EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

REVIEW 2022-2024




Captain


AVFC
/ 12PM
AVFC

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ALL IN TOGETHER

CHAPTER ONE

ALL IN TOGETHER

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

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.

Aston Villa Football Club Limited, Aston Villa FC Limited, Aston Villa Women's Football Club Limited, Aston Villa Foundation and its group of companies (together the "Club"), are fully committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone who wishes to be involved in the Club.

We believe that everyone stands to benefit when we embrace and value the diversity of thoughts, ideas and ways of working which people from different backgrounds, experiences and identities bring. It helps our employees to grow and learn, enables them to realise their potential, improves decision-making, boosts engagement and innovation, and enables us to better meet the needs of our diverse players, staff, and the local community. We appreciate that a culture which promotes equality will create a positive environment and a shared sense of belonging for all.

We recognise that equality will only be achieved by the Aston Villa Family continuously working together to build an inclusive environment where opportunities are open to all, diversity is valued, and where everybody can reach their full potential without fear of harassment, prejudice or discrimination and where a zero-tolerance approach is taken.



Chris Heck,
President of Business Operations

COMMITMENT & PRIORITIES

Our vision and primary commitment is to embed equality across all levels of the Club. As part of this commitment, we have a rolling plan to collect data on the profile of players, match-day 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:

OUR OBJECTIVES

LEADERSHIP
Demonstrate leadership and accountability on EDI

DATA AND INSIGHT
Utilise and improve data to make informed decisions

DIVERSIFY PARTICIPATION
Take proactive steps to address and underrepresentation

STRUCTURAL INCLUSION
Embed and sustain EDI across all Club activities and environments

BEHAVIOURAL INCLUSION
Inform, educate and raise awareness on EDI values and behaviours

OUR PRIORITY AREAS

Based on internal and external data including demographic reports, recruitment data and our EDI supporter survey, the Club is focussing on the following priority areas:

RACE AND ETHNICITY

=

DISABILITY

=

LGBTQ+

=

WOMEN AND GIRLS

OUR COMMITMENTS

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

CAMPAIGNS

CHAPTER TWO

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

17,590,808
Social Media Impressions

380%
Increase from 2021

2 Dedicated fixtures per season

60060 Reporting Text Service Number being utilised to report matchday discrimination







Level Playing Field
For disabled sports fans

2,577,154
Social Media Impressions

1
Match invite for
AVDSA Fan group



We're proud to support RAINBOW laces



5,053,055
X Impressions

127%
Increase from 2021

PRIDE clothing sold in store
with proceeds going to charity





FAN ENGAGMENT



PUNJABI VILLANS

Punjabi Villans is an official supporters' club bringing the Punjabi flavour through food, dance, music, charity and positive energy. 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. In 2024 we'll be celebrating Vaisakhi on a match day. Vaisakhi is a harvest festival in the Punjab that coincides with the birth or Sikhi.

@PunjabiVillans **punjabivillans.com**

VILLA BELLAS

Aston Villa's official women's supporters' network. They support inclusion and diversity and aim to raise the voice of women and non-binary people at the club. We will be Celebrating International Women's Day with Villa Bellas.

@VillaBellas

SAATHI VILLANS

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. We will be Celebrating International Women's Day with Saathi Villans.

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. We'll be promoting the hard work of this group by inviting new fans to promote the Level Playing Field Match.

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. Their membership of over 500 members makes them one of the largest LGBTQ+ supporters' networks in the country, stretching membership over all five continents. With is being their 5th birthday, Aston Villa are inviting V&P to a match celebrating Rainbow Laces.

@VillaAndProud **villaandproud.co.uk**

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. We're working closely with Villans Together in promoting multi faith celebrations from Diwali to Open Iftar Events. Villans Together's motto is be yourself, belong and be valued.

@VillansTogether **villanstogether.co.uk**



To Celebrate our Diversity Fan, Aston Villa invited members of each group to their flags being unveiled at Villa Park. This shows Aston Villa's commitment to the groups and it gives them representation throughout the stadium.

CLUB INITIATIVES

CHAPTER THREE

FOUNDATION & COMMUNITY

EVENTS

OPEN IFTAR

Aston Villa Football Club was proud to host the Ramadan Tent Project's Open Iftar at Villa Park for the first time on Wednesday night (click here for full story).

Over 500 people attended, with 70 volunteers from the Ramadan Tent Project and Aston Villa staff helping to organise the event.

Iftar is the first meal of the day for those who are fasting during Ramadan, which comes just after the call to the Maghrib prayer at sunset.

The call to prayer was delivered over the Villa Park PA system, in order to not only be heard by those in the Holte Suite, but also those in the vicinity of the stadium.

Open Iftar is the Ramadan Tent Project's flagship initiative, increasing community harmony, belonging, and turning strangers into friends while breaking fast.



"A decade on after turning strangers into friends, softening hearts and minds, we find ourselves delivering this historic and iconic Open Iftar event in partnership with Aston Villa"

Founder and CEO of the Ramadan Tent Project,
Omar Salha



BOLLYWOOD EVENT

In March 2023, we hosted a Bollywood Event at Villa Park as part of our TeamWork programme. Through consultation with local councillors as well as working with fan groups such as the Punjabi Villans, we recognised a need to do more for our local community, as part of our "Think Local" approach. There was an appetite from the local community to come to Villa Park and it was an opportunity for us to broker stronger relationships with them and so off the back of this, a Bollywood event was planned and delivered.

Around 150 members of the local community attended the event which had a variety of activities on offer for families to try. As well as some sporting activities for children, there was a fire breathing show, a Bollywood dancing show and workshop as well as food that was provided by Punjabi Villans. The event was incredibly successful and off the back of it, conversations have continued with local councillors to plan another similar event.

EVERYBODY'S GAME

Aston Villa Foundation (AVF) with the support of the PL PFA Community Fund is committed to provide a mentoring, education and development programme for aspirational male and female grassroots coaches to increase their coaching skills and confidence on & off the pitch. AVF will continue to work closely with grassroots clubs and community organisations to provide guidance and support in becoming a more sustainable organisation.

Also, the project is designed to increase participation within the Women & Girls game, by providing greater opportunities of engagement and development. The project will also aim to support female coaches and volunteers within local grassroots clubs and community organisations, developing skills and knowledge through coach mentoring.





8x

Consultation groups with grassroots clubs, community organisations at Villa Park and TEAMS to discuss about the challenges and barriers coaches and clubs are currently facing in the local community

20-25

Mentored & supported coaches (male & female) from a British South Asian background

3-5

Celebration events (e.g Girls & Women)

300

Engage with children & young people from a British South Asian background

80

Engage with girls from all backgrounds

1

Hosted celebration event at Villa Park to celebrate the Asian footballing community

RAMADAN

A remarkable, historic week at AVFC celebrating the holy month of Ramadan. First Women's Ramadan tournament with 10 teams entering the tournament and Men's Ramadan tournament with 20 teams entering the tournament with over 200+ people attending the event.

Food was provided and the events took place at the academy building from 9pm -2am at the Ramadan midnight tournaments. This was massive with loads of people in the community attending.



1ST

Women's Tournament

10+

Teams entered the tournament

200+

Participants

INTERVENTIONS

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.



2255
Participants engaged

482
Female participants

80%
From ethnically diverse backgrounds

216
SEND participants

637
Participating in EDI workshops delivered including No Room For Racism, Kick it Out, International Women's Day and Prevent

ACTIVE THROUGH FOOTBALL

ATF, funded by the Football Foundation, is a programme that aims to increase the participation levels within sport and physical activity. The main outcome of project is to reduce inequalities from LSEG communities (Lower Social Economic Groups) using sport as a tool to remove barriers and increase physical activity levels. Our programme targets five areas which are Alum Rock, Newtown, Gravelly Hill, Small Heath and Balsall Heath. These areas were chosen based on locality and where they placed on the IMD (Indices of Multiple Deprivation).

To fully understand the communities, we would be engaging with, we worked with Citizen's UK who ran focus groups within each area to find out the make-up and the needs of each area, in particularly the sport sector. These focus groups helped us determine our target audiences and allowed us to tackle issues such as costs, safe spaces, facility access and cultural barriers. In some instances, ATF has gone further than Sport and in the past we have run day trips.

For example, in September 2023 we took a Women's community group to Stratford-Upon-Avon to offer participants new experiences.

ATF revolves around the participant, and we also tailor our sessions to the needs of the community we engage with. For example, the celebration of Ramadan and Eid is very prevalent amongst the participants we engage with, so we approach these celebrations in various ways. In 2022 we ran a Women's Ramadan Football Tournaments which included trophies for the winners! We also celebrate Eid with our participants and provide food!

ATF is always evolving and has a strong national network as other clubs are also running the programme in their local areas. We have visited sessions at and had sessions visited by Leicester City and Derby County to share good practice and develop our own offer. We also have strong ties with Wolverhampton Wanderers and Birmingham City FC and we run inter-club football tournaments with their support.



ACCESSIBILITY

STAIR CLIMBER

Terrace View added space in the Holte for 8 wheelchair bays. The only lift in the Holte stand is a service lift and can be reliable. The stair climber has been purchased to support ingress and egress of wheelchair users to the new space. It also provides a means of evacuating wheelchair users from the space without needing to transfer them into an EvacChair.

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.



"To start with it was a bit frightening but I was reassured by the team I was with especially Anthony and Sam

At first it seems that you are going to fall out but quite the opposite you are upright all of the time as I gently climbs the stairs, no jolting you about I really enjoyed it!

I think it's a great piece of mind that we have this in the event of a fire or the lift stopped working"

Head of Aston Villa Disabled Supporters Association,
Joanne McKibbens

PARTNERSHIPS

HER GAME TOO

Principal partner BK8 have donated multiple branding and ticketing assets to Her Game Too for the 23/24 season. BK8 wanted to support the organisation by giving them prominent assets for their message, including fixed branding at Villa Park, Giant screen advertising and programme adverts. As well as this they have donated tickets to both men's and women's team matches.

WOMEN'S TEAM AWAY TRAVEL

For the first away match of the 23/24 season BK8 donated £1,000 towards subsidising away fan travel to the Emirates. The offer was quickly redeemed and the first buses selling out for the trip.



Cadbury

In partnership with Cadbury, three first team women's players were questioned to help celebrate International Women's Day. They were asked questions which were then shared internally with members of Cadbury members of staff. Questions centred around who their main inspiration was, alongside any advice on how women can achieve their dreams and goals.



The LEGO Group UK are in a similar space as Women's Football with both being historically seen as being for boys. In partnership with The LEGO Group UK, the Club working closely with the Foundation provided girls aged between 7 – 9 years old the opportunity to "Play Unstoppable", encouraging skills such as confidence and resilience, in turn driving inclusive play for all kids, regardless of gender. The Play Unstoppable workshop was hosted at the newly unveiled Aston Villa Brookvale Academy with Aston Villa Women's first team player and LEGO ambassador Rachel Daly in attendance.



71

Participants

100k+

Impressions on Official Social Channels

78%

had never participated in an AVFC Foundation session before

SOLD-OUT

within the first 48 hours of launch

TESTIMONIAL

"My daughters were wearing a headscarf throughout the whole workshop, and they have been treated with smiles, kindness and in the same way as everyone. It was really heartwarming for me to see that whoever you are, you are welcome at the club, you are treated exactly the same way as others, and you are giving the same opportunities."

GYM+COFFEE

BE THE INSPIRATION

Official Club Partner, Gym+Coffee provided ongoing support for the Clubs Be The Inspiration Campaign, #BTI. Fans were educated of the campaign and encouraged to participate through season long competitions. Prizes included matchday tickets, signed shirts, partner gifts, and the opportunity to watch the team train.

The partner promoted the campaign further by inviting football and lifestyle influencers behind the scenes and to fixtures. Girls on the Ball, This Fan Girl, This Girl Can, Samantha Miller and Ryhanna Parara shared matchday content with Club campaign #BTI.

AVFC FOUNDATION

Gym+Coffee supported the Aston Villa Foundation with access to the Clubs training facilities. The Foundation team delivered a "train like a pro" experience at Bodymoor Heath Training Ground. 71 girls aged 12-17 years attended "Train like a Pro" experience.

95K

Visitors to our new digital Women's hub

182K

Page views since launch

The most viewed page on avfc.co.uk in September when #BeTheInspiration launched

140+

Women and girls participating in our UGC wall

TESTIMONIALS

"It will go down as one of the best moments of her life"

"For a young girl who has grown up watching football, going to watch Aston Villa Women's football team train meant a world of inspiration and empowerment."

"The sight of seeing young talented women pursuing their passion has given her a strong sense of possibility and encouraged her to strive for greatness in her own journey into becoming a footballer."

Aston University
BIRMINGHAM UK

APPLIED FORENSIC LINGUISTICS – MISOGYNY

In January 2023, postgraduate students at the Aston University Institute of Forensic Linguistics began a data scrape and analysis of online discourse around the 2022 #BeTheInspiration campaign, with a focus on misogynistic language in the West Midlands premier league football community.

Five student groups examined the language data using a range of methodologies and analytical tools to answer their research questions, which focused on football fans' use of explicit and implicit misogynistic language, themes emerging out of online interactions, and gender related language used positively and negatively.

The analysis of the Twitter data revealed a number of instances of misogynistic language which could be grouped into four main categories; sexualization, physical appearance, comparison to the men's team, belittling. In fact, it was found that regardless of whether the women were winning, losing, being criticised or complemented, they were consistently and frequently compared to men. The misogynistic language most often occurred implicitly, manifesting in various indirect ways via underlying themes rather than explicitly through particular words or phrases. Misogynistic tweets were directed to both the official AVFC accounts and the individual players. Misogyny, whilst still prevalent after the #BeTheInspiration campaign, appears to become less explicit.

It appears that the #BeTheInspiration campaign decreased hostile misogyny, however it didn't completely target the more implicit misogynistic themes. In fact, it's possible that blocking direct, explicit misogyny on Twitter may have facilitated a rise in the use of more subtle, difficult-to-resolve implicit misogyny in the "After" dataset.



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.

QR code stickers were also placed behind seats, 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'. A supporter can then add details and specific location of the offender. Reporting incidents at the time, either via the text service, or directly to a steward or police officer, will ensure details are received 'in the moment' directly into our control room.




1874
ASTON VILLA