



# Women & Girls' Cricket

Action Plan 2021 – 2023



## Welcome message

Ireland has a long and proud cricketing history, and with its recent elevation to Full Membership, Irish cricket is being recognised on the world stage for its upward trajectory of successes, on and off the field.

However, that trajectory of growth has not been felt as keenly across all areas of our sport.

Globally, attitudes about women's sport are undergoing significant change for the better, and in Ireland - through initiatives such as the recent 20 x 20 Campaign – this change has seen substantial uplifts in investment, participation and coverage of women's sport.

Cricket Ireland has likewise made numerous advancements in supporting the women's game in recent years, including the introduction of the first-ever women's contracts, 45% increase in investment in support staff and services for the international squad, significant improvements to the pathway system and development of soon-to-be rolled out nationwide participation programmes. In addition, in 2020 we launched several pilot programmes to promote women's leadership and fitness – *On The Front Foot* and *CricHIIT* respectively.

However, we recognise that there is much more to do. This Action Plan underscores our commitment to improvement and growth for females in cricket.

This Plan provides a range of concrete actions that Cricket Ireland, in partnership with Provincial Unions and local stakeholders, aims to deliver over the next three years. These actions seek structural and financial improvements, as well as widening opportunities from the grassroots to elite levels to experience, enjoy and excel at our great sport.

The actions outlined in this Plan were identified and developed through consultation with local and international experts - within and outside cricket, as well as open consultation sessions that were held across Ireland and online with players, supporters and participants within the game. We thank everyone who gave their time in this work.

This Plan calls for action - to grow the women's game, to invest in structures and to nurture our talent.

We also recognise that this is the start of a much longer journey – we hope you will join us and together make cricket the fastest growing sport for women and girls in Ireland.

**Ross McCollum**  
Chair, Cricket Ireland

**Warren Deutrom**  
CEO, Cricket Ireland

11 May 2021





## Building on recent progress

Before we look ahead, we should first look at where we have come from and the current state of women's and girls cricket in Ireland.

In 2016 we developed a High Performance Strategy to guide the elite end of our operations. This, in conjunction with other projects, has driven many key areas of progress, including:

### Performance

- Increased investment in the women's game by 45% since 2016
- First-ever part-time contracts for female cricketers
- Substantial investment at senior level for health/medical insurance, nutrition, psychology, support and welfare services
- Access to Sport Ireland Institute facilities; gym memberships; strength & conditioning and physiotherapist support on tours and during home series
- Increased women's elite and pathway coaching hours
- Restructure of Super Series, with coaching hubs established
- Building out of women's Academy programme

### Capacity building

- Funded two players and a regional development officer to join the Swim Ireland Female Leadership programme
- New Sport Ireland Leadership programme for captains

### Participation

- Two national programmes developed (expect roll out during life of this plan)
- Launched CricHIIT programme
- Launched the On The Front Foot leadership programme

### Governance and Administration

- Improved female representation on Cricket Ireland Board and committees
- Appointment of women's sport expert on Grassroots Cricket Committee
- Recruited a new Women in Sport Officer

### Profile

- First-time television and on-the-ground media and PR coverage of an Ireland Women's T20 World Cup campaign (2018)
- New livestream system implemented for women's internationals (775K views of the West Indies series, 2019)
- New livescoring and livestreaming system implemented for Super Series (48K views of Super Series, 2020)
- Engaged extensively with 20x20 campaign, including co-branded match (2020)

This is only the beginning. The following pages provide a roadmap to grow the women and girls game over coming years, with a long-term vision of becoming Ireland's fastest growing sport for women and girls.

But first, a few facts and figures on where we currently stand.

# Where we stand

During the process undertaken to develop this Action Plan, it was determined that a key part of our work from 2021-2023 will be in better gathering and understanding the data behind women's and girls cricket across Ireland. This will make more meaningful and tangible metrics to grow the game over the next decade.

However, a number of immediate facts and figures can be reported.

## Participation

**1,582 female players are registered at junior, youth or adult levels**

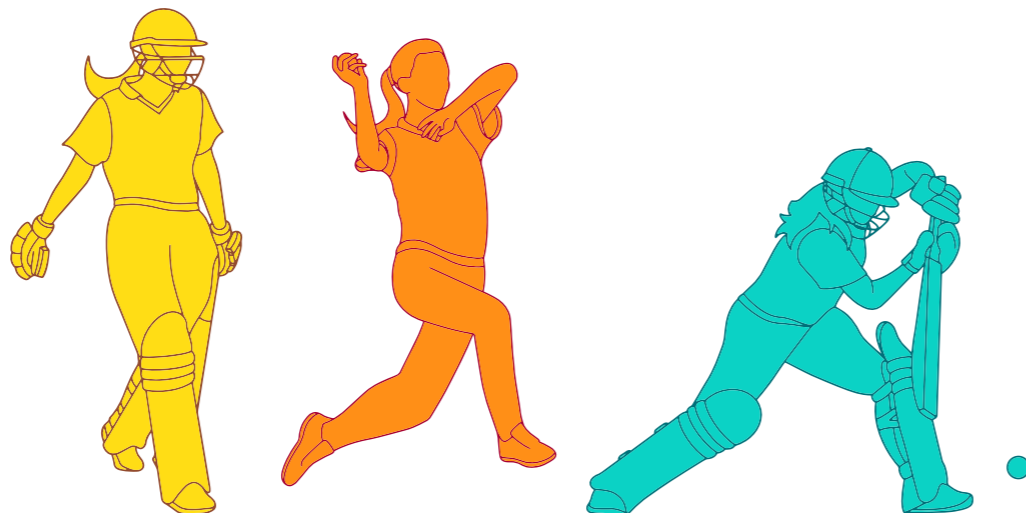
Less than a quarter of cricket clubs across Ireland offer competitive cricket opportunities for girls.



## Performance

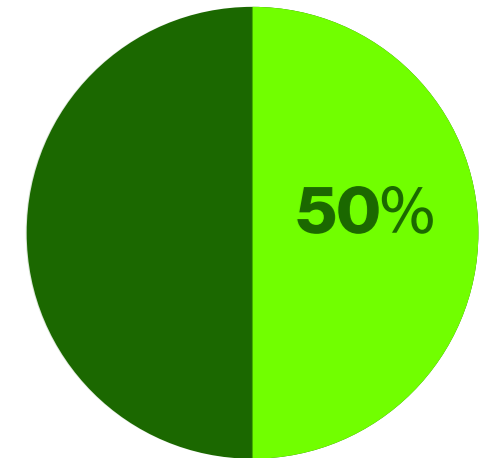
Ireland Women's world rankings  
10th: ODI  
10th: T20I

Player contracts  
7: Retainer contracts  
12: Non-retainer contracts

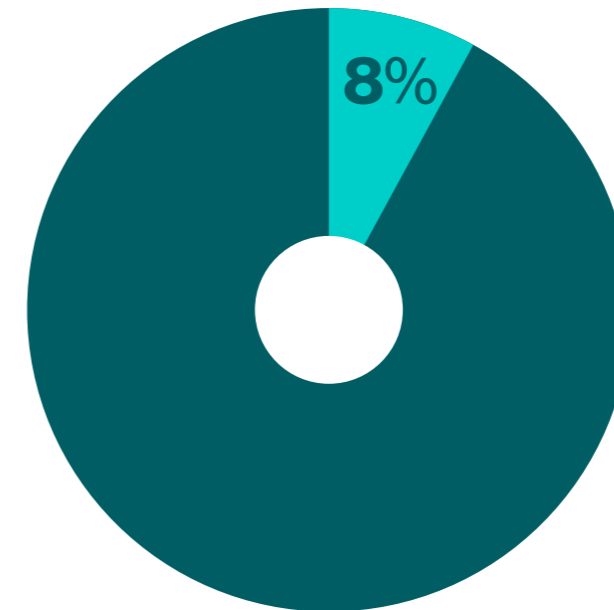


## Irish women's cricket in brief

- c1884:** First full women's side plays
- 1923:** Irish Cricket Union formed
- 1982:** Irish Women's Cricket Union formed
- 1993:** Ireland receives Associate Membership of ICC
- 2001:** Irish Cricket Union amalgamates with Irish Women's Cricket Union
- 2017:** Ireland receives Full Membership



50% of Provincial Unions have a dedicated Women's Development Officer



## 8% female representation

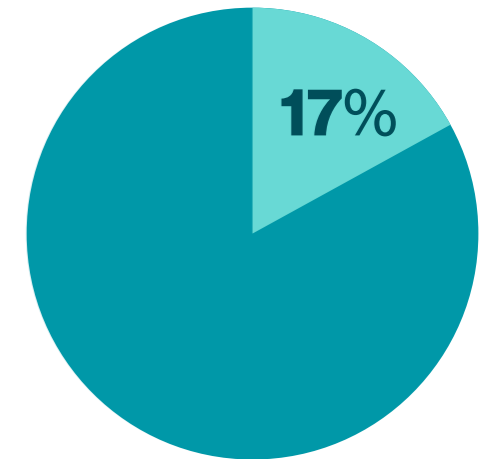
on Boards/Committees (National and Provincial)



**1 x female**  
senior executive within Cricket Ireland (out of five senior executive positions)



**1 x female**  
General Manager of a Provincial Union (out of four unions)



17% of participants on coaching courses are female



**0**  
Currently no all-Ireland club cup competitions for women



## Our Vision

To become the fastest growing sport for women and girls in Ireland

## Our Mission

To build the access, visibility and participation in women's and girls' cricket in order to grow the game across Ireland

## Our Core Principles

- We promote a family ethos and we have fun
- We are an inclusive community
- We are innovative
- We have ambition
- We educate and empower through our sport

## Our Strategic Objectives

By the end of 2023 we aim to:

1. Become recognised as a top 10 sport of choice for girls across Ireland.
2. Develop national programmes to support increased participation and engagement.
3. Achieve a 50% increase in participation numbers nationally.
4. Develop a substantive talent pool of accredited female coaches and officials; implement an online coaching platform with accelerator programmes for women.
5. Meet our female representation targets on boards in line with the National Sports Policy.
6. Qualify for all ICC World Cups, the ICC Women's Championship and Under-19 World Cup.
7. Invest in the women's game through ringfenced funding from commercial sponsorship opportunities and establish a sustainable women's overseas scholarship programme.
8. Significantly increase visibility of women's international and Super Series matches.



## Pillar #1: Grassroots Focus

### What we're aiming to achieve...

1. become a top 10 sport of choice for girls across Ireland
2. develop national programmes to support increased participation and engagement
3. achieve a 50% increase in participation numbers nationally
4. develop a substantive talent pool of accredited female coaches and officials; implement an online coaching platform with accelerator programmes on coaching and officiating for women.

### Actions

We will develop a series of national programmes to support increased girls participation and engagement, targeting various age levels:

- 5-9 years
- 9-13 years
- Adults

**When: by end of 2022**

We will proactively seek joint programming opportunities with the formal education sectors to grow opportunities for female participation and social cricket activities – including partnerships with institutions, LSPs and local government to provide cricket experiences to under-represented communities.

**When: by end of 2023**

We will launch new curriculum-aligned free cricket-themed resources in schools across Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland in partnership with Chance to Shine.

**When: by end of 2021**

We will – under the Club Connects programme – create an annual club symposium specifically around the women's game. These events will invite clubs to share experiences, learn from and form connections with other clubs looking to build the women's side of the game, and to share best practice international examples.

**When: by end of 2022**

We will work in partnership with regional and local stakeholders to create 'clusters' for the women and girls' game (i.e. grouping multiple clubs in a single region to work together to offer junior, youth and senior women and girls cricket).

**When: by end of 2022**

We will work with provincial and local stakeholders to lobby government and local councils to provide high quality public facilities, changing rooms, toilets and other facilities that appropriately cater for women and girls in order to enhance training and playing venues.

**When: by end of 2022**

We will develop accelerated courses and an online training portal to enable the growth of female umpires and match officials, and to grow the number of female and male coaches and match officials specifically trained for participation in women's and girls cricket.

**When: by end of 2023**

We will seek to increase the number of women on umpiring pathways and elite panels, and facilitate overseas experience opportunities for women umpires.

**When: by end of 2023**

We will establish a system of data usage and analysis around the women's game (e.g. insight on coaching numbers, officials etc.) so as to identify gaps and track progress.

**When: by end of 2022**

## Pillar #2: Organisational Transition to Full Membership

### What we're aiming to achieve...

1. target alignment with the Irish Government and Northern Ireland Executive policies regarding female representation on national and provincial boards
2. support clubs in diversifying their gender representation on their committees

### Actions

We will create a substantive position – National Development Manager - that will include coordinating development of the women's game, liaison with provinces, and advocating for the women's game, whilst accountability for the women's game will remain across the entire organisation.

**When: by end of 2021**

We will facilitate opportunities to develop greater female leadership capacity within the women's game through identifying and facilitating training courses and other opportunities for skills development.

**When: by end of 2022**

We will ensure greater gender diversity across its Boards and Committees, in alignment with the Irish Government's National Sports Policy.

**When: by end of 2023**

We will develop and implement a Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy to drive cultural change around a range of issues, including unconscious bias, inclusive leadership and gender-neutral language.

**When: by end of 2021**

We will work with provincial and local stakeholders to actively identify, promote and encourage women to go on panels and Boards, including:

- National, regional and club positions
- Opportunities via the ICC
- Domestic opportunities that may arise via Sport Ireland, Sport Northern Ireland etc.

**When: by end of 2023**





## Pillar #3: Talent & Performance Programmes

### What we're aiming to achieve...

- qualify for all ICC World Cups
- qualify for the ICC Women's Championship in 2022
- qualify for the newly announced Under-19 World Cup
- invest in the women's game through ringfenced funding from commercial sponsorship opportunities
- establish a sustainable Women's overseas scholarship programme

### Actions

We will support the delivery of the current High Performance Strategy (2019-2022) for women's cricket, then develop a new Strategy (from 2023) built around six key focus areas:

- Team/Game Development
- Talent ID & Development
- Coaching
- Performance Services (sports science & medical services)
- Facilities
- Operations and Systems

We will submit an assessment report on the High Performance Strategy (2019-2022) to the Board at its conclusion, including an assessment of outcomes relating to women's cricket, and actions within this Plan.

**When: by end of 2023**

We will develop coaching and officiating opportunities for women at the performance-end of the sport, specifically through the development of coaching courses, exploration of women's coaching development (including in conjunction with other sports), coach accelerator and fast track programmes for female coaches and establishing mentoring opportunities for female players and coaches.

**When: by end of 2023**

We will build out the female player pathway to have a structure including Ireland under-15, under-17 and under-19 to senior teams. Additionally, new investment in the Shapoorji Pallonji Cricket Ireland Academy will see additional coaching hours, and an updated merit-based selection policy implemented.

**When: by end of 2022**

We will explore commercial uplift opportunities for the women's game, through:

- a dedicated programme to attract sponsors for the women's game, with provision for ring-fenced funding to fund growth opportunities; and
- investment of specific assets around the women's game that may appeal to commercial sponsors (e.g. livestreaming, match day experiences, fan engagement).

**When: by end of 2023**

We will focus on attracting and/or maintaining grant funding opportunities with bodies such as Sport Ireland and Sport NI – including seeking to increase investment from Sport Ireland through Women in Sport Grant.

**When: by end of 2021**

We will develop a benchmark report on gender parity of remuneration, support services and support staffing across Irish sport.

**When: by end of 2021**





## Pillar #4: Growth opportunities

### What we're aiming to achieve...

- significantly increase visibility of the women's game through public relations, digital exposure and livestreaming of international and Super Series matches

### Actions

We will build visibility of the international women's game through:

- Doubling in match attendances at women's internationals
- Hosting of home internationals at ODI venues (where feasible)
- Hosting a number of Women's internationals outside of Dublin
- Implementing and supporting livestream of all women's internationals, putting paid spend behind livestream to boost reach
- Building a PR plan to drive domestic awareness and media coverage of women's internationals, and grow the profile of key players.

**When: by end of 2023**

We will commit to a minimum of 20% annual increase in marketing expenditure to support the women's game overall with three aims:

1. grow awareness of women's cricket,
2. grow participation in women and girls cricket at grassroots level, and
3. attract new revenue streams to support the women's game.

**When: by end of 2021**

We will build visibility of the Super Series through:

- Implementation of a new branding and marketing campaign for the competition
- Committing to playing a proportion Super Series matches every season outside Dublin
- Enabling an enhanced livestream service to cover Super Series games

**When: by end of 2023**

We will create an All-Ireland T20 Cup competition for women's club sides around Ireland.

**When: by end of 2021**

Develop a new overseas placement sponsorship programme and attract a sponsor to make sustainable.

**When: by end of 2022**



## Implementation

Following adoption by the Board of Cricket Ireland, and endorsement by Provincial Unions, this plan will be oversighted by the National Development Manager, with:

- engagement to begin with Provincial Unions on a delivery programme; and
- detailed KPIs, targets and timeframes will be established by respective senior management representatives to address the actions under each strategic pillar.

Oversight for outcomes of this plan will reside with:

- Grassroots Cricket Committee to report to the Board on participation-related actions
- High Performance Committee to report to the Board on performance-related actions
- Governance Committee to report to the Board on governance-related actions

Furthermore, a Board Champion will be identified on the Cricket Ireland Board to drive activity and transparency around the implementation of actions.

The Board will receive regular progress and tracking reports at meetings on progress of the Strategy.

### Our thanks

We would like to thank all those who gave their time in the consultation and work around this strategy, including all those who participated in the survey and who attended the consultations.

We would also like to thank the representatives of Cricket Leinster, Northern Cricket Union, North West Cricket Union and Munster Cricket Union who contributed to the development of this strategy.

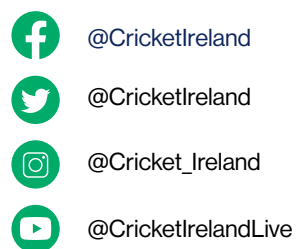
Finally, our thanks to the members of the Women's Working Group for their time in the creation of this strategy:

- Siobhan McBennett
- Clare Shillington
- Angela Platt
- Anne Nolan
- Andrew Fleming
- Jo Hopkins
- Craig Easdown
- Maeve Buckley



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