



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Annual Report • July 2024



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Welcome to our annual Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) report. The aim of this report is to share our progress on the EDI agenda over the last season and look forward to our next season in the Premier League.

At Brentford FC, **our values are togetherness, respectful and progressive** and we want to ensure that inclusivity is at the heart of everything we do. This season, our focus has been on building a sustainable foundation for EDI, based on evidence, our values and impact.

We see EDI as an integral activity in helping drive Brentford FC forward. It's crucial for us to make sure our staff, players and fans feel welcomed and safe at the club and Gtech Community Stadium. We were proud to be recognised for our work by receiving the gold award for EDI at this year's Football Business Awards and it's an area that we will continue to prioritise.

We continue to learn and grow in this space, and we recognise there is so much more for us to do. We are all too aware that racism and discrimination continue to exist within our game, and we will continue to actively campaign and use our platform to call it out and educate. We continue to focus our attention on supporting women and girls in the game too, and we are delighted that our Women's B Team has been promoted this season.

I would like to thank our fans, our staff, our players and our Board for their continued commitment to embrace the need to make Brentford FC an inclusive environment for all. Inclusivity doesn't happen by accident or in isolation. As we shared in a recent campaign, it is said it takes a village to raise a child, well, it takes a community to raise a club.

We would also like to recognise the work happening across the game to make football a place for all.

Jon Varney

CEO

Brentford Football Club



Bee Together: Equity, Diversity & Inclusion at Brentford FC

Football is for everyone, it belongs to and should be enjoyed by anyone who wants to participate in it, whether a player, official, staff member or spectator. We aim, therefore, to bring people together in a way that supports positive change, makes people feel valued and improves the lives and inclusive experience of our fans and wider community.

We aim to promote equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across all aspects, from our buildings to our policies, our recruitment to our communications, all under the club's campaign, Bee Together.

We are committed to confronting and eradicating any form of discrimination. At Brentford FC, we strive to treat everyone fairly and with respect.

We want to ensure that EDI is embedded throughout Brentford FC. We believe this is everyone's responsibility, and our structure aims to reflect this. Brentford FC has an EDI Team to support the club, which includes the equity & inclusion director, EDI manager and event & engagement executive. Our equity & inclusion director sits on the club's Executive Committee.

This agenda is supported by our EDI Mental Health and Wellbeing (MH&W) Steering Committee, which includes members of the Board and both on-field and off-field leadership, who are responsible for the oversight of the club's delivery outcomes in this area. They are in place to check, challenge and provide strategic support in the club's aims in this area. This group is chaired by Preeti Shetty, non-executive director at Brentford Football Club and our Board EDI lead.

We are privileged to have Marcus Gayle, our club ambassador, at Brentford. Marcus is an ex-first team player and previously worked at Kick It Out. Marcus has continued his work on anti-racism at Brentford FC, with staff and players, but also in the community with Brentford FC Community Sports Trust. Marcus was recently recognised by the Football Black List in the Practitioners Category for his outstanding contributions to anti-discrimination advocacy.

The EDI Strategy for 2023-2026 was developed to drive impact, utilising evidence, existing commitments (such as the Premier League Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Standard), best practice and ensuring alignment with our values. We started by defining our four key outcomes for the club:

- **Belonging:** An environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging and can be themselves
- **Safety:** A safer environment (both physically and psychologically) for all
- **Fairness:** Fair systems and processes which provide equal opportunity
- **Representation:** An environment more representative of our population

To meet these outcomes, we have four pillars for delivery on data, policies & processes, learning & development and culture, which we will focus on in this report.

The scope of our strategy is both internally and externally facing and our key stakeholders include:

- **Staff:** On-field and off-field
- **Players:** Men's & women's teams (First Team, B Team & Academy)
- **Fans & Community:** Season ticket holders, members & matchday fans, local community
- **Partners:** Including sponsors & suppliers

1. Data

Our first EDI pillar concentrates on data to ensure our focus is data-led and evidence-based. We have focused on collecting and analysing data both internally and externally and utilising this data to make decisions. This approach helps us to understand our club better, reduce bias in our decision-making and measure impact.

Shared Goals with British Future & Spirit 2012

This season we took part in Shared Goals, a project by British Future and sponsored by Spirit 2012, exploring how football clubs can harness their fans' feelings of pride and togetherness to promote social integration across divides and build shared, inclusive local identities.

The research informed a report, exploring how football clubs can engage their local community to bridge divides and bring people of different backgrounds together. The results were presented at a parliamentary launch hosted by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on social integration in May 2024.

It found that the tribal loyalties of club football could actually help bridge divides – and the reach of football across society gives it a unique power to bring people together across the nation and help combat social division. It also identifies a strong public appetite for football clubs to increase efforts to welcome fans from all backgrounds.

More information on the report can be found [here](#).



Football Leadership Diversity Code

Brentford FC was one of the first voluntary signatories of the Football Leadership Diversity Code (FLDC), to ensure English football better represents today's society.

Released in November 2023, the Code shows that Brentford has continued to make progress in most areas. Among new hires at the club during the 2022/23 season, Black, Asian and Mixed Heritage people made up 15% of senior leaders, 18% of team operations staff and 25% of coaches. 30% of new hires among team operations were also women.

Whilst we fell short of meeting the target to hire more women in senior leadership positions with 23% being female, this was a significant improvement from last season.

More information can be found [here](#).

Case Study: Coach Inclusion & Diversity Scheme

This season we participated in the Premier League Coach Inclusion & Diversity Scheme (CIDS) – a Premier League programme aimed at increasing the number of female coaches and Black, Asian and Mixed heritage coaches from a variety of backgrounds in English professional football.

Brentford has been lucky to hire Manraj Sucha as a coach in our Academy. Manraj has had previous experience of being head of performance analysis at Northampton Town FC and coaching at professional academies such as MK Dons, Luton Town, Chesterfield and Walsall.

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I have been in environments where there are no other coaches from ethnically diverse backgrounds. It may often be the first time a young person has encountered anyone from a diverse background - more specifically Sikh, when they have someone like myself as a coach.

For them to be coached by someone like me, provides education within those environments. It may be within football but that experience then extends to their whole life. **They may have never met someone from a diverse background that closely, but now they can understand that there is not a massive difference. We are all people.**

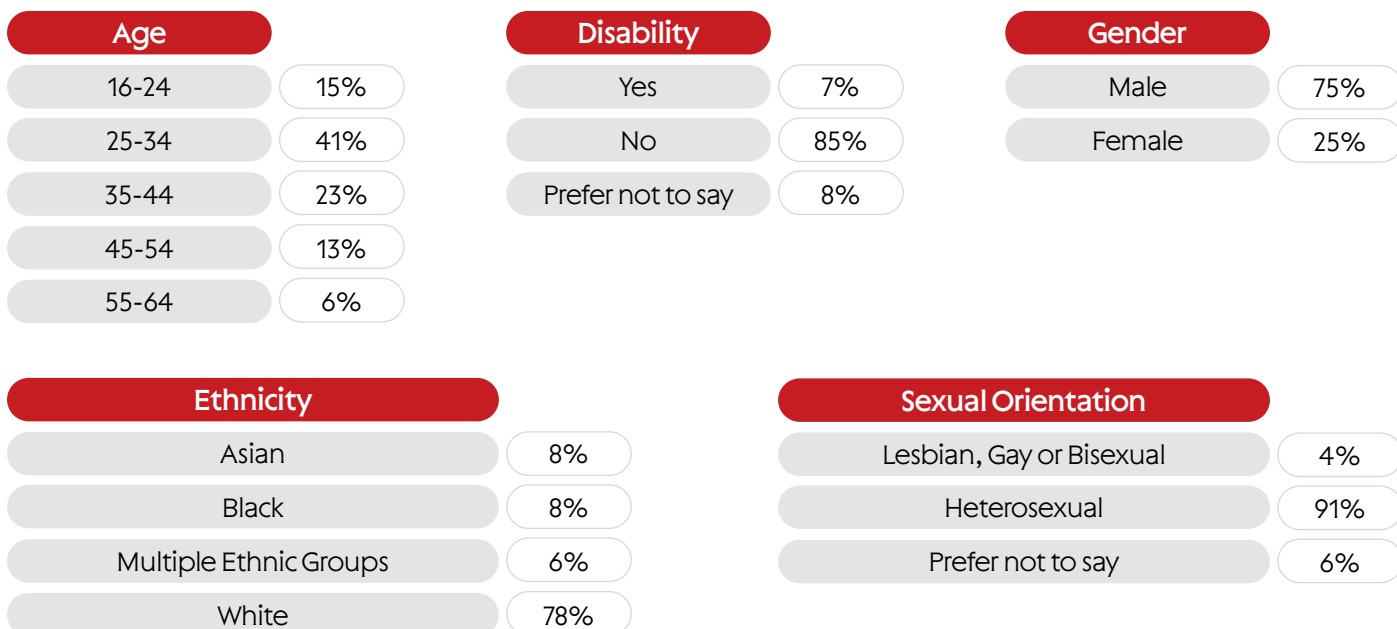
Manraj Sucha



Workforce Diversity Data

This season we have created a dashboard with anonymised workforce diversity data, which we collect anonymously and confidentially. The purpose of collecting this data is to understand the diversity of our staff and potential biases within our systems and processes. This is reported to our Executive Committee and Board on a quarterly basis.

Below we have included our workforce diversity data from this season, up until 1 June 2024. Our threshold for reporting data is five people or more and every question has a 'Prefer Not to Say' option. Our completion rates for each question are above 90 per cent.



From this data, we are aware that we need to address the lack of women at all levels, particularly in senior roles and the lack of Black representation in senior roles. We are also focused on attracting more women, people from ethnically under-represented groups, people with disabilities and the LGBTQ+ community into our club.

Our data analysis has led to the implementation of our Diversity data action plan internally to ensure we are addressing the gaps which we identify. We have already seen an impact on our recruitment figures. This season:

- **27 per cent** of new starters were **female**.
- **26 per cent** of new starters were from **Asian, Black or Multiple Ethnic Backgrounds**.

We will continue to implement more changes going forward in line with our EDI Strategy.

Case Study: Women in Football partnership

In July 2023, Brentford became a corporate member of Women in Football. Women in Football (WIF) is an organisation dedicated to promoting and supporting women's involvement in the world of football. **The organisation aims to empower everyone with knowledge, expertise and collective support to create a stronger, brighter and more diverse future.**

This season, our focus has been on internal development and progression. Ten women across the club participated in Women in Football's Leadership Courses and in January, we officially launched our mentoring programme with Women in Football for women across Brentford and the Community Sports Trust.

2. Policies & processes

We have an ongoing review process for all our policies, to ensure they are equitable and inclusive. This involves both internal and external policies, which affect our staff, players, partners and fans. This has included anything from updating our Acceptable Behaviour Policy, Accessibility Policy or EDI Policy, to changing our process to ensure better support for trans and non-binary fans with steward searches.

Case Study: Parents leave & pay policies

In December, we launched our new staff Adoption, Maternity and Paternity Leave & Pay Policy, which offers additional support for new parents. We are proud to provide an enhanced package for staff who have been at Brentford for 52 weeks or more:

- **Adoption & Maternity:** 100 per cent of your average weekly earnings (before tax) for the first 18 weeks, 50 per cent for the next 18 weeks and 25 per cent for the next 16 weeks.
- **Paternity:** 100 per cent of your average weekly earnings (before tax) for two weeks with an additional two weeks fully paid dependent on business sign-off.

We recognise this is an important opportunity to support attraction and retention of talent and to support gender equity in the workplace.



EDI Reviews

This season, we launched EDI reviews, which are designed to support the club to consider policies, strategies, plans, programmes and activities through an EDI lens and to ensure inclusivity is at the heart of everything we do.

EDI reviews are conducted against each of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010 to understand potential unintended consequences or impacts towards different groups. They also cover the proposed mitigations which will be put in place to ensure that our approach is fair and inclusive.

Case Study: **Every seat counts**

Last year, the club introduced the ‘every seat counts’ policy to help reduce the number of empty seats at the Gtech Community Stadium. However, we also recognised that this policy may have some unintended consequences on certain groups, such as families with children or people with disabilities. We want to ensure inclusivity is embedded in all our policies, therefore analysing ‘every seat counts’ through this lens has meant we have put certain provisions in place, which include:

- Exemptions for children and fans with disabilities who attend with personal assistants.
- Options to ‘pause’ season tickets in the event of maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave. This also includes the sad event of experiencing pregnancy loss or stillbirth.
- Special dispensation for parents or carers of somebody with a disability or long-term health condition.

More information on these provisions can be found in our FAQs [here](#).



3. Learning & Development

This season, we have provided learning opportunities to players, staff and stewards to ensure everyone at Brentford is aligned with our values and commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Staff & Players

Our training suite for staff was based on feedback from our last staff survey, which outlined areas for improvement for us to focus on. This included embedding broad concepts such as psychological safety, providing staff with tools to 'call in' and 'call out' negative and inappropriate behaviours if they witnessed them, and deep diving into pressing issues which affect our game, such as tackling anti-Black racism and tackling everyday sexism and misogyny.

We have provided training to both our men's team and women's team players this season, including players in our Academy. A few examples include a session on anti-racism first aid and a keynote and Q&A with Rt Hon Stuart Lawrence.



Case Study: **Bystander intervention & active allyship**

An active bystander is someone who witnesses harmful or inappropriate behaviour and chooses to intervene to stop it or help the affected person. However, there are often situations where we want to help but we don't know how. Our mandatory learning sessions on Bystander intervention & active allyship seek to do just that – **provide staff with a framework on how to intervene safely and appropriately in different scenarios.**

This is based on the evidence of what works to affect behavioural change and make positive impact. It is important to understand how to assess situations, the different ways you can intervene and what feels most appropriate in the moment and afterwards.

93 per cent of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the session improved their understanding of how to be an active bystander and an active ally.

93%

agreed or strongly agreed the session improved their understanding of how to be an active bystander / ally

Stewards

Our training suite for stewards was based on feedback on learning gaps and previous incidences. We covered a broad range of subjects such as Muslim culture & awareness, including the changing prayer times during the year and a session on Ramadan, LGBTQ+ inclusion, anti-racism, neurodiversity & disability.

Case Study: Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

In July 2023, Brentford signed up to the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower network to provide better support to fans and staff with non-visible disabilities. We provided training on the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower to all fan-facing staff at Brentford.

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is for people with non-visible disabilities to voluntarily share they have a disability or condition that may not be immediately apparent – and that they may need additional support or more time in public spaces.

The initiative includes lanyards and pins branded with the distinctive sunflower symbol, which discreetly indicates that the wearer may require additional support, help or a little more time.



Case Study: Muslim player considerations with the PFA

In January, we welcomed the Professional Footballers Association (PFA) to run a session with coaching staff on Muslim player considerations and Ramadan. This was followed up with a session in February, when we invited an Imam to come and speak with players and coaching staff about fasting during Ramadan.

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The knowledge shared in the workshop from the PFA was excellent...**The information shared better equips me to approach the players who are partaking in Ramadan as I now understand what they're going through.** The wider support team were also equipped with more information about the day-to-day support that we can give the Muslim players all year round such as providing rooms for prayers as well as how our professional chefs and nutritionists can prepare food for when they get up early morning and when the fast breaks.

Thomas Frank, Head Coach Brentford FC

4. Culture

We are striving to create an inclusive culture aligned with our values for everyone who interacts with the club, but there is no one single way to achieve this. This season we have tried to do this in a few ways from organising celebrations and events, convening and collaborating with different groups and running awareness-raising activities.

Fans & Community

Our fans are our greatest asset at the club, and we are proud to work closely with our fans who support us and local community to make Brentford as diverse, inclusive and equitable as possible.

Women & Girls Inclusion

Our Women & girls fan forum continues to convene regularly. This season we spotlighted women's safety. In September, Brentford signed up to the Women's Night Safety Charter. By signing the Charter, the club makes a voluntary pledge, reinforcing its commitment to taking women's safety seriously.

Following on from this, we launched an internal Women's Safety Taskforce at the club, with representatives from across different teams, to ensure we were prioritising women's safety, whether for fans, staff, players or participants of Community Sports Trust programmes.

In March, we dedicated a fixture to Her Game Too and used the opportunity to spotlight women at Brentford. Kris Ajer, Mark Flekken and Zanka interviewed four female members of staff at Brentford about what it's like to be a woman working in men's football.



Case Study: **Walk & Talks with the police**

Since November, we have been working with the Metropolitan Police to organise ‘Walk and Talks’ in collaboration with the Metropolitan Police, giving fans the opportunity to meet and engage in open conversations with our dedicated law enforcement officers, while walking along selected routes in the local area they may take after matches or on non-matchdays. These have been made available after all home matches.

These sessions provide an opportunity to highlight practical tips, share resources and address any concerns that fans may have regarding personal safety when walking home from matches or when walking on non-matchdays in the area. **All fans are encouraged to join and share their valuable feedback so that we can improve and refine our efforts to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all fans.** This has led to an introduction of 8-10 female officers in static positions around the local areas.

8-10

female officers in
static positions in
the local area

LGBTQ+ Inclusion

The LGBeeTs, our LGBTQ+ fan group, has gone from strength to strength this season. It was founded eight years ago as a group for LGBTQ+ fans and allies and has been vital in supporting the club to create and maintain an inclusive environment for all.

This season the LGBeeTs have supported us to continue the LGBTQ+ Football 101 Skills Sessions with the West London Queer Project and Brentford FC Community Sports Trust. Over 50 people have attended the LGBTQ+ Football 101 Skills Sessions and 100 per cent of attendees would like to attend again in the future.

In February, we released an exhibition celebrating the memories and contributions of the LGBeeTs to mark their contribution to the club on their anniversary. The LGBeeTs also spent time with Christian Nørgaard and Neal Maupay discussing the fan groups, representation and inclusion.



Disability Inclusion

The club's Sensory Room provides a quiet place where fans can enjoy a match with a full view of the pitch, with special glass to mitigate the noise. The room creates an environment to support fans who have sensory protecting issues and that struggle to deal with the large crowds and matchday atmosphere. It allows families that might not otherwise be able to come and watch Brentford FC, to have access to our matches.

Our Disabled Supporters Association (DSA), which started in August 2023, continued to grow this season. It was formed to promote the needs and interests of disabled supporters.

We are proud to support Brentford Penguins FC, a football team of children with Down's syndrome led by former Bees player Allan Cockram. The team hold weekly outdoor training sessions open to children with Down's syndrome aged five and over who want to learn and practice their football skills such as passing, dribbling and shooting while also improving their balance, coordination and agility.



Anti-racism

At Brentford, we have a zero-tolerance attitude to racial discrimination. Through our work with our specialist advisors, the police and the Premier League, we investigate any abusive messages and will support prosecutions to hold those responsible to account. We will continue to speak out on this subject and we will seek the necessary the outcome for incidences of racism.

In October, in line with our Heart of West London campaign, we focused on ethnicity and cardiac health. Our players helped to raise awareness of ethnic disparities regarding CPR. People from ethnic minority backgrounds are statistically more at risk of cardiac arrest. But research shows only one in five have been given CPR training - significantly lower than the UK average.

Events

We have organised **14 events** this season, both internally and externally, to celebrate, educate and raise awareness of different experiences, identities and stories. Many of these events have featured staff members, both as participants and hosts, and we are grateful to them for their contributions.

Based on over 100 feedback forms, **99 per cent** of attendees agreed or strongly agreed that they **enjoyed these events**.

June 2023

1. Windrush Day

We marked Windrush 75 with a staff panel event, featuring staff members and their family members talking about the legacy of the Windrush generation.



July 2023

2. Pride

We hosted a panel on LGBTQ+ Inclusion in sport with both internal and external speakers.

August 2023

3. South Asian Heritage Month

We hosted an event with Fulham FC on the theme 'Stories to Tell' with an off-field, on-field and changemakers panel, and entertainment in the form of song and dance.



September 2023

4. East & South-East Asian Heritage Month

We hosted a staff panel event, featuring staff members, to explore culture, tradition and heritage on the theme 'Routes/Roots'.

October 2023

5. Black History Month

We hosted a staff panel event on the theme 'Celebrating our Sisters, Saluting our Sisters, and Honouring Matriarchs of Movements' recognising Black women across the club and Community Sports Trust.



October 2023

6. Black History Month

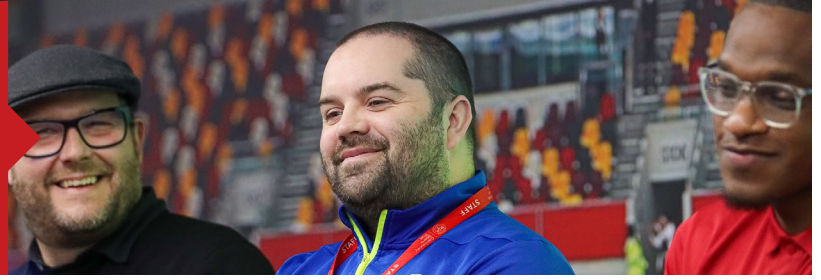
We were privileged to welcome David Olusoga, who is an author, presenter and film-maker, for a keynote and fireside chat with staff.



November 2023

7. International Men's Day

We hosted a staff panel event on fatherhood.



December 2023

8. International Day of Persons with Disabilities

We hosted a panel which featured staff, alongside Allan Cockram of Brentford Penguins FC and the Chair of the Brentford Disabled Supporters Association. This was followed by a film screening of the Mighty Penguins.

December 2023

9. Hannukah

We hosted a staff panel event on Jewish heritage and culture, which featured our Chair, Cliff Crown.



January 2024

10. Holocaust Memorial Day

We were privileged to welcome Joan Salter MBE, a Holocaust survivor, to share her story with staff.

March 2024

11. International Women's Day

Staff enjoyed welcoming Anita Asante, football coach and former player, for a fireside chat with staff.



March 2024

12. International Women's Day

We hosted a staff panel event on women's wellbeing.

March 2024

13. Ramadan

We hosted an Open Iftar with the Ramadan Tent Project, which involved a call to prayer and breaking of the fast.



April 2024

14. Stephen Lawrence Day

We were honoured to host Rt Hon Stuart Lawrence, brother of Stephen Lawrence, for a keynote and fireside chat with staff.

Case Study: **Open Iftar at the Gtech**

This Ramadan, we hosted our first Open Iftar at the Gtech Community Stadium alongside the Ramadan Tent Project, uniting local communities to share in the spirit of Ramadan. With 250 guests joining us, **our stadium became a hub for reflection, prayer, and connection**. We had a heartfelt pitch-side call to prayer by a local Imam, a Qur'an reading by schoolchildren, followed by a peaceful meal together.

Guests were welcomed with an opening from our CEO, Jon Varney, who spoke about our values of **Togetherness, Progressive and Respectful**.

250

guests



Employee networks

At Brentford FC, we now have three established employee networks:

- **Our Women's Network**
- **Our Multicultural Inclusion Network**
- **Our Disability & Neurodiversity Network**

An employee network or affinity group is a group of employees within an organisation who share a common identity or interest and come together to support each other and promote their shared goals. We are grateful to the chairs of these networks who provide a strong sense of community for staff.

Brentford FC Community Sports Trust

We continue to work closely with Brentford FC Community Sports Trust to embed inclusion. Our EDI manager works across both the club and Trust to ensure greater collaboration.

Programmes

The Trust continue to roll out their ‘award-winning’ anti-discrimination workshops, with the support of club ambassador, Marcus Gayle. This has become a core part of the Premier League Primary Stars programme and is delivered in schools across west London.

The Trust has grown and started new programmes for girls and women only, including enrolling a larger post-16 cohort, additional girls football development programmes, a new girls-only fitness class, Brentford Welcomes - a female-only session for refugees and people seeking asylum, and an evening women’s recreational session.

The Trust has invested in developing three new disability sports programmes. As a result of these programmes the number of participants with disabilities has grown by close to 500 new unique participants.

Following on from the success of the LGBTQ+ Football 101 Skills Sessions, the Trust is working with two other west London Premier League football clubs to pilot a weekly session for the group, partnering with the West London Queer Project and the LGBeeTs.

The Trust’s programme of support for refugees and people seeking asylum continues to evolve and be shaped by those attending.

The Trust has developed two new programmes to improve mental health programmes and support for young people, Active Minds and Advantage Mentoring, and continue to build on their adult initiatives, Comedy for Thought and Football for Thought.

Next season, The Trust will be focusing their attention on areas of underrepresentation, a key one being South Asian participation.



People

This season, the Trust has focused on improving the experience of staff. This has included using staff survey data, training and focus groups to inform change, setting up a new EDI strategy group and enhancing their parents leave and pay policies.

With the support of the club, the Trust rolled out a mandatory inclusion workshop for all staff, aligned to their values. This included modules on privilege, inclusive language and micro-behaviours.

In order to ensure a more data-led approach, workforce diversity data is shared and analysed with the Trustee HR Subgroup monthly. The Trust's Youth Voice panel has been established this year and is a key part of decision-making and feedback.

The club looks forward to continuing this collaboration next season.



Summary

Thank you for reading our annual report on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion. This season, we prioritised building trust and a solid foundation for EDI at the club. Everyone across the club is responsible for EDI and we have tried to translate this belief into our activities and operations.

There has been progress but, in this space, the goalposts are always moving. As we said last year, we are committed to raising the bar for ourselves. We promised more investment, better data and an acceleration in progress and we have ensured that this has been met.

Our challenges remain but we continue to remain focused, intentional and transparent. We look forward to sharing more information with you throughout next season.



FOOTBALL BUSINESS AWARDS 2024



Brentford Football Club received a gold award at the 2024 Football Business Awards for its work in equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the season



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

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