

**ICEC**

Independent  
Commission for  
Equity in Cricket

# Public Responses to the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket's (ICEC) Call for Written Evidence

# Summary Report

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Authors: TONIC – Dr Amanda Carr,  
Maria Gallagher, Sanjidah Islam  
and Matthew Scott

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[www.tonic.org.uk](http://www.tonic.org.uk)

[engage@tonic.org.uk](mailto:engage@tonic.org.uk)

0800 188 4034

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# 1. Introduction

The Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC) was established in March 2021 by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) to evaluate the state of equity in cricket and to examine people’s experiences within the game.

The ICEC operates independently of the ECB in its work and aims to make evidence-led recommendations to the ECB to help cricket become a genuinely equitable and inclusive sport.

As part of their evidence gathering process, the ICEC ran a Call for Written Evidence which included specific questions relating to equity in cricket, with a focus on race, gender and class. The questions were grouped under five themes:

- Talent Pathway and Progression into professional cricket
- Culture
- Good Practice
- Complaints and Discipline (discrimination-related)
- Governance and Leadership

The Call for Written Evidence was open from 10th March 2022 to 20th April 2022 and was intended for anyone involved in cricket, at all levels, past and present, to participate in.

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## 1.1 Context

In the wake of global movements such as Black Lives Matter and #MeToo gaining momentum in recent years, organisations across the globe have been prompted to rethink their role in promoting equity. Both within the world of cricket and wider society, the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 was especially pivotal in sparking mass conversations and actions.

In cricket, long-standing racist structures and behaviour were brought to the fore as several individuals, both formerly and currently engaged in the sport, publicly opened up about their experiences of discrimination and racism. There have been many concerns, including allegations of racism and discrimination, raised about the game and how it is governed. There is also evidence of a lack of progression for Black and South Asian players across talent pathways, and of limited diversity across multiple aspects of the game – for instance within leadership, coaching and umpiring.

The ICEC independently sought and considered evidence on these matters, providing a confidential environment for those involved in cricket to share their lived experiences without fear of reprisal. Evidence submitted as part of this exercise, in addition to other evidence gathered by the ICEC, informed the ICEC’s recommendations to the ECB about how to improve equity in cricket.

## 2. Respondents

A total of 96 responses to the Call for Written Evidence were received via an online survey or by email. Responses came from a range of organisations and academics, as well as individuals who provided feedback reflecting their personal views and experiences.

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### 2.1 Organisational responses

49 responses were received from those representing organisations, comprised of:

- The ECB and ECB Member Organisations
  - ◆ 3 from the ECB, the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) and the National Counties Cricket Association (NCCA)
  - ◆ 10 from County Cricket Boards (CCB)
  - ◆ 18 from First-Class Cricket Counties (FCC)
- 14 from Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities
- 1 from a Local Cricket Club
- 3 from National Associations/Networks and Sport England

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### 2.2 Individual respondents

44 responses were received from individuals. These comprised parents or guardians of players or fans - some of whom were also involved in the game as amateur coaches or volunteers; players (recreational and County Age Group) - some of whom were also club volunteers; former professional players; staff members; and fans.

A further 3 responses were received from academics specialising in relevant research.

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### 2.3 Analysis by respondent type

This summary report is based on analysis of all responses received. Where differences were seen between the responses of different responder types, these are noted in the report. Where this is not noted, the broad messages from different responder types were considered to be similar.

# 3. Analysis Methods

The Call for Written Evidence asked a number of open-answer survey questions under the five overarching themes of interest.

Qualitative thematic analysis was conducted for all open questions under each of the five themes of interest addressed by the consultation. Quotations taken from responses are used throughout this report to illustrate key findings. These quotations have been anonymised but are shown by their respondent type.

## 3.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a simple and flexible form of qualitative analysis that is commonly used in social research<sup>1</sup>. This approach was chosen as it provides a way of summarising patterns in a large body of data, highlights similarities and differences across the data set, and can generate unanticipated insights. The thematic analysis comprised six steps:

- **Step 1:** The qualitative data is read in detail to become familiar with the text.
- **Step 2:** Initial codes (e.g., school approaches; cost; role models; facilities) are manually ascribed to the data, organising it into meaningful groups relevant to the consultation questions.
- **Step 3:** Codes that are conceptually related to one another are grouped together and identified as themes (e.g., curriculum and resourcing; facilities and expertise; connections to professional cricket).
- **Step 4:** Themes are reviewed to determine whether they are internally coherent (i.e., all data within each theme are conceptually linked) and distinct from each other.
- **Step 5:** The themes are then named, with the aim of capturing the essence of the data they comprise. This stage also involves the identification of subthemes, which help to provide structure to the analysis.
- **Step 6:** The results provide a narrative summary of the relationship between codes, subthemes and themes, including the use of quotes to illustrate the essence of each theme.

## 3.2 Response Formats

In addition to those responding to the online survey, 19 written responses were provided from organisations. These included governing bodies, associations and professional networks, FCCs, CCBs, and Sporting and Equality Organisations. These were analysed alongside the qualitative responses from the survey using the same coding framework described above.

## 3.3 Status of this report

This research report has been prepared at the request of the Chair and Commissioners of the ICEC. Any views expressed are those of the authors alone. Any findings arising from the research do not constitute findings or recommendations by the ICEC. Evidence gathered via this research is separate from but complementary to other evidence gathered by the ICEC. This report contains quotes from submissions to the Call for Written Evidence, which use the terminology of the person/organisation that submitted the evidence. Otherwise, the terminology in this report has been decided by the authors.

<sup>1</sup> Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2), pp. 77-101.

## 4. Summary of Key Themes

This section sets out a high-level summary of the main points raised in responses, arranged by the five themes in the Call for Written Evidence.



**Deep-seated belief in that, when you come from a Black and Asian heritage, it is much harder to climb the cricketing ladder.**

*Individual*



**For the poorer families with children at State Schools the availability of facilities and equipment, the ability to get to training sessions where there are good facilities and availability of a good, healthy diet is not always there. To encourage these young people to remain involved requires counties to allocate funds to help these individuals receive similar support to those from more affluent families.**

*FCC*



**Most private schools have excellent facilities and run thorough coaching and match play programmes. It's often the opposite in state schools. We can't escape the fact that good facilities cost a lot of money and require a lot of resources, skill and expertise to prepare and maintain.**

*CCB*

### Theme 1: Talent Pathway and Progression into professional cricket

Responses mentioned a lack of access to high quality cricket and progression from individuals who attend state schools. The dominant reason for this was said to be funding, which results in state schools lacking valuable resources. These were said to include specialist coaches, good quality equipment and good quality pitches. This lack of resources was felt to result in a reduced focus on sport in the state school curriculum and lack of connections to the professional game. A lack of equitable access was also mentioned with regards to individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds for reasons including a scarcity of diverse role models within cricket and the prevalence of a culture that historically supports and favours White cricketers and which deters individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds from engaging. In addition, it was highlighted that all communities from less affluent, urban areas experience additional barriers such as the means to get to training sessions and other sports facilities as well as the availability of a healthy diet.

Respondents across the board said that many of these barriers could be improved by encouraging greater collaboration and the sharing of resources between private and state schools. In addition, it was felt that targeting funding and scouting talent in non-traditional settings will encourage greater progression from individuals from state school, ethnic minority and less affluent backgrounds.



Cricketers from ethnic minority backgrounds feel they must be 'twice as good' to be equal to their white counterparts (as a result) many players have been lost due to racism, discriminatory practises, unfriendly and hostile environments.

*Individual*



All of these projects bring the sport to the communities in the areas they live. They do not require much travel or financial resource and therefore eliminate many of the barriers that many communities face when looking to get into Elite sport.

*FCC*



The approach taken to engage with underserved communities has been to work with partners to create facilities on their doorstep and then designing and delivering bespoke projects that people want to engage with.

*FCC*

## Theme 2: Culture

Most cricket organisations were keen to highlight the 'spirit' of cricket and its inclusive, social nature, which they said brings people from all backgrounds within the community together and makes a positive contribution that they felt should remain. However, most individuals felt there to be an elitist and exclusionary culture that exists within cricket that needs to be addressed. This impacts on feelings of belonging within the game, which many individual respondents stated were often determined by individuals' race, gender or class. This exclusionary culture was felt to be enforced through sexist and racist practices such as the use of casual racist slurs, toxic attitudes to masculinity, misogynistic and homophobic comments and actions, and a drinking culture. Individuals identified a toxic, 'laddish' culture of drinking that persists and has the result of alienating women, children and 'people of colour' due to religious or cultural beliefs. Respondents commented on how this culture is upheld due to the overly 'white' nature of the sport, resulting in a lack of diverse representation among cricket officials that does not reflect the diverse communities they serve. A culture of 'tradition' was also described as a reluctance to listen to complaints or change the current system which acts as a deterrent to minority groups.

## Theme 3: Good Practice

A common theme across responses involved praise for community-driven initiatives that aimed to dismantle the elitist culture in cricket and make it more accessible by removing barriers of cost, space and social class. In addition, organisations working to reduce racial inequality in cricket, such as the ACE Programme and the South Asian Cricket Academy, were commended for their commitment to encouraging greater participation and increasing opportunities for people from ethnic minorities. Respondents also described initiatives that aim to promote the inclusivity of women and girls in cricket. They discussed how these have been important in raising aspirations for young female cricketers, providing female role models, and challenging established gender norms. There was concern about the accessibility of these initiatives, as they are often delivered by clubs in suburban areas and, therefore, not available to those in more deprived urban locations.





Cricket must continue to champion the rights of people to feel included and call out discrimination or unfair treatment at all levels where evidence exists.

FCC



A lot of parents have stayed silent about raising unfair practices from some staff because many feel they do not want to 'mess up' the involvement or progression of their child.

Individual



Really listen to the voices within the game and ensure communication is consistent and robust. Urgently need to build trust and credibility and move away from the corporate approach which isn't relatable for most clubs. The ECB is currently too far removed from the realities of cricket beyond the governing body environment.

FCC



It's about putting diverse thinking at the heart of the game's decision making.

FCC

## Theme 4: Complaints and Discipline (discrimination-related)

A number of FCC and CCB respondents commended their clubs for having clear and trusted pathways to file complaints through and spoke about the value of having a designated club complaints officer or an independent complaints board to make the process easier. However, this was in stark contrast with numerous individual respondents who expressed a lack of confidence in the complaints system due to their complaints not being acted on or taken seriously by club officials, and highlighted the 'family-run' culture of cricket making the complaints process even more difficult – resulting in a lack of anonymity and confidentiality.

Individuals also commented on the feelings of fear and shame attached to making a complaint. This was due to fear of the complaint resulting in negative repercussions that would impact an individual's selection and progression opportunities and popularity within the club. Related to this, multiple respondents also commented on their experiences of sexism and misogyny when reporting complaints which have acted as a further barrier. A dominant view that emerged related to the difficult and time-consuming nature of the complaints process. This involved a lack of clarity, inconsistent details and a lack of clear communication about the complaints procedure. Despite their differing views, most respondents identified a need for improved advertising and promotion to make complaints pathways more well-known and easier to navigate.

## Theme 5: Governance and Leadership

A dominant view across responder types, particularly equality organisations and individuals, centred on encouraging the ECB to become more local and community driven. These groups urged the ECB to be more present in the community, involve underrepresented groups in the decision-making process and invest more in community driven initiatives. In addition, individuals stressed the need for the ECB to hold local clubs accountable and to pressure them to deliver initiatives that increase equality and diversity. Another common theme related to the need for systemic change that actively promotes inclusion and diversity and addresses racism. Respondents, including individuals and organisations, encouraged targeted recruitment and greater diversity in the ECB professional workforce as a way of gaining a different perspective on decision-making and providing role models for underrepresented groups.

## 5. Detailed Thematic Analysis

This section provides a summary of the responses to each of the five themes of the consultation.

### 5.1 Talent Pathway and Progression into professional cricket

From analysis across the responses, we noted a clear disparity whereby FCCs and CCBs stated that they believe that they do not discriminate against anyone based on race, class or gender, whereas individuals cited their personal experiences of discrimination based on their race, class and gender.

One interpretation of the disparity between individual experiences and responses from organisations, is that the latter are not yet fully acknowledging and addressing structural discrimination that exists. This is evident from individual respondents' personal experiences of discrimination, and a lack of acknowledgement from FCCs and CCBs of the potential impact of this on selection and progression.



We are a National County and have enjoyed relationships with four different First-Class counties. Not once have we felt race has been a factor, nor school or wealth. There might be reasons why the coaches tend to pick certain groups more than others and they may not even know they are doing so. They may also have reasons - just or unjust - as to why out of two identical talents they pick one over the other. However never have we felt there has been discrimination in our dealings with the professional counties.

CCB



I suffered gross discrimination and exclusion based on my race which resulted in lost opportunities in the form of career progression and development.

Individual



The Foundation can 100% categorically confirm that no players (Under 18 in male game and all ages in the female game) are excluded because of their school or background. The process in [FCC] doesn't ask for the school that the player came from, just the club as that is the most important aspect. Selectors are provided with a list of names and an emergency contact number, no more.

*Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities*



I trialled back in my home county in 2019. I have a close friend who I also got to trial at the county. In 5 games he scored 2 100's and he also scored an 80\*. With this he took wickets in the white ball games whenever we had t20's. The stats are there for all to see. He never got signed but another batter got signed after scoring maybe 1 or 2 fifties in the same period. He was white. Going earlier in 2011/2012, there was a conscious bias towards those who were not of South Asian background. It was clear as those players still got their chance in second team games, but I was always told that I'll be batting down the order because of pro's taking priority. How is this the case when my white academy team mates still open the batting and have their spots.

Individual

## 5.1.1 Progression into professional game from state versus private schools

In the ECB's response, they mentioned data from a survey they had conducted of 428 male professional cricketers in England and Wales<sup>2</sup> which showed that 52% of players attended state schools, and 48% attended fee-paying schools. It is worth noting here that in this survey, no information was provided about the type of state school (i.e., grammar or comprehensive) that the 52% of players attended or whether players from private schools started off at state schools and then moved across via a scholarship or some other route. In addition, no equivalent data is held for the women's professional game.

Across the board, respondents from all categories cited the unequal opportunity for engagement and participation in cricket provided by state and private schools as a primary reason for the lack of progression into the professional game for those attending state schools.



Private schools generally attract and consist of children from higher income families, where access to high quality cricket and extended opportunities mean that development can be unequally accelerated. Children from state schools provided with scholarships will also benefit from the opportunity rich environment, where many schools have highly qualified professional coaches to provide mentoring, coaching and support. Alongside high-quality facilities and in-depth fixture lists these environments become a catalyst to player development which state schools cannot match.

*Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities*

### DISPARITIES IN OPPORTUNITY FELL INTO THREE KEY AREAS:

- Facilities and expertise
- Curriculum and resourcing
- Connections to professional cricket

### i) Facilities and expertise

It was widely acknowledged that private schools are almost always able to offer better quality facilities with more space and access to well-maintained grass pitches. In addition, private schools invest more in specialised staff, giving students access to high-quality coaching and mentoring. In comparison, state school facilities for cricket tend to be limited with few having access to dedicated pitches and coaching facilities.



We have seen many state school pitches decline in standard gradually over the past 20 years or be sold off. As well, over the last 20 years, less state schools have started entering into cricket competitions (reduced by approximately 1/3).

*FCC*



No state school in the city of [X] has a grass cricket pitch at its disposal. Private schools have, meanwhile, been able to retain their green spaces and have the expertise to maintain grass pitches. They also actively target talented young people (including cricketers) with scholarships.

*FCC*

<sup>2</sup> ECB Ethnicity Monitoring Form, 2018

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## ii) Curriculum and Resourcing

The lack of cricket provision within the state school curriculum was highlighted by respondents across the board as a key barrier to participation. Children attending private schools were said to not only be able to practise on better facilities, but also to have more time to practise as a much greater emphasis is placed on specialist sports within the curriculum, including inter-school competition and extra-curricular opportunities.

Lack of funding and government resourcing of Physical Education (PE) within the National Curriculum was said by respondents, both individuals and organisations, to have resulted in the sports curriculum not holding the same value within state schools, with little flexibility or opportunity for specialist sports provision. A number of respondents cited a complete lack of cricket provision within the PE curriculum for girls.

Sport England quoted data from their research in 2020/21 which showed that independent school children are 2.5 times more likely to play cricket in an average week than children attending an Academy or state-maintained school.



**Cricket is only a small part of the PE curriculum in state schools and in some schools, there is no extra-curricular offer.**

*CCB*

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## iii) Connections to professional cricket

Both individuals and organisations identified the close connection and strong links that many private schools have to the professional cricket infrastructure, usually via County Cricket Boards. For example, private schools are often used as venues for pathway programmes due to the quality of their facilities. There are also commercial arrangements with private schools in relation to sponsored scholarships. Scouting and talent identification also focuses more on independent school settings, than grassroots clubs.



**This [private schools' connections to professional cricket] in itself, is alienating a huge proportion of the population from having a viable entry into professional cricket and this applies to the white working classes in addition to those from an ethnically diverse background.**

*Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities*



**The men's talent pathway county structure is linked into local clubs and independent schools. There is also often a cost associated with attending county trial events even at a young age (such as under 10). Young players will be 'invited' to attend several county trial/selection days and be asked to pay each time. Some clubs do offer this for free but many charge. Trials may also be held in an independent school facility, with which some children are more familiar or comfortable to 'perform'.**

*National Associations/Networks and Sport England*

## 5.1.2 Progression into the professional game for minority ethnic cricketers

A number of respondents, including individuals and equality organisations, cited academic research from Birmingham City University which showed that while almost a third of recreational and grassroots players are from the British South Asian community, only 4% of professional players are of South Asian heritage (Brown et al., 2021).<sup>3</sup> Sport England also cited the Birmingham City University research in their response. This shows that in London, a White British player is 12.6 times more likely to be selected for their U10-U15 county pathway than their Black British peers.

Respondents were also asked about progression for women and girls from ethnically diverse backgrounds into the women's game. Many noted that there is very little progression data available for the women's domestic professional game which was established in 2020. However, many respondents, both individuals and organisations, noted that the challenges faced within the men's game are similar for women and girls from ethnically diverse backgrounds. These challenges relate to:

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### i) Participation

It was raised by numerous individuals and ECB member organisations that there are generally lower levels of participation in sport among people from ethnic minorities. Chance to Shine cited research conducted by Sport England which showed that 36% of Black children were considered physically active versus 48% of White children.

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### ii) Unequal access

Equality organisations, in particular, noted a lack of clubs and facilities in areas which are more likely to be ethnically diverse – such as urban areas and areas with higher levels of deprivation. This was seen as a significant barrier to young people accessing cricket from those communities.

Talent identification was also identified as problematic by individual respondents, who cited that few coaches came from ethnic minority communities, and scouting appeared more focused on private schools and clubs which do not represent the diversity of the population. Many ECB member organisations stated that their talent identification and scouting processes were focused on ability and finding 'the best players' and did not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity or background. However, many individual responses and those from equality organisations identified biases and barriers inherent in this process, and many called for a focus on 'potential' to ensure the process is more inclusive as well as working more closely with grassroots community organisations to identify talent. The ECB acknowledged biases inherent in the process and cited funding it has invested through its County Pathway Agreement and Regional Host Agreement for counties and regions to recruit and employ scouts to provide independent observation of players focused on identifying 'potential' and moving away from 'trial' based assessment.

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<sup>3</sup> Tom Brown, Irfan Khawaja, Alun Powell, Paul Greetham, Lewis A. Gough & Adam L. Kelly (2021): The sociodemographic profile of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) talent pathways and first-class counties: considering the British South Asian player, *Managing Sport and Leisure*, DOI: 10.1080/23750472.2021.1949382

### iii) Lack of role models

It was widely acknowledged by individuals and equality organisations in particular that there is a lack of diverse role models for young people, in relation to players, coaches and other staff. This was identified as a key barrier preventing young people from ethnic minority backgrounds from feeling a sense of belonging, interest and ambition for the game.



We know that role models play an important part in children's journeys in cricket. Independent academic analysts looked at survey responses from 9,000 primary aged children that took part in CTS in school. They looked at a range of factors to understand what supports a child's interest in cricket and found the measure 'My coach made cricket fun' to be most strongly correlated to the measure 'I like cricket' (stronger than gender or general interest in sport). Diverse role models at the elite end of the sport are important and these come into play once a young person has decided they are a fan. Prior to this we know that, for many, the most important role model is their coach. We asked 1,200 school children, 'Which cricketer has most inspired you to want to play and succeed in the game?' It was an open response question - 33% wrote their CTS coach and 18% named a friend / peer. We know that having a coach as a role model is an important factor for those who play cricket via Chance to Shine Street, where 79% are from an ethnically diverse community and 1/3 coaches are former participants. In a survey of 1,140 Street participants, 90% agreed 'I look up to my coach' and 95% agreed 'My coach inspires me to do my best'.

*Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities*



There is now a large amount of work within professional clubs reviewing their recruitment, selection, and development of players of Black and South Asian backgrounds. We are aware of some clubs [...] who have recently recruited specific positions to talent ID players from these backgrounds as well as support these athletes once they enter their development programmes.

*National Associations/Networks and Sport England*



Within the women's professional game there is a distinct lack of role models. With only two black players to have played for England in the past 10 years.

*FCC*

### iv) Prejudice and discrimination

Some organisations and individual respondents felt there was explicit and structural racism as well as unconscious bias within cricket, stating there is a need for activism and pro-active processes to genuinely address this, rather than just rhetoric about inclusivity. Some responses specifically referenced "high-profile cases of racism brought against Yorkshire County Cricket Club and later at Essex County Cricket Club by professional cricketers of Asian heritage" (Cricket Charities, Sport/Equality Organisations/Charities respondent). Kick It Out provided details on their relevant schemes, such as their Racial Equality Standard, their wider Equality Standard, and the Raise Your Game initiative with coaching staff – a "mentoring and leadership programme developed with the aim to diversify football's workforce".



There are a multitude of factors contributing to the lack of progression into the men's professional game for ethnically diverse cricketers. Firstly, attitudes and perceptions of County Cricket Clubs have fostered an unwelcoming environment for those from varying ethnically diverse backgrounds. Secondly, structural racism has been and continues to be prevalent in cricket at all levels. Finally, not enough has been done to encourage progression from grassroots to the elite which has ultimately created and continued racial inequality across the sport.

*Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities*



There is anecdotal evidence of a creeping and deeper malaise across the game at every level, affecting people from all minoritised communities who spoke to us about leaving the game completely.

*Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities*

### 5.1.3 Structural inequality and social capital

An overarching theme that emerged from both individual and cricket organisation responses on talent and progression pathways related to structural inequalities in society that are also reflected within cricket. Although the problems of elitism, racism and gender inequality exist more widely than just within cricket, or within sport in general, it was recognised that every institution and sector has a responsibility and role to play in addressing these. This was a view strongly held and advocated by Equality Organisations, which urged the cricket world to look beyond the surface, challenge its assumptions, and reflect on the underlying structural inequalities and differences in social capital that result in the inequitable experiences of participants from diverse backgrounds.

In doing so, it is important to recognise multiple disadvantages, and the intersectionality of race, class and gender.



Structural inequality cuts across many lines one of those being class. Attendance at private schools can provide a level of social capital that is not always afforded at some state schools. We must also consider the cultures of institutions and the ‘traditional pathways’ to elite levels. What are the underlying assumptions behind an elite level cricketer? Do these assumptions restrict and lead to a lack in inclusivity? Clearly, there is a need for a forensic examination of the institutional culture of cricket, in order to better understand the pathways to success.

*Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities*



We also know that if you are a young person living in a disadvantaged part of the UK you are less likely to have a regular, accessible, cricket opportunity in your locality.

*Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities*

### 5.1.4 Selection bias in identifying talented young players

Many respondents across all groups referred to selection bias, both conscious and unconscious, as a key issue limiting equality of talent progression. In particular, a lack of diverse representation within the selection and recruitment workforce was raised, as well as a tendency to focus most often on those already within clubs or private schools.



Bias in selection often compounds this issue as clubs and selectors look for what they perceive as ‘talent’ but should instead be looking for potential. Many young people (often from state school) who have had less playing time, less coaching, and less experience of competition will miss out, despite theoretically having more potential.

*National Associations/Networks and Sport England*



Having access to valued networks, knowing others in cricket may support progression from schools/ areas where people are like those already in the game. These forms of social reproduction often result in a case where people look for people like them, and this can replicate current inequalities.

*Individual*



The consistent narrative emerging is that coaches and scouts are ‘lazy’ in their approaches. By this I mean they only go looking for talent in the areas they expect to find it. This invariably takes them to private schools and other privileged spaces.

*Individual*

## 5.2 Culture

### 5.2.1 Tradition and History

ECB member organisations and some individuals cited the traditional ‘spirit of the game’ as providing an inclusive, positive social environment, which brings individuals and communities together. Traditional values of team spirit, respect, teamwork, loyalty, comradery, competition, fairness, sociability, good sportsmanship, among others, were said to be defining features of a proud tradition surrounding the game, which many stressed was important to maintain.



**Cricket has always been proud of its old-fashioned values and traditions, its history and heritage. Its reputation for sporting behaviours and the ‘spirit of the game’ on the field of play are one of its strengths.**

*FCC*

However, there was recognition too, that the strong traditional and historic roots of cricket also reflect wider-societal inequalities and biases which limit opportunities and diversity within the game. Individuals commented on how this culture of tradition is upheld by cricket officials and favours White, male players. This has the effect of excluding underrepresented groups such as those from ethnic minority backgrounds or women.



**Cricket should become a sport whose culture is more inclusive and more welcoming of diverse communities. It should create an environment in which everyone feels welcome and removes the barriers which are evidently putting certain groups of people off joining and staying in the sport. The positive aspects of the game, those of team building, fair play, collaboration and more should be further supported and be the core of any cricket culture going forward.**

*Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities*



**Tradition and all its trappings can be as much a negative as a positive and for those that just want to get on and play the game.**

*FCC*

Responses showed that the high esteem for the traditional nature of the game held by organisations and clubs within the cricket establishment stood in contrast to many of the individual experiences in which exclusionary and discriminatory practices were felt to be commonplace. As much as it was felt that cricket can create feelings of belonging and inclusion, there was also strong evidence that this aspect of the ‘culture’ is often determined by individuals’ race, gender or class.

This exclusionary culture was said by individual respondents to be enforced through sexist and racist practices, such as the use of casual racist slurs, toxic attitudes to masculinity, misogynistic and homophobic comments and a drinking culture. Respondents commented on how this culture is upheld through the leadership and governance structure of clubs which are run predominantly by White, older, upper and middle class men. Not only does this result in a lack of diverse representation within the sport, but also in a lack of confidence and trust to raise issues and complaints relating to this.



## 5.2.2 Elitism

A strong theme running across different responder types pointed to the elitism inherent in the sport. There were several references to the origins of cricket being deeply rooted in the values of the British Empire, with many of its rituals and cultural practices designed ‘exclusively’ for the upper and middle classes as separate from ‘the masses’. Many viewed the costs associated with participating and playing cricket as a barrier that continues to make it a sport for those who can afford to play it. Individual respondents referenced Club and County memberships, festival cricket payments, kit supplies and travel expenses as all contributing to it being a high-cost sport which not all will be able to afford. The link to the private school system, and the opportunities inherent in this for some, was given as a further example of deeply rooted elitism within the sport.



Cricket in England has been run by, for and in the image of the upper and middle classes. Beginning with the ideology of amateurism in the late-nineteenth century, and its discriminatory ‘amateur professional distinction’, notions of ‘fair play’, ‘not cricket’ and ‘playing with a straight bat’ did not simply play a part in the so-called ‘civilising mission’ of Empire, it was used to elevate the ‘gentlemen amateurs’ from the masses as a whole by administrators, amateur players and the media (much of which was written by or owned by such men – see Pelham Warner, ex-captain of England establishing the deeply conservative *Cricketer* magazine in 1921). Cricket has never been run in the interests of the public. In fact, the historical evidence strongly suggests those in charge deliberately sought to make the game less popular. Sadly – even if it takes a different, capitalistic (see the ECB’s extra-marital affair with *The Hundred*), form today – we do not so much live with the repercussions of this process, but its continuation. Be it the Tebbit Test, the TCCB’s drive to quieten crowds, or the England (men’s team) taking the field to the strains of ‘Jerusalem’, English cricket’s monoculture either forces the acceptance of this image by ‘outsiders’ or, if they understand all this for what it is, excludes them entirely...How all of the above is supposed to appeal to a young Asian lad from Bradford is anyone’s guess. Regrettably, few understand the damage this culture does to cricket. Indeed, I’d argue the culture of English cricket is its own worst enemy as far as restoring the game as a truly national sport with genuine mass appeal again.

*Academic*

## 5.2.3 Racism

As well as the lack of access for Black and Asian players already described in relation to Talent and Progression Pathways, there were many examples submitted of overt racism and abuse from club officials, team members and supporters directed at Black and Asian players. This included derogatory, racially abusive, and inappropriate language, as well as a perceived resistance from club officials to recognise racism during complaints procedures and, on the pitch, a perception of not being able to play a part or being relegated. Many individual responses described the negative impact that racism had on the wellbeing and mental health of Black and Asian players, and many described having left the game as a result.



During a match, our club members were twice racially abused. A supporter at the ground shouted a racist slur to one of our players and another member posted a comment referencing racialised violence on a live feed of the match. Our experience of seeking effective sanction in this case from the club in question and the cricket authorities has confirmed to us that the culture in cricket around racism is marked by denial, obfuscation, poor education, and a lack of care for the victims of racism. These, in our experience (when the case finally resulted in a written apology from the perpetrators) continue to occur at all levels of the game.

*Individual*



Many players have been lost due to racism, discriminatory practises, unfriendly and hostile environments. I left...feeling a deep lasting harm and convinced the administration was racially prejudiced, unjust and ruthless.

*Individual*



I listened to the testimony of Azeem Rafiq and he could have been talking about the things we'd heard in the 90's. The aggressions (from micro to outright racism) don't seem to have changed much. That speaks of an embedded culture of racism in the sport. And while much has been said by members of the cricket establishment, the record is very poor. And it seems to be spread across counties, clubs and the media. The same tropes about Black and Asian cricketers persist to this day. One example is the treatment and descriptions of Jofra Archer. They have a weary similarity to the ones expressed about Norman Cowans, Devon Malcolm, Chris Lewis, David Lawrence. If you then add in the way Black and Asian fans have been discouraged from attending test matches - [FCC Ground] now is a long, sad, white, distance from the summer of '76 it's hardly surprising that the talent looks elsewhere. Compare the England team in another "posh" sport, Rugby Union to the cricket one and which looks more like the community we live in?

*Individual*

## 5.2.4 Sexism

Individual respondents described a culture of sexism in both recreational and professional clubs. This included misogynistic and derogatory comments about women and girls and sexist 'banter'. Some described being ostracised and ridiculed for not participating in or for objecting to, casual sexism. There were also descriptions of women and girls' teams not being given equal access to pitches, as well as male club members de-valuing the women's game, and female players and umpires being joked about and having derogatory comments aimed at them.



Teams are mostly upper class men with lad culture, they talk about women and send nude pics of women and rate any women in the news on a scale of how desirable they are. They routinely express homophobic and transphobic views and anyone who objects to them is outcasted.

*Individual*



At both clubs I have been at I have had many comments about my 'manliness' or lack of. This is due to not being a big drinker and refusing to make sexist or derogatory remarks about my wife and other women. I also overheard the head of the umpire's panel in our league saying, 'Women shouldn't be playing cricket'.

*Individual*

## 5.3 Good Practice

### 5.3.1 Improving equity in cricket

Respondents praised the community-driven initiatives that aimed to dismantle the elitist culture in cricket and make it more accessible. There was recognition, particularly from individuals and equality organisations, that change needed to be systemic, and practises needed to be changed from the grassroots right up to the elite level, including amongst cricket's leadership.

Numerous respondents from all groups cited the 'Chance to Shine' programme as an example of good practice that has played an important role in making cricket accessible by removing barriers of cost, space, and social class.

Another key theme was respondents, both individuals and organisations, describing initiatives that aimed to promote the inclusivity of women and girls in cricket. In particular, they discussed how these have been important in raising aspirations for young female cricketers, providing female role models, and challenging established gender norms.

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#### i) Increasing opportunity and accessibility

There were many national and local initiatives commended for promoting participation from minority groups, women and girls, and state-educated children. Among those frequently cited by a number of respondents were Chance to Shine, Lord's Taverners, ACE, and SACA, among others. These all have a common aim of increasing opportunities and accessibility for all. Community Cricket Hubs were highly valued as seen as vital for engaging communities. As well as increased opportunities, diversification of the format of the game (e.g., softball cricket) was cited as being important for increasing participation and appealing to a wider demographic.



**Soft Ball Cricket has provided an opportunity for women and girls in particular to experience cricket together, encouraging them to continue playing in Softball leagues as well as progressing onto hardball cricket.**

*CCB*



**The ACE programme has significantly shown that a distinct programme can be set up to allow access for children from an underrepresented group to a cricket development opportunity and incorporate a connection to allow the most talented to access a pathway that links to the professional game.**

*FCC*

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## ii) Chance to Shine

The Chance to Shine programme was commended across the board as an example of good practice that was said to have increased children's opportunity to play cricket through its provision in state schools, and in the community through Chance to Shine Street. In particular, many commented that this has been particularly successful in increasing access for girls and young people from Black and South Asian communities. However, several respondents raised the concern that funding for this programme is decreasing.<sup>4</sup> Chance to Shine Street aims to break down barriers to participation in the community by providing free, year-round cricket opportunities in accessible venues identified by communities. There are no specific clothing requirements and different formats of the game are practised (e.g., tape-ball, countdown cricket).



**Chance to Shine Street has played an important role in making cricket accessible by removing barriers of cost, space and social class. The free programme aims to engage participants from areas within the 10% most deprived in the country where opportunity and access may be a barrier to participation. Participants do not require any equipment to play, and participants can simply turn up each week and play cricket in a safe environment. There are examples nationally where participants have gone on to play professional cricket or take up employment within cricket.**

*Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities*



**Chance to Shine was particularly successful in introducing my state school daughters to cricket & joining county pathways 6 years ago but that has changed recently, certainly in the girls' game, with significant numbers now moving into pathways from private schools.**

*Individual*

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## iii) Positive recruitment

Another key aspect to improving equity that was cited by respondents across the board was the importance of a representative and diverse workforce. [Two FCC's] were given as recent examples of looking to recruit positions to support the talent identification of players from diverse backgrounds. Respondents across all groups also highlighted the need for continued support and encouragement of these players that needs to be in place once they are in the pathway to prevent tokenism.



**The lack of vacancies for job roles is indicative of not being willing to diversify our offering to attract a new, younger, more ethnically diverse audience and workforce that is more representative of our society.**

*FCC*

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<sup>4</sup> Several respondents made this point but we understand from the ICEC that they have seen evidence from the ECB that their funding for Chance to Shine Street has increased.

## 5.3.2 Improving diversity of coaches and/or leadership in cricket

Numerous respondents commended the introduction of the ECB Coach Development Scholarship Scheme. This was an initiative that aimed to support underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, women, and individuals with a disability, to become qualified cricket coaches.

In addition, ACE programme, that aimed to encourage greater participation from women and girls were praised for their work.

Respondents across all groups also commented on the success of specific projects or organisations working to tackle racism that aim to remove both explicit and unconscious biases in cricket. In particular, the 'Rooney Rule' was commended for encouraging diversity and inclusion during the recruitment of coaches and providing more diverse role models.

## 5.3.3 Improving access to talent pathways for children and young people from underrepresented groups

Several community-led, grassroots initiatives were identified as areas of good practice. Respondents commented on specific development hubs that aim to engage children and young people from areas of deprivation and underrepresented groups. Numerous respondents also mentioned the success of certain bursary and grant schemes that they felt enabled young people to access cricket and certain talent pathways which can otherwise be prohibitively expensive.

### i) Development hubs in underprivileged areas

The MCC Development Hub programme was noted as particularly important to identify and develop players that can then progress onto talent pathways.



Developing community hubs at old facilities now brought back to life, linked in with focused Chance to Shine programmes. The development of hubs in [a part of the city linked to an FCC] Development team has enabled us to see late developing Boys and Girls.

*Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities*



MCC Hubs for state school children an excellent idea. My daughter had free, quality coaching in [city with an FCC].

*Individual*



The MCC Foundation programme has helped to increase the amount of young people from across the County (both boys and girls), this is specifically targeted to those who are from state school backgrounds and not in County pathway programmes. The value of this is then to offer sessions free of charge to participants.

*Individual*

## ii) Apprenticeship programmes

Apprenticeships were noted as an important vehicle for increasing diversity and participation in coaching. Apprenticeships were said to provide opportunities for individuals and to increase coaching interactions for young people, as well as providing vital role models.



Coach Core is a social mobility charity that uses Apprenticeships and sport to target disadvantaged young people and get them back into education and employment. We use coaching as a way to have them do something they love, but to immediately put back into the community as relatable role models. In 10 years, we have supported over 700 apprentices with a 90% success rate and yet 1 in 3 don't have maths or English GCSE and 1 in 3 live in the Top 20 IMD areas. Our model is to focus on personal support as much as professional development with the sporting employers, and to ensure they are operating in communities with numerous complex social issues. It has shown that this long-term approach not only benefits their future life chances, but also creates thousands of coaching interactions from these relatable young role models so their participants have a positive experience in sport and physical activity week in, week out.

*Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities*

## iii) Bursaries and scholarships

Bursaries and scholarships were broadly seen as an important way of providing talented cricketers with opportunities for development. However, it was also noted that more targeted scholarships for under-represented groups were necessary. In addition, respondents commented on how private school scholarships attracted talent away from state schools and reduced the likelihood of role models in less affluent areas.



A large number of private schools offer scholarships to talented young cricketers who would not normally have the opportunity to attend a fee-paying school. This has allowed players from less affluent socio-economic backgrounds to enhance their cricket education but also arguably their academic achievements leading to higher education or enhancing their career opportunities outside of cricket.

*FCC*



There are not enough scholarships provided to BAME cricketers.

*Individual*



We have operated a bursary system for Women and people from diverse communities for a few years and this has seen numbers increase. We are also in year 2 of a Girls only young leaders programme to support Women become a greater component of the Club Infrastructure and in particular their organisers, role models and leaders.

*National Counties and Local Cricket Clubs*

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#### iv) Grassroots talent scouting

The value of having increased talent scouting at grassroots level was cited by many. Some clubs had noted examples of positive recruitment of scouts to focus on grassroots level.



**Real investment into communities is key. The plan to install non-traditional playing facilities in urban areas is welcomed. However, there should be accessible opportunities to be scouted in underrepresented communities too.**

*Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities*



**We are recruiting a talent coach to specifically focus on diverse communities especially communities that doesn't yet engage with cricket.**

*FCC*

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#### v) Supporting diverse talent

Respondents commended organisations working to support diverse talent in cricket, such as the ACE Programme, that are committed to encourage greater participation and increase opportunities for young Black cricketers, the South Asian Cricket Academy whose goal is to increase representation of British South Asian players and coaches in the professional game, and Chance to Shine Street which is targeted at bringing cricket to young people from under-represented groups in inner-city areas.



**Progress is evident at Surrey CCC where Ebony Rainford Brent, Chevy Green and the ACE Team have been able to build close relationships with the CEO and selectors to create real understanding around the bias that exists in the game. Scouts and coaches have witnessed players with huge potential attend ACE talent ID days, after being deselected from another club. Those players have then developed in the ACE academy as it's an environment that is free from bias, which provides high support and allows space for people to be themselves.**

*National Associations/Networks and Sport England*

## 5.4 Complaints and Discipline (discrimination-related)

There were mixed responses to questions about complaints and discipline procedures for discrimination-related issues. Notably, the responses of FCCs and CCBs differed from those of individuals. While officials tended to cite the policies and procedures in place to deal with complaints, individual submissions suggest that these are not always experienced in a fair or consistent manner. There were several examples of poorly implemented procedures and cases in which complainants were threatened and complaints disregarded without proper investigation.

### 5.4.1 Making a complaint in the recreational or professional game about discrimination or unfair treatment

A number of individual respondents commended their organisations for having clear and trusted pathways to file complaints and spoke about the value of having a designated safeguarding officer to make the process easier. Despite these views, most respondents identified a need for improved advertising to make complaints pathways more well-known and easier to navigate. There was a clear disparity between organisations who were confident in their complaints pathways and individual responses who expressed a lack of trust in the process.

There were many individual respondents who expressed a lack of confidence in the complaints system due to complaints not being taken seriously by officials. There was mention of the ‘family run’ and ‘traditional’ culture of cricket making the complaints process even more difficult. Respondents also commented on the feelings of fear and shame attached to making a complaint. This was said to be due to fear of being labelled as ‘weak’ and having negative consequences that will impact their cricket career.

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#### i) Value of safeguarding officers

Safeguarding officers were cited by many respondents, both individuals and organisations, as a valuable asset with regards to keeping people safe and dealing with discrimination and complaints. However, there were also examples cited by individuals where safeguarding officers were not seen to be independent and where conflicts of interest were present, such as being related to the person against whom a complaint was made or connected to them officially through the organisation’s structure. Greater independence of safeguarding officers, and increased procedures for anonymity and confidentiality were called for by many individuals who had experienced making a complaint via safeguarding officers.

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#### ii) Clear and trusted complaints pathways

Responses from the ECB and cricket organisations cited clear and trusted pathways for making complaints with information on procedures available through official channels such as websites and handbooks. However, others, including individual respondents, questioned how widely known these were and whether all members and families would know how to make a complaint if they needed to. Many therefore called for increased communication and visibility about complaints procedures.

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#### iii) Lack of confidence in current system

Those respondents who had experience of making a complaint all expressed some form of dissatisfaction towards the complaints process. They commented on the lack of compassion and understanding from club officials that degraded the individual and questioned the validity of their complaint. In addition, numerous respondents commented on how their complaints had often been ‘brushed off’ and not taken seriously by the club. A dominant theme that emerged was one related to the difficult and time-consuming nature of the complaints process. This involved a lack of clarity, inconsistent details and a lack of clear communication about the complaints procedure.



**KEY BARRIERS IDENTIFIED:**

- Lack of regular checks
- Misogyny and sexism
- Corruption and nepotism
- Fear/shame related to complaining
- Lack of anonymity and confidentiality
- Lack of trust and confidence in the system



I am disappointed in how members of the committee have conducted themselves and the inappropriate 'investigation' and handling of the statements and communication with the women involved.

*Individual*



A lot of parents/guardians have stayed silent about raising unfair practices from some staff because many feel they do not want to 'mess up' the involvement or progression of their child/young person regarding getting opportunities.

*Individual*

## 5.4.2 Barriers to making a complaint related to discrimination or unfair treatment

A common theme across all responses related to a lack of trust and confidence in the complaints system. This was, in part, a result of the lack of anonymity and confidentiality when filing a complaint. In addition, respondents commented on perceived nepotism present within clubs which prevented them from complaining. Respondents also identified the fear of certain repercussions being a significant barrier to raising issues. There was fear of impacting an individual's popularity within the club or impacting their progression and career within the sport. Related to this, multiple respondents also commented on their experiences of sexism and misogyny when reporting complaints which have acted as a further barrier. To resolve these issues, respondents suggested there would be value in having dedicated complaints officers within clubs or establishing a completely independent complaints board.

**KEY POINTS RAISED:**

- An independent complaints board
- More positive complaints environment
- A clear complaints process



The main barrier is that no one has faith their complaint will be taken seriously. The solution would be to establish a disciplinary panel locally that was diverse in its representation and included people with expertise from beyond the game/league. How can you have faith in making a complaint about a player or umpire to someone directly involved with those people?

*Individual*

### 5.4.3 Effective complaint handling procedures (related to discrimination or unfair treatment) in other sports and/or industries

Respondents stressed the importance of encouraging a positive environment related to complaints to remove the fear-inducing elements that can act as a barrier to complaints being made. It was suggested that this could involve promoting safeguarding and encouraging whistleblowing. Alongside this, the need for a clear and ‘easy to follow’ system was emphasised. Numerous respondents suggested complaints should be directed to an independent body that is unrelated to the cricket club and anonymity must be guaranteed.



**UK Sport have released what appears to be a particularly effective new reporting mechanism called ‘Sport Integrity’. It is an independent disclosure and complaints service pilot to support athletes, coaches and all support personnel with an independent and confidential reporting line, and an independent investigation process to deal with relevant allegations of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or abuse, and to allow sports to take the appropriate disciplinary action as necessary. It involves: A ‘safe-space’ for athletes and members of the high-performance community to raise a concern; A confidential and independent ‘preliminary assessment’ to establish all the relevant details of the complaint; A confidential and independent ‘full investigation’ to establish all the relevant facts relating to a complaint, in order to make recommendations for a disciplinary panel, if appropriate; and Access to trained mediators as an important first step in the resolution of disputes.**

*The ECB and ECB Member organisations*

## 5.5 Governance and Leadership

### 5.5.1 Attitudes towards the ECB and its EDI initiatives

In the Call for Written Evidence online survey, respondents were invited to respond to a series of closed questions relating to the effectiveness of current leadership and governance within the game.

Their responses to these questions are set out in this section, in graphs (rounding percentages to the nearest whole number) with an accompanying brief commentary.

**When analysing the responses to the 4 closed questions in the survey, we have grouped each of the respondents under one of the following three categories:**

- ECB and ECB Member Organisations – including ECB, FCCs, CCBs<sup>5</sup>
- Other Organisations – including cricket, sporting and equalities charities, Non Departmental Public Bodies and academics
- Individuals

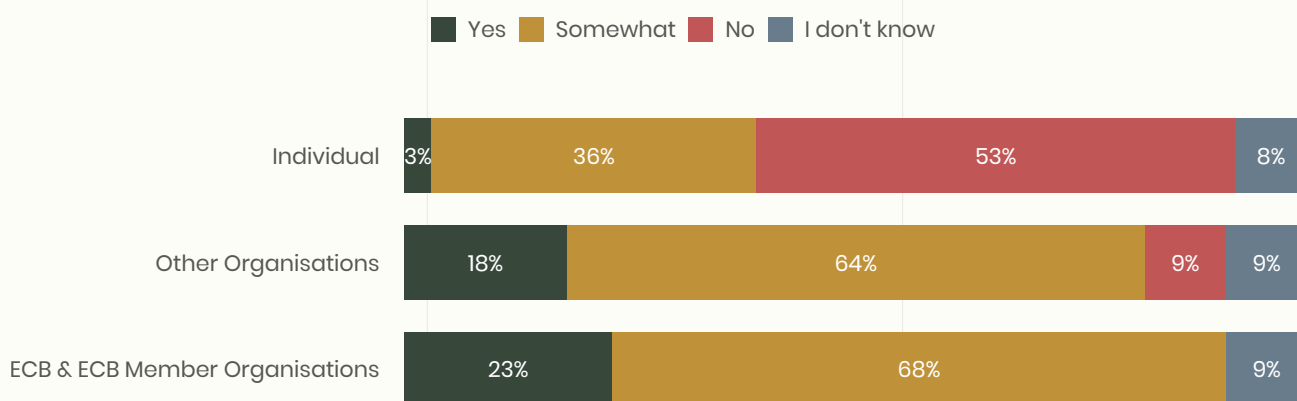
#### Effectiveness of ECB's 12-Point Action Plan

There was a clear difference between how individuals felt about how effective the ECB's 12-point game-wide action plan would be at tackling racism and discrimination in cricket, and the views of ECB and ECB Member Organisations and Other Organisations.

While only a minority of each group fully agreed that the ECB's plan would be effective, when this was combined with those who felt that the plan would be somewhat effective, the gap between individuals on the one hand and ECB and ECB Member Organisations and Other Organisations on the other, became more pronounced.

Only 3% of individuals felt the plan would be effective, 36% felt it would be somewhat effective, whilst over half (53%) felt it would not be effective. Whereas 23% of ECB and ECB Member Organisations felt the plan would be effective and 68% somewhat effective. Other Organisations were similarly supportive, with 18% saying it would be effective and 64% somewhat effective.

**Figure 1: Will the ECB's 12 point game-wide action plan be effective in tackling racism and discrimination?**



<sup>5</sup> Note: this group also includes the single local cricket club which responded to the Call for Written Evidence

### Effectiveness of ECB’s Inspiring Generations Strategy

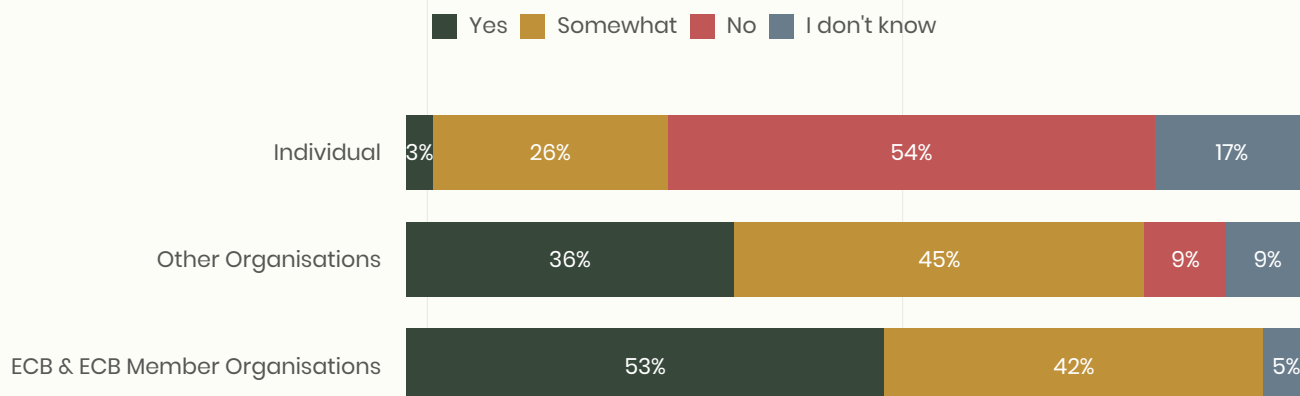
ECB and ECB Member Organisations and Other Organisations were much more likely than individual respondents to say that the ECB’s Inspiring Generations Strategy would be effective in engaging and supporting people from underrepresented groups.

Over half (54%) of individuals felt the Inspiring Generations Strategy would not be effective and only 3% felt it would be effective, with a quarter (26%) saying it would be somewhat effective.

However, not a single respondent from the ECB and ECB Member Organisations group said that it would not be effective, with over half (53%) saying it would be effective and 42% stating it would be somewhat effective.

Other organisations were also supportive, with over a third (36%) saying it would be effective and 45% somewhat effective with only 9% saying it would not be effective.

**Figure 2: Will the ECB’s Inspiring Generations Strategy be effective in engaging and supporting people from underrepresented groups?**



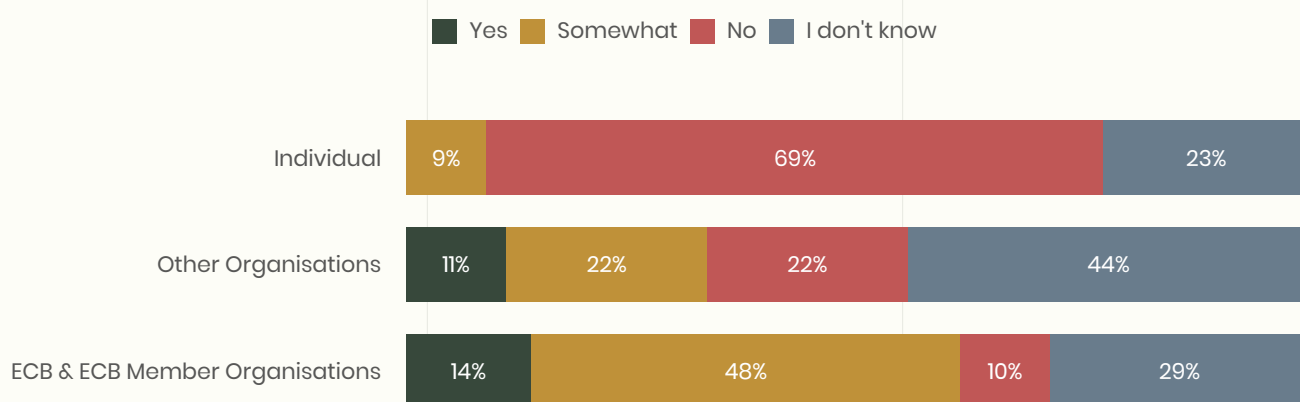
### Effectiveness of engagement with diverse communities

Only a minority of ECB and ECB Member Organisations (14%) and Other Organisations (11%) and none of the individual respondents felt that the ECB effectively and sensitively engages relevant stakeholders from diverse backgrounds when developing its plans and strategies.

Around half of ECB and ECB Member Organisations (48%), one in five Other Organisations (22%), and one in ten individuals (9%) felt ECB was somewhat effective in engaging with diverse communities.

Most individual respondents (69%) said this was not done effectively and sensitively.

**Figure 3: Does the ECB effectively and sensitively engage relevant stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to develop its plans and strategies?**



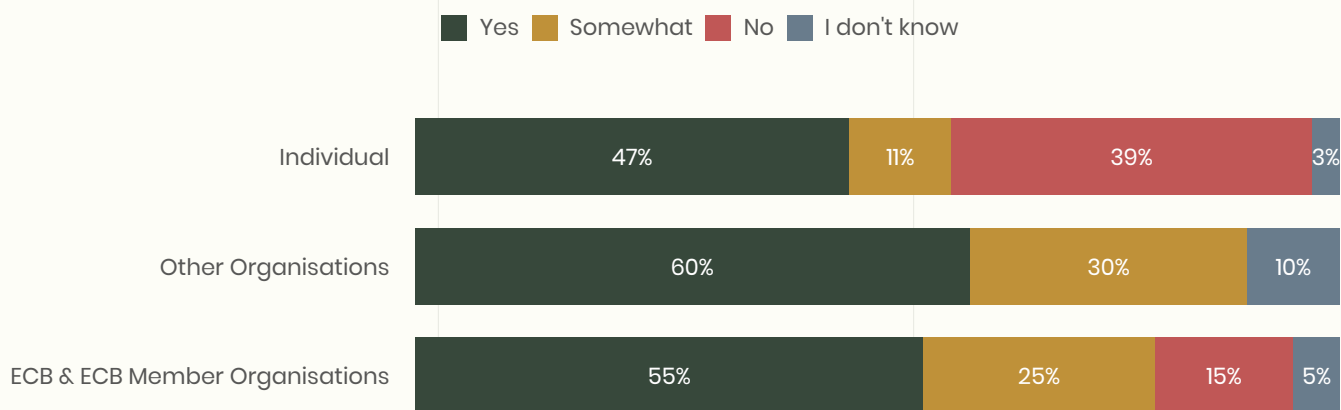
## ECB powers and leverage

There was much greater agreement amongst the three groups with regards to whether the ECB has the powers and leverage it needs to make cricket a more equitable and inclusive sport.

Around half of all groups agreed with this – 55% of ECB and ECB Member Organisations, 60% of Other Organisations and 47% of individuals.

It is worth noting that 39% of individual respondents and 15% of ECB and ECB Member Organisations felt that the ECB needs more powers and leverage to make cricket a more equitable and inclusive sport.

**Figure 4: Do you think the ECB has the powers and leverage required to make cricket a more equitable and inclusive sport?**



## 5.5.2 Actions needed to make the game more equitable and inclusive

A dominant theme that emerged from both individuals and organisations involved encouraging the ECB to become more local and community driven. Respondents urged the ECB to be more present in the community, involve the community in the decision-making process and invest more in community-driven initiatives.

In addition, respondents stressed the need for the ECB to hold local clubs accountable and pressure them to deliver initiatives that increase equality and diversity. Another common theme related to the need for whole systemic change where the current senior staff are “too male, White and stale”.

Respondents encouraged greater diversity in the ECB professional workforce, in order to offer a different perspective on decision-making and provide role models for underrepresented groups.

### KEY ACTIONS NEEDED:

- More local and community driven
- Greater focus on gender equality
- More proactive in encouraging participation from BAME and underprivileged communities
- Ensure cricket is more accessible and less expensive
- Improve education and understanding of discrimination
- Whole systemic change



**Invest and scale initiatives that demonstrate positive impact in delivering greater equity and inclusion:** We believe the ECB should help to super-charge what is working well whether that be at grassroots or further into the performance pathway, particularly those initiatives which are focusing on youth as this is the future of the game – the next generation of young people who will learn a love for the sport, take their learning and cultural awareness and experiences both within but beyond the game.

**Create inclusive environments across-the-board:** By that we mean, really focus on understanding what an inclusive environment looks like at every opportunity within the game; from schools to club, from Board rooms to the ECB itself. Drive this change from the front, implementing and sharing learnings. Do this publicly and promote good practise. We feel that this is the most important piece of work as this is the piece which will really help the game to improve.

**Improve access to, and support within, the talent pathway for under-represented groups:** Rapidly improve access from grassroots to the talent pathway, remove barriers such as those we outlined earlier on in our response. Ensure the earliest performance environments right through to the top levels are creating inclusive environments.

**Improve the diversity of administrators and coaches at all levels of the game:** We referenced in our response earlier the importance of diverse role models, we believe greater diversity in cricket administration and within the coaching pathway will help to create more inclusive, stronger environments whilst providing the opportunity for people to see others like them are represented within all levels of the game.

*Cricket Charities, and Sport and Equality Organisations and Charities*

## 6. Conclusion

The key findings across the five themes of this consultation are summarised in the Executive Summary. These highlight evidence of significant gaps in equitable access and progression from the grassroots up to the elite game for individuals attending state schools, when compared to private schools, those from ethnic minorities when compared to White players and for women and girls, compared to boys and men.

The consultation has shone a light on the disparity in views between cricketing organisations, who emphasise the positive 'tradition' and 'spirit of the game', and individuals whose experiences point to a culture of elitism and exclusion based on gender, race and class.

Although the need for change was acknowledged by many cricketing organisations, in most cases this stopped short of fully recognising the structural inequalities and biases at play at every stage of a player's journey.

Pro-actively promoting inclusion and diversity from the grassroots through to the sport's leadership and governance structures is needed in order to effect a whole system change.





**ICEC**

Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket