

# OUR WALES: FOR HER EIN CYMRU: AMDANI HI



THE FAW WOMEN AND GIRLS' FOOTBALL STRATEGY 2021-2026



# CONTENTS

Introduction	2
The First Half	3
Key Targets	5
Our Vision	6
Our Mission	7
Enablers	8
Our Strategic Objectives	9

# INTRODUCTION

The FAW's new vision and strategic plan, Our Wales maps out the path ahead for Welsh football to reach its true potential. We're proud to share our objectives and targets for Women and Girls' football which will allow us to grow faster and stronger, and give our game the platform it deserves.

Women's football is the fastest growing sport across Europe and the biggest area of growth in Welsh football. Over the past four years, we've seen a +50% increase in participation with over 11,000 registered players. Our ambitious goal is to get 20,000 women and girls playing by 2026. We must build the right support structures, playing opportunities and visibility to attract new women and girls to the game while also retaining them as lifelong participants, fans, ambassadors and volunteers.

In our commitment to developing women's football in Wales, we will double our investment. We will provide a positive, person-centered and inclusive experience for women and girls from all backgrounds and skill levels. And for this it's key to develop a clear, sustainable pathway with a wide range of footballing opportunities based on player needs and motivations.

Along with our valued partners, we're responsible for and committed to making increased visibility and media coverage a key priority for the women's game. From our fun and friendly introduction to football, Huddle, to our Cymru national team, we aspire to connect all levels of the game and inspire future generations through utilising the platform of our household names, such as Jess Fishlock and Sophie Ingle.

The qualification of the Women's national team to a major tournament would be a catalyst for great growth in the women's game in Wales, and through an improved support structure and player agreement, we aspire to give them the best possible chance of success.

**Our commitment: to doubling the women's game.**

- Double the participation
- Double the fanbase
- Double the investment



Steve Williams,  
FAW President





Women's Football has seen a 50% increase in participation in the last 4 years and is now Wales' number one team sport for Women and Girls.

# THE FIRST HALF

Over the last few years, female football has grown in a significant way. These are some highlights of the current state of play.

## Participation

- No.1 Teams Sport for Women and Girls in Wales, with over 11,000 registered players
- Over 50% increase in 4 years
- Over 50 Huddle providers
- Over 5,000 NEW female players since COVID-19

## Visibility and Awareness

- 1,800 average attendance of Cymru matches across Wales
- Partnered with BBC and S4C for Cymru and Adran Leagues
- Launched our women's football brand identity, #BeFootball

## National Teams

- Reached our highest FIFA ranking, 29th in 2018
- Appointed Gemma Grainger as first full-time Women's National Team Manager







# THE FIRST HALF

## Leagues and Competitions

- Introduced club licensing to Tier 1 and Tier 2
- Rebranded Adran Leagues, 3rd country across Europe to remove the word 'women'
- Secured multi-year commercial partnership for Adran Leagues

## Workforce

- Cheryl Foster promoted to FIFA elite referee
- 9 female UEFA A licence coaches
- 6 A licence coaches in the Adran Premier
- 2,000 female volunteers

And this is only the first half. While we celebrate these success stories and all the progress to date, we must embrace the momentum to further develop and grow women's football, making sure it realises its potential.

Cheryl Foster is Wales' highest ranked match official having been promoted to FIFA Elite Referee status. Foster will officiate Europe's top matches in the UEFA Women's Champions League.



# KEY TARGETS

We're committed to doubling the women's game:

## DOUBLE THE PARTICIPATION

Reaching 20,000 registered women and girls

## DOUBLE THE FANBASE

Increasing attendance and coverage of national team and domestic games, with an average of 3,600 attendants at Cymru matches

## DOUBLE THE INVESTMENT

Increasing the investment in our sport to accomplish all these targets

## CYMRU ON THE WORLD STAGE

Qualifying for a first major tournament

## REPRESENTATION

Achieving gender parity of 40% on the FAW board





# OUR VISION

Inspire confidence in women & girls to be their best self.





# OUR MISSION

Create the best environment, support structures and opportunities to accelerate the growth of women's football to make it reach its full potential.





# ENABLERS

The following are the key factors that will allow us to accelerate growth and give women's football the platform required to reach its full potential.

## INVESTMENT

We will double our investment into women's football and develop a commercial strategy to capitalize on recent growth and momentum to increase income

## VOICE AND REPRESENTATION

Evolve the FAW to be representative of a diverse, inclusive and accessible game

## DATA AND INSIGHTS

Embracing data and insights to make informed decisions, including listening to women and girls across the sport

## PARTNERSHIPS

Collaborating with our partners to develop and grow the women's game in Wales

## FACILITIES

Developing accessible and inclusive high-quality facilities that improve the experience and meet the needs and demands of the female game





# OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES





**VISIBILITY &  
AWARENESS**



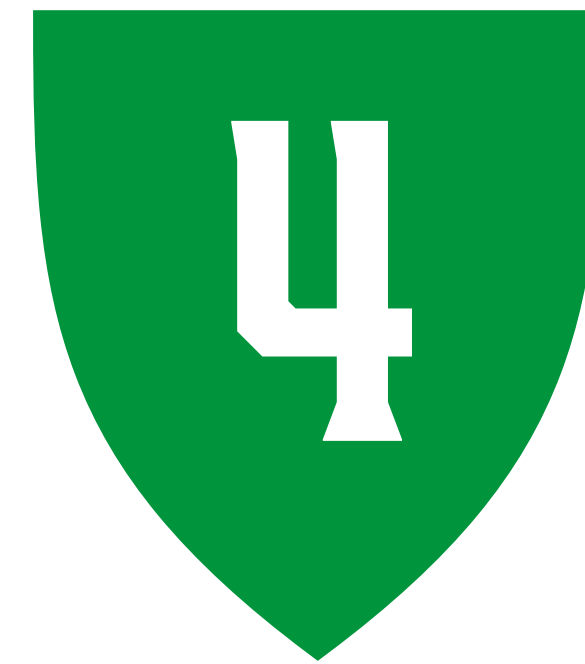
**LEAGUES &  
COMPETITIONS**



**PARTICIPATION**



**PLAYER DEVELOPMENT  
& NATIONAL TEAM**



**WORKFORCE**







# 1 VISIBILITY & AWARENESS

Increasing visibility, challenging perceptions, and raising the profile of Women's football

## OUR GOALS

### Awareness and Visibility

- Developing an impactful match promotion plan for Cymru matches and use national team profile as a hook to drive awareness of participation opportunities
- Increasing the media coverage, including broadcast partnerships, for Cymru Women's National Team and domestic football
- Inspiring teenage girls to aspire to a future in football thanks to the #BeFootball campaign

### Audience Engagement

- Encouraging young girls to play football for the first time through communicating the life skills and benefits to their parents, teachers and peers
- Engaging and retaining our teenage audience through the creation of relevant and relatable content
- Challenging perceptions and boosting Welsh pride through national team success and identity

### Marketing and Messaging

- Inspiring confidence in girls through impactful marketing and PR campaigns
- Promoting the unique selling points of the women's game and celebrate the differences and be true to our core women's football brand values: relatable role models, positive, progressive, inspiring, inclusive and accessible
- Developing a strong brand identity for the women and girls' game in Wales





# 2 LEAGUES & COMPETITIONS

Developing the national league and creating a clear and sustainable domestic pyramid

## OUR GOALS

### League Development

- Developing a clear and sustainable pyramid structure with set criteria and clear rules and regulations for each tier
- Using the Adran Leagues as a platform for achieving potential including nurturing future international players
- Developing the U19s Development League to address drop-off and gap in provision
- Building the Adran Leagues brand and increasing the commercial investment and media coverage of the domestic game

### Sustainable Clubs

- Further developing club licensing in line with UEFA's UWCL licence requirements to improve standards on and off the pitch and professionalise the clubs within the Adran Leagues
- Deliver a holistic club development programme that supports Tier 1 and Tier 2 clubs in meeting licence criteria on and off the field
- Creating stronger and sustainable clubs through effective financial and business development services that improves the structures, practices and decision-making across all levels of the pyramid







# 3 PARTICIPATION

Developing a flexible and appealing playing offer adapted to the needs and motivations of women and girls

## OUR GOALS

- Understanding the needs and desires of women and girls in football through good research and insight to improve the appeal of our sport with new and alternative formats of the game
- Creating more opportunities for women and girls to play in informal, flexible environments such as community and education settings
- Increasing engagement and offering positive environments where women and girls can build confidence, and develop life skills and an active lifestyle
- Developing and delivering integrated and sustainable programmes in education to give every girl the opportunity to be involved in football and improve gender participation balance
- Developing fit for purpose facilities where female players' needs are catered for to ensure they feel safe, included and like they belong
- Developing a network of high-quality clubs that supports women and girls throughout their football journey and provides them with a complete sporting pathway, including a clear recruitment and retention plan
- Supporting clubs, leagues and partner organisations in creating participant-centred environments based on the needs and motivations of female players
- Signposting women and girls to playing opportunities thanks to effective marketing and communications plans
- Develop a network of micro-influencers and ambassadors from the women's game to drive awareness of participation programmes





# PLAYER DEVELOPMENT & NATIONAL TEAMS

Supporting the success of the national team by developing an effective player pathway and international schedule

## OUR GOALS

- Undertaking a full review of the elite female player pathway and implementing a fit-for-purpose structure to support players to reach their potential and seamlessly transition through the various stages of the pathway
- Cymru to qualify for a major tournament thanks to a more competitive and effective elite player pathway, support service and international schedule
- Providing relevant and appropriate competition and a minimum of 8 international fixtures for Cymru youth teams through an annual fixture schedule which best prepares players for senior international football
- Developing a more robust female talent development programme by integrating the FAW Trust Girls' Academy into the licensed academies' competition, and developing the right exit strategies into women's domestic game
- Developing an effective player monitoring and talent identification strategy to support national team success
- Supporting every elite female player in Wales to reach their full potential through access to a high-quality, person-centred training programme and performance support
- Supporting youth international development through a competitive domestic structure
- Delivering an improved women's national team player agreement with clear investment principles and a progressive commitment to achieve equity as an enabler for equality





# **WORKFORCE**

Increasing the visibility of women working in football and supporting them to fulfill their potential on and off the field

## **OUR GOALS**

- Increasing female representation in decision-making positions at the FAW through a female mentoring programme and positive action
- Integrating women's football activities within the operations of all departments at The FAW, and maintaining clear responsibilities for all aspects of the game
- Improving our coach development programme to support the progression of elite coaches within domestic and international structures
- Increasing the number of female match officials and coaches and improving retention through an effective training and development programme, including female-only courses and CPD opportunities
- Supporting and developing our female game workforce by providing specific CPD support and courses tailored around the needs of female players
- Promoting opportunities through the development of effective communications and recruitment plans





“

We've seen significant growth across the female game in recent years in terms of participation numbers and increased visibility. It's time to build on that momentum and realise the potential of women's football.

Sophie Ingle,  
Cymru Captain

”



