

Chancellor backs grassroots football as Euro 2020 fever sweeps the UK

- Chancellor Rishi Sunak visited a new government-funded sports facility in West London this week as Euro 2020 enters the knock-out stages
- £25 million of new funding being delivered for grassroots football – enough to fund 700 new pitches
- Support builds on the £600 million provided to sports clubs through the government's Sport Recovery Package and Winter Survival Package

As Euro 2020 heads towards the knockout stages, Rishi Sunak visited Gunnersbury Park Sports Hub in West London to participate in several sessions with students from local schools.

It comes after the government committed £25 million of new funding to support the growth of grassroots football at the Budget earlier this year – enough money to build around 700 new pitches across the UK.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

Grassroots football and facilities like Gunnersbury Park play a vital role in local communities, supporting jobs and developing the stars of the future.

That's why we invested £25 million of new money at the Budget earlier this year – building on the £600 million of targeted support we have provided for sport throughout the pandemic.

Government support like this will help the home nations find and train up the stars of the future and I urge everyone to get behind England and Wales as the remaining British teams in the knockout stages of Euro 2020.

Mark Bullingham, FA Chief Executive, said:

Grassroots football has the power to positively impact the lives of those that play, with the clubs sitting at the very heart of their communities.

The recent £25m investment into grassroots football from the Government, the first part of their £550m commitment, is welcomed and will transform football facilities across the country.

It was fantastic to welcome the Chancellor to a grassroots training session where he was able to see the top facilities, get involved, meet the players and experience the benefits first-hand.

At the visit earlier this week, the Chancellor met a disability community sports group before helping to set up a training session for an all-girls football group from local schools, along with their coach, as well as Brentford FC player Joshua Dasilva.

Last year, the government introduced the £300 million Sport Winter Survival Package to protect spectator sports in England and, at Budget this year, a further £300 million was announced for a Sport Recovery Package to continue to support clubs as fans return to venues.

Separately, Sport England, which is funded by the government and National Lottery, has provided £220 million to support community sport clubs and exercise centres through the coronavirus pandemic. The latest figures show that £10.5 million has already been awarded to over 1,500 football clubs.

Sport England has also provided an extra £50 million to help grassroots sports clubs and organisations as part of their Uniting the Movement strategy.

Football Foundation figures show that football participation increases by 10% at facilities like Gunnersbury Park which have been awarded a Hubs grants. In 2017, this meant 250,000 more people participated, a third of them women and girls.

Many football clubs at all levels of the UK domestic game have benefited from the multi-billion-pound package of government support, including the furlough scheme and Covid loan schemes.

Notes to editors

- Gunnersbury Park Sports Hub is part of the separate Hubs programme, which has received £4 million from the government-backed Football Foundation, delivering for community and grassroots sport, creating new jobs and boosting people's health and wellbeing
- The Hubs Programme, formerly known as the Parklife Football Facilities Programme, began in 2015 and aims to provide quality grassroots football facilities in deprived communities, ensuring that people of all ages can experience the positive health and community benefits of participation in sport
- Figures from the Football Foundation show that participation in football increases on average by 10% at grassroots facilities that have been awarded a Hubs (Parklife) grant, and multi-sport participation also increases by 12% at those same sites. In 2017 this equated to 250,000

footballers, a third of which were women and girls

- £8 million provided will generate an annual investment of around £43 million once match funding is taken into account, which will deliver around 12 football hubs that could attract over 300,000 participants.
- The 2020 Budget allocated £8.5 million to continue the Hubs (Parklife) football facilities programme in 20/21. The government provided £8 million capital funding alongside the Premier League and Football Association to match fund investment in local, accessible football facilities, targeted at deprived communities. Local authorities with a population over 200,000 are eligible to apply.