STRONGER, HEALTHIER, MORE ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

STRATEGY 2019 – 2024
INTRODUCTION TO OUR STRATEGY

Welcome to our ambitious strategy for 2019 – 2024. We are incredibly proud of our progress during our charity’s first ten years, but we know there is much more to do to achieve our vision of Stronger, Healthier, More Active Communities.

As the charitable arm of the English Football League (EFL), the EFL Trust was established in 2008 to oversee the remarkable and diverse work of their Football Club Community Organisations (CCOs). Over ten years later, providing ‘a football experience for everyone’ is key to EFL’s work and this is reflected in the work of our CCOs.

Our core purpose remains to support the CCOs to help us achieve our vision. This is best achieved when the power of both the Football Club and the Club Community Organisation are brought together.

We will continue to work closely with a significant number of key partners whose ambitions we share, such as DWP, DCMS, MHCLG, Department for Education, Sport England and the NHS. We are confident and ambitious about the pivotal role we can play in helping them to meet our shared objectives.

In 2018, as we celebrated our 10th anniversary, we invested over £18 million in our network, more than ever before. This continued the expansion and improvement of our support for the communities in which EFL Clubs operate. We have since confirmed funding from the Professional Footballers Association for the next three years. We also successfully secured the continuation and growth of our delivery of National Citizen Service – our largest single programme. As such we have a strong financial base from which to plan with confidence.

We remain committed to providing a world class service to our network of partners to help them develop and flourish, and to maximise and quantify their impact in their local communities. In 2018 we achieved compliance with the Sport England Code of Governance. In 2019 we were successful in retaining the Merlin Accreditation for Excellence in Supply Chain Management and in addition we achieved the ‘Merlin Standard Award: Working with Effective Supply Chains’. This is recognition of best practice in organisations who are recognised by their supply chain as having an approach that creates a win-win partnership to deliver excellent value to the customer.

We will continue to embed a culture within the EFL Trust where improvement is a habit and our people are encouraged to challenge and innovate.

Our ambition during the next five years is to be a catalyst for change in reaching our vision. Our network delivers a vast range of innovative solutions to local issues. We want to share the story of this great work and to create an evidence base from which we can secure further resources to expand and improve what we do.

We are excited about what lies ahead and we look forward to working with you to achieve our ambition.
A JOINT MESSAGE FROM...

EFL Executive Chair, Debbie Jevans and EFL Trust Chair, John Nixon

One in five people who pay to attend a live sports event in this country do so by watching an EFL match – over 18 million fans attend games each season.

EFL Football Clubs are positioned at the very heart of their communities and embody local heritage and identity. They are often the most recognisable institution in their town or city and many have been a focal point for over 100 years.

Interest in EFL Clubs crosses generational and social divides and can be harnessed to engage individuals and bring together communities in many different ways. They engage people within the existing fan base and can reach out to people who may not share our passion for football.

The core purpose of the EFL Trust is to harness the incredible engagement power that football provides and use it to deliver life enhancing experiences for our local communities. Participants ranged in age from six months to 103 years in 2018 and their backgrounds reflect the diverse local communities our CCOs serve.

Our CCOs have built their reputation and the trust of local people because they have proven themselves able to find solutions to local problems. They are rightly recognised as a key part of their local voluntary sector providing highly valued services.

The EFL Trust takes responsibility for overseeing the continuous improvement of leadership, governance and delivery across the network. In effect, the EFL Trust and the network of CCOs form a ‘Community of Practice’. We share a passion for what we do – improving the lives of people in EFL communities. We learn how to get better by sharing our best ideas and learning from one another.

Our 10th anniversary was a proud landmark. It has caused us to reflect on how far we have come and what we have achieved, but it also encouraged us to look forward, to re-assess our potential and to plan our future.

We use the power of the Club badge and the affinity countless numbers of people have to their team, to deliver a wide range of community initiatives focusing on raising people’s aspirations and quality of life.

A continuous theme running through our work is connectivity. We bring people together. We unite people. Whether it is with disaffected young people, adults living with a long term health condition or isolated older people, our work is most effective when we encourage integration and bring people together to share experiences, to learn and to support each other.

We believe in the benefits to people’s health and wellbeing from being part of, and identifying with, diverse social groups. There is growing academic evidence to support this.

- Groups give us a sense of meaning, purpose and belonging
- They are an important source of support
- They motivate us to adopt behaviours that impact on our health and wellbeing.

Belonging to groups has been termed the ‘social cure’. It appears to be an important predictor of health – just as important as diet and exercise. This sense of belonging and shared identity is crucial and it underpins our work.

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER
OUR VISION
Our vision is clear and ambitious: "Stronger, Healthier, More Active Communities"

We want to build overall resilience to social and economic pressures within communities, so that levels of prosperity, community engagement and public health are improved.

We will do everything we can, as influencer and commissioner, to reach people that might otherwise not engage through more traditional routes. We will use our national influence and resources to harness the extraordinary ability of our network to improve people’s lives.

OUR MISSION
Our mission is to advise, support, represent and resource the network of EFL Club Community Organisations. We will build on the great work of recent years by focusing on:

- Building stronger, more cohesive communities
- Improving physical and mental health and wellbeing
- Raising aspirations and realising potential

To achieve these aims we will help to increase participation in sport, community and social action, skills development and other activities that have a positive impact.

To do this we need to identify, understand and build on our own strengths and join forces with like-minded organisations that can provide specialist expertise and knowledge.
OUR VALUES

Our values are the core qualities that will guide us on our mission to make our vision a reality. They are embedded in everything we do. They shape the principles that guide our behaviour towards each other as well as our relationships with our network, partners and stakeholders.

Our Board, network and staff have helped us to develop these values. We believe they provide solid foundations for our future success.

Leading by example
We act with integrity at all times. We will be agile, responsive and flexible to meet the needs of stakeholders. We will develop expertise and knowledge in specific business areas and pursue appropriate income streams in line with strategy.

Innovate and Inspire
We will provide leadership that encourages staff to innovate, seek or create the best solutions, find creative ways around obstacles, show willingness to experiment, take calculated risks and challenge the norm.

Passionate about People
We will provide excellent services, empower staff learning, deliver, challenge and respect the views, talents and expertise of others.

Continually Improve
We will strive to deliver the best possible outcomes, learn from the best in class and be relentless in improving ideas and plans.

As we continue to grow, we will make sure we do not lose our focus on our values. We will recruit new colleagues who share these values and embed them in our organisational training and development plans.

Our staff share a strong sense of purpose. We are confident in our values being shared by our team following a recent staff survey:

- 100% said they are proud to work for the EFL Trust
- 93% are confident their team go out of their way to support them and are committed to excellence
- Over 90% are confident of an exciting future.

STRATEGY 2019 – 2024
WE HAVE LISTENED...

This strategy sets out some of the key areas we are going to focus on over the next five years. These will build on what we have done over our first ten years. Our consultation has told us that we should:

- Represent our network to secure greater influence over national and local policy makers
- Secure funds to include more CCOs in nationwide programmes
- Place greater emphasis on addressing key health and wellbeing challenges and work more closely with the NHS at national and local level
- Partner with like-minded organisations to share learning and resources
- Focus on more proactive and targeted support for CCOs to build organisational capability and resilience
- Place greater emphasis on developing our approach to impact and evidence
- Review the way we use our brand to create greater clarity and impact.

OUR OUTCOMES

To fulfil our mission, we have defined intended outcomes at three impact levels:

Individual

People are at the heart of our planning and delivery. Therefore we will continue to focus on equipping and supporting people to:

- Build and retain friendships and connections across different social groups
- Improve their health and wellbeing
- Feel fulfilled
- Feel safe and connected to the local area
- Progress in life
- Be more active
- Have fun.

Community

We will continue to develop resilient communities, in which people can thrive and achieve more. We are able to make a difference at population level by focusing on:

- Integrating communities to build social cohesion and trust
- Increasing civic engagement
- Improving social mobility
- Increasing tolerance and reducing prejudice
- Shared values and attitudes.

Organisational

We will continue on our journey of organisational improvement to provide the necessary influence, support and advice to our network. We will focus on:

- Strong and mutually beneficial relationships between Clubs and CCOs
- Effective, strong and transparent governance
- Organisational and workforce development
- Frameworks for measuring and evidencing impact
- Learning from research and insight
- Targeted marketing and communications
- More effective community engagement and service user involvement
- Stronger advocacy and influence at local and national level
- Innovative and creative solutions.
ACHIEVING TOGETHER...  
To achieve our desired outcomes, we will monitor our performance against the following objectives:

We will continue to focus on developing and managing programmes that equip and support people to raise their aspirations and realise their full potential.

Together with our partners we will:

• Expand our delivery of National Citizen Service to develop young people’s skills and confidence and to give them the chance to mix with people from different backgrounds
• Augment and enhance the network’s capacity and capability to deliver high quality education and employability programmes
• Continue to develop the education and training progression ladder available at CCO level, enabling participants at any level to gain qualifications and work experience that will make them more employable
• Support people of all ages into work by developing strong strategic partnerships.

We will contribute to the creation of stronger, more resilient and cohesive communities. Together with our partners we will:

• Help groups who face disadvantage to achieve and progress by identifying the barriers which may hold them back, and seeking interventions to support them to overcome these
• Support the integration of different communities by increasing tolerance and understanding between different faiths, cultures, generations and social groups, thereby reducing divisions and improving levels of trust and inclusion
• Offer a range of social action and volunteering opportunities to encourage people to give their time in service of others and engage in civic life
• Help to make our network’s communities safer and more connected – for instance work with key partners to reduce serious violence, reduce re-offending, and combat isolation and exclusion.

We will support people to adopt healthy lifestyles, to access the support they need, enhance the quality of life for people with long term conditions and help people to recover.

Together with our partners we will:

• Use our reach to support public health prevention campaigns and work with health charities and the NHS to deliver screening and testing programmes at football stadia and in the community
• Create programmes that empower people to make long term sustainable positive lifestyle choices and changes
• Deliver targeted interventions to support people living with, or at risk of, long term conditions
• Tackle local health inequalities and the wider determinants of health by helping CCOs to create an appropriate social prescribing offer.

We will provide the support to ensure the viability and effectiveness of our network.

On behalf of our partners we will:

• Use the Capability Code of Practice (CCOP) to ensure that all members of our network can demonstrate the highest standards of governance and management
• Target and adapt our support and guidance to those organisations that have particular development needs
• Ensure we can evidence best in class internal approaches across all our business support functions
• Create an organisational development programme that complements the offer from other parts of the ‘football family’ and focuses on the identified needs of our network
• Recruit the best possible people and support their ongoing development to ensure we offer high quality support, advice and guidance to the network
• Put in place improved business and contracting processes to support the network to grow and prosper
• Create communications that focus on supporting programme delivery, amplify the work of our network with key stakeholders and build awareness of the work of the EFL Trust and CCOs with new audiences
• Focus on a clear and consistent measurement framework for the overall impact of the network.
MEASURING, EVALUATING AND CELEBRATING SUCCESS

It is important that people know what we do and what our network does. Communicating about the programmes we provide and the impact that they have on people is a key part of the EFL and EFL Trust’s stories. Through PR, social media and digital channels we are committed to expanding this work in the future. Alongside regular communication of our work, EFL Day of Action is an annual showcase, where all Clubs and CCOs focus on the impact in their communities and this generates significant positive reach for our message.

We already use a theory of change model for some of our core programmes. We want to embed this approach at national level and provide our network with the tools and advice to help them adopt it at local level.

In 2019, the EFL and EFL Trust commissioned Knight Kavanagh and Page to assess the social value of the network. The outcome of this initial survey will be assessed and reported from September 2019.

Building on this valuable work, over the next five years, we want to develop and embed a clear and consistent outcomes framework across our network that will create a far greater understanding of our collective achievements.

We will do more work over the early phase of this strategy to ensure that by 2024 we can look back and accurately assess whether or not we have been successful in delivering the medium and longer term objectives of this strategy.
We would like to thank our programme partners and funders. We look forward to working with you over the next five years.

EFL Trust and our network are supported by:

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