

RESPONDING TO RACISM AND ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION IN CRICKET

Introduction and Context

We met as a game last Friday to discuss how to unite and respond to the crisis that our sport finds itself in. We agreed that it was critical for us to work together at every level of the game and commit to a series of actions. We all understand the power of sport, its ability to connect and inspire – but this must be for the many, not for the few.

We all wish to feel proud about our game again. We acknowledge the need to work together, overcome the challenges we are facing and create long-term change that will overhaul the culture of cricket for the next generation.

We also know we still have much to learn. Ongoing work – through the ICEC and racism inquiries - is still being undertaken to explore the breadth of cricket's issues. We must be committed to continuing to listen, learn and educate ourselves in the coming months.

Rebuilding trust and finding ways to reconcile, reconnect and ensure that cricket can move forward as a game for everyone will be critical.

The below outlines our agreed pledge and the actions which we believe will start to solve the problem and demonstrate impact in the short-and-long term.

(1) The Game-wide Pledge

The ECB, the MCC, the PCA, NCCA Ltd. and the First Class Counties, Women's Regional Hosts and the Recreational County Cricket network, said:

"Azeem Rafiq has shone a light on our game that has shocked, shamed and saddened us all.

"Racism and discrimination is a blight on our game. To Azeem and all those who have experienced any form of discrimination, we are truly sorry. Our sport did not welcome you, our game did not accept you as we should have done. We apologise unreservedly for your suffering.

"We stand together against discrimination in all its forms, and are united as a sport to act. We will continue to listen, and make swift, positive changes to the culture of the game. We will embrace and celebrate differences everywhere, knowing that with diversity, we are stronger.

"Today, as a game, we discussed a series of tangible commitments to make cricket a sport where everyone feels safe, and everyone feels included. We will now finalise the detail and publish these actions next week.

"Our game must win back your trust."

(2) The ECB Commitments

In addition to the game-wide commitments outlined below, the ECB will:

1. **Undertake a review of governance and regulation in cricket** to improve the governance and regulation of the game. The terms and details of this review will be agreed with the ECB's stakeholders. We commit to acting on the recommendations of the review.
2. **Commit to £25m of strategic funding over 5 years** which will be used to support the actions in these plans, our stakeholders and any future actions.
3. **Establish a new anti-discrimination unit within 6 months** to ensure we create the right culture to tackle discrimination in all its forms and provide guidance to counties to be best in class.
4. **Include EDI minimum standards for all domestic and international venues**, with immediate effect.
5. **Connect funds and central distributions with agreed EDI minimum standards:** including withholding distributions where necessary to ensure all stakeholders meet the standards the game as a whole has agreed to.

6. **Enable stakeholders to partner with Sport England and Perret Laver** to increase diversity of Boards across the whole game.
7. **Report and publish annually on the game's progress** against its EDI goals. This will hold the game to account on our commitments.

(3) The Game Wide Commitments

We as a game are committing to a 5 point plan, with 12 tangible actions, that will help create a culture to eliminate discrimination. Our aim is to make cricket the most open and inclusive sport in the country. We will:

(A) Listen, care and educate ourselves

1. **Whistleblowing:** To set up and adopt a standardised approach to reporting, investigating, and responding to complaints, allegations, and whistleblowing across the game, within three months. To review, learn from and take action based on findings.
2. **Engage with ICEC:** To fully promote the aims of the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC), proactively engage with its investigations and recommendations (published Summer 2022).
3. **Continuous Education:** All those who work in cricket will be provided with ongoing EDI training. This will cover all staff, volunteers, recreational club officials, umpires, directors, and coaches.

(B) Address dressing room culture

4. **Review Dressing Room culture:** We commit to working with the ECB and PCA to undertake a full review of dressing room culture in all international and domestic teams. Findings will be published and used to inform future training.
5. **Player & Coach Education:** Reassess player and coach education. Work alongside the PCA to redesign the ongoing training programme and address any gaps identified through the dressing room review.

(C) Remove barriers in the talent pathway

6. **Talent Pathway:** We will remove structural and cultural barriers in our elite talent pathways. We must improve support for people from diverse backgrounds, especially South Asian, Black and less-privileged youngsters. We will identify and remove barriers to progress into our professional teams.

Our insights show that the specific barriers vary across counties. However, these fall into three broad themes: player identification, player support, and coach education and diversity. ECB will work with each County to identify each County's unique challenges before addressing these challenges with partners to support delivery. County plans will cover:

- **Talent identification and scouting:**
 - Expansion of the Community Talent Champions programme, which identifies talent from non-traditional and diverse backgrounds (subject to pilot in 2021)
- **Education & Diversity of Coaches:**
 - Take positive action towards reaching a minimum 20% gender diversity and appropriate level of ethnic diversity (% will vary by each county's demographic) for professional and recreational coaching staff & pathway coaches by 2025.
 - Continuous education and training for all coaches (as above)
 - Reaffirm our commitment to the Rooney Rule for all coaching appointments
- **Player support:**
 - Create a mentoring programme to support players from diverse or underprivileged backgrounds
 - Ensure the delivery of individualised programmes for academy players

(D) Create welcoming environments for all

Prior to the 2022 season, each County will address:

7. **Crowd behaviour:** Conduct full-scale review into the detection, enforcement, and sanctions against discriminatory and abusive crowd behaviour in each of our professional cricket grounds.
8. **Welcoming stadia:** To immediately begin delivering against enhanced EDI criteria when hosting international and major matches. All 18 FCCs will create plans tailored to local communities to ensure venues are welcoming to all. These will include, but not limited to; accessible seating, food and beverage provision that caters to all faiths and cultures and the availability of appropriate facilities that are inclusive for all (multi-faith rooms, alcohol-free zones etc)
9. **Recreational Cricket:** Upgrade education, training, and ongoing campaigns in recreational cricket to ensure all players, volunteers and coaches through the recreational game understand and champion inclusion and diversity in the game.

(E) Publish localised EDI Action Plan within 6 months

The ECB will shortly publish its 2021-2023 equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) Action Plan with clear actions and targets. The ECB will then work with any stakeholder that does not have an EDI plan in place to create their own localised version within six months*.

These actions will be specific to each organisation but will all incorporate the following:

10. **Best practice governance:** A commitment to best practice governance. Included in this, each organisation will deliver Board diversity (30% female, representative ethnicity) by April 2022. Compliance will be subject to a “comply or explain” provision to ensure organisations can respect their own governance processes in making the required change. Each organisation will also develop plans to create greater organisational diversity – with a specific focus on gender and localised ethnicity representation.
11. **Fairer recruitment:** To immediately adopt anonymised recruitment tools for all senior roles. To run an open process for all roles and ensure each interview process is assessed by a balanced and diverse multiple-person panel.
12. **Leadership accountability:** From 2022, every senior executive employed across the game will have personal EDI objectives as part of their annual performance targets.

**Note: Some Counties already have an existing EDI Action Plan, in which case this will be a review of the plan*