



# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Update 2026

## Our Commitment

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) remain central to the vision of Sussex Cricket: creating a game where everyone in our communities can say “I feel part of Sussex Cricket.” Our work is grounded in the belief that cricket should be accessible, welcoming and inclusive for people from all backgrounds, abilities and experiences.

During 2025, Sussex Cricket and the Sussex Cricket Foundation continued to embed EDI across participation, workforce development, community programmes and governance, ensuring cricket in Sussex reflects and serves the diversity of our communities.

## Expanding Access to Cricket

Through the work of the Sussex Cricket Foundation, we continued to grow opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to engage with cricket.

- 22,084 unique participants engaged in Foundation activity across Sussex.
- 4,370+ sessions delivered across community, school and club environments.
- 6,710+ hours of engagement supporting participation and wellbeing through sport.

These programmes are designed specifically to remove barriers to participation and reach individuals who might not traditionally have access to cricket.

Key initiatives included:

- **Chance to Shine school programmes** - providing cricket opportunities in state schools.
- **Lord’s Taverners SEND programmes** - supporting young people with disabilities or special educational needs.
- **Street Cricket and Wicketz initiatives** - engaging young people in urban communities.

Together these programmes ensure cricket reaches diverse communities, including those facing economic, social or accessibility barriers.

## Supporting Disability and Inclusive Cricket

Disability cricket remains a major area of progress within Sussex.

Highlights in 2025 included:

- Record participation at the annual DIScoverABILITY Day, bringing together more than 750 participants for inclusive sport activities.
- Continued success of the Sussex Visually Impaired (VI) Sharks, who secured major national honours.
- Strong development of D40 disability teams, with Sussex players representing England in international fixtures.

These achievements reflect Sussex Cricket's commitment to ensuring people with disabilities have opportunities not only to participate but also to progress and compete at the highest level.

## Growing the Women's and Girls' Game

Increasing female participation remains a priority across Sussex Cricket's EDI strategy. In 2025:

- Over 3,000 young people took part in national youth programmes such as All Stars and Dynamos.
- 934 participants were female, representing 31% of all participants.
- Female participation in these programmes increased by 28% year-on-year.

Additional initiatives included:

- Women's Soft Ball Cricket festivals bringing together clubs across the county.
- Expansion of women's league cricket, now involving around 40 clubs across multiple divisions.

These programmes provide welcoming entry points for new players while creating clear pathways into competitive cricket.

## Tackling Social and Economic Barriers

A key part of our EDI work focuses on addressing barriers linked to socio-economic background.

In 2025 the Foundation launched "Breaking Boundaries", a new state school programme designed to:

- Develop cricket hubs in eight state secondary schools across Sussex.
- Provide coaching, equipment, facilities and teacher training.
- Strengthen links between schools and local cricket clubs.

The programme is designed to transform access to cricket for state school students, ensuring that talent pathways are open to young people regardless of background.

## Inclusive Community Programmes

The Foundation continues to deliver a range of programmes designed to improve wellbeing, reduce isolation and promote inclusion.

These include:

- **Walking Cricket** - supporting older participants to stay active.
- **Sporting Memories** - tackling loneliness and dementia through sport-based activities.
- **Super 1s disability cricket clubs and community Street Cricket programmes.**

Collectively, these initiatives support hundreds of participants each week across Sussex, demonstrating the role cricket can play in improving both physical and mental wellbeing.

## Building an Inclusive Cricket Workforce

Sussex Cricket and the Foundation are also committed to ensuring our workforce and volunteer base reflect the diversity of our communities.

In 2025 we:

- Trained 141 activators and volunteers supporting grassroots cricket.
- Delivered coach development programmes involving 80 coaches, including 30 female coaches.
- Continued to invest in training for umpires, first aiders and young volunteers.

Developing a diverse coaching and volunteer workforce helps ensure cricket environments are welcoming, representative and inclusive.

## LGBTQ+ Inclusion

Sussex Cricket remains committed to ensuring that cricket is a welcoming and inclusive sport for LGBTQ+ people. Through both Sussex Cricket and the Sussex Cricket Foundation, we continue to work with partners, clubs and communities to create environments where everyone feels safe to participate and be themselves.

In 2025, we continued to raise visibility and celebrate inclusion through our annual Pride Match at the 1st Central County Ground. The fixture forms part of Sussex Cricket's wider commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion and provides an opportunity to celebrate diversity within the game. The event included Pride-themed activations, engagement with community partners and visible messaging reinforcing that cricket in Sussex is a sport for everyone.

Alongside this, the Sussex Cricket Foundation has supported inclusive participation opportunities through Sixes Cricket sessions, providing accessible and welcoming cricket environments for adults who may not previously have played the game. These sessions help remove barriers to participation by focusing on social, recreational cricket in a supportive setting, enabling people from a wide range of backgrounds – including members of the LGBTQ+ community – to connect through the sport.

Our broader approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion also includes:

- Working with community partners and clubs to promote inclusive cricket environments

- Ensuring Sussex Cricket’s policies and staff training support inclusive behaviours
- Using major events and matches as platforms to reinforce messages of belonging and respect

Through these initiatives, Sussex Cricket aims to ensure that everyone – regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity – feels that cricket in Sussex is a place where they belong.

## Celebrating Cultural Diversity – Diwali

Celebrating and recognising the diverse cultures represented within our communities is an important part of Sussex Cricket’s approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

In 2025, Sussex Cricket hosted a Diwali celebration event at the 1st Central County Ground, bringing together members of the South Asian community, local partners, clubs and supporters to celebrate the festival of lights. Diwali is one of the most widely celebrated festivals in South Asian communities and provides an important opportunity to build stronger cultural connections through cricket.

The event included cricket activity, cultural performances and community engagement, helping to introduce new audiences to the game while celebrating the cultural heritage of many people across Sussex. The event also provided an opportunity to strengthen relationships with local community organisations and cricket clubs with strong South Asian participation.

Through events such as the Diwali celebration, Sussex Cricket aims to:

- Celebrate the cultural diversity of our communities
- Encourage participation in cricket from underrepresented groups
- Build stronger relationships with diverse communities across Sussex

These celebrations complement our wider participation programmes and reinforce our ambition for Sussex Cricket to be a welcoming and inclusive place for everyone in our community.

## Looking Ahead

While 2025 has seen significant progress, we recognise that meaningful change requires sustained commitment.

Our priorities for the coming years include:

- Further increasing participation among women and girls.
- Expanding state school cricket and talent pathways.
- Continuing to grow disability cricket opportunities.
- Ensuring Sussex Cricket’s workforce, volunteers and governance structures reflect the communities we serve.

By continuing to work with clubs, schools, partners and communities across the county, Sussex Cricket and the Sussex Cricket Foundation remain committed to making cricket a game for everyone.