professional footballers as possible to graduate from the performance pathway to our own domestic leagues and those abroad in both the men's and the women's game. Results on the pitch have a tangible, positive 'domino effect' on other parts of the organisation, too. We will ensure all of our teams have the best possible chance of succeeding in every competition they enter.

- Challenge every time, qualify every other time
- Transform the football pyramid to create a clear pathway for ambitious clubs
- Deliver a consistent and comprehensive approach to elite talent identification across Northern Ireland
- Continue to grow and embed the Irish FA Academy in collaboration with UEFA
- Continue to improve the standard of coaching across all levels in Northern Ireland







## PARTICIPATION

**O**ur role is to encourage participation at all levels, from all communities and from every corner of the country. Some may make a career out of football, emulating the boys of '58, the great teams of the 1980s, those who dared to dream in 2016 or our history-making senior women's team. The vast majority, however, will play simply for the love of the game and the health, fitness and general wellbeing qualities it brings.

- 100,000 young people participating in football by 2025
- 50,000 adults participating in football by 2025
- Increase the quality and quantity of coaches, officials and administrators across the game





## FACILITIES

**F**ootball is the premier sport in Northern Ireland. We recognise that players at all levels need facilities to match and it is our role to keep pace with these expectations. With appropriate investment in football infrastructure there will be quantitative outcomes in terms of increased participation from players, staff and volunteers of all disciplines, as well as the qualitative upshot of improved mental and physical health levels.

- Build an international-class training and development centre
- Deliver at least three Category 3 UEFA stadia
- Enhance spectator experience at all top-level clubs across Northern Ireland through the delivery of best-in-class minimum standards
- Ensure playing surfaces at the top level are consistently high quality to facilitate enhanced performance
- Support ambitious clubs who wish to progress through the football pyramid in Northern Ireland while ensuring continuous improvement and availability of facilities at the everyday game level







## REVENUE

**E**very pound generated by the Irish FA goes straight back into supporting football in Northern Ireland – from grassroots to elite level. Simply put, growing revenue means growing the game. To do this we will explore new commercial developments and opportunities, maintain existing partnerships and seek new ones, all while continuing to run the organisation in an efficient manner.

- Generate revenues in excess of £100m over five years to reinvest in the game
- Make the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park a premium venue for conferences and entertainment events and enhance the matchday experience for all fans
- Optimise the international match ticketing strategy to provide value for money for our fans, remaining consistent with economic conditions
- Maximise commercial partnerships and retail opportunities, identify new revenue streams and protect existing ones
- Double the level of grant funding in the next five years and seek to create partnership programmes with local councils and government departments





## ENGAGEMENT

**R**egular and meaningful engagement is critical and it is our role to understand the connections and solutions needed to make football, at all levels, a positive experience. As the game grows we will ensure we remain relevant and connected through embracing emerging digital trends, making use of all our communication channels to link directly and personally with our audiences.

- Develop tools and applications to provide a 'digital first' approach to supporting, participating in and administering football
- Build excellent working relationships with the entire local government to collectively support the football community
- Refresh the Irish FA brand identity in line with our values
- Deliver a best-in-class fan experience for all national teams





## WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' FOOTBALL

**W**omen's football is the fastest-growing game in the world. In Northern Ireland we are experiencing record levels of interest and participation. It is a part of the game that we will invest in further. This will give us the best opportunity to build on the progress made in recent years both on and off the field.

- Create a top-class women's competition and pathway
- Embed the new Director of Women's Football role across the Irish FA
- Introduce licensing for women's clubs and a Club Mentor programme at all levels of the game
- Recruit and retain women in coaching, match officiating and administration roles at all levels of the game
- Create a bespoke communications plan for the women's game with every youth programme having specific advertising and publicity to encourage girls







# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) AND SUSTAINABILITY

The physical and mental benefits of football are well known. Football is a key resource for the country and a vital contributor to the economy. It supports thousands of jobs, helps to reduce crime rates and heightens aspirations for those in full-time education. It also serves as a catalyst for education, better health, justice and social development. Equality and inclusion are cornerstones of our work and that of our charity arm, the Irish FA Foundation. Through our 'Football For All' ethos we will ensure our work continues to improve the lives of groups and individuals from every community across Northern Ireland. As sustainability becomes increasingly important we, as an association, recognise our Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) responsibilities and our duty to maintain the highest standards of corporate governance in this area.

- Generate £3bn in Social Return On Investment (SROI) value over five years for our community
- Become a leading organisation on sustainability, including a national stadium powered by renewable energy
- Become an exemplar governing body, championing equality, diversity and inclusion








# Appendix

PERFORMANCE		FACILITIES	
Strategic Objective	Strategic Actions	Strategic Objective	Strategic Actions
<p><b>Challenge every time, qualify every other time</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work to ensure that the infrastructure off the pitch around each of our national teams is of premium quality and that teams are prepared for each tournament</li> </ul>	<p><b>Build an international-class training and development centre</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a site and a potential partner organisation</li> <li>Agree on a funding approach</li> <li>Engage with the DfC Sub-Regional Advisory Working Group (if funding support is required)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transform the football pyramid to create a clear pathway for ambitious clubs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with the Northern Ireland Football League (NIFL) and other relevant stakeholders to make the necessary amendments that create a pathway which ultimately leads to the NIFL</li> <li>Define a consistent Tier 4 of the football pyramid</li> <li>Define Ground Criteria and a funding plan</li> <li>Appoint a league operator</li> </ul>	<p><b>Deliver at least three Category 3 UEFA stadia</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appoint an internal project team</li> <li>Engage with the DfC Sub-Regional Advisory Working Group</li> <li>Work with the Northern Ireland Executive for the release of funding</li> <li>Ringfence potential matched funding allocations for clubs when Sub-Regional funding is released</li> <li>Explore potential ground share arrangements</li> </ul>
<p>Deliver a consistent and comprehensive approach to elite talent identification across Northern Ireland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and define the role of Head Scout (Northern Ireland)</li> <li>Deliver training to scouts and provide ongoing CPD</li> <li>Provide and apply a clear definition to our scouting system</li> <li>Provide a centralised database of scouts that sits within the football operations unit</li> </ul>	<p>Enhance spectator experience at all top-level clubs across Northern Ireland through the delivery of best-in-class minimum standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define consistent key priority areas for improvement across all NIFL Premiership/ Championship clubs (accessibility, health and safety, toilets, changing rooms etc) to inform any future grant award scheme</li> <li>Support Community Hub initiatives linked to improved stadia</li> </ul>
<p>Continue to grow and embed the Irish FA Academy in collaboration with UEFA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop strategic partnerships with other national academies</li> <li>Build stronger relationships with local clubs and schools</li> <li>Enhance goalkeeper support and development, an area with a considerable shortage</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure playing surfaces at the top level are consistently high quality to facilitate enhanced performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider Irish FA-funded financial support scheme to assist clubs in the delivery of high-quality playing surfaces at the top end of the game</li> </ul>
<p>Continue to improve the standard of coaching across all levels in Northern Ireland</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the UEFA Youth Certificate in senior academies via Club Licensing</li> <li>Identify and develop a bursary programme for coach education focused on retaining coaching talent in Northern Ireland</li> <li>Regional coaching masterclass sessions hosted by senior Irish FA staff</li> </ul>	<p>Support ambitious clubs who wish to progress through the football pyramid in Northern Ireland while ensuring continuous improvement and availability of facilities at the everyday game level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a grant scheme to support clubs who wish to meet enhanced ground criteria standards</li> <li>Engage with DfC Sub-Regional Advisory Working Group to ensure a portion of funding is allocated to the everyday game</li> </ul>
<p><b>100,000 young people participating in football by 2025</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further delivery of the 'Let Them Play' programmes and expanding participation, especially in women's and girls' football</li> </ul>	<p><b>Generate revenues in excess of £100m over five years to reinvest in the game</b></p>	<p>See below</p>
<p>50,000 adults participating in football by 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver on the 'Amateur Football Games Development Research and Plan Ahead' strategy to develop new participation opportunities for adults</li> </ul>	<p>Make the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park a premium venue for conferences and entertainment events and enhance the matchday experience for all fans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host a first major concert at the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park</li> <li>Raise awareness of the facilities available at the stadium through a new promotional campaign</li> <li>Create a value-for-money experience for all fans attending matches at the stadium</li> </ul>
<p>Increase the quality and quantity of coaches, officials and administrators across the game</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop coaching courses aimed specifically at youth football</li> <li>Develop coaching courses aimed specifically at the adult amateur game</li> <li>Deliver OCNs (Open College Network courses) in football administration to help clubs develop</li> <li>Deliver training courses and development squads to support, train and continually improve the quality of our officials and club administrators</li> <li>Align coaching awards with each level of football</li> </ul>	<p>Maximise commercial partnerships and retail opportunities, identify new revenue streams and protect existing ones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grow our portfolio of retail and licensed products and increase availability online and at the stadium</li> <li>Establish long-term agreements with recognised partners in all major sponsorship categories</li> </ul>
		<p>Double the level of grant funding in the next five years and seek to create partnership programmes with local councils and government departments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a funded activity programme relevant to each local council and government department</li> <li>Generate significant new funding from the National Lottery and SEUPB (Special European Union Programmes Body) within the next two years</li> <li>Identify one or more strategic philanthropic relationships that will generate investment in our CSR programmes</li> </ul>



# Appendix

	Strategic Objective	Strategic Actions		Strategic Objective	Strategic Actions
 <b>ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>Develop tools and applications to provide a 'digital first' approach to supporting, participating in and administering football</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a single customer view (accurate data for each customer)</li> <li>• Expand Comet functionality to engage with football at all levels</li> <li>• Create a data and insights job role</li> <li>• Use data and insights to better understand and engage with the football community</li> <li>• Build on the GAWA official membership scheme to continue to attract and reach a wider audience</li> <li>• Introduce NPS (Net Promoter Score) and post-event research</li> </ul>	 <b>CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) AND SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<b>Generate £3bn in Social Return On Investment (SROI) value over five years for our community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and deliver club and community programmes to produce Social Return On Investment (SROI) in Northern Ireland</li> </ul>
	<b>Build excellent working relationships with the entire local government to collectively support the football community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint a public affairs officer</li> <li>• Create a clear narrative around the UEFA Social Return On Investment (SROI) impact of the Irish FA</li> <li>• Ensure joint action with local government through the delivery of the new strategy</li> </ul>		Become a leading organisation on sustainability, including a national stadium powered by renewable energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicise current stadium practices</li> <li>• Produce an easy guide for clubs to develop sustainability</li> <li>• Develop a sustainability policy and pathway to being a leading organisation in this area</li> </ul>
	<b>Refresh the Irish FA brand identity in line with our values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refresh the corporate brand</li> <li>• Launch a new brand campaign</li> <li>• Drive cultural change to ensure our brand and values underpins the way we interact with all members</li> </ul>		Become an exemplar governing body, championing equality, diversity and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop the female football leaders' programme</li> <li>• Continue development of the inclusive clubs programme, helping clubs to develop new sections</li> <li>• Encourage underrepresented groups to apply for leadership roles in football</li> </ul>
	<b>Deliver a best-in-class fan experience for all national teams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create fan focus groups to support matchday experience, new products and campaigns</li> <li>• Create bespoke segmented fan experience plans both inside and outside the stadium</li> <li>• Premiumise the fan experience in the stadium</li> <li>• Introduce away tours (GAWA &amp; premium)</li> <li>• Introduce NPS and post-event research</li> </ul>			
 <b>WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' FOOTBALL</b>	<b>Create a top-class women's competition and pathway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the development of youth leagues</li> <li>• Review and develop the elite pathway</li> <li>• Review and develop the NIFL Premiership by reassessing, with a view to expanding, the current six-team structure</li> </ul>			
	<b>Embed the new Director of Women's Football role across the Irish FA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the workforce and resources to maximise the women's game at all levels</li> </ul>			
	<b>Introduce licensing for women's clubs and a Club Mentor programme at all levels of the game</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensing introduced for the NIFL Women's Premiership</li> <li>• Mandate NIFL Men's Premiership clubs to have women's teams with relevant budgets</li> <li>• All women's clubs to have an appointed club mentor</li> </ul>			
	<b>Recruit and retain women in coaching, match officiating and administration roles at all levels of the game</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female-only coaching courses for Level 1 and Level 2</li> <li>• Bursaries for female coaches to achieve Pro, A and B Licences</li> <li>• Establish development squads for female match officials</li> <li>• Devise and deliver a female football leaders' and alumni programme</li> </ul>			
	<b>Create a bespoke communications plan for the women's game with every youth programme having specific advertising and publicity to encourage girls</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devise a working group to develop a bespoke communications plan</li> </ul>			

The Irish FA is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Safeguarding is paramount to all that we do and is everyone's responsibility.



# Key Progress Indicators

These Key Progress Indicators (KPIs) will allow us to identify how effectively we are meeting our Strategic Objectives. They will be monitored and evaluated regularly, and will evolve throughout the course of the strategy.



## PERFORMANCE

We will...

- launch the UEFA Youth Certificate via the Coach Education Department
- continually gain feedback from UEFA to benchmark the Irish FA Academy with other similar academies across Europe
- establish a new system to evaluate the effectiveness of the talent identification process
- create clearly defined roles and responsibilities for scouts working within Northern Ireland
- appoint an Elite Goalkeeping Consultant
- gain regular post-camp feedback from key stakeholders including players, coaches, UEFA and FIFA
- have a clearly defined football pyramid from the entry level of the game to the NIFL Premiership, developed for and communicated to stakeholders
- provide high quality training and development opportunities for scouts
- deliver coaching masterclasses across all counties in Northern Ireland



## PARTICIPATION

We will...

- grow participation and have 90,000 youth participants (5-18-year-olds) playing football by 2023, and 40,000 participants (18 years-plus) playing football by 2025
- develop 1,000 new coaches by 2023
- provide training opportunities for 150 administrators by 2023
- recruit 100 new referees each year across all formats of the game and will focus on reducing the attrition rate of referees across the game
- create and implement minimum operating standards for coaches working at different levels by 2023



## FACILITIES

We will...

- identify a site for a national training and development centre and devise a funding model for it
- launch a financial support scheme to assist ambitious clubs seeking to move through the football pyramid
- have the national training and development centre design agreed and will commence planning
- agree a rollout schedule for the Sub Regional Funding when it is announced by the Northern Ireland Executive



## REVENUE

We will...

- successfully host one major non-football event at the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park by the end of 2023
- extend our range of retail and licensed products based on current gaps in provision
- establish the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park as a unique conference and events space
- increase the percentage of income that we generate from grant funding



## ENGAGEMENT

We will...

- continue to use brand metrics to regularly inform decision making across the association, and to measure the effectiveness of brand campaigns
- launch Comet 'Live' and embed it across the Northern Ireland football family
- have a dedicated staff member in place who is responsible for data analysis and insights
- increase the number of 'GAWA Official' members over the next five years
- create a new public affairs strategy
- increase our event surveys and Net Promoter Score (NPS) Year-on-Year (YoY)
- continue to deliver an improved fan experience for the supporters of the national teams and seek regular feedback
- use UEFA's Social Return On Investment (SROI) model to provide the Irish FA and clubs in Northern Ireland with quantitative data on the impact of football



## WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' FOOTBALL

We will...

- operate sustainable girls' youth leagues in four regional areas and have the age group gaps filled by 2025
- enhance the elite programmes to ensure the best development for players
- have a sustainable eight-team competitive top league with promotion and relegation (working with the NIWFA to ensure promoted clubs are ready for the top division)
- develop the staff and volunteers working within the women's game through the provision of new training opportunities
- identify current gaps in provision and encourage more senior men's clubs to create a women's section
- provide access to a club mentor for all women's clubs
- identify relevant coaches to progress through their coaching courses, and track and support their progress
- have three teams of officials on the UEFA list by 2025



## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) & SUSTAINABILITY

We will...

- work with UEFA to produce yearly reports on the impact of football on everyday life via the UEFA Social Return On Investment (SROI) model
- deliver at least four BAME, disability and female programmes per year to encourage diversity and inclusion amongst staff and volunteers
- report our carbon emissions annually and develop environmental initiatives to neutralise the climate impact of our operations
- develop five new inclusive clubs per annum
- release a yearly plan using Irish FA expertise and UEFA resources, highlighting the work that we are doing around sustainability to empower leagues and clubs to develop sustainability within their communities
- have 20 new graduates from the Female Football Leaders programme per annum



# Consultation meetings & special thanks

We wish to thank these organisations, who were the main consultees when developing and finalising this strategy. They represent the Northern Ireland football family and, in turn, hundreds of clubs and thousands of players, not to mention officials, volunteers and fans. They are the lifeblood of football in this country.

Without our commercial partners and sponsors many of our programmes and activities simply would not take place. They, like us, are committed to promoting, fostering and developing football for all across Northern Ireland and we thank them for their ongoing collaboration.

## ENGAGEMENT



NIBFA



Mid Ulster FA



NI Referees' Association



NIWFA



Fermanagh and Western FA



AONISC



Co Antrim FA



NISFA



NWFA



NIFL

## SPECIAL THANKS



Portas



UEFA



Touchline

