# Prime Minister hosts reception to celebrate grassroots sport and announce further facilities investments

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**Sir Andrew Strauss was among the attendees at Downing Street celebration of grassroots sport.**

- Event celebrated the landmark 25th anniversary of the Football Foundation, a charity set up by the Government, The FA and the Premier League delivering thousands of facilities and pitches to help people get active.
- This event announced an extra £10 million injection this year, including at least £5 million into cricket and tennis facilities.

Sporting star Sir Andrew Strauss was at a Downing Street reception hosted by the Prime Minister this evening (16 March) to champion the transformative impact of grassroots sport facilities on individuals, communities and our country's greatest athletes.

The Prime Minister used the occasion to announce that the Government will work with local areas and the sporting sector to better understand what facilities communities need, ensuring investment goes to the right places and helps more people from all backgrounds to get active and healthier. This will build on the Football Foundation's work in this area.

This targeted approach sits at the heart of the Government's commitment to creating and improving community sports facilities across the UK between investing over £400 million over the course of this Parliament, ending the postcode lottery in access to sport and giving everyone the chance to find a sport they love.

The Prime Minister also confirmed £10 million investment in 2026/27 to develop new delivery models. This includes at least £2.5 million to the Lawn Tennis Association for covered courts in England for tennis, padel and other activities, at least £2.5 million grant to the England and Wales Cricket Board to enable the building of covered, all-weather multi-sport domes, and additional funding to enable a wider range of sporting bodies to trial innovative funding pathways.

In the months ahead, the Government will build on this approach by setting out plans for its investment in the coming years.

## Prime Minister Keir Starmer said:

> I've played football for many years, and I know just how important it is to get out, play sport and stay active.
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> But that's not possible without investment in great facilities.
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> I'm proud that this government is turning that around. From new football pitches to padel courts, we're making sure everyone has somewhere to play.

The event was also a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Football Foundation, the UK's biggest sports charity funded by the Premier League, The FA and Government. This partnership has invested more than £1.3 billion - with Government as the largest funding partner - delivering over 1,300 new or improved 3G pitches, helping to improve over 15,000 grass pitches and more than 1,700 changing rooms, and giving communities great places to play and stay active.

Premier League Kicks, a programme providing opportunity in areas where young people face barriers was also celebrated as it hit its 20th year milestone. Launched as a collaboration between the Premier League and the Metropolitan Police in 2006, it now sees the League fund 93 clubs across the Premier League, English Football League and National League to provide young people with access to free weekly football sessions and education workshops in safe and supportive community environments, supported by 38 local police forces.

## Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Lisa Nandy said:

> Behind every sporting great, there's a community club where it all began. Grassroots facilities are where the love of sport is born and they matter just as much today as they ever have.
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> Twenty-five years ago, the Football Foundation was set up with an ambition to give every community the grassroots facilities it needs, and the results have been extraordinary. Over the last year alone we've funded almost 1,000 projects across the country - reaching underserved areas and opening doors for women and girls.
>
> Now we want to go further, widening the offer so more people have a sport they can call their own. Every generation deserves the chance to discover what sport can do for them.

## The Football Foundation CEO, Robert Sullivan said:

> This evening's reception at Downing Street has provided an opportunity to celebrate the importance of community sports across the country. Thanks to the generous support of our funding partners, The FA, the Premier League and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Football Foundation has invested nearly £1.3 billion over the last 25 years to improve grassroots facilities across the country.
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> We know that great facilities do more than support health and wellbeing: they bring communities together, particularly in the places where our investment is needed most.
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> At the core of our work are Local Football Facility Plans, developed in partnership with local authorities, County FAs and other community stakeholders.
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> These plans are a blueprint for providing the grassroots football facility improvements that will deliver where need is greatest and impact is strongest. It is a testament to the effectiveness of these plans that the Government are taking forward the Local Community Sport Facilities Plans that we've been piloting this year so far. We look forward to continuing this work to provide every community in the country with a great place to play.

## Premier League Chief Executive, Richard Masters said:

> It is thanks to the incredible football we see week in, week out in the Premier League that we are able to invest so widely in all areas of the game, including grassroots football and communities. As part of our current More Than A Game initiative we are celebrating 20 years of our longest-standing community programme, Premier League Kicks, and the positive impact it has had on over 600,000 young people across England and Wales.
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> We are also proud to have delivered long-term investment into grassroots and non-league football through the Football Foundation and Premier League Stadium Fund. This has benefited clubs throughout the non-league system and women's game, as well as more than 125,000 grassroots teams up and down the country.

## CEO of the England and Wales Cricket Board, Richard Gould said:

> We've already seen how these pioneering all-weather cricket domes can open up our sport to many more people and have a transformative impact on communities.
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> With this Government commitment of a further £2.5m to part-fund a further four projects, more parts of England and Wales will benefit.
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> Hosting this summer's ICC Women's T20 World Cup is a golden opportunity to inspire a generation to fall in love with cricket, and we look forward to continuing to work with the Government to give more people in other areas access to top quality facilities.

## Lawn Tennis Association, Chief Executive, Scott Lloyd said:

> Covered tennis and padel facilities are vital for getting more people of all ages on court all year round, but we know many communities lack access to these.
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> We welcome this funding, that will allow us to pilot the new facilities initially, and we look forward to working with the Government to deliver a nationwide portfolio of much-needed community facilities in the future.

## Sport England's Chief Executive, Simon Hayes said:

> Sport England research shows that every £1 invested in community sport generates over £4 for the economy and society, so today's announcement is a win for us all. Sport makes us happier, healthier, wealthier and more connected.

## ENDS

- The £400 million investment in grassroots sport facilities is for the next four years, to make sport truly accessible to all and give communities all over the UK the facilities they need.
- It includes a previously announced £5 million investment and partnership with the NBA, for a

mix of outdoor and indoor basketball facilities, match-funded by the NBA. In January we announced that 1000 community projects across the UK are now benefitting from new all-weather pitches, extended playing hours through floodlighting, and modern changing facilities designed to welcome underserved groups like women and girls through the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme, with more beneficiaries to be announced soon.

- The Government announced in January that £85 million was available in 2026/27 for grassroots sports facilities across the whole of the UK: funding everything from pitches to floodlights and changing rooms to goalposts.
- Premier League Kicks: This season is the 20th anniversary of Premier League Kicks, which sees 93 Premier League, EFL and National League clubs delivering free weekly football and personal-development sessions. Since the launch of the programme, which uses the power of football to inspire young people to reach their potential, more than 600,000 young people have participated at over 5,000 venues across England and Wales. Sessions take place in some of the most under-served communities, supporting those who need it most. An independent evaluation of Premier League Kicks found that 93 per cent of alumni believe the programme helped them get into less trouble and avoid negative influence, with 91 per cent learning more about the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour, helping to change attitudes and choices.
- About the Football Foundation: The Football Foundation is the Premier League, The FA and Government's charity that delivers outstanding grassroots facilities, more and better places to play, transforming lives and communities where it is needed most. The Foundation's goal is to unlock the power of pitches ensuring every community has a great place to play regardless of gender, race, disability or place. Since its creation in 2000, the Foundation has £1.3 billion to improve grassroots facilities across the country – including 1,300 3G pitches, 15,000 grass pitches and 1,700 changing rooms. This has attracted an additional £1.5 billion of partnership funding – totalling £2.8 billion investment in grassroots football so far. In partnership with local authorities, County FAs and other community stakeholders, the Foundation has created Local Football Facility Plans for every local authority in England. These Plans act as a blueprint for providing the grassroots football facility improvements that each community needs and deserves across the country. Visit footballfoundation.org.uk for more information on the Foundation and view the Plan for your local area.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-hosts-reception-to-celebrate-grassroots-sport-and-announce-further-facilities-investments