



# **THE FA AND BUCS WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME**

## **IMPACT REPORT**

This report provides an overview of the impact of The FA and BUCS Women's Leadership Programme on its participants from its inception in 2019 to 2024.



**CREAS**  
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# WHAT IS THE FA AND BUCS WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME?

## PROGRAMME VISION:

Unlock the potential of a diverse cohort of female students aspiring to work in football, enabling them to be competitive in securing roles in their chosen speciality when they enter the job market.

## PROGRAMME OUTCOMES:

- Increased knowledge and understanding of the working landscape of football.
- Support the participants to define clear career goals/ambitions whether in the short, medium or long term.
- Develop self-confidence and belief in their ability to succeed.
- Build understanding and self-awareness of own strengths and potential areas for development.
- Expand the professional network of the participants.

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW:

The FA Women's Leadership Programme is an award winning\* collaboration between the FA and BUCS, with the intention of positively impacting the gender diversity of the paid football workforce within England.

Based on FA commissioned research into the key behaviours that align to high performance in roles and/or increased chances of employability; the programme aims to support students who identify as female or non-binary and have aspirations to work within the game, to be competitive when they enter the job market. Seeking to bridge the gap between who the students are, and what they are capable of, through experiential and applied learning experiences. Students have the opportunity to develop their skills, behaviours, confidence and professional network, as well as be supported in defining their career goals & ambitions by exploring and understanding the diverse opportunities that exist in football.

The participants have three multi-day touch points across a nine-month period, including a minimum of two residential stays. These feature both theoretical and applied learning experiences, with students being placed in 'real life' simulated tasks and networking opportunities with established individuals from across the football sector.

Every student is also supported throughout, by a member of staff known as a Learning and Development Accelerator. These staff members are volunteers recruited from across the sport sector, who provide mentoring and coaching support on a 2:1 basis throughout the residentials.

The Programme is entering its 6th season in 2024-25 and continues to grow in reputation throughout the industry. Moving forwards, we aim to focus on the diversity within our cohorts and make a positive impact in supporting more females and non-binary students from under-represented and under-served groups to access the Programme.

# THE EVALUATION PROCESS

CREAS Sports Consulting LTD. were brought in to complete an evaluation and impact study on the FA and BUCS Women's Leadership Programme (WLP).

In order to do this, existing resources were analysed, as well as a mixed-method approach of surveys and interviews was designed and delivered to collect sufficient data in order to demonstrate the impact of the programme to date.

Members of all 5 cohorts as well as some of the accelerator staff were included throughout this process to freely share their thoughts and feedback on the programme through an independent party.

## Data Collection

### Cohort 1 - 2019/2020



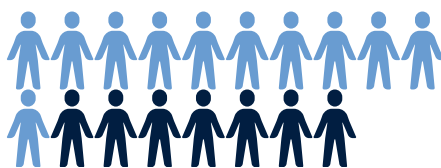
7 of the 10 participants in the pilot cohort took part in an in-depth alumni survey, of which 2 were then interviewed further to share their career stories.

### Cohort 2 - 2020/2021



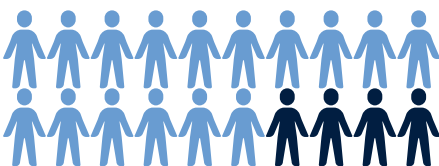
11 of the 17 participants in cohort 2 which ran completely online during the COVID pandemic took part in the in-depth alumni survey, 2 participants then took part in a further 1:1 interview.

### Cohort 3 - 2021/2022



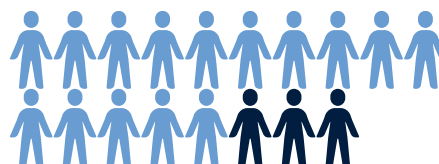
11 of the 18 participants in cohort 3 took part in the in-depth alumni survey with 3 of those taking part in a 1:1 interview.

### Cohort 4 - 2022/2023



A total of 16 of the 20 participants in cohort 4 took part in the alumni survey, with 4 participants engaging in a further 1:1 interview.

### Cohort 5 - 2023/2024



15 of the 18 participants in the current WLP cohort completed the in-depth post-programme survey, 12 of these then took part in a 1 hour focus group in small groups. In this cohort 9 of the accelerators also took part in separate focus groups to share their feedback.

A total of 69 individuals were engaged in the evaluation process in total.



# IMPACT IN NUMBERS

To begin exploring the impact of WLP on its participants, we wanted to share this through the big numbers that came through in the research when engaging with all five cohorts.

**100%** of all alumni have said that they would recommend the FA and BUCS Women's Leadership Programme (WLP) to prospective participants.

**98%** of all alumni have said that the FA and BUCS Women's Leadership Programme (WLP) either met or exceeded expectations.

See below the percentage of participants that 'agree' or 'strongly agree with the following statements.

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**100%**

of WLP participants agree that it is important that programmes like this exist.

**92%**

agree that 'WLP positively contributed to my professional/personal development.'

**90%**

agree that 'completing the WLP has improved my ability to connect with people through the quality of my communication and influence.'

**88%**

agree that 'WLP has increased my awareness of the leadership qualities needed to inspire people.'

**88%**

agree that 'WLP improved my ability to develop effective collaborative relationships with stakeholders from different backgrounds.'

**86%**

agree that 'completing WLP has supported me to build a stronger network in the football industry.'

**85%**

agree that 'after completing WLP, I am more confident in myself and what I can accomplish.'

**81%**

agree that 'completing WLP has prepared me to undertake a role in the football industry.'

**81%**

agree that 'WLP has made me more able to plan activities, set goals, manage and organise resources and my time.'

**80%**

agree that 'WLP has opened my eyes to the range of opportunities available in the football industry.'

**78%**

agree that 'WLP has encouraged a love of life-long learning and reflection for developmental action.'

**78%**

agree that 'from completing WLP, I am now more equipped to cope with pressure, deal with setbacks and remain resilient and effective.'

# IMPACT OF WLP ON THE FOOTBALL INDUSTRY

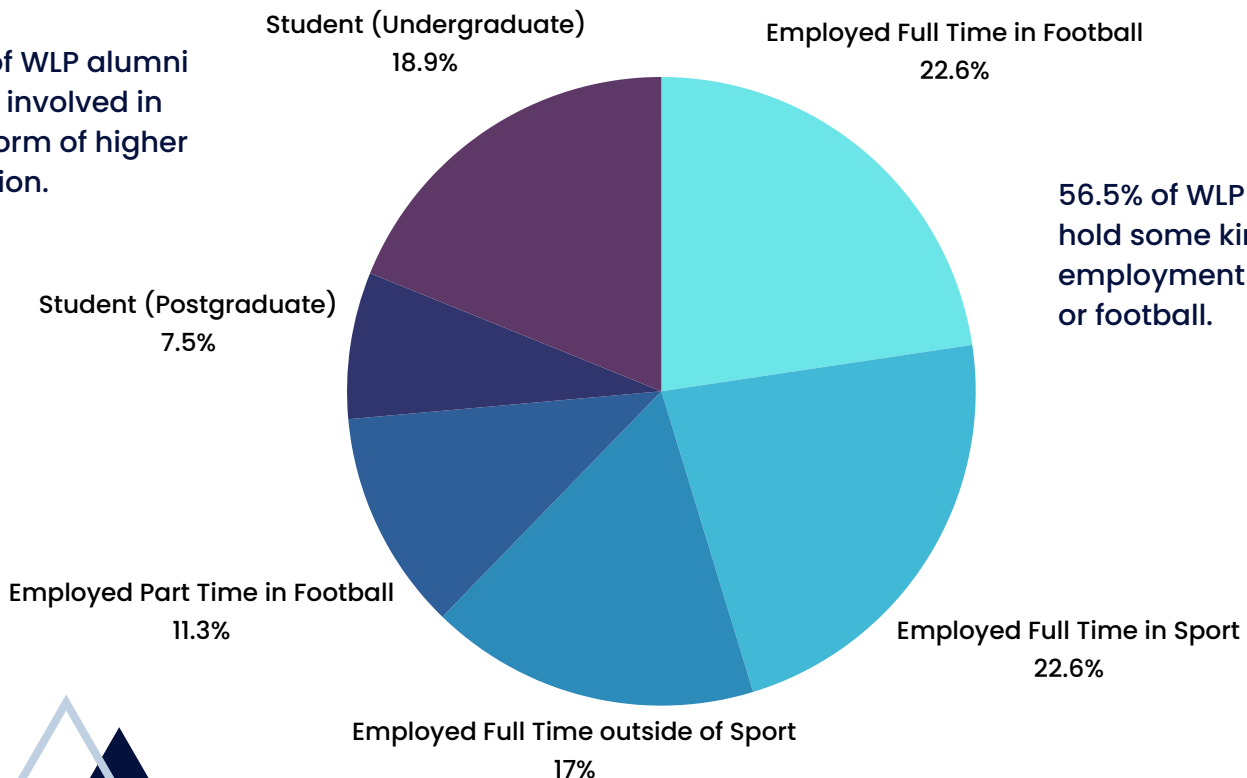
Alumni of the Women's Leadership Programme are already having a significant impact on the football, sport and higher education sectors through their employment at the following organisations...



Within these organisations alumni hold a vast array of roles with many based in sport and football development, whilst others are lecturers, performance coaches, PE teachers etc.

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF WLP PARTICIPANTS

26.4% of WLP alumni are still involved in some form of higher education.



56.5% of WLP alumni hold some kind of employment in sport or football.

# LEARNINGS FROM ALL WLP PARTICIPANTS

The following pages of the report will explore the role WLP alumni are having in football and their future ambitions in the game.

## Current involvement in football

WLP alumni are deeply involved in various roles across the football landscape, showcasing their commitment to the sport at multiple levels.

Many are players in women's football teams, ranging from university clubs to semi-professional teams, with some also engaging in futsal.

Coaching is another significant area, with alumni leading or assisting in youth and women's teams, often volunteering their time to develop the players they work with.

Several alumni hold leadership positions within FA & County FA Youth Councils or the FA Regional Youth Network, contributing to the governance and development of football, particularly in promoting diversity and inclusion.

Additionally, some are involved in referee roles or administrative duties for clubs, whilst others focus on supporting community football initiatives and youth engagement.

A few alumni are working towards higher coaching qualifications or exploring roles in football medicine and physiotherapy.

Despite the diversity in roles, a common theme is their dedication to enhancing the footballing experience, whether through direct participation, coaching, or broader organisational involvement.





# LEARNINGS FROM ALL WLP PARTICIPANTS

## Future ambitions in football

The future ambitions of WLP alumni, especially within football, reflect a strong desire to make meaningful contributions to the sport at various levels. Their goals and desired impacts are outlined as follows:

- **Coaching and Player Development:** Many alumni aim to become coaches in professional football, working at academies or within community settings to develop the next generation of players.
- **Football Development and Administration:** Several alumni aspire to work for the FA or in football development roles, focusing on expanding opportunities for participation, especially in women's and girls' football.
- **Leadership and Management:** A significant number are targeting senior management roles within clubs, such as First Team Operations Manager, Academy Manager, or Head of Women's Football, with a focus on improving operations and driving strategic change.
- **Sports Performance and Analysis:** Alumni are interested in roles such as Performance Analysts or Physical Performance Coaches, particularly within elite women's football teams.
- **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion:** Some alumni are passionate about working in EDI roles within football, aiming to create more inclusive environments and ensure equal opportunities for all.
- **Event Management and Operations:** There is a desire among alumni to work in sports event operations, with ambitions to contribute to large-scale events like the EUROs and create lasting legacies through sport.
- **Sports Medicine and Physiotherapy:** Alumni are also looking to pursue careers in sports medicine, with goals to become team doctors or physios, particularly in women's football, and to research women's health in sport.
- **Academia and Research:** A few alumni wish to enter academia, focusing on sports research, nutrition, or psychology, and to apply their findings to improve sports performance and athlete well-being.
- **Entrepreneurship and Consultancy:** Some aspire to start their own businesses, such as injury clinics, or youth development programmes, while others aim to consult for NGBs or sports organisations.
- **Community and Outreach:** Alumni are committed to using football as a tool for social change, aiming to work in roles that make the sport more accessible and inclusive, especially for under-represented groups.
- **Content Creation and Media:** A number of alumni are interested in full-time roles as content creators for football clubs, particularly in the WSL, to help grow the visibility and engagement of women's football.

These ambitions highlight the alumni's dedication to not only advancing their careers but also to positively impacting the game at all levels in a diverse range of roles.



# ALUMNI REFLECTIONS ON THE PROGRAMME

This section of the report will look to showcase the reflections of WLP alumni on different elements of the Women's Leadership Programme.

## WLP Favourite Moments

The favourite moments shared by the participants of the WLP programme can be grouped into the following themes:

### Building Connections and Networking

A significant theme was the joy of meeting new people, forming lasting friendships, and building a strong network. Participants cherished the opportunity to connect with others who shared their passion for football and leadership.

#### Quotes

- *"Developing a long-lasting network of peers and role models."*
- *"Meeting everyone and learning everyone's story."*
- *"Meeting new people and staff members from all different backgrounds from all over the country."*
- *"The togetherness you find with yourself and other like-minded women."*

### Residential Experiences

Many participants highlighted the residential as their favourite moments, particularly the first one. These experiences were marked by personal growth, bonding with others, and a sense of being part of something impactful.

#### Quotes

- *"The first residential—probably my favourite as I left feeling a real buzz and excitement for the year ahead."*
- *"Residential 1— the most I've ever grown in the shortest amount of time."*



# ALUMNI REFLECTIONS ON THE PROGRAMME

## WLP Favourite Moments

### Teamwork and Collaborative Tasks

Working on group tasks and projects was another favourite, where participants enjoyed the collaboration, the challenge of high-pressure environments, and the opportunity to apply what they learnt.

### Quotes

- *"I really enjoyed the tasks we received. Working with others who are passionate about the same things and curating projects in a high-pressure environment was intense but very enjoyable."*
- *"I loved having the practical experience of a small project to implement the skills learned whilst working in a group."*
- *"I loved the group tasks that we had to present to people who work in the industry."*

### Inspiring Opportunities to Network

Listening to inspiring guest speakers and engaging in conversations in the networking sessions were memorable experiences that left a lasting impact on the participants.

### Quotes

- *"So many to choose from! The first residential and realising you were part of something so impactful or my conversations with staff about my career aspirations and personal development."*
- *"Networking on the third residential event. I had gained confidence by this point and managed to talk to nearly everyone."*

These themes illustrate the rich, multifaceted experiences of the WLP participants, combining personal growth, connection with others, and the joy of shared experiences.



# ALUMNI REFLECTIONS ON THE PROGRAMME

## Advice WLP alumni would share with prospective applicants

The WLP alumni overwhelmingly encouraged prospective applicants to apply for the programme, highlighting its transformative impact and the unique opportunities it offers. Here's a summary of their advice:

### Take the Leap

- *"Take the leap and apply—it will truly change you for the better."*
- *"Just go for it, it will change your perspective on life and equip you with skills that will benefit you for life."*
- *"Apply right now, you won't regret it! Become comfortable in uncomfortable situations as it will only help you grow & develop!"*

### Personal and Professional Growth

- *"It's an opportunity for self-development like no other."*
- *"This programme will change your life in the most positive way!"*
- *"It's a once in a lifetime opportunity that you will not regret. WLP asks for such a small chunk of your time in exchange for lifelong skills."*

### Networking and Connections

- *"You will leave the programme feeling more inspired and empowered than ever to achieve your goals, whilst having met like-minded people and becoming a part of a really special network."*
- *"Do it—you meet like-minded people, you get pushed outside your comfort zone, and you build so many skills."*

### Embrace the Challenge

- *"Grasp the opportunity with both hands and go in with an open mind."*
- *"Apply for WLP if you are ready to put your development first."*
- *"Go for it! Be a yes person!"*

In essence, the alumni strongly recommend applying to WLP, emphasising that it's a unique, life-changing experience that offers both personal growth and professional opportunities.

# ALUMNI REFLECTIONS ON THE PROGRAMME

## The personal impact of WLP

The FA Women's Leadership Programme (WLP) has been described by its alumni as nothing short of life-changing. It has had a profound impact on their personal development, transforming participants in ways they never imagined possible.

### Confidence and Self-Belief

For many, WLP has been a catalyst for immense growth in self-confidence and self-belief. One alumna shared, *"It's made me so much more confident, with a lot more self-belief, which is something I've always struggled with."* Another reflected, *"Before completing WLP, I never would have had the confidence to even apply for the roles that I have done since."* The programme empowered participants to embrace new challenges and believe in their potential, with one stating, *"It gave me a great sense of self-belief and encouragement that I can achieve anything I put my mind to."*



### Networking and Career Advancement

WLP opened doors to new career opportunities and fostered invaluable connections within the football industry. Alumni praised the programme for enhancing their networking skills and broadening their professional horizons. *"It massively increased my confidence and allowed me to see the wide range of jobs available in sports,"* one participant noted. Others highlighted how the programme introduced them to roles and people they never knew existed, helping them to establish a strong network that continues to support them beyond the programme. *"The connections I made were amazing, and the programme allowed me to network with people I never thought I'd get the chance to,"* another shared.

# ALUMNI REFLECTIONS ON THE PROGRAMME

## The personal impact of WLP

### Resilience and Personal Growth

The journey through WLP is described as both challenging and rewarding, pushing participants out of their comfort zones and encouraging deep self-reflection. *“It taught me the importance of stepping outside my comfort zone, which I now adopt in many situations,”* one participant shared. The programme also instilled resilience, with another participant recalling, *“WLP has helped me develop resilience and improved my ability to take on feedback. It gave me the skills and confidence to change my life for the better.”* This resilience has empowered alumni to overcome setbacks and continue pursuing their goals with renewed determination.

### A Life-Changing Experience

The impact of WLP is summed up in the words of one participant: *“Life-changing. It opened doors for me that I didn’t know existed. The level of personal support was like nothing I had experienced before. It’s exactly what young people need to believe in themselves and realise that anything is possible.”* Another echoed this sentiment, saying, *“It’s impacted me more than I thought possible. A truly one-of-a-kind experience, and I’m forever grateful.”*

### Empowerment and Inspiration

Being part of WLP has left alumni feeling empowered, motivated, and ready to take their next roles and opportunities. *“I feel empowered, motivated, and have a clear vision for what I want to do next,”* one participant expressed. The programme’s focus on leadership, self-reflection, and personal development has inspired participants to step into their potential. *“WLP has made me more confident, resilient, and reflective, and helped me make connections that will last,”* another participant shared, encapsulating the transformative power of the programme.

In short, the FA Women’s Leadership Programme is not just a programme—it’s a *“life-changing”* journey that equips women with the tools, confidence, and network to thrive both personally and professionally in the football industry.

# ALUMNI REFLECTIONS ON THE PROGRAMME

## The professional impact of WLP on alumni career journeys

WLP has had a profound impact on the career journeys of its alumni. For some, it has been *"instrumental in making [them] aware of opportunities to work within football and equipped [them] with the skills to be successful in applying for roles."* Others have found that the programme gave them the confidence *"to seek advanced roles"* and believe in themselves to *"apply for jobs that before the programme [they] would never have applied for."*

Alumni describe the experience as a *"kick start"* that gave them the direction and confidence needed to succeed: *"It allowed me to go straight into a national role in football post-graduating university."* The connections made during WLP have had lasting effects, as one participant noted, *"I'm still seeing the connections I made on WLP have an impact on my current role within football."*

For many, WLP was not just a programme but a transformative experience that *"opened doors and started conversations with prospective employers,"* helping them *"believe in [themselves] when applying for different roles in the footballing industry."* As one participant summed up, *"WLP was crucial in building a network who have supported me to fulfil my career ambitions and continue to do so."*



# 2023/24 COHORT (5) REFLECTIONS

Words the participants used to describe their WLP experience

Inspiring

Empowering

Challenging

Insightful

Reflective

Motivating

Powerful

Eye-opening

Vulnerability

Community

Therapeutic

Exciting

Life-changing

Formative

Rewarding

Educational

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14 out of the 15 Cohort 5 participants surveyed are clear on the future opportunities in football they would like to be a part of.



# 2023/24 COHORT (5) REFLECTIONS

## Learning WLP participants gained about themselves through the programme

# 1

### Confidence and self-belief

Many participants discovered that they are more capable and resilient than they initially believed. They learned to trust in their abilities and to back themselves in challenging situations.

# 2

### Stepping outside of your comfort zone

The programme encouraged participants to push beyond their comfort zones, leading to personal growth and a readiness to embrace new challenges and opportunities.

# 3

### Builds self-awareness

Participants gained a deeper understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. This self-awareness helped them identify where they could grow both personally and professionally.

# 4

### Value of vulnerability

The programme highlighted the importance of being vulnerable, allowing participants to share experiences and challenges without fear of judgement, leading to personal growth.

# 5

### Effective communication and delegation

Participants recognised the importance of clear communication, especially in leadership roles, and the need to delegate tasks effectively while maintaining strong relationships.

# 6

### Importance of reflection

Through reflection tasks, participants learnt to address their tendencies, such as people-pleasing or self-doubt, and to develop strategies for personal and professional improvement.



# 2023/24 COHORT (5) REFLECTIONS

## The importance of programmes like WLP...

Cohort 5 of the Women's Leadership Programme (WLP) strongly believes that the programme is crucial within the football industry for several reasons:



### Empowering Women

The programme helps break down barriers related to self-belief and lack of awareness about opportunities in the industry.



### Skill Development

WLP provides participants with unique skills and real-life scenarios that are hard to find elsewhere. This practical experience is vital for thriving in the competitive sports industry and having examples to discuss within job interviews.



### Networking Opportunities

The programme connects participants with a diverse range of professionals and peers, creating lifelong networks that support career growth and development.



### Safe Space for Growth

WLP offers a safe environment where participants can make mistakes, reflect, and grow.



### Community and Support

The sense of community among like-minded peers fosters a supportive environment where participants feel motivated and inspired to achieve their goals.



### Career Preparation

Participants feel better prepared for their future careers in football from completing WLP, gaining the confidence to pursue roles that once seemed out of reach to them.

# 2023/24 COHORT (5) REFLECTIONS

## Cohort 5 Summary of Reflections

### Unexpected and Transformative Experience



Chelsea

*"WLP was full of surprises and I actually think that was good preparation for us going into the industry. We had to rise to the challenge each time."*

*"I don't think anything I can say, will actually do the programme justice in how incredible it has been. I generally feel it's been life-changing in the most positive way."*



Megan

### Networking and Future Connections



Maddy

*"I can see how the network we've made from WLP will be so important to us in the future... these are the people I will likely go to for advice in the industry."*

*"It's really helped with my network, I know I can reach out to any of the staff that supported the programme in the future and they would likely help me."*



Lydia

### Self-Reflection and Personal Growth



Ella

*"Moving forward I will definitely take time to reflect... it helps you to rationalise things and is a great habit to build in as I enter a new role."*

# 2023/24 COHORT (5) REFLECTIONS

## Cohort 5 Summary of Reflections

### Self-Reflection and Personal Growth

*"The self-reflection aspect of WLP was a big learning for me, and something I am still working on now."*



Pelumi

### Opening Career Opportunities



Shelley

*"WLP has helped me see that there are so many different job roles in football... so it's really opened my eyes."*

*"WLP has actually given me an avenue to see myself working in football in the future, I never really saw myself being able to get to that point before."*



Megan

### Confidence and Leadership Development



Maddy

*"My confidence levels have shot up massively by being on this programme, I don't think I would have got my job offer if it wasn't for WLP."*

*"I am now more confident in myself, and more reassured that it's okay to get things wrong and you don't have to be an expert on something to be able to contribute."*



Beth

# WLP ALUMNI STORIES

## Career Journeys of WLP alumni

Below is a series of case studies that showcase the impact of the programme and the journey of previous WLP participants who are now in the early stages of their careers.

*“I think WLP really puts you ahead in the company you end up working in.”*



**Name:** Leigh Gell

**WLP Cohort:** Cohort 1 - 2019/20

**Current Role:** Women and Girls Football Development Officer at Manchester FA.

**Impact of WLP:** “We all just felt like young students that are on this opportunity where we want to learn, and want to progress. But, what I didn't think about was that these people are going to be my colleagues in the game.”

“WLP provided the most professional support that I could have been given to get into a role, I was applying for roles in COVID which was a really difficult time, not many job opportunities, and fiercely competitive. The time that we'd spent going through job descriptions, how to make sure our application and our CV stood out, I think was invaluable for me being able to work in this industry.”

*“For me, WLP was my life changing moment, as a result, I took lots of positive steps into the world of football, and youth leadership. I know this programme changed my life, and I'll always be grateful for WLP”.*

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# WLP ALUMNI STORIES

## Career Journeys of WLP alumni

*The programme helped me to define my goals, supported me to develop my network and build my confidence."*

**Name:** Ellie Reid

**WLP Cohort:** Cohort 1 - 2019/20

**Current Role:** Youth & Workforce Development Manager - London Youth Games

**Impact of WLP:** "Post programme it's great to still feel a part of the WLP network which is really special, even if you weren't on the same year of the programme as someone else, you still have plenty to connect with them over particularly the niche elements of the programme that no one else would know unless you have been a part of it."

"During my job search in COVID trying to enter the football industry, there were a few times when I was going to give up, but with the support of the WLP staff, connecting me in with new people, supporting me to develop my CV, it gave me the confidence to keep going and eventually secure that first position."

*"From WLP I found out about the rest of the FA Youth Leadership ecosystem which led me to being on Berks & Bucks Youth Council and then the FA National Youth Council, but that all stemmed from WLP."*

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*"I still reflect back and use the notes, advice and feedback I received on WLP in my day-to-day work."*

**Name:** Tiara Hemans

**WLP Cohort:** Cohort 2 - 2020/21

**Current Role:** Head of Strategy at Tel Group

Tiara went on to join the FA National Youth Council for 2 years, including a year as Vice Chair of the team, and has now returned to WLP as an accelerator for the programme.

**Impact of WLP:** "I think it's probably had one of the biggest impacts in terms of my level of confidence and just my level of self awareness and how self assured I have felt since completing the programme. That impact has carried me forward with the different parts of my personal and professional life since."

# WLP ALUMNI STORIES

## Career Journeys of WLP alumni

*"WLP was the perfect transition programme for me between university and working within the industry."*



**Name:** Hannah Humphreys

**WLP Cohort:** Cohort 2 - 2020/21

**Current Role:** Female Pathway Development Officer at Hampshire FA

**Impact of WLP:** "It was the first programme I've been on that felt really real and a lot more hard hitting and kind of forced me to think about the standards and expectations in a workplace outside of university, and that is exactly what I needed at the time."

"The staff on the programme are brilliant, it is a safe space to get things wrong or not be sure what the answer is. They know the right times to challenge you and they know the right times to support and give you that time to try and figure things out for yourself."

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*"I think it gave me confidence, more than anything, a new belief in myself and this is something I didn't really have, and I didn't really think you could learn that before WLP."*



**Name:** Izzy Coppel

**WLP Cohort:** Cohort 3 - 2021/22

**Current Role:** Program Manager at Football Victoria

**Impact of WLP:** "On WLP it was the first time I had to give constructive criticism to someone directly, at university previously, this was mainly done via message or email, but this is something I have really taken with me. I've really redirected how I think about this in the sense that me sharing this feedback shows them that I am really serious about them and ultimately I care."

"Being in a new role for me, it tests me all the time, but WLP really taught me that sometimes being uncomfortable wasn't necessarily always a bad thing, and I can see how much I am learning from pushing myself out of my comfort zone."

# WLP ALUMNI STORIES

## Career Journeys of WLP alumni



*"I'd definitely say this opportunity has been life shifting, it shifted my perspective of myself, and of the football industry into being something that was an actual potential career for me long-term."*

**Name:** Charlotte Akester

**WLP Cohort:** Cohort 3 - 2021/22

**Current Role:** Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator - Inspire Education Group.

Charlotte was on FA National Youth Council 2022-24 with a year as Vice Chair of the team.

**Impact of WLP:** "WLP completely shifted the direction I was going in my career in a positive way, I learnt more about what roles and opportunities football has to offer."

"I'll always be a big advocate for the programme, I'm always encouraging people to apply, because I feel like it opens up a perspective to football you wouldn't have had before, and I don't know where else you would get this from."

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*"I really do think if I hadn't done WLP, I probably wouldn't have applied for my job or other roles in football."*



**Name:** Ellie Maguire

**WLP Cohort:** Cohort 3 - 2021/22

**Current Role:** Graduate Programme at City Football Group

**Impact of WLP:** "I would say, for anyone that's aspiring to have a career within sports or football, WLP is an absolutely invaluable experience. It will make you believe that your aspirations are possible, you'll walk away believing in yourself and surrounded by a great network of supportive people who truly want the best for you."

"I think WLP is really important and especially the fact that it's just for women, because in my office now working in football, it's like 70% Men 30% women, so, to have that network of women behind you it gives a bit of a boost."

# WLP ALUMNI STORIES

## Career Journeys of WLP alumni



*"I think I've become more confident from WLP, I feel more than comfortable to walk into a room and, and introduce myself and make that first move following the networking experience we gained on the programme."*

**Name:** Jess Screen

**WLP Cohort:** Cohort 4 - 2022/23

**Current Role:** Women's Talent Pathway Operations & Impact Officer at The FA

**Impact of WLP:** "I think WLP has helped accelerate both my personal and professional development by creating opportunities for us to develop our strengths, but also highlight our development areas sooner so I have greater self-awareness. The reality is, without WLP, in a few years time I could be in a leadership position and I'd be making some of those mistakes and they'd be a lot more detrimental to my career, to my reputation or to the people I'm working with. I think that the platform to make mistakes early and learn from them, obviously should you choose to, is really beneficial, it accelerates your growth whilst in a safe space."

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*"I genuinely think this programme is one of the best things I've ever done."*



**Name:** Alice Parker

**WLP Cohort:** Cohort 4 - 2022/23

**Current Role:** Degree Mentor at Norwich City Community Sports Foundation

**Impact of WLP:** "A lot of the key messages I took from the programme, I have now passed on many of these to my students in the first year of their degree."

"WLP creates such a powerful network from working together in a professional capacity but also with the foundation of a friendship there which was built through the residentials."

"When applying for my current role, having been on WLP meant I had many examples, experiences and learnings I could share in my interview which was really helpful."



# WLP ALUMNI STORIES

## Career Journeys of WLP alumni

*"Without WLP, I wouldn't have had the confidence to apply for the opportunities and roles that I have now secured and made the most of, that just wouldn't have happened."*



**Name:** Alice McDonagh

**WLP Cohort:** Cohort 4 - 2022/23

**Current Role:** Football in the Community Coach at Aston Villa  
Alice was also on FA Regional Youth Network and the FA Leadership Academy Delivery Team.

**Impact of WLP:** "I think the positive impact WLP has had on me has been incredible. I think, personally I've developed so much, like it's kind of insane how much I've changed as a person. Compared to the start of the programme to now, I think you wouldn't have guessed that I would have been one of the participants to continue within football the way I have."

"I'm a very big advocate for the programme, I wouldn't be where I am now, physically or mentally, and when I say physically I refer to the opportunities and other programmes I have been able to access in football that WLP opened my eyes to, whereas mentally, I wouldn't have had the confidence to put myself out there to make the most of those."

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*"WLP provided a safe space that I'd never really had before."*



**Name:** Ellen Williams

**WLP Cohort:** Cohort 4 - 2022/23

**Current Role:** Football Services Officer at Manchester FA

**Impact of WLP:** "Before WLP my view of leadership was incredibly different, a leader was someone who was super task oriented and achieved their goals, but now I think there has to be an important balance around how you are with people, and you don't have to be the loudest in the room to be the best leader."

"WLP was the start of my football career, it really gave me the platform to take on future opportunities and seen my personal and professional development go from strength to strength."

"WLP helped me to understand my passion and elevated me to a new level."

# WLP IMPACT ON ACCELERATORS

The Learning and Development Accelerators on the WLP play a pivotal role as coaches and mentors, guiding participants through the programme with tailored feedback and support. Their primary focus is on empowering the participants to grow in confidence and leadership. However, this process is reciprocal, as accelerators also engage in continuous learning, gaining insights and developing alongside participants, which enhances their own professional and personal growth.

## Accelerator Feedback

### Personal and Professional Growth

The accelerators noted significant personal development through their roles, particularly allowing the development of leadership skills for future management roles.



Amy

*"I've developed through the programme as much as the participants do by being an accelerator."*

*"WLP made me walk away and really think about what I want to achieve and where I want to get to."*

*"I genuinely don't think I would be in my job now without having been an accelerator on this programme."*

### Motivation and Inspiration

Several accelerators noted that the programme reignited their passion for their work and reminded them of their purpose.



Kirsty

*"I go back home and to work buzzing from these residentials, it's really re-ignited a fire within me."*

*"It's a great programme to be a part of and helped me to re-discover my why."*



Sarah

# WLP IMPACT ON ACCELERATORS

## Accelerator Feedback

### Transferable skills

The accelerators noted significant skill development through the WLP programme, showcasing the layered learning process.



Nayim

*"There are a lot of skills developed as an accelerator that are really transferable to professional roles."*

*"This was a great opportunity to develop the skills I needed that I could transfer to my professional role in order to progress."*



Cissy

## Witnessing the development of the participants



Rafe

*"You take people from doing something that would have been nearly in their panic zone in residential 1, to residential 3 it's in the stretch zone, but it's something they really want to do and enjoy."*

*"I've seen the participants really grow in self belief during WLP, I feel they leave the programme holding their heads a little bit higher than they came, I think that's a major impact that this programme has."*



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Through these reflections, it's clear that WLP not only empowers participants but also profoundly impacts the accelerators, helping them grow, reflect, and enhance their leadership and professional skills.

# CONCLUSION

## Summarising the Impact of the Women's Leadership Programme

The Women's Leadership Programme (WLP) has made a profound impact on its participants across the five cohorts to date, fostering personal and professional growth, enhancing self-confidence, and creating lasting networks within the football industry. Participants have reported significant increases in their self-belief, clarity in career aspirations, and awareness of various roles within the football sector. Many have discovered new pathways and developed essential skills that empower them to navigate their careers with confidence and purpose moving forward.

The programme has not only benefited participants but has also provided invaluable experiences for the learning and development accelerators involved. They have seen their own growth mirrored in the participants, with many expressing renewed passion for their work and a deeper understanding of their leadership potential. The collaborative environment fostered by the training days and feedback sessions has created a strong sense of community, enabling both participants and accelerators to thrive in the environment created during WLP.

Overall, WLP has proven to be a vital initiative in supporting women's leadership in football, breaking down barriers, and empowering graduating university students to secure entry level roles in the game.

As one participant eloquently stated,

*“WLP hasn't just changed my own life, but it could change generations of lives to come in the future based on the collective impact this network of women will have on the game.”*





# THANK YOU

CREAS Sports Consulting LTD. would like to thank everyone who participated in the impact reporting of The FA and BUCS Women's Leadership Programme



If you have any further questions about the report, please reach out to Emma Clarke at [emma.clarke@creas.co.uk](mailto:emma.clarke@creas.co.uk)