



Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport

Baroness Twycross
Minister for Gambling
1st Floor
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

E: enquiries@dcms.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/dcms

19 December 2024

Lord Mann
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

INT2024/10328/DC

Dear John,

I am writing to follow up on the question you raised during the fourth Committee Stage debate on the 11th December of the Football Governance Bill related to Solihull Moors Women's Team being unable to access a facility that they have been given grants by the Football Foundation to use. I have placed a copy of this letter in the library of both Houses.

Firstly, I would like to thank you for raising this important issue and extend my sympathies to Solihull Moors Women's Football Team. We are dedicated to supporting women's sport. We should do all we can to ensure women's sport is treated equally to men's at all levels and we urge Solihull Moors to ensure the women's team meets appropriate minimum standards for player welfare, including suitable equipment, pitch access and transport for away fixtures.

You asked whether the Regulator would step in if a club is unable to play on certain pitches, and whether it would take action to ensure repayment of any grant money from the Football Foundation. I can confirm that this would fall outside the remit of the Regulator. The process of recouping costs is only to be used as a last resort, and facilities and their users are encouraged to work with local stakeholders (such as the local council and their appropriate FA representative). Should recouping be required, this would be carried out by the Football Foundation, rather than the Regulator.

I am aware that the Chief Executive Officer of the Football Foundation has reached out to you on the specifics of the Solihull Moors issue, and I hope that this can provide some further clarity and resolution.

We wholeheartedly agree that access to facilities used by women and girls should be improved across all levels of football. The Football Foundation published a review of its provision for women and girls in October and as a result has committed to implementing recommendations from that review to ensure new minimum standards for women and girls at funded sites. This includes guaranteeing a share of priority slots to women's and girls' teams, setting up a new small grants programme specifically targeted at creating female-friendly facilities off the pitch, and ensuring refreshed Local Football Facility Plans reflect the growth in women and girls' football.



Karen Carney's Review of Women's Football which published its report on 13 July 2023 supports the continued growth and development of women's and girls' football. The Government is working closely with stakeholders to ensure progress regarding the recommendations made by the Carney Review, including developing access to facilities for women and girls.

Regarding the Regulator, as you are aware, the Women's game will not be initially in scope. The Government believes that it should only intervene with statutory regulation where there has been a clear market failure which the market cannot resolve itself. Whereas, I am confident that the industry authorities governing the women's game will be able to tackle many of the problems faced by women's clubs, including through their own rules for women's clubs with affiliated men's teams. Those industry authorities deserve the time, space, and opportunity to do so.

Where possible, the Regulator would look to cooperate with women's game authorities and share best practice to ensure any ways of working or regulating football clubs can be shared across the sector.

I thank you again for raising this important issue, and I hope my response has given some clarity on this.

With best wishes,



Baroness Twycross
Minister for Gambling