



Press Release

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## **ECB to recruit 2,000 South Asian female mentors to develop the next generation of cricketers**

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) today celebrated the progress already achieved via the South Asian Action Plan as it announced £1.2million of funding to develop a network of 2,000 female role models. The grant from the National Lottery awarded by Sport England, will be used to retain, develop and expand cricket's female volunteer network.

The new volunteer 'activators' will combine coaching and mentoring to inspire and support the next generation of cricketers. They will support the delivery of All Stars Cricket, ECB's entry-level-cricket programme for 5 – 8 year olds, in seven cities and act as role models, showing young people the positive part that cricket can play in their lives.

The ambition to expand the female coaching network was one of the 11 key measures outlined in the ECB's South Asian Action Plan, launched in May to transform the way cricket engages with British South Asian communities. 30% of people surveyed during the consultation process for the plan said that more female coaches would encourage more South Asian women and girls to play the game.

The funding was celebrated at a special community event in Leicester today, with former champion England off spinner **Graeme Swann**, his Strictly partner **Oti Mabuse**, former leading England Women's bowler **Isa Guha** and local school children from Coleman Primary School and Al Aqsa School all taking part in an All Stars Cricket session hosted by Leicestershire Community Engagement Officer, **Amna Rafiq**.

The Strictly stars joined women from around Leicester in a women's cricket and Bollywood dance session, a fun-filled, 90-minute fitness session which combines cricket Bollywood dance routines with cricketing skills.

**Leicester County Cricket Club Community Engagement Officer, Amna Rafiq commented:**

“For me, growing up and getting into cricket, it wasn’t just about enjoying playing the game – which was important, it was the fact that I wanted to see women who looked like me and understood my heritage. I was fortunate that the mentors I had around me all understood my background and knew how to help develop my self-confidence and social skills.

“As a result of my own experiences, I’m incredibly passionate about this Action Plan and I know it’s already making a difference to the girls and young women that are involved in the programmes that I help run in Leicester. I’m working hard to ensure that I carry on the same style of mentoring for all the girls I’m working with. It’s all about encouraging them to get active, learn different skills and make new friends in a supportive and fun environment.”

The new volunteers will work in seven cities (Birmingham, Bradford, London, Leeds, Leicester Manchester and Nottingham) with a high South Asian population.

Additional progress on the South Asian Action Plan includes:

- Leyton Cricket Club in East London being chosen as the first pilot venue for the new Urban Cricket Centres, purpose-built sites specifically designed to provide cricket in urban areas
- The installation of 58 non-turf pitches and renovation of 14 turf pitches in 2018 in Core Cities
- The ECB T20 City Cup has expanded to reach 16 cities

**ECB Non-Executive Director, Lord Kamlesh Patel said:**

“When we launched the Action Plan six months ago, we knew that there was a lot of hard work to be done and that a lot of people within the British South Asian community were counting on us to deliver on our promises.

“I’m pleased to say that in a relatively short space of time, progress has been made in a range of different areas including identifying our first Urban Cricket Centre and commissioning and installing 58 non-turf pitches. Today’s announcement of funding from Sport England shows that we are in a great position to deliver on another element of our plan.”

He continued:

“Of course there is still much to be done, however, by working closely with our key partners such as Sport England, SpringBoard, the British Asian Trust and the National Asian Cricket Council, we’re confident we will be able to ensure that cricket remains diverse and welcoming for all sections of the community.”

**Jenny Betteridge, Sport England’s Strategic Lead for Volunteering said:**

“We know that if you consistently don’t see people like you volunteering in sport and physical activity it is very difficult to think of that sport as something *for* you. That’s why attracting those who don’t normally volunteer has the potential to change the face of community sport across the country.

“We are delighted to award National Lottery funding to this important project working alongside the British South Asian communities to inspire women to get involved and hopefully go onto become leaders in cricket. Not only do projects like this make volunteering and community sport more inclusive, they also directly benefit those giving their time by improving their mental and physical health, enabling them to meet new people, make friends and develop new skills.”

**Former England Women’s cricketer Isa Guha said:**

“Coming up through the ranks of cricket as a woman of South Asian heritage, I’m acutely aware of the importance of attracting young girls from a diverse range of backgrounds to play our great game.

“Not only do we need to create new ways of interacting with these girls, such as the local Bolly Cric-Hit programme that’s been so successful in Leicester, we also need to invest in attracting women into coaching and facilitator roles to help train and nurture the next generation of stars. This funding from Sport England will go a long way towards helping us achieve this goal.”

If you’re interested in finding out more or applying for one of the new roles, please visit [ecb.co.uk](http://ecb.co.uk). If you are interested in getting involved in volunteering in your community or to find out more about the Action Plan, please visit [ecb.co.uk/south-asian-action-plan](http://ecb.co.uk/south-asian-action-plan).

**-Ends-**

**Notes**

The announcement is joint investment between Sport England awarding National Lottery funding and ECB. Sport England have awarded a £1.2million of National Lottery funding, which the ECB will match by investing £1.2million in the second stage (years 3 & 4) to help ensure the long-term success of the project in inspiring a new generation of British South Asian volunteers, players and fans.

**About Sport England**

Sport England is a public body and invests up to £300 million National Lottery and government money each year in projects and programmes that help people get active and play sport.

It wants everyone in England, regardless of age, background, or level of ability, to feel able to engage in sport and physical activity. That's why a lot of its work is specifically focused on helping people who do no, or very little, physical activity and groups who are typically less active - like women, disabled people and people on lower incomes.

### **The Springboard Charity**

The purpose of the Springboard Charity is:

The advancement in life and education of young people under the age of 25 by the provision of advice, training and skills courses.

To relieve unemployment for public benefit in such ways as may be thought fit, including the provision of assistance to unemployed people seeking employment in hospitality, leisure and tourism.

The relief of poverty caused by disability, social or economic circumstances, by the provision of advice, training skills courses and support.

### **The British Asian Trust**

The British Asian Trust was founded in 2007 by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales and leading British Asian entrepreneurs and business leaders to tackle widespread poverty and hardship in South Asia.

We want to see a South Asia that maximises the potential of its people, and that is free from inequality and injustice.

Since we began, our programmes have had a positive impact on the lives of more than 4 million people. Business principles run through our DNA - in the way we run the organisation, the way in which we partner with the private sector to bring about change through our programmes and the way in which we engage with innovative finance and impact investing.

### **National Asian Cricket Council (NACC)**

The National Asian Cricket Council has been established to support and promote the interests of the South Asian Cricketing Community at National and Regional levels, whilst building open relationships

between key stakeholders such as the England and Wales Cricket Board, County Boards and their immediate cricketing communities.

The purpose of the National Asian Cricket Council is two-fold, firstly we would become the voice of the South Asian Cricketing Communities across the Country and secondly, we will challenge the South Asian Cricketing Communities on the contribution they are making to mainstream cricket. At the same time it is important to note that the South Asian Cricketing Community is a very significant part of the cricketing family in this country, with official statistics confirming, anything between 30-40% of all recreational cricket in the UK is played by them.