Aston Villa Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Review 2021/22

All In. Together

All In represents the ethos and values of Aston Villa. As a Club situated in the heart of a diverse city, we actively celebrate difference and the diverse voices in our community.

The All In initiative, first launched in 2018, reflects our commitment to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone who wishes to be involved in our Club.



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Commitment and Priorities

Our primary commitment is to embed equality across all levels of the Club and create a welcoming environment for all. As part of this commitment, we have a rolling plan to collect data on the profile of players, matchday fans, staff, Executive Team members, community outreach participants and other people engaged with the Club's activities. Without this data it will not be possible to identify any current areas of under-representation or potential inequalities and, as such, tackling these issues will be made much more difficult. This data, along with the Club's ethos, practices and values on EDI have enabled us to identify cohesive objectives and priority areas to shape and inform the Club's EDI work.

Achieving Preliminary Level of the Premier League Equality Standard

Since our promotion to the Premier League in 2019, the Club has actively worked towards the Premier League's framework, which helps clubs to progress equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across all areas of their business, including the work of the Aston Villa Foundation. The Premier League Equality Standard Panel were "struck by the scope of the EDI work" being undertaken by the Club, noting the supporter engagement with fan groups among other areas.

From the 2021/22 season, the Club is working towards the Intermediate Level of PLEDIS, which incorporates the following four key themes:

1. **Leadership and Commitment**
2. **Promoting EDI; Challenging and Preventing Discrimination**
3. **Data, Insight and Delivery**
4. **Learning and Development**

Our priority areas:

Based on internal and external data, including demographic reports, recruitment data and our EDI supporter survey, the Club is focussed on the following priority areas for 2021/22:

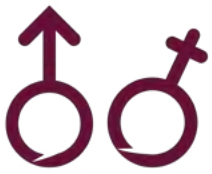
Disability

Race and Ethnicity

Women and girls







Commitments

The Club is committed to embedding EDI via the following commitments and pledges:

- Premier League Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Standard Preliminary Level
- FA Football Leadership Diversity Code
- Women In Football 'Get Onside'
- Disability Confident 'Committed'

Data and Insight

Improving our equal opportunities data and being transparent on our progress will ensure that we can take informed steps to improve inclusion and diversity through our EDI Delivery Plan. The following data gives a snapshot of the Club in relation to our three key priority areas:

Gender

Within our Core Workforce (Including Club, Foundation, Academy, First Team Coaches, Support Staff, and Executive Team) our gender breakdown is 76% Male, 24% Female

Within our matchday staff, this increases to 83% male

Within Birmingham, current data indicates a breakdown of 51% female to 49% male

We recognise that we have a positive gender balance on our Senior Management Team

Disability

'Nil Response' rates have improved from 44% to 34%. In our core workforce, 3% of staff have declared a disability, a very slight increase of 0.3%. Overall, our response rates are low in this area

The Club will continue to make continual improvements to accessibility for staff and supporters and self-assess performance through its commitment to the Disability Confident Scheme

Ethnicity

Core staff response rates have increased for ethnicity from 64% to 76%. Our largest Ethnic Group is White (62%). From those who responded, over 40% are from ethnically diverse communities

When applied to matchday ethnically diverse staff make up 11% of the overall team, but response rates have been more challenging to capture

We will continue to take measures to improve the quality of our data

FA Football Leadership Diversity Code

Aston Vila is proud to be a founding signatory of the Code, which focuses on increasing equality of opportunity with hiring targets – rather than quotas – to encourage recruitment from across society. The targets are:

Senior Leadership and Team Operations

- **15%** of new hires will be Black, Asian or of Mixed-Heritage [or a target set by the Club based on local demographics]
- **30%** of new hires will be female

Coaching: Men's Professional Clubs

- **25%** of new hires will be Black, Asian or of Mixed-Heritage
- **10%** of new senior coaching hires will be Black, Asian or of Mixed-Heritage

Coaching: Women's Professional Clubs

- **50%** of new hires will be female
- **15%** of new hires will be Black, Asian or of Mixed-Heritage

Recruitment

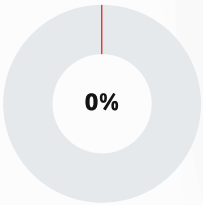
- Shortlists for interview will have at least one male and one female Black, Asian or of Mixed-Heritage candidate, if applicants meeting the job specifications apply



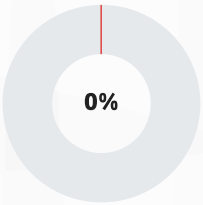
2020/21 FLDC SUMMARY

Aston Villa

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TARGETS

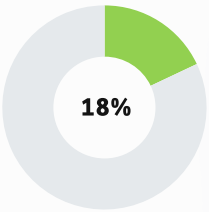


15% of our new hires will be Black, Asian or of Mixed-Heritage (or a target set by the club based on local demographics)

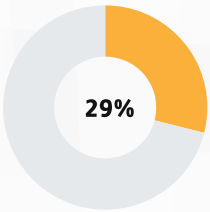


30% of our new hires will be female

TEAM OPERATIONS TARGETS

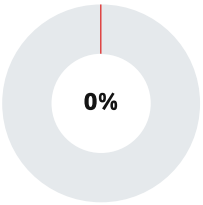


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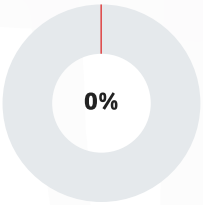


30% of our new hires will be female

COACHING - MEN'S CLUBS TARGETS

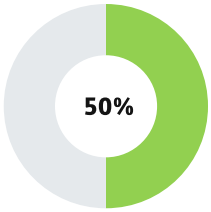


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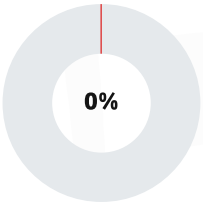


10% of our new senior coaching hires will be Black, Asian or of Mixed-Heritage

COACHING - WOMEN'S CLUBS TARGETS

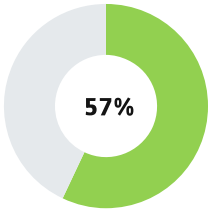


50% of our new hires will be female

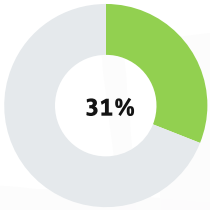


15% of our new hires will be Black, Asian or of Mixed-Heritage

RECRUITMENT



Shortlists for interview will have at least one male Black, Asian or of Mixed Heritage candidate (if applicants meeting the job specifications apply)



Shortlists for interview will have at least one female Black, Asian or of Mixed Heritage candidate (if applicants meeting the job specifications apply)

Club's Comments

Aston Villa is fully committed to increasing and supporting employment opportunities across the Club from a diverse talent pool, which is representative of our local area. We are proud to be part of a diverse city but recognise that this is not currently reflected in our staffing demographics in certain areas of the Club. We welcome transparency of data across the football sector, particularly within coaching and leadership. This information enables us to have a deeper understanding of barriers to opportunity across our recruitment and selection processes. Whilst the data indicates that we have met targets in identified categories, we will continue to drive forward our agenda to widen opportunities and participation for all. The Club has implemented an Equality Delivery Plan to help shape, monitor and challenge the Club to make significant progress in the short and long-term. The Club is striving towards a culture whereby internal talent is developed, nurtured and encouraged to progress. The Club recently achieved the Preliminary Level of the Premier League Equality Standard and is continuing to drive equal opportunities through its commitment to Women in Football's 'Get Onside' initiative. The Club has pledged to increase opportunities for women through internships, careers fairs and shining a spotlight on women already making a difference within our Club. There are also several active coaching initiatives, which the Club are fully supporting, to enable opportunities for Black, Asian and of Mixed Heritage individuals (Kick Start and Coach Core Apprenticeships, Coaching Sector Skills Academy, FA BAME Work programme, ECAS Scheme). During season 2020/21, the Club has recently reviewed and transformed our approach to recruitment & selection to ensure we are treating every applicant in a fair, inclusive and consistent manner.

Visibility

We aim to elevate campaigns through consistent social media support, story sharing from supporters, community outreach participants, staff and players.



No Room for Racism

3,658,594 Social Media impressions

2 Dedicated fixtures per season

1 Campaign video featuring members of the Villa family

1 Community graffiti project through the Premier League Kicks Programme

60060 Reporting Text Service Number implemented to report matchday discrimination



International Women's Day

303,437 Social Media Impressions

1 Staff breakfast to launch our official campaign video

3 Women in Football 'Get Onside' pledges to support Club pathways

1 Women's and Non-Binary Supporter Network launched

1 Aston University IWD partnership Webinar

Fan Engagement

Villans Together

The aim of Villans Together is to ensure all fans/community feel safe and welcome, regardless of background.

They aim to get new and old fans engaged in and around Villa Park, especially from the diverse community, to ensure that everyone is welcome.

Their community work caters for all needs, from coaching young people to local leagues, including the over-35s and networking with local organisations like Saathi House.

Villans Together's motto is be yourself, belong and be valued.

@VillansTogether

villanstogether.co.uk

Punjabi Villans

Punjabi Villans is an official supporters' club recognised by AVFC, bringing the Punjabi flavour through food, dance, music, charity and positive energy.

They are a passionate group of Villa fans who came together over 10 years ago to support the team they love in their own special way. Their aim is to let people know Villa is for everyone, no matter who you are or where you're from. Punjabi Villans focus on sharing Punjabi culture with all - the food, dancing, music from Punjab is for everyone to enjoy.

@PunjabiVillans

punjabivillans.com

Aston Villa Disabled Supporters Association

The work of AVDSA is about building a better disabled supporter community, helping each other and bringing a more enjoyable matchday experience.

Our whole aim is to make matchdays less stressful and make them as enjoyable as possible.

avdsa.co.uk

Villa & Proud

Villa & Proud are the official LGBTQ+ supporters' network of Aston Villa Football Club.

Their mission is to empower, support and build LGBTQ+ inclusion for fans, players and staff at Aston Villa as well as the wider football industry.

Villa & Proud are driven by their mission and endeavour to be the best form of LGBTQ+ visibility. Their membership of over 500 members makes them one of the largest LGBTQ+ supporters' networks in the country, stretching membership over all five continents. Their impact is as much on our front door as it is globally, and they continue to strive for excellence to support LGBTQ+ people from all backgrounds.

@VillaAndProud

VillaAndProud.co.uk

Saathi Villans

Launched at our home fixture against West Ham during the 2019/20 season, Saathi Villans was created to break down barriers and encourage local women from diverse ethnic backgrounds to attend Villa matches.

Saathi Villans was formed with support from the Aston Villa Foundation, Villans Together and Fans for Diversity.

Saathi House is an anchor organisation that is committed to supporting women to drive positive change in their lives, in their family's lives, and in the local communities.

@SaathiHouse



Villa Bellas

Aston Villa's official women's supporters' network

In an unequal and often unrelenting world, Villa Bellas work to break down barriers for equality.

In creating a women's network, Villa Bellas challenge sexism and misogyny for the fans in the stands and the women on the pitch.

They support inclusion and diversity and aim to raise the voice of women and non-binary people at the club. Let's celebrate ourselves and champion each other while having fun doing it!

@VillaBellas

AViDS

AViDS is a supporters' group for people with disabilities who follow Aston Villa Football Club.

AViDS was established in 1999 by a group of enthusiastic Aston Villa fans to provide a voice and help for disabled supporters, and welcome new members.

avidslions.weebly.com

Fans For Diversity

Aston Villa is proud to support the Fans for Diversity campaign, a partnership between the Football Supporters' Association and Kick It Out led by Anwar Uddin MBE. Its aim is simple – to celebrate diversity in football to ensure all fans feel safe and welcome at the game, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, faith, sexual orientation or any other protected characteristic.

@AnwarU01

Be Villa Proud!

Villa & Proud

Aston Villa are proud to support the ongoing work of Villa & Proud, who are the Club's official LGBTQ+ Supporters' Network.

Before Aston Villa's 2021/22 game against Brighton, Women's team manager Carla Ward and general manager Lee Billiard unveiled the network's new progress banner which represents progress for LGBTQ+ visibility.



500+ Members of Villa & Proud

1 AGM event hosted at Villa Park

3 Consecutive years Aston Villa have attended Birmingham Pride

40+ Staff participated in Stonewall Lunch n' Learn sessions

2,222,382 Rainbow Laces Twitter Impressions

1 LGBTQ+ Inclusive Tournament hosted at Villa Park



Aston Villa Foundation's 'Be You LGBTQ+ Safe Space' football sessions and ongoing engagement at Birmingham Pride have been supported by official 2021/22 official kit supplier Kappa, official retail partner Fanatics and lead partner Cazoo through sales of our special edition Part of the Pride range. A donation was also made to Birmingham LGBT, the city's leading charity advocating for and supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities in Birmingham and beyond.

Growing the Women's Game

The FA Girls' England Talent Pathway was put in place to give young aspiring female football players the opportunity to access elite levels of coaching and support within a professional environment. The RTC is an integral part of the FA Girls' England Talent Pathway, which Aston Villa Football Club have been a part of since its inception.

1000 Players involved in RTC trial process

3 Villans selected for the Lionesses for UEFA Women's Under-19 Euro 2022

1 FA Girls' Youth Plate success via our Under-16s team

13 Players across the pathway involved within England youth teams.

9 Teams as of 22/23 season compared to 4 in 2018/19



During our season-ending Second City Derby against Birmingham City at Villa Park, we launched support for both Villa Bellas, Aston Villa's official women's supporters' network and Her Game Too.

The game itself provided the perfect platform to round off a season of progress under Carla Ward, and one that reflected the positive backing the Club have provided the women's team with over the past three years.

8327 Attendance at Villa Park for derby fixture vs Blues **(08.03.2022)**



Villa also pledged to 'Get Onside' via Women in Football's campaign to actively bring about a permanent and positive change for women and girls in football:

1x Pledge to offer paid internships to two women, one at Villa Park and one at Bodymoor Heath

1x Pledge to run a careers fair targeting women in the community to improve the gender balance of our workforce

1x Pledge to shine a light on the amazing women at Aston Villa through two quarterly features on women working at the club and our Foundation

Academy Pathways

The PFA Asian Inclusion Mentoring Scheme (AIMS) was created to enhance the experience of British Asian footballers on the elite pathway by creating a structured network of support that allows them to thrive, and it counts former Villan Neil Taylor among the senior footballers mentoring scholars and emerging pros.



3 Aston Villa Academy players attended AIMS 'Player Development Day' at St George's Park

100-150 Young players Emerging South Asian Lions Talent ID Event

1x Emerging South Asian Lions Talent ID event hosted to boost player representation

1x Academy boys coach completed the FA Coach Placement Programme and secured employment at Championship Academy

1x Employment opportunity via the Premier League Coach Inclusion Diversity Scheme



"Birmingham is a highly diverse and multicultural city, and we believe it important our Football Club represents this."

Mark Harrison – Academy Manager

Foundation and Community

Premier League Changemakers

The Changemakers programme empowers and inspires girls and non-binary participants to be the leaders of tomorrow. During the 2021/22 season, Changemakers participants were visited by the women's team squad at the beginning of the season. The squad joined one of the sessions taking place at Villa Park and participants were able to interact with the players, asking key questions on leadership motivation and inspiration. Participants also went to see the players in action at a game at Walsall Banks Stadium.

146 Girls and non-binary participants enrolled on the programme working towards Leadership Qualifications

4 Weekly school sessions and 2 community sessions

Participants transitioning to and from wider Foundation programmes, such as Ability Counts and PL Kicks

6 Girls met our men's 1st Team manager and players at Bodymoor Heath Training Ground

£13,000 Donated from the women's team Golden Goal initiative to support female-specific projects including the Premier League Changemakers programme



"I feel like I can be myself at the sessions. I wasn't very confident until I came here, now I have these girls and they make me feel normal."

Chloe, Changemakers Participant (bottom right)

TeamWork Be You Sessions

The TeamWork project aims to bring Villa fans and the wider community together to help improve their mental and physical health through activities alongside offering a number of safe space sessions to ensure all participants feel included and welcome.

The 'Be You' sessions at Villa Park offer a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies to enjoy a fun, social kickabout! There is also the opportunity to connect with others, improve your fitness and enjoy music and giveaways.



"I really enjoyed the Be You TeamWork session I went to, not only was it really enjoyable and everyone was super nice but it was a safe space to just hang out."

Lena, Be You Participant

Interventions

Football Welcomes

The Football Welcomes project aims to create welcoming communities through football and encourage those who are part of more established roles within the community to work together and open their doors to those who have fled conflict and persecution and arrived more recently.

The programme enables opportunities for people from a refugee background to adjust to a new country and culture through making new friends and connections, learning English and taking part in Football with great physical and mental health benefits.

"This is a great initiative to work on and for us here at the AVFC Foundation to give back to the local community to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan"

Aquib Mohammed, Education and Skills Officer

30-40 Participants each week

35 Food packs distributed during Ramadan

Ability Counts

Ability Counts sessions provide inclusive, accessible football for everyone. The Foundation offer a free weekly multi-sport SEND Youth club, with a range of physical and social activities for young people aged 8 – 16. It is an opportunity for young people with special educational needs and disabilities to be active in an environment comfortable to them, where they otherwise might not gain access to social spaces within the community. The SEND Youth Club creates a pathway into our wider PL Kicks programme, as well as Ability Counts sessions for young people who are interested in progressing their football skills.

Qualified staff provide a welcoming, inclusive environment which is adaptable and accessible to the needs of everyone, to ensure we offer the opportunity to enjoy physical activity. The sessions emphasise having fun, making new friends and building confidence, whilst highlighting the importance of regular physical activity andsafe space for young people.

149 unique participants

1 Signing Day for the 2023/23 season at Bodymoor Heath



Kicks

The Aston Villa Foundation delivers Premier League Kicks sessions at various locations across Birmingham. PL Kicks started in 2006 and has a long history of using the power of football and the value of sports participation to help hard-to-reach youngsters in some of the most high-need areas.

Emphasis is on working with young people aged 14+ from areas of the city vulnerable to crime and anti-social behaviour and nurturing them in a range of positive sporting and healthy lifestyle activities – principle of which is football.

Our Kicks programme has expanded across Birmingham with sessions taking place in a diverse range of communities. The aim is to increase the number of young people developing a sporting habit for life and to create youth-led responsive projects with a culture of volunteering.

2,052 Participants engaged, of which 916 and from within a mile radius of Villa Park

408 Female participants

1525 From ethnically diverse backgrounds

169 SEND participants

5+ EDI workshops delivered including No Room For Racism, Kick it Out, International Women's Day, Prevent, Girls over Tournament



Premier League Kicks began in the 2006/07 season in partnership with the Metropolitan Police, with the aim of involving and supporting young people in regular, positive and fun activity, whilst helping to create stronger, safer, more inclusive communities. Ian Robinson was named Aston Villa's Premier League Kicks 'Local Legend' as the community programme marked its 15-year anniversary. Ian was chosen as Aston Villa Foundation's Premier League Kicks Local Legend because he has a strong track record with supporting young people from the Foundation's youth-based programmes into apprenticeships and employment with the Foundation, and plays a pivotal role in helping young people transition into employment or educational pathways.



Accessibility

Aston Villa strives to ensure supporters, staff and everyone connected to Aston Villa Football Club feel an equal sense of belonging. The Club made significant improvements to accessibility during the 2021/22 season including opening a new Changing Places facility located on the ground floor of the Trinity Road Stand, allowing step-free access for all visitors who may need to use it.



"After many meetings and continued collaboration,
I am immensely proud that our Club have installed a Changing Places facility.

"We are getting much closer to being fully accessible to all and this is a very positive step."

Joanne McKibbens, Head of Aston Villa Disabled Supporters Association



1 Changing Places facility installed in lower Trinity

7 New accessible bays created in our away end

38 Guests and families in our Sensory Room

6 Matchday Welfare Officers employed to support accessibility, inclusion and safeguarding

42,727 Supporters at our dedicated Level Playing Field Weeks of Action fixtures

#1 Aston Villa Women become the first Barclays FA Women's Super league team to support the campaign

6,667,691 Social Media Impressions

Partnerships

Black History Month

Aston University Students had the chance to interview players from both first teams, including Anita Asante and Matty Cash, to celebrate Black History Month. Students discussed what the campaign meant to themselves and the players they interviewed, as well ongoing issues of racial justice, taking the knee and celebrating Black heritage and culture.

157+ Social Media Impressions

15k+ Social Media views

6 First team Men's and Women's player interviewed by students

Aston University
BIRMINGHAM UK

Rainbow Laces

Masters students from Aston University undertook a Forensic Linguistics project, assessing the language impact of the Rainbow Laces campaign. The research looked at language used on both social media and fan forums before, during and after the campaign. Findings by the student groups will be incredibly important in building on the existing campaign and how Aston Villa communicates with fans.



Increasing Confidence to Report

We believe that every person who engages with the Club has a right to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect, irrespective of their personal characteristics. The Club is therefore committed to avoiding and eliminating discrimination of any kind. During the 2021/22 season, the Club launched a matchday text support service with the aim of driving confidence in supporters to report any incident of discrimination, anti-social behaviour and safeguarding concerns.

117,000 Impressions on promotion of text line service Villa vs. Tottenham. Fans were alerted via the App upon entry to the ground



75% fans confident or very confident to report discrimination (2021/22) Fan EDI Survey

60060 Reporting text line via QR code stickers placed behind every 5th seat, concourses and toilet stalls to enable a discreet way of reporting.

Supporters are required to simply scan the code, which will open a text message pre-loaded with the trigger word 'REPORT'.

2021/22 Reported Incidents

Reports	Medium of Report	Outcomes
22 Racism	**12** Email	**11** Insufficient evidence (e.g., Inaccurate location, unable to obtain witness statements, reported after the offence)
6 Sexual Orientation	**8** Steward	**10** Police action or arrest
3 Religion	**6** Kick It Oout	**9** No action necessary/Other (e.g., Reported to opposing club)
2 Disability	**5** 60060 Text line	**3** Caution or Warning
1 Sex	**3** Other (e.g., AVFC Twitter Support)	**1** Education

We will continue to work with partner organisations
to tackle hate crime and discrimination.
All In. Together.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Every member of staff, player and participant matters to the Club, and we take our responsibility to promote good mental health and wellbeing seriously.

Aston Villa run initiatives to promote open conversation around mental and wellbeing and bring Villa fans and the wider community together. The Foundaton's TeamWork programme supports mental health and wellbeing by providing online and in-person activities and challenges.

TeamWork, which was funded by the Premier League and the Professional Footballers Association, provides virtual meet-ups to share resources and inspire communication. As part of World Mental Health Day, Tyrone Mings sat down with Aston Villa Foundation ambassador Katharine Merry and Villa fan Gemma Broad to discuss the importance of caring for your mental health.

The Staff initiative, 'You Matter', was also launched to offer guidance and support to those who need our help, and we encourage individuals to take a proactive approach to enhancing their own health and wellbeing.

1,090,658 Social media impressions for World Mental Health Day feature

1 Safe space wellbeing room implemented to support staff

1 Club-wide Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan launched during Mental Health Awareness Week

31 Staff Mental Health First Aiders

170 Participants engaged through the Foundation TeamWork Programme




AVFC


all in
Part of the Pride