

Government announces additional support for women's football clubs

The Sports Minister has announced that £680,000 in grant funding will be provided to six women's football clubs, in the latest tranche of funding from the Government's Sport Winter Survival Package.

Birmingham City Women, Blackburn Rovers Ladies, Bristol City Women, Lewes FC Women, London Bees and London City Lionesses will receive a total of £680,000 in grant funding, bringing the total support provided to women's football to £2.9 million.

The funding will cover essential survival costs due to the lack of spectators, and will allow these clubs to complete their seasons. It will also help to support the continued visibility of women's football, as England prepares to host UEFA Women's Euro 2022.

It follows the Women's Super League and FA Women's Championship [receiving a combined £2.25 million of grant support for essential league costs in February, backed up by women's sport being prioritised for 250,000 free Covid-19 testing kits being made available to elite sports, worth £1.5 million.](#)

Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston said:

Women's football continues to go from strength to strength. The last World Cup captured the hearts and minds of the nation.

With more terrestrial broadcast coverage and Euro 2022 on the horizon, we must do all we can to give it the visibility it deserves. This funding will provide vital support to allow these six clubs to continue, to inspire our stars of the future.

Kelly Simmons, FA Director of the Women's Professional Game, said:

This new grant funding will provide vital financial support to six more clubs, helping to cover losses as a result of COVID-19 and giving them the best possible opportunity to complete their campaigns.

We welcome this funding, along with the previous grant from the Sport Winter Survival Package which has been crucial in keeping the game going with weekly COVID-19 testing across the top two divisions, ensuring players can continue to play safely.

Lewes FC Women is a not-for-profit club which is wholly owned by supporters

and the local community. In 2017 it became the first professional or semi-professional football club to pay its women's team the same as its men's team as part of their Equality FC initiative. It currently plays in the FA Women's Championship.

Charlie Dobres, Lewes FC Women director, said:

Lewes FC Women has made great strides in boosting attendances and matchday revenues in recent years, and so the absence of crowds has hit us harder than most.

Lewes FC is a 100% community-owned non-profit, and this funding is vitally important in enabling us to continue through this difficult period and not lose the substantial progress that we've made on many fronts. This is exactly the kind of intervention that the current situation requires and is essential for clubs to survive.

This is the latest tranche of funding to be announced from the Government's [£300 million Sport Winter Survival Package](#) that is focused on helping those major spectator sports severely impacted by coronavirus restrictions survive the winter.

On Friday the Government announced [£2.7 million for elite, national and regional ice hockey](#), which will cover essential costs necessary for the sport's survival and to get back playing, including the launch of the [2021 Elite Series](#). In February the Government announced [a major boost for women's sport](#), with the aforementioned support for women's football coming alongside support for netball and women's basketball, totalling more than £7 million.

Submissions for support have been made from individual sports to an [independent decision-making Board](#), supported by Sport England.

The Sport Winter Survival Package is the most generous of any Government for its domestic sport sector in the world. It comes as part of the sector benefiting from more than £1.5 billion worth of business support that has been made available by the Government, including the furlough scheme, business rates relief and business interruption loan scheme that has helped many sports clubs and leisure businesses to survive.

Earlier this month the Chancellor announced a [further £300 million of support](#) that is expected to benefit major summer spectator sports such as cricket, tennis and horse racing, as the path out of lockdown continues and sports stadia initially open at reduced capacities. The Budget also included £1.2 million to mitigate the financial effects of COVID-19 on the UEFA Women's Euro football competition and deliver a successful tournament in England in 2022, supporting the sport to grow and thrive. This money will go towards extending contracts of the delivery teams, host city resource costs and the opening ceremony.

Further confirmations of funding from the Sports Winter Survival Package, and details on how the additional £300 million will be distributed, will be

announced in due course.

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Notes to editors:

- A detailed factsheet on how the Sport Winter Survival Package works and the criteria when assessing applicants has been [published by Sport England](#).
- [In a press conference at 10 Downing Street in May 2020](#), the Culture Secretary said: “given the deserved momentum that had built up behind women’s sport after the football, cricket and netball world cups, I will be working hard with the Sports Minister to make sure we don’t lose any of that progress. Visibility matters. Our daughters deserve to see female athletes on the main stage.”
- Grassroots sports and the physical activity sector are also benefiting from £220 million in emergency funding delivered by Sport England, and the recipients of a £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund to support publicly owned leisure facilities in England during the pandemic have also been announced today.
- At the Budget on 3 March, the Chancellor also announced that the Government will provide an initial £25 million to support the growth of grassroots football, which will be enough to build around 700 new pitches across the UK.