

# THE IMPACT OF CRICKET 2023



ENGLAND & WALES  
CRICKET BOARD



# FOREWORD

WELCOME TO THE IMPACT OF CRICKET REPORT.

This is the first time that the ECB has produced a report focused on the impact of cricket on the people who are touched by the game - whether as players, fans or volunteers - and on the communities where it is played. Although we have long known that cricket has the power to inspire people, improve lives and connect communities, until now there has not been a comprehensive analysis of how these impacts are felt across the recreational and professional game in England and Wales.

To fill this gap, we have worked with experts from The Sports Consultancy to assess the breadth of the ECB's projects and programmes in England and Wales and the outcomes that they deliver. In doing so, we aim to learn more about what is working well, where there are opportunities to have greater impact in the future, and where we must take steps to improve what we do.

The Impact of Cricket Report is the result of work that began a year ago and brings together a wide range of research from the ECB and our partners. This includes the results of a comprehensive survey of players and volunteers across the recreational game conducted by the ECB during 2023.

It is encouraging to see clear evidence of the

positive impact that cricket brings to people's lives by helping them to be more active, supporting mental wellbeing and fostering connections in local communities. These are a few of the highlights:

- 93% of players agree that cricket helps them to stay fit and healthy.
- 83% of parents say their child's confidence has been boosted by taking part in the ECB's All Stars and Dynamos programmes.
- Three quarters of volunteers say the experience has helped them to learn new skills and contribute to their local community.

With this being the first time we have carried out this report, we have taken a focused approach to assessing our impacts. However, we hope that a greater focus on measurement can provide an insight into the benefits that the game can bring and, importantly, highlight where there are opportunities to have greater impact in the future, and where we now know we need more data. One of the areas where we know there is more to do is the continuing, game-wide effort to make cricket a more inclusive, diverse and equitable sport.

We want cricket to be open to all, so that its positive impact reaches as far and as wide as possible and its benefits can be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of gender, background or disability. This is the focus of

the plans set out by the ECB earlier this year in response to the recommendations of the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC). We will be reporting on our progress next year, as well as bringing forward comprehensive action plans to increase access to cricket for state school pupils and tackle barriers for Black and other ethnically diverse communities.

The positive impacts described in this report are the result of work by many organisations and countless individuals across the cricket network. I would like to thank all of our partners for their commitment and pay tribute to the volunteers, coaches and officials who contribute so much to the game.

Our ambition is to make cricket the most inclusive sport in England and Wales. While we know we have much more work to do, this report shows that cricket is delivering significant benefits today and that we have solid foundations upon which to deliver lasting change and impact.



Richard Gould  
Chief Executive Officer, England  
& Wales Cricket Board

# THE IMPACT OF CRICKET 2023 INTRODUCTION

The Sports Consultancy (TSC) has been engaged to deliver this first-of-its-kind report, analysing the impact of cricket across England and Wales.

It focuses primarily on the 2022 and 2023 seasons, during which the ECB and a wide range of partners across the game have delivered programmes that are aiming to influence better outcomes for everyone involved in the sport.

This report reflects the ECB's awareness that it needs to measure, understand and enhance the impact of cricket for the people, communities and environment that are the foundation of the game.

TSC, in consultation with the ECB, have identified several core outcome areas with a view towards measuring cricket's impact, considering:

- How cricket is **Improving Lives**, from increased physical health and wellbeing to developing life skills.
- How cricket is **Connecting Communities**, bringing people together and driving societal development across England and Wales.
- How the ECB and partners are **Growing the Game**, making cricket a sport for all and delivering even greater impact.
- How the game is becoming future-proofed by **Promoting Environmental Sustainability**.

This report seeks to explore and demonstrate the positive influence of the game across England and Wales, whilst acknowledging areas where the ECB, and cricket more broadly, can improve, to help create a game for everyone.



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EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY



# CRICKET'S IMPACT: IMPROVING PEOPLE'S LIVES

Cricket enables the 2.6 million people in England and Wales who play the game to live an active lifestyle, supporting better physical and mental wellbeing both now and into the future. Participation in cricket is helping people to stay fit and healthy, driving broader health benefits in a way that other activities do not. Opportunities and experiences in the game are supporting individuals to develop new skills for life.

For children in particular, research shows cricket supports young people to have greater levels of confidence, happiness and a sense of worth than those who don't play sport.\*

The ECB is aiming to help more people to enjoy these benefits – particularly children, who will hopefully become a new generation of cricket enthusiasts, experiencing the great impact cricket has throughout their lives. Initiatives delivered by the ECB and its partners are enabling 1.1 million children to experience the game this year, with a renewed focus on reaching those most in need.

Beyond participation, 13 million people also describe themselves as passionate fans of the game. Cricket provides joy and entertainment to this large cohort, from County Championship regulars to once-in-four-years Ashes advocates.

\* Simetrica-Jacobs report assessing the total social and economic value of youth cricket to society based on the 2020/21 academic year

## 80%

OF PLAYERS AGREED THAT  
PLAYING CRICKET KEEPS THEM  
ACTIVE IN A WAY THEY  
WOULDN'T BE WITHOUT IT

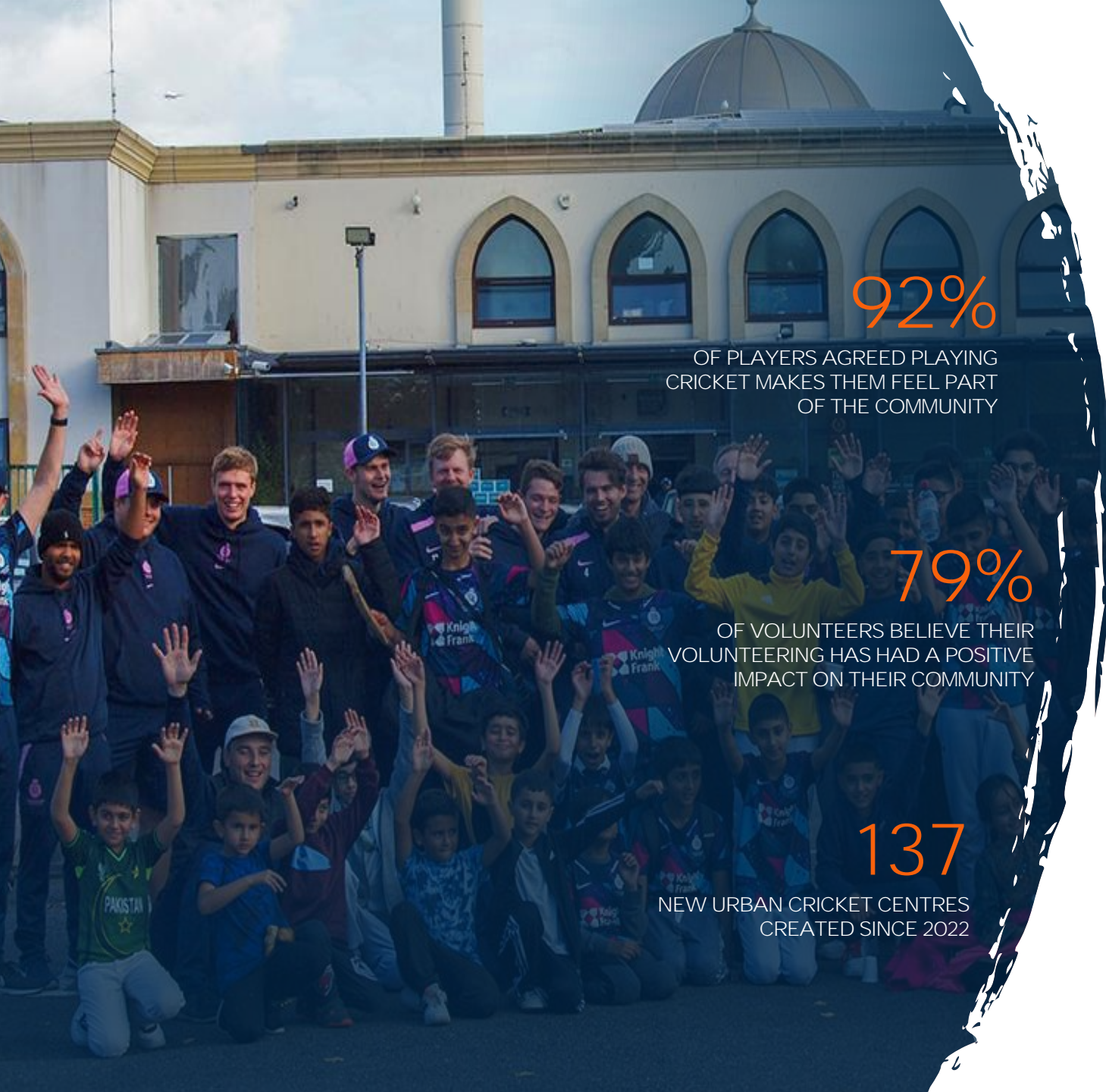
## 89%

OF PLAYERS AGREED PLAYING  
CRICKET MAKES THEM FEEL  
GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES

## 78%

OF PLAYERS AGREED PLAYING  
CRICKET HELPS THEM TO  
DEVELOP SKILLS THAT ARE  
USEFUL IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL  
AND PERSONAL LIVES





92%

OF PLAYERS AGREED PLAYING CRICKET MAKES THEM FEEL PART OF THE COMMUNITY

79%

OF VOLUNTEERS BELIEVE THEIR VOLUNTEERING HAS HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THEIR COMMUNITY

137

NEW URBAN CRICKET CENTRES CREATED SINCE 2022

## CRICKET'S IMPACT: CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Cricket is a sport that can bring people together from a wide range of communities and backgrounds, giving them a greater sense of belonging and social cohesion.

The game allows those who play or volunteer to come together and connect, helping them to feel part of their community and appreciate people from different backgrounds.

To support communities and break down barriers further, the ECB has helped over 500 cricket clubs across England and Wales to become more accessible and welcoming to more people, working towards making cricket a game for all.

The ECB is also supporting the growth of cricket in towns and cities, creating opportunities for urban communities to experience the benefits of cricket that has long been felt in rural areas.

137 new urban cricket facilities have been built, with most of the funding directed towards some of the most deprived areas in the country. This has been supported by providing cricket activity in 285 hubs across 13 core cities to bring more people into the game.

# GROWING THE GAME TO INCREASE IMPACT

The scale of impact which cricket delivers increases with every additional person who gets involved in the sport. The ECB is ambitious about growing the game by offering engaging opportunities to play, attend, watch and follow.

2023 has seen record attendances at matches, catalysed by the game-changing marketing of the dual Ashes series and another bumper season for The Hundred. 3.1 million tickets were sold and issued for live cricket in 2023. A host of attendance records were set in the women's game, whilst strong broadcast interest led to a record 323 million total viewing hours.

The rapid development of women's cricket has seen a 20% growth in women's and girls' club teams since 2022. Reinforcing this commitment, the ECB has awarded over 3,000 bursaries to enable individuals, especially women, ethnically diverse individuals, and disabled people, to qualify as coaches. Efforts are also underway to reduce the costs in boys' and girls' talent pathways, driving progress towards tackling the financial barriers to player development.

The ECB recognises that there is still significant work required to broaden access to the game and make it the most inclusive sport, committing to a range of new initiatives for the coming years, alongside regular progress reporting.

3.1M

TICKETS SOLD AND ISSUED FOR LIVE CRICKET IN ENGLAND AND WALES IN 2023

▲140%

INCREASE IN ATTENDANCE AT WOMEN'S INTERNATIONALS IN 2023 VS 2022 – 122,000 IN TOTAL

41%

OF TICKET BUYERS FOR THE HUNDRED IN 2023 WERE FAMILIES





317

CRICKET CLUBS GIVEN  
FUNDING FOR PROJECTS TO  
TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE  
(2021-2023)

£1.5M

SPENT ON TACKLING  
CLIMATE CHANGE  
THROUGH THE COUNTY  
GRANTS FUND (2023)

▼47%

REDUCTION IN VOLUME OF  
PLASTIC BATS PROVIDED TO ALL  
STARS AND DYNAMOS  
PARTICIPANTS SINCE 2019,  
DESPITE MAJOR GROWTH OF  
THE PROGRAMME

## ENABLING LONG-TERM IMPACT THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY

The ECB is leading the way to address the growing threat of climate change to the future of the game by investing in and promoting sustainable practices. Significant progress has been made in recent years to support cricket to continue delivering lasting impact, but the ECB acknowledges the need to continue and strengthen this response.

A new environmental sustainability plan has just been launched, outlining strategies to contribute towards a greener and more sustainable future. Building upon existing progress, the plan aims to tackle the threat caused by climate change, manage resources and waste, and promote biodiversity.

Since 2021, the ECB has supported 317 sustainability projects at cricket clubs across England and Wales, bolstering collective efforts to combat climate change. The ECB's support for the professional game is driving change at major venues, including a 67% reduction in the carbon footprint of the ECB's pitch-side LED advertising at Headingley thanks to its transition to grid electricity.

The ECB is also leveraging its influence and partnerships to encourage the wider public to contribute to this mission, such as the Sky Zero campaign which saw a 22% increase in active travel, such as walking or cycling, among attendees at The Hundred.



A young girl with long dark hair, wearing a white, short-sleeved, button-down dress, is cheering with her arms raised in the air. She is smiling broadly. In the background, a crowd of people is visible, some holding up phones to take pictures. The scene is set in what appears to be a stadium or arena. The image is overlaid with a dark blue diagonal graphic that contains white text.

## DETAILED FINDINGS

IMPROVING LIVES

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

GROWING THE GAME

PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY



IMPROVING LIVES

# IMPROVING LIVES

Cricket helps to improve the lives of everyone who plays or engages with the game by increasing activity levels, improving wellbeing and developing skills for life. The ECB is expanding access to the sport, especially in schools and under-served communities. This activity aims to cultivate a new generation of cricket enthusiasts who will experience the broad range of benefits the game delivers and bring greater joy and entertainment to the millions of cricket fans across England and Wales.



## ENCOURAGING ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

Cricket improves lives by delivering better physical health outcomes. The ECB helps unlock these physical health benefits by supporting grassroots programmes that use cricket to help people live more active lifestyles.



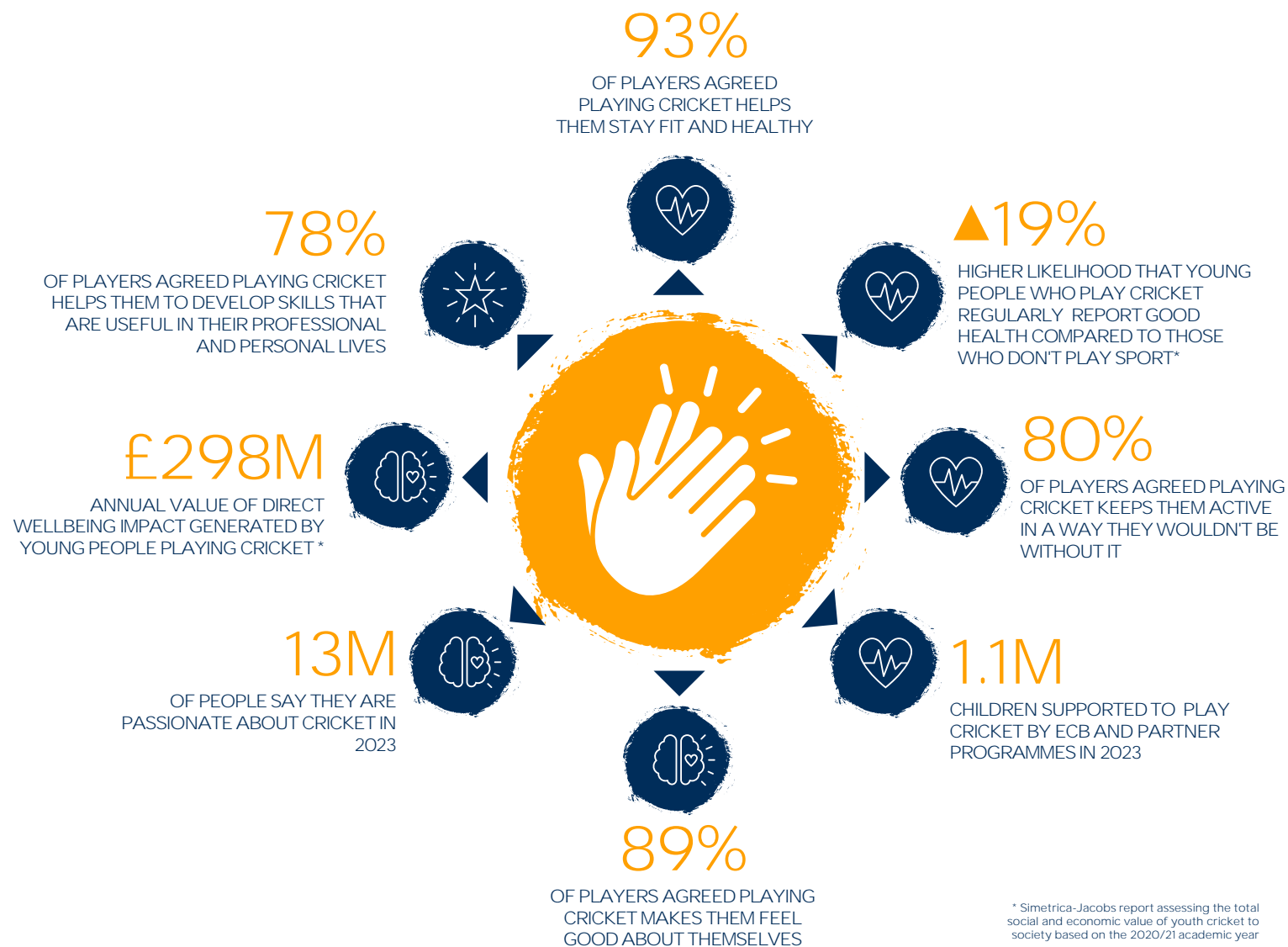
## ENHANCING MENTAL WELLBEING AND SOCIAL SKILLS

Cricket plays an important role in improving mental health and wellbeing. Through its initiatives, the ECB improves the mental health of those playing, attending, watching or following the game, leading to greater levels of wellbeing.



## DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS

The ECB is positively impacting lives beyond the pitch and is helping people in the cricket community to develop life skills that set them up for a better future.



\* Simetrica-Jacobs report assessing the total social and economic value of youth cricket to society based on the 2020/21 academic year

# ENCOURAGING ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

Cricket offers players a way to be physically active and keep healthy in a fun, engaging environment. In England and Wales, where 2.6 million people play cricket, including 595,000 core club cricketers, the impact of the sport is evident.

The ECB's annual player survey has shown the clear role that cricket plays in supporting health outcomes, with a significant majority (93%) of respondents agreeing that cricket helps them to stay fit and healthy. In addition, 80% of players credit cricket with keeping them active in ways they wouldn't be otherwise – a figure that is 9 percentage points higher amongst South Asian respondents. As such, this community of cricketers is able to experience the broad range of health benefits that the game can bring, supporting people to stay active.

## ENCOURAGING THE NEXT GENERATION

The ECB encourages active lifestyles, alongside its partners, to bring cricket and its associated benefits to children and young people, engaging them in sport at an early age.

The ECB's key national programmes, All Stars and Dynamos, have now taken the sport to 350,000 children since its launch in 2017. The ECB also invests over £4 million each year to support the free delivery of cricket in schools via Chance to Shine and Lord's Taverners, reaching 600,000 children, and working with every County Cricket Board across England and Wales.

## INTRODUCING CRICKET TO MORE YOUNG PEOPLE

Currently, 1.9 million children in England receive free school meals and there are 1.5 million children with special educational needs and disabilities in England and Wales. These children are less likely to be active and may not have the chance to experience cricket.

In 2022, the ECB, Chance to Shine and Lord's Taverners came together through their Youth Strategy to make a collective, targeted intervention to support these children who are at the highest risk of missing out. This focused work enabled the delivery of their cricket programmes to schools with a high percentage of children who receive free school meals, or at Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) schools.

As a result, an extra 54,000 children in 700 schools played cricket in the first year of delivery. To introduce the game to more people, the ECB also provides coaching and match play opportunities as described later in this report.

**“Playing table cricket has improved the quality of life for our students – they have become more confident and we see them able to socialise more easily.”**

Teacher, Ralph Thoresby School

**“Seeing the kids today get proper coaching is really amazing. In this area in particular, they don't often have that standard of coaching or the facilities to encourage kids to play cricket. It's brilliant that Chance to Shine are doing something.”**

James Anderson, England Men, on returning to his old school in Burnley with Chance to Shine

# IMPROVING MENTAL WELLBEING AND SOCIAL SKILLS

Cricket's social and active nature helps to support players' and volunteers' mental wellbeing.

96% of players surveyed by the ECB indicated that playing cricket makes them feel happy, with a significant majority also agreeing it makes them feel more relaxed (85%) and more worthwhile (81%). This demonstrates the value of playing cricket to the core community of players.

In addition, the game has a significant impact on the wellbeing of young people, with 83% of All Stars and Dynamos parents saying the sessions helped to improve their children's confidence.

**“I wasn't very confident at the start and I find it hard to meet new friends, but since I've started to come here, I feel part of a team.”**  
Recreational player

Through promoting cricket participation across England and Wales, alongside a wide range of partners, the ECB is helping to drive improved wellbeing and social outcomes.

## THE WELLBEING VALUE OF YOUTH CRICKET

Significantly, a study has recently been carried out by Simetrica-Jacobs\* to understand the social and economic benefits of youth participation in cricket. Looking at the 2020/21 academic year, the research showed that playing cricket regularly delivers significant wellbeing benefits for young people, compared to those who do not play sport:

- 23% more likely to express higher levels of confidence.
- 13% higher happiness levels.
- 12% higher sense of having a worthwhile life.

The study also assessed the health benefits, recognising that cricket drives activity levels. Young people who play cricket regularly are 19% more likely to report good or very good health than those who do not play sport.

The report has calculated that these benefits are contributing £298 million in direct wellbeing impacts to the economy.

\* Simetrica-Jacobs report assessing the total social and economic value of youth cricket to society based on the 2020/21 academic year

# DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS

Cricket equips individuals with important skills such as teamwork, social skills and problem solving, strengthening critical skills for students.

The ECB's Youth Strategy work with Chance to Shine and Lord's Taverners focuses on students in lower socio-economic groups (LSEG) and SEND schools. The impact of this work is being felt by those most in need of support, with students benefitting from improved teamwork, building new friendships and improving focus in class.

Over 9 in 10 teachers from the schools involved in this work said that the programmes improved pupils' physical, mental, personal and social wellbeing.

## IMPACT OF ECB YOUTH STRATEGY

Proportion of teachers who agreed the programme supported pupils in the following ways\*:

LOWER SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

**79%** IMPROVED TEAMWORK

**83%** IMPROVED TEAMWORK

**24%** BUILT FRIENDSHIPS

**81%** FELT GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES

**14%** BETTER FOCUS IN CLASS

**73%** FELT MORE INCLUDED

Through the Lord's Taverners' Super 1s programme, young people with a disability have benefited from vital life skills workshops such as CV writing, communication and healthy eating, with some participants benefiting from work experience opportunities at county cricket clubs. 80% of Super 1s participants in the past year say they felt more independent following engagement with the programme, with 89% feeling good about themselves.

Cricket's ability to support players in this way is shown by responses to the player survey, where 78% agreed playing cricket helps them to develop skills that are useful in their professional and personal life. This was higher among South Asian respondents, at 90%.

Cricket's valued cohort of volunteers are benefiting further, with 74% agreeing that volunteering has helped them to learn new skills and 45% agreeing it has helped to develop their career or CV. A small but notable minority (17%) even said that volunteering has helped them to gain employment. This year, the ECB launched its new Cricket Collective campaign, which is supporting clubs to recruit and retain volunteers to ensure more people experience the benefits of volunteerism.

The ECB is also working with partners to deliver several programmes that aim to maximise this impact, benefitting the cricket community in all areas of their lives.



\* Everfi report assessing the impact of the ECB's Youth Strategy



CONNECTING  
COMMUNITIES

# CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Cricket is a sport that can bring people together from a wide range of communities and backgrounds, giving them a greater sense of belonging and social cohesion. By investing in improving access and facilities, and creating more opportunities to bring people together, the ECB is engaging communities across society and enabling more people to enjoy these benefits.



## MAKING CRICKET A WELCOMING SPORT

The ECB is supporting existing cricket clubs to make the game welcoming for everyone, investing in facilities that encourage more people to feel able to play the game.



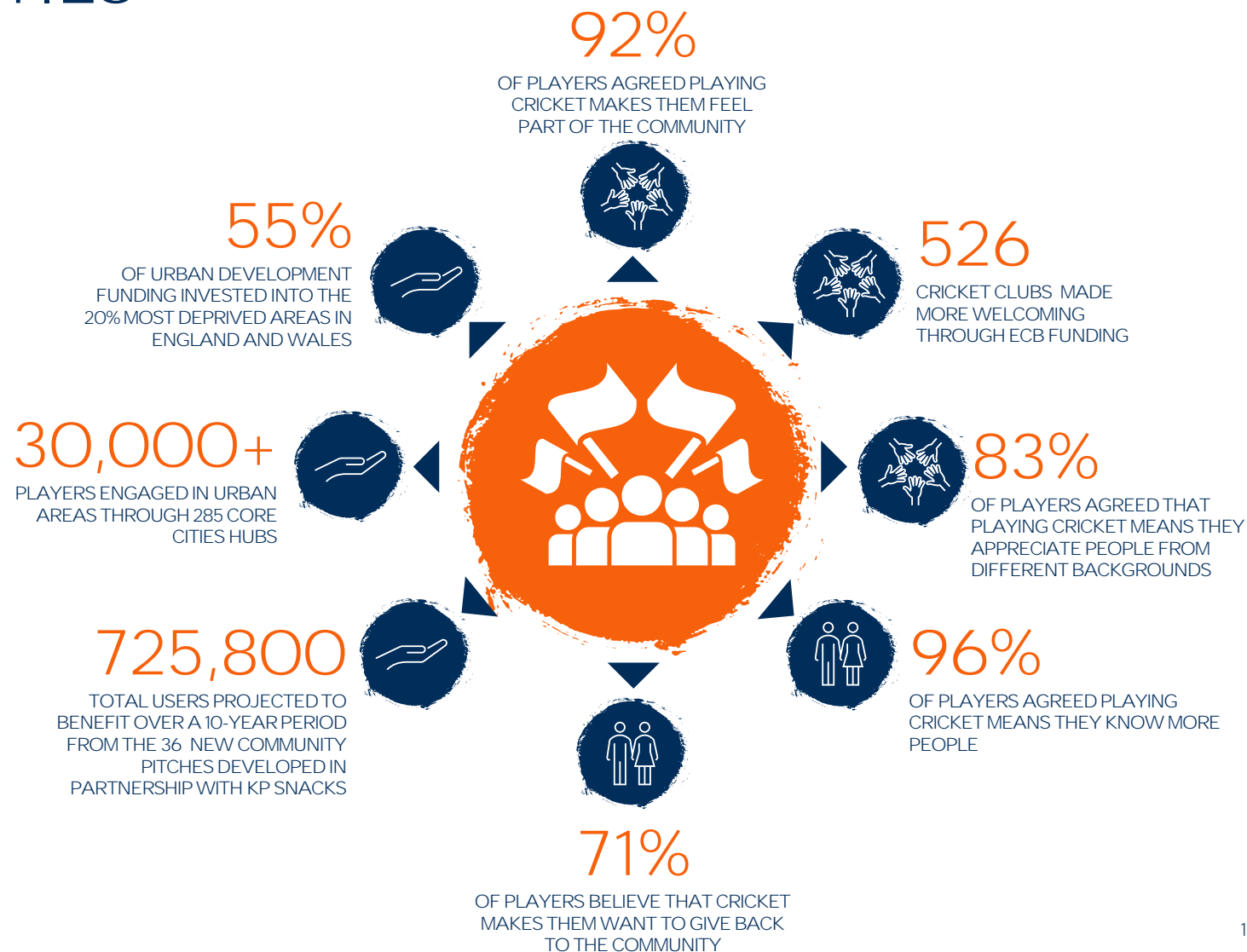
## CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL CONNECTION

By delivering volunteer and participation initiatives that bring people together, more can benefit from social interaction and a sense of belonging.



## SUPPORTING URBAN COMMUNITIES

More and more of the population live in towns and cities, but many cricket clubs are based in suburbs or rural areas. By investing in facilities and cricket provision in urban areas, the ECB is widening access to the game to under-served communities.





# MAKING CRICKET CLUBS MORE ACCESSIBLE

Cricket has the power to bring together people from different nationalities, cultures, religions and experiences, with local cricket clubs often seen as the bedrock of local communities.

**“Through playing sport together, you win together, lose together and most importantly you learn and grow together.”**  
Recreational cricketer

This impact is clear from the 2023 survey of recreational players, where a significant majority agreed that cricket enables them to know more people (96%), feel part of a community (92%), and appreciate people from different backgrounds (83%).

In addition, 94% of respondents agreed that they felt included, welcome, and like they belong at their cricket clubs, with only 3% disagreeing, showing the benefits that clubs bring as places to socialise. However, notable differences exist between respondents, as evidenced by 29% of women rating facilities as poor in terms of female-friendliness.

## CREATING WELCOMING ENVIRONMENTS FOR ALL

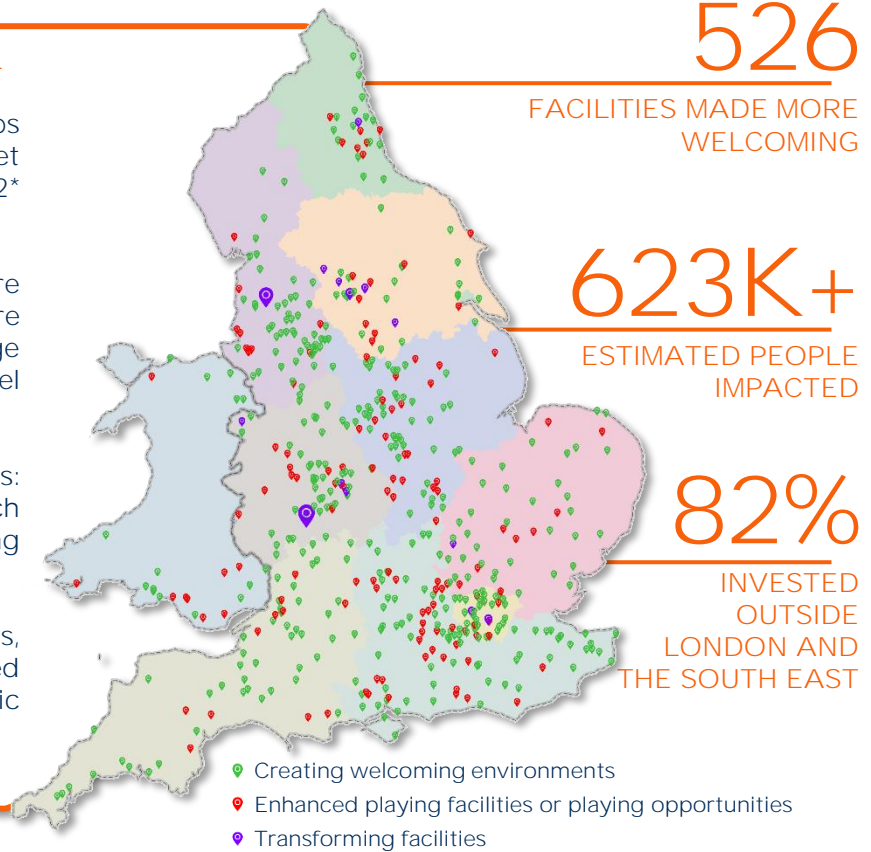
The ECB is actively investing in local cricket clubs across England and Wales to make grassroots cricket welcoming for all. Over £10m was invested in 2022\* across three major funds to drive this initiative:

Creating welcoming environments: 380\* clubs were provided grants to make their facilities more welcoming in a range of ways, aiming to encourage people to access the game, helping them to feel included and in turn strengthen community bonds.

Enhanced playing facilities or playing opportunities: 131\* clubs received grants to develop additional match and training facilities, particularly focused on enabling the growth of the women's and girls' game.

Transforming facilities: 15\* clubs, local authorities, charities and education providers have received funding to greatly increase capacity, with specific focus on provision for women and girls.

\* 2022 financial year data used as the most recent full year available



PROPORTION OF CLUB MEMBERS WHO FEEL INCLUDED, WELCOME AND LIKE THEY BELONG IN THEIR CLUB

**94%**  
OVERALL

**88%**  
DISABLED

**89%**  
FEMALE

**89%**  
SOUTH ASIAN

**88%**  
LGBTQ+

**87%**  
BLACK

# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Cricket is a social sport, with a gameplay and culture that offers participants an opportunity to meet and connect with new people. An overwhelming majority (96%) of players agree that they know more people because of playing cricket – a clear indication that cricket helps build social wellbeing and a deeper community connection. This social side of the game can be seen at all levels too, with 52% of All Stars and Dynamos parents indicating that the social element was the reason for signing up.

The sport also encourages people to contribute and participate in their community, bringing wider benefits for individuals and their local areas. A survey of recreational cricket players indicated that 74% believe that cricket makes them more likely to take part in or support events in the local community.



**“We became a hub for people of all ethnicities and backgrounds. Some play cricket, some don't but they can still get involved. It's not all about the sport.”**

Ish Jalal, Chair of the Sussex Cricket Foundation

The ECB's programmes present valuable opportunities for people to connect and engage meaningfully with community members, creating social connections and building a shared sense of purpose, trust and pride among communities across England and Wales.



**“Cricket has made me so much happier. Wherever I go in the cricket community, I know people and it's lovely to have that welcome feeling.”**

Kay Patel, Dream Big Activator

## FORGING MEANINGFUL SOCIAL CONNECTIONS THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering in cricket is an effective way for people to form meaningful social connections, to feel more connected to their local community, and to feel a greater sense of purpose. A survey of these volunteers demonstrates this significant impact. 86% believe that volunteering has helped them to meet new people and forge new connections, and 79% believe their activity has had a positive impact on the local community.

These meaningful experiences not only contribute to personal growth but also play a vital role in fostering a wider sense of belonging and community integration, both in people's individual lives and the broader communities they serve.

# SUPPORTING URBAN COMMUNITIES

With a large proportion of the population and an even higher proportion of ethnic minority groups living in cities, the ECB has recognised the importance of adapting the sport to urban environments, ensuring cricket's benefits are accessible to as many as possible.


The Core City Hubs programme has been critical to achieving this objective. Established in 2018, the programme aims to create hubs that connect communities by combining cricket with a range of local offerings (such as mental health awareness initiatives, community cohesion projects or wellbeing programmes) in central locations. To date, 285 hubs across 13 core cities have been developed, and these are now engaging over 30,000 players, including over 9,000 women and girls. Each of these hubs is establishing sustainable youth pathways, engaging diverse communities, and aiming to use cricket to break down barriers.

Through the Chance to Shine Street programme, almost 9,000 children and young people are playing free, weekly, year-round cricket, with 81% of participants being from an ethnically diverse community. One third of Street projects are funded by the ECB and the nationwide programme often collaborates with the ECB's Core City Hubs.

## DEVELOPING URBAN CRICKET FACILITIES

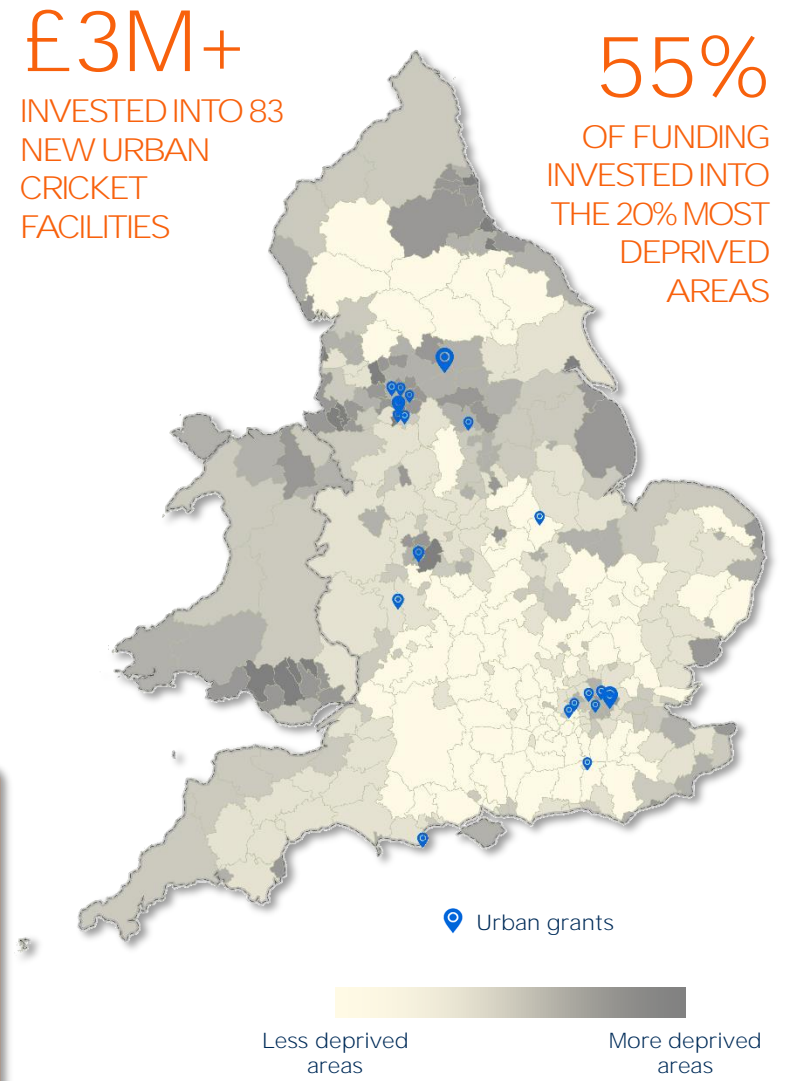
The ECB is delivering funding through its Urban Facilities Fund to affiliated clubs, local authorities and education providers in urban areas to create facilities that support cricket in city centres. Since 2022, £4.4 million has been distributed to develop 137 new urban cricket centres, pitches and training facilities.

The ECB has placed significant focus on delivering support where it is needed. In the 2022 financial year, 83 new facilities were developed, with the majority (55%) of funding delivered to the 20% most deprived areas in the country. This reflects the ECB's recognition that access to cricket may be difficult for these communities, as well as their desire to develop centres that bring cricket to the places it is most needed to offer a platform for social connections.

**KP Snacks**  **COMMUNITY PITCHES**

Through a shared vision of making the game more accessible for urban communities, the ECB has partnered with KP Snacks to fund 100 brand new community cricket pitches over the next three years. In 2023, 36 pitches were installed. The 100 pitches are projected to be used by 725,800 users in the next 10 years, with the majority within ethnically diverse communities and more deprived areas than average.

## 2022 URBAN CRICKET FACILITIES INVESTMENTS



\* 2022 financial year data used as the most recent full year available



GROWING THE  
GAME

# GROWING THE GAME

To increase the impact cricket generates, the ECB is focused on growing the game to make it a sport for all, offering opportunities to play, attend, watch and follow. A significant growth in women's and disability cricket is being reinforced by bigger England attendances and TV figures than ever before, securing the sport's long-term health.



### OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Recognising that the recreational and professional games still fall short of representing the diversity of the wider population, the ECB and partners are taking action to ensure there are greater opportunities for people from all backgrounds.



### GROWING CRICKET'S AUDIENCE

Interest in the sport has grown in recent years, driven by a range of new initiatives. The ECB is aiming to increase attendance and viewership for major games to reach as many people as possible.



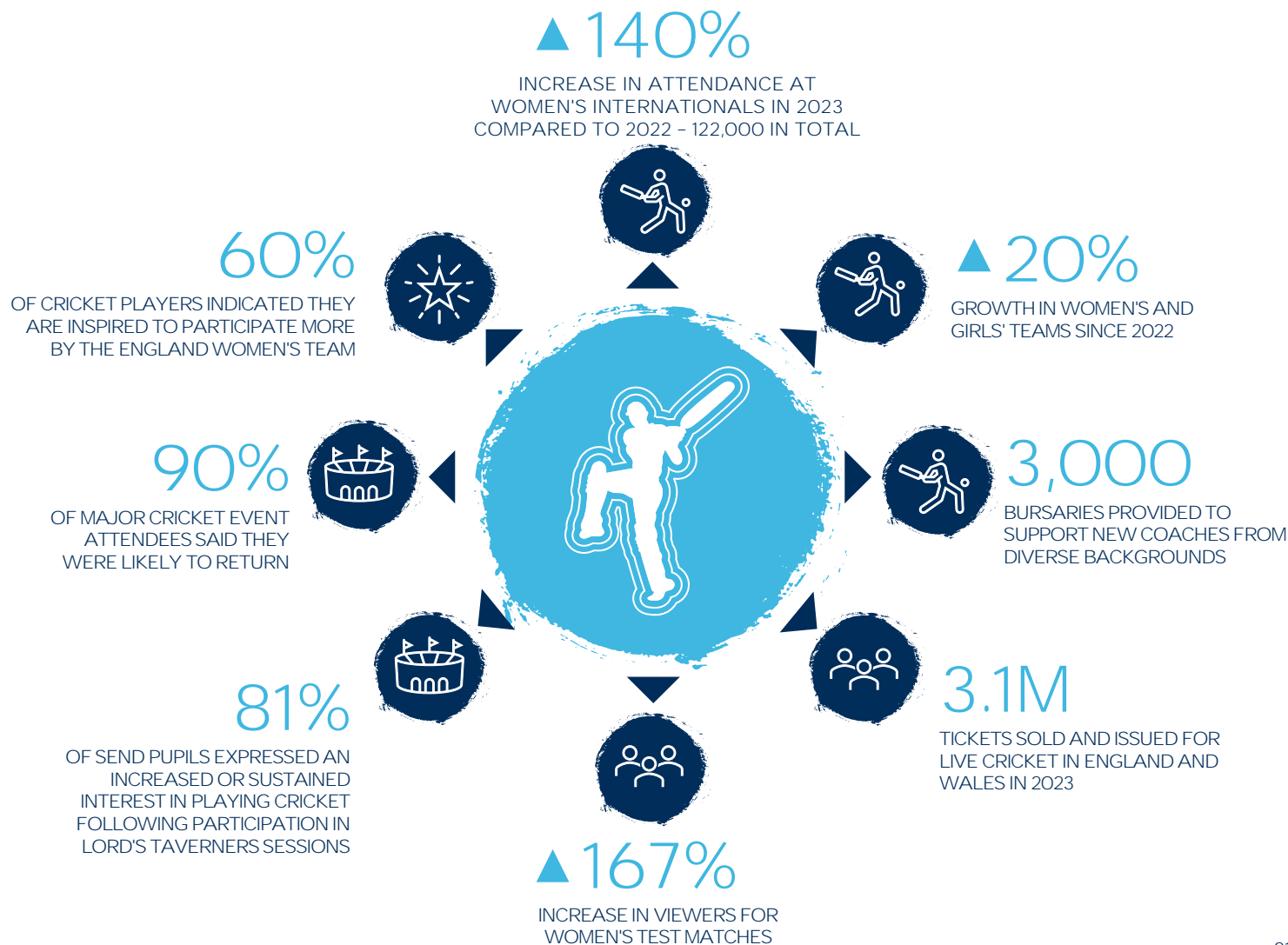
### IMPROVING ACCESS FOR FANS

To ensure that as many people as possible can become fans of the sport, the ECB delivers initiatives that help make venues and match experiences become as welcoming and inclusive as possible, bringing a variety of audiences into the game.



### INSPIRING FUTURE GENERATIONS

The ECB ignites a love for cricket by providing exciting opportunities to engage with the game. By broadening access to professional cricket and promoting team success, the ECB aims to boost engagement with the sport.



# TURBOCHARGING THE WOMEN'S GAME

Domestic women's professional cricket has reached an inflection point, and the ECB is aiming to drive further development, making the game as effective and equitable as possible. This has been supported by an additional £3.5 million injected into the women's domestic game in 2022. There are now 87 full time professional domestic players, 80 of whom are funded by the ECB, with a further 18 England Women's central contracts.

Further progress has been made through equalising match fees for England Men's and Women's players, addressing concerns raised by the ICEC. This represents significant progress in driving equity and making cricket a realistic career option, although further change is required to reach full equal pay.

## PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY

The ECB is committed to enhancing women's and girls' participation in cricket, one of their primary target audiences for growth. The ECB is investing £1.2 million in a network of 100 Cricket Development Officers to support this, and 2023 has seen 717 new women's and girls' teams, a 20% growth from 2022. The ECB has launched a range of initiatives including a project targeted at growing the game among secondary school girls. Around 20,000 participants took part and 90% of teachers reported a positive impact on their pupils' perceptions and attitudes

towards cricket, although some barriers were identified in ensuring the girls continued to play, including a lack of local opportunities to play.

In the recreational game, 53% of players and volunteers identified the shortage of available players as the primary barrier to establishing a women's section in clubs, with 48% expressing a similar concern for a girls' section. There is an opportunity for the ECB to develop further strategies to support women and girls into the recreational game and ensure their long-term involvement.

To drive the growth of the women's game further, the ECB has committed to a long-term partnership with Metro Bank. Designed to grow the women's and girls' game through co-developing and co-investing in programmes, the partnership aims to triple the number of women's and girls' sections at clubs - transforming the grassroots experience.

▲ 22%

INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' FIXTURES FROM 2022 TO 2023

26,752

GIRLS TOOK PART IN ALL STARS AND DYNAMOS IN 2023





# DEVELOPING DISABILITY CRICKET

## FILLING GAPS IN SEND SUPPORT

Currently, a significant gap exists in providing sports opportunities for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This deficiency stems from a lack of staff training, equipment, and knowledge required to accommodate young people with varying abilities and needs.

Lord's Taverners, in collaboration with the ECB, is committed to offering a range of opportunities for young people with disabilities to participate in cricket. These programmes include Super 1s and Table Cricket. Super 1s gives 1,800 young people with a disability aged 12-25 the chance to play regular, competitive cricket and is available in every county and Wales. In 2023, Table Cricket positively impacted 10,750 people with disabilities, and 81% of surveyed pupils at SEND schools expressed an increased or sustained interest in playing cricket following participation in the Lord's Taverners sessions.

## DISABILITY CHAMPION CLUBS

The ECB is also making clubs more accessible for disabled people. Through its Disability Champion Clubs programme, clubs are provided with guidance, resources, and equipment to support people with additional needs and varying abilities to play, follow, officiate, and volunteer. As of 2023, there are 147 Disability Champion Clubs across England and Wales developing the disability game.

## DISABILITY PREMIER LEAGUE

The Disability Premier League (DPL) is a groundbreaking cricket competition featuring 65 of the UK's finest disabled cricketers, with a variety of disabilities, engaging in franchise-style cricket.

**"...he's had some really black moments, times where he's just thought: 'Why me?' Yet cricket has always got him through – he's made friends for life through the game. And the DPL, which we've been involved with since the pilot, has been wonderful."**

Miranda Brown  
discussing her son, DPL Tridents player Elliott, who was born with cerebral palsy

The DPL provides a competitive platform for disabled players to engage in high-level competition. Since its inception, the DPL has achieved remarkable success. In 2024, 64 county teams have been entered into domestic disability competitions (D40 Hardball and S9 Softball), a 23% increase on the 2023 season, thanks in part to the growth of the DPL and Super 1s cricket.

▲ 24%

INCREASE IN PLAYERS  
WITHIN THE DPL'S 2023  
ROSTER COMPARED TO 2022

▲ 25%

INCREASE IN PARTICIPANTS  
WITHIN THE DPL'S FEMALE  
DEVELOPMENT GROUP

# ENABLING TALENT TO REACH THE TOP

Enhancing representation in the professional game, both on and off the field, is crucial to reflecting the nation's full diversity. The ECB is actively working on offering these opportunities to people from all backgrounds.

## MAKING THE PATHWAY MORE AFFORDABLE

A 2022 survey indicated that 74% of parents of players involved in County Age Group (CAG) pathways reported that their county required a financial contribution. In response, during the season, First Class Counties (FCC) and National Counties (NC) have reduced costs for players in their pathways, allocating equal investment to the boys' and girls' programmes. The aim was to reduce financial barriers for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access the talent pathway. All FCCs have now reduced the costs of their pathway programmes, leading to a 36% reduction in fees for girls and a 28% reduction for boys.

## MAKING THE PATHWAY MORE INCLUSIVE

Data from the 2023 season indicates that the ethnicity of professional cricketers does not reflect the diversity of the recreational game. 30-35% of the adult recreational game is made up of individuals from ethnically diverse backgrounds. However, a much smaller proportion are making it into the professional game, with 11% of professional players from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Data suggests in recent years this has improved slightly within the county pathways. In 2022, 23% of boys at CAG level were from ethnically diverse backgrounds, up from 17% in 2017. In addition, 14% of girls at CAG were ethnically diverse compared with 10% in 2021.

However, the ECB is working to drive additional change, particularly in partnership with organisations such as ACE.

**CASE STUDY: ACE PROGRAMME**

The ACE Programme was launched by Surrey County Cricket Club in response to the decline of black British professional players by 75%, providing under-served children with access to a pathway to the professional game. In 2023, the ECB supported ACE through a £200,000 investment. The programme has already reached over 21,000 participants, with 78% of schools visited having had no prior access to cricket. In its talent development programme, ACE currently has over 150 scholars training twice a week, and has seen 21% of elite academy players progress to the county cricket structure.

## BEYOND PLAYING OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to providing more playing opportunities, the ECB is aiming to build a network to support growth. Alongside the #Funds4Runs initiative with LV=, over 3,000 bursaries have helped people from underrepresented groups to start coaching cricket since 2021. These Foundation Coaching bursaries are targeted towards people from ethnically diverse communities, women and people with disabilities, offering the opportunity to gain the entry-level qualification required to lead coaching sessions. To support coaches from underrepresented groups who want to keep developing their skills, at least 15 bursaries have been made available at Advanced and Specialist level and 100 Coach Development Scholarships have provided funding, mentorship and work opportunities.







# GROWING CRICKET'S AUDIENCE

2023 saw huge interest in cricket in what was an Ashes summer, with 3.1 million tickets sold and issued across all domestic and international competitions. Whilst the Ashes will always be a calendar highlight, this summer's growth in ticket sales is also supported by efforts to engage a wider audience of attendees and viewers.

## THE BENEFIT OF AN EQUAL PLATFORM

For the first time, both the Men's and Women's Ashes were marketed alongside each other. The ECB's 'Ashes, Two Ashes' campaign showcased cricket as a game for all, reaching a broad audience across the country and driving sellout attendances across both series. The Metro Bank Women's Ashes in particular achieved record attendances for individual games at several of the grounds, and overall across the series, the attendance was 4.5 times higher than in 2019.

This success was supported by further strong crowds across the domestic game, led by the Vitality Blast, alongside The Hundred which attracted more women and kids during the school holidays. 30% of ticket buyers for The Hundred were women, 23% were juniors, and 41% were families, with the percentage of women and juniors both higher than in 2022.



# 122,000

TOTAL ATTENDANCE AT WOMEN'S INTERNATIONALS IN 2023 - UP FROM 51,000 IN 2022, INCLUDING:

## 21,610

ATTENDEES AT LORDS FOR THE WOMEN'S T20 AGAINST AUSTRALIA - A RECORD FOR A BILATERAL WOMEN'S GAME IN ENGLAND

## 23,207

TICKETS SOLD OVER 5 DAYS AT TRENT BRIDGE, BREAKING NEW GROUND FOR A WOMEN'S TEST MATCH IN ENGLAND

# THE HUNDRED

# 310,751

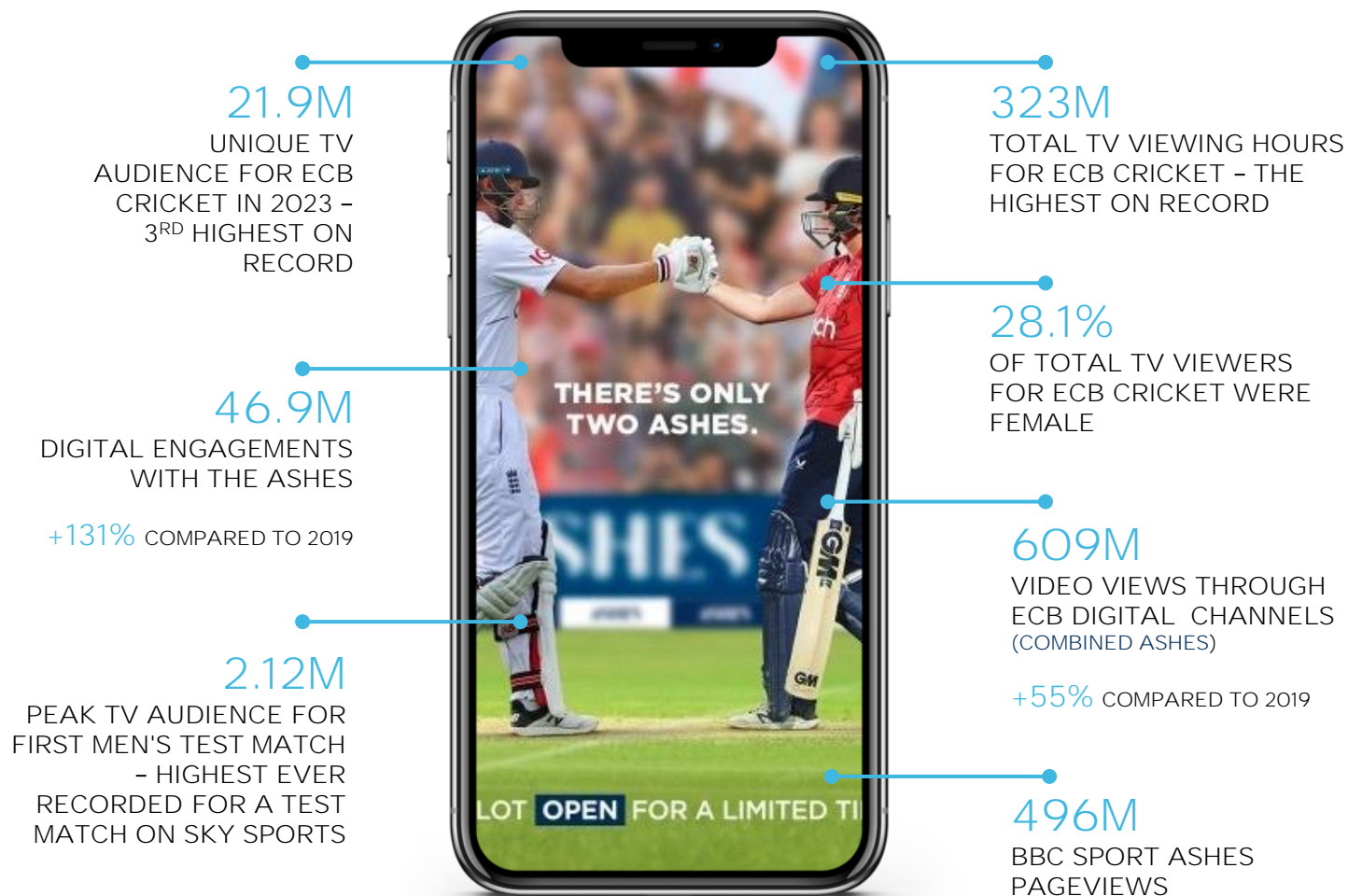
TOTAL ATTENDANCE AT THE WOMEN'S HUNDRED

# A REMARKABLE SUMMER OF CRICKET

This summer, the Men's Ashes set an all-time record as the most-watched men's Test series on Sky Sports, and the Metro Bank Women's Ashes garnered a larger audience than any previous series.

These contributed to a total unique audience for cricket in 2023 of 21.9 million, the third most on record, and total viewing hours reached a staggering 323 million - the most ever recorded. Importantly, the cricket was engaging a broader audience, reaching the joint highest proportion of female viewers on record (28%) and the highest proportion of 16-34-year-olds (13%) since 2013.

The Women's Test match saw an impressive 167% increase in viewers, totalling 168,000, while Women's ODIs experienced a 49% rise to 166,000 viewers. This year, ECB women's cricket collectively attracted a substantial audience of 7.4 million, underlining the growing interest and rapid evolution of the women's game.



# IMPROVING ACCESS FOR FANS

## CASE STUDY: CHESTER-LE-STREET

Durham Cricket is actively working to transform their Chester le Street ground into one of the most accessible cricket venues in England and Wales. They have implemented a series of upgrades designed to enhance accessibility and promote inclusivity.

This year marked a significant milestone as the club installed an all-new sensory room, providing a safe and relaxing environment for both individuals and families to enjoy an unparalleled view of the game. Additionally, a state-of-the-art changing places facility has been installed, catering to individuals with complex care needs. Lastly, a new multi-faith room is set to launch, offering a serene space for prayer and reflection. This inclusive area will be accessible to all supporters and followers of every religion on home matchdays.

**“With funding and support from the ECB, these upgrades have been possible, and we now look forward to welcoming a wide range of people to Seat Unique Riverside this summer.”**

Richard Dowson,  
Chief Operating Officer, Durham Cricket

The ECB has invested £3 million in its Welcoming Venues initiative, demonstrating its commitment to delivering on plans (tailored to local communities) to ensure professional cricket venues are welcoming to all. In particular, the ECB is focusing on the following facility offerings:



Accessible seating



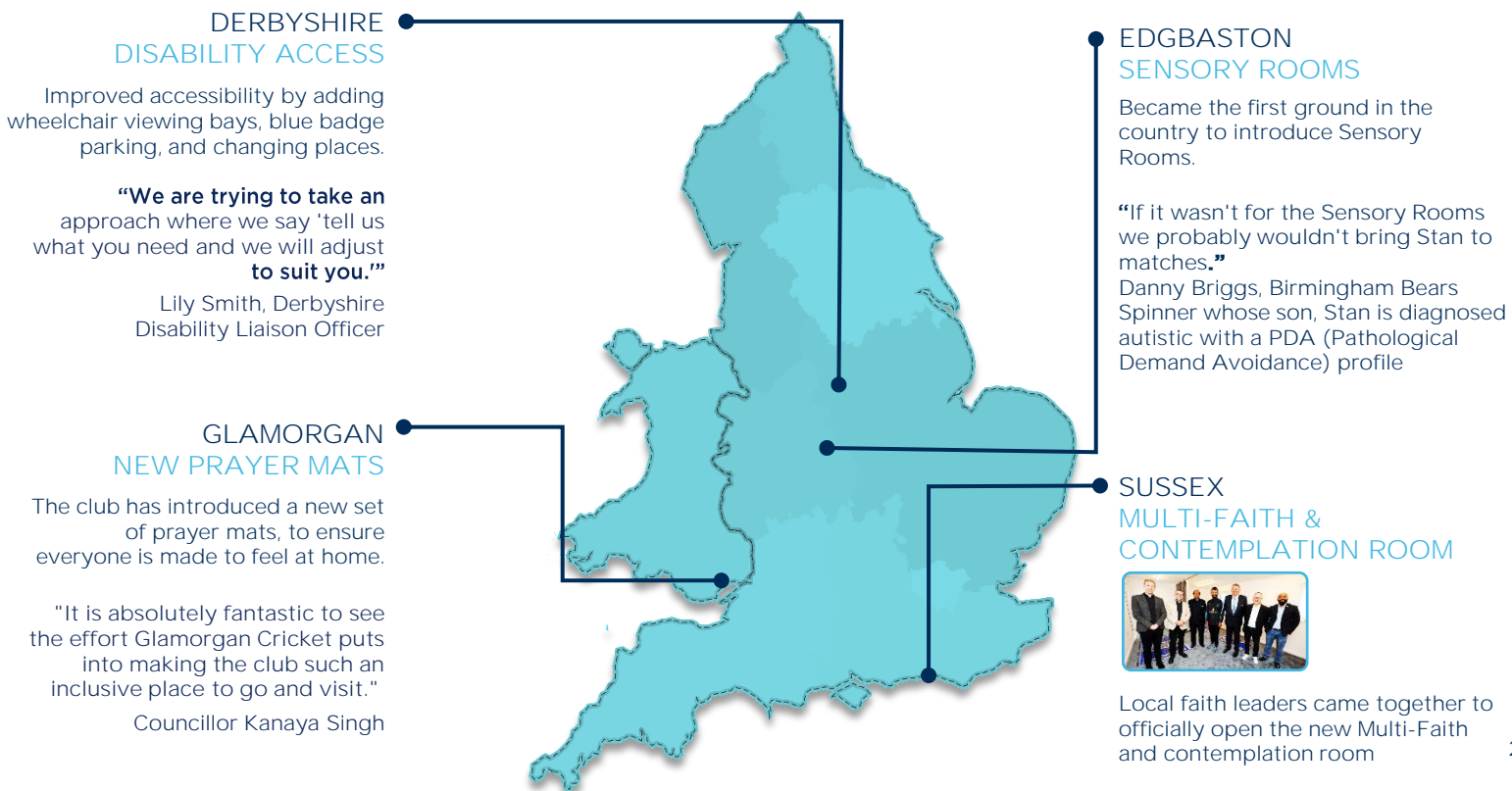
Catering to all faiths and cultures



Food and beverage offerings



Availability of facilities  
(E.g. Multi-faith rooms and alcohol-free zones)



# INSPIRING FUTURE GENERATIONS

Cricket possesses a unique potential to ignite a passion for the game. Thrilling series like the Men's and Women's Ashes leave a lasting impression on people, engaging the public in new ways and encouraging them to continue to actively engage with cricket in the years to come.

## PROFESSIONAL TEAMS: A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

Significantly, a number of surveyed recreational players have drawn inspiration from various professional teams in 2023, encouraging them to play more in the future.



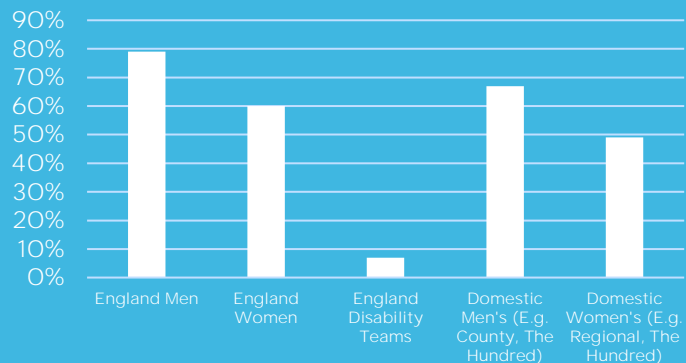
Issy Wong,  
England Women

“It doesn’t get much more special than receiving your first England Cap from your childhood hero. @KBrunt26 thank you for inspiring me to play the game in the same way you have ❤️”

## DRAWING A DIVERSE AUDIENCE

Inspiration goes beyond participation, with people attending cricket showing a strong intention to attend more games in future. 90% of major cricket event attendees said they were likely to return, with Women's Internationals and The Hundred standing out for newcomers. The Hundred is also helping to engage a younger, more diverse audience through its unique format and presentation – families in particular. Its joint promotion of the men's and women's game has improved cricket's perception as a gender-equal sport, with 36% believing the sport is male-oriented, a 4-percentage point decrease since the beginning of 2022. This places cricket on par with football and positions it ahead of basketball and rugby union in terms of gender equality perception.

PROPORTION OF RECREATIONAL PLAYERS WHO SAID THE FOLLOWING TEAMS INSPIRED THEM TO PLAY MORE CRICKET





# GROWING THE GAME - LOOKING FORWARD

At its best, cricket has the potential to be a force for good, bringing people from different backgrounds together to experience the game in all its forms. However, the recent findings in the ICEC report highlight that cricket is still in the process of evolving into a sport that is truly inclusive and accessible for all.

The ECB is making progress to broaden access to cricket, make the pathways more inclusive and improve the accessibility of the game's infrastructure. 2023 was an iconic summer for cricket, drawing huge crowds and audiences excited by the thrilling on-field action. The excitement generated by the women's and disability games, in particular, will serve to inspire a new generation and motivate more people to engage with cricket.

Despite this progress, there is still significant work to do to make cricket truly accessible to all and to ensure that people from all backgrounds feel welcome in the game at all levels. The ECB has committed to regular reporting on its progress, as can be seen in its latest EDI reporting on its website.

To broaden access, the ECB will partner with the South Asian Cricket Academy to address the disparity between South Asian participation in the recreational and professional game. The ECB is also working with various cricket bodies to redefine the talent pathway to reduce financial barriers, including supporting the MCC Foundation to expand its network of hubs to 150 by 2025, providing free-to-access training and match play to 2,000 more young people.





The ECB will also invest £25 million annually above forecasted revenues into women's cricket to foster its growth. To reinforce this commitment, the ECB is developing a refreshed professional women's game strategy for 2025-2029.



PROMOTING  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY

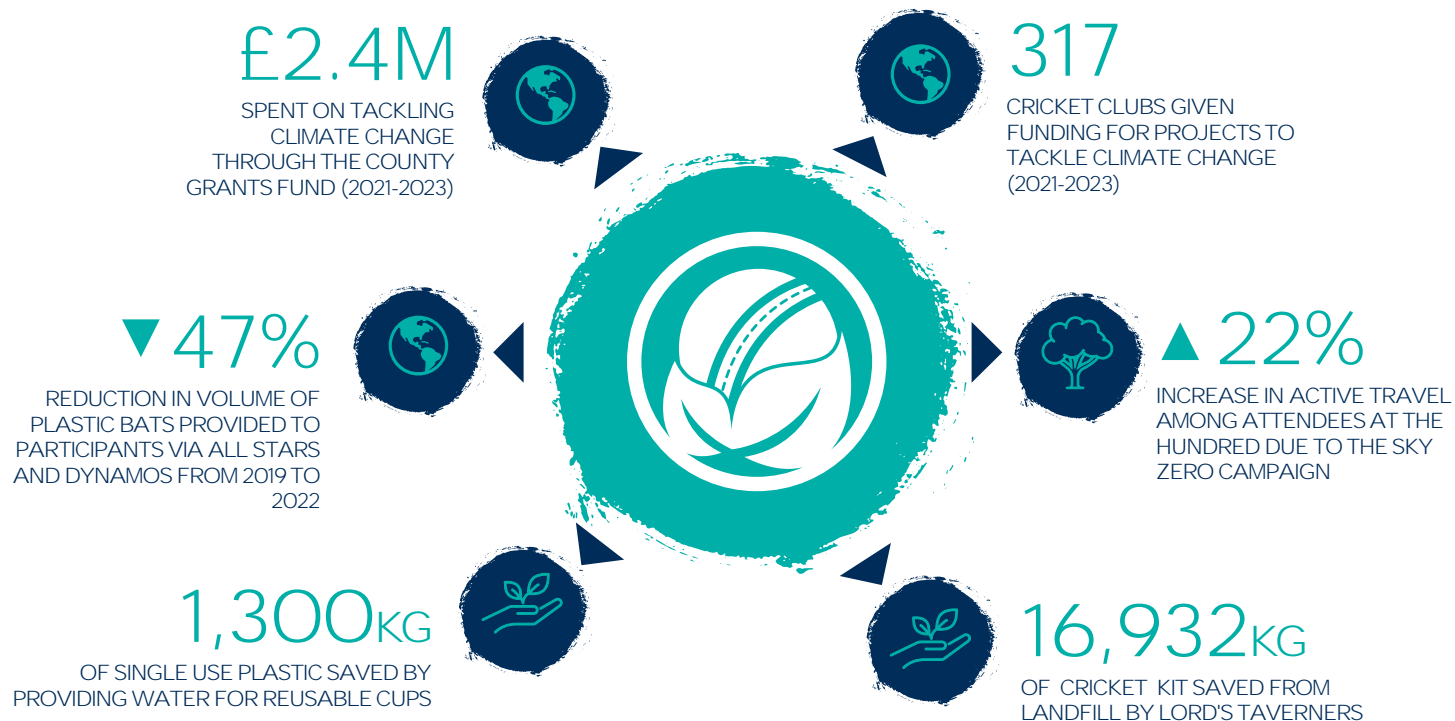
# PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Cricket is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change - more than many other sports - which continues to be a major challenge for the game globally. The ECB has just published its first environmental sustainability plan in response to these challenges, which sets out a commitment to:

-  Reduce the ECB's greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and become Net Zero by 2040.
-  Eliminate the use of single-use plastic by 2025 and work with landlords and venues to eliminate waste to landfill by 2035
-  Collaborate with venue partners to increase fan engagement around sustainable practices.
-  Support and invest in the game to inspire action on tackling climate change.

This builds on work which has been under way for a number of years by the ECB and across the game across three key areas:

-  Tackling climate change
-  Managing resources & waste
-  Protecting the natural environment



# MANAGING THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The ECB is working with clubs across England and Wales to become more resilient to climate change through the County Grants Fund, which provides financial support for investment in sustainable initiatives.

'Tackling Climate Change' is one of the main themes of the scheme, with strands to address the key issues of flood and drought resilience as well as energy saving and water management. Between 2021 and 2023, 317 projects have been supported to tackle climate change.

The funding invested each year has increased significantly, with just over £1.5 million granted to clubs in the 2023 financial year (up to October 2023). These grants are actively supporting cricket clubs with targeted investment to encourage sustainability through initiatives such as the on-site generation of electricity, building insulation, electrical infrastructure, and the replacement of inefficient boilers.

By encouraging and supporting climate conscious initiatives, the ECB is playing a critical role in safeguarding the future of the game and helping to manage the impact that cricket is having on our environment.

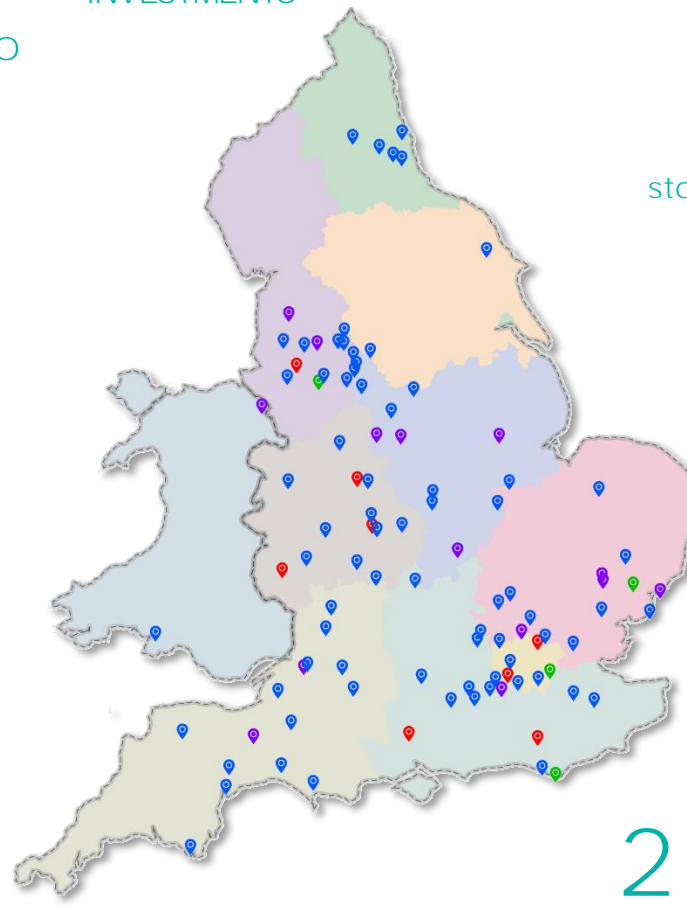
## AMOUNTS INVESTED EACH YEAR TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

2021  
**£79K**  
 6% OF COUNTY GRANTS FUND INVESTMENTS

2022  
**£858K**  
 17% OF COUNTY GRANTS FUND INVESTMENTS

2023  
**£1.5M**  
 38% OF COUNTY GRANTS FUND INVESTMENTS\*

## 2022 TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE INVESTMENTS



**“Any cricket clubs that have been affected by storm damage or flooding, we’re here to help”**

Dan Musson  
 Head of Facilities Planning, ECB

- Drought resilience
- Energy saving
- Flood resilience
- Water management

**2 in 5**

CRICKET CLUBS ARE AT RISK OF FLOODING OR DROUGHT

\*FY2023 data up to October 2023









# ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

The ECB is working with cricket clubs, partners and venues to encourage responsible management of resources and to reduce the waste associated with cricket activities. This means committing to more sustainable practices in the delivery of cricket at all levels.

By encouraging a collective focus on sustainable operations, the ECB is helping to manage the impact of major cricket events and building a shared sense of purpose and awareness across the cricket community.

### SUSTAINABLE FACILITIES




Helping counties and cricket clubs to manage emissions through investing in energy efficient improvements:

-  Installing LED floodlights
-  Transitioning to grid electricity
-  Reducing mains water use
-  Developing habitat management and biodiversity plans

**CASE STUDY**  
Including a 67% reduction carbon footprint of ECB's pitch-side LED advertising at Headingley, while Somerset County Cricket led as the UK's first professional club with LED floodlights.

### RECREATIONAL CRICKET

Supporting recreational cricket in its initiatives to reduce waste associated with cricket activities:

-  Promoting the re-use of cricket kit
-  Allowing parents to opt out of receiving kit
-  Reducing the volume of new plastic bats provided

**CASE STUDY**  
The ECB has significantly reduced the volume of plastic bats provided to participants via All Stars and Dynamos, from 85,713 units in 2019 to 45,486 in 2022 – a 47% reduction.

### PROFESSIONAL CRICKET

Encouraging sustainable practices at live cricket events and through partnerships in professional cricket:

-  Partnerships promoting sustainable practices
-  Initiatives to increase sustainable practices such as using reusable bottles

**CASE STUDY**  
The Hundred x Sky Zero campaign encouraging fans to choose low-carbon transportation options to The Hundred saw a 22% rise in active travel (e.g. walking or cycling) by event attendees.



ENGLAND & WALES CRICKET BOARD

LORD'S CRICKET GROUND

LONDON NW8 8QZ

[ecb.co.uk](http://ecb.co.uk)