



# LINCOLN CITY

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**EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION REPORT**

**2023**





WE ARE  
IMPACT





# INTRODUCTION

Lincoln City are committed to ensuring that equality, diversity, and inclusion ('EDI') is championed throughout the Football Club, and integrated as an organisational priority in everything that we do.

As a club, we are looking to constantly progress with the work that we do across the community, be that through the Foundation, Player visits, the matchday experience or the provision of facilities that are accessible to all community groups in Lincolnshire.

Lincoln City Football Club and Foundation (our official, independent charity) work closely together to ensure that all aspects of EDI are considered an operational priority and embedded within everything that we do. Staff are provided with access to a wide range of training to increase knowledge across the workforce, our disabled liaison officer is on hand on matchdays to ensure that help and guidance is always on hand for supporters visiting the LNER Stadium, and a range of activities regularly take place across the county and on the LNER Stadium footprint.

Fan engagement is important to our club, as we regularly consult with our numerous supporter groups as well as the Fan Advisory Board, and we are set to launch our external EDI group who will consult directly with the club's internal EDI group on a frequent basis.

This report acts as a review of the 2022/23 season. It includes a selection of case studies and looks forward to what we are implementing as we move forward.

**Liam Scully**  
Chief executive





# EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION PLEDGE

Lincoln City recognises that, historically, the traditional football supporter environment has sometimes been labelled a barrier to allowing everyone to fully enjoy the football fan experience and has not been perceived as wholly inclusive.

Nevertheless, everyone at Lincoln City is committed to promoting a continuous and proactive approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and will actively champion and celebrate difference by welcoming supporters from across the community.

As evidence of this commitment, Lincoln City was the first EFL club to establish an (originally) designated female supporter group – Lady Imps Supporters Association (LISA) – which was established in 2017 and remains a valued member of the Lincoln City family.

Today LISA helps to promote the inclusivity and diversity of the fan base, irrespective of gender, and actively encourages more families to attend fixtures together. Lincoln City also recognises that it has a social responsibility to lead the way in encouraging more young females to get involved in sport.







# OUR PLEDGE

## LINCOLN CITY FC WILL

- Abolish the use of gender stereotypical terminology – for example by replacing the traditional term ‘ball boys’ with matchday ball assistants.
- Continue to collect and review equality monitoring data to measure the impact of inclusivity messaging and communication campaigns.
- Promote best practice of corporate and social responsibility by ensuring its partners and sponsors celebrate and welcome equality, diversity, and inclusivity among matchday guests.
- Use imagery and video which showcases diversity across its fan base, alongside the workforce, stakeholders, and partners.
- Only support campaigns that demonstrate integrity in line with their own pledges, and where participation will have a long-term impact.
- Actively promote opportunities for female sports participation.
- Ensure regular and engaging communications with its stakeholders.
- Create and celebrate an inclusive environment by endorsing the non-acceptance of all forms of hate crime, misogyny, and all other forms of discrimination.





# EDI OBJECTIVES

## LINCOLN CITY FC WILL

- Ensure services are accessible and welcoming to all individuals and communities.
- Employ a modern and diverse workforce and promote an organisational culture that values and cultivates diversity.
- Celebrate and promote the diversity of our participants, staff, and
- Prioritise equality, diversity, and inclusion based on evidence to help address key issues facing individuals and communities.





# EDI STEERING GROUP

Our internal EDI steering group, known as the Social and Ethics Committee (SEC) meet regularly to discuss and implement ways of improvement across the club. Listed below, the group is made up of individuals from a range of departments and includes members of the club's board and Foundation.

- Martin Hickerton – chief executive (Lincoln City Foundation) & SEC chair
- Clive Nates – chairman, Lincoln City FC
- Matthew Murgett – head of governance & compliance, Lincoln City FC
- Richard Parnell – director of legal and football administration, Lincoln City FC
- Damian Froggatt – director of operations, Lincoln City FC
- Alex Bavin – director of quality and development, Lincoln City Foundation
- David Lipschitz – key investor, Lincoln City FC
- Herman Kok – director, Lincoln City FC
- Rob Noble – head of supporter services, Lincoln City FC
- Pauline Tait – trustee (EDI), Lincoln City Foundation





# STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS

The club conduct annual surveys of staff and supporters along with job applicants relating to equality, diversity and inclusion. This data, which is submitted anonymously, is a key part of the club's formation and adaptation of policies and initiatives\*.

- 34.1% of staff are female
- 42.9% of the club's board are from an ethnically diverse community.
- 9.8% of staff have a physical or mental condition/illness.
- 17.6% of matchday spectators are female.
- 14.87% of matchday spectators have a physical or mental condition/illness.
- 1% of matchday spectators are from an ethnically diverse community.

*Figures are based on returned monitoring forms from staff, board members and spectators*





# COLLEAGUE TRAINING

As a club, we recognise how important it is that our staff have access to regular training and development opportunities to enable them to enhance their knowledge so that they can progress professionally and personally. This in turn improves the overall experience for our supporters and community members. Our staff training is continually developing and improving in a number of different important areas, particularly with regards to the experience of supporters and participants across the Club, and over the past year:

- Staff have been able to access training, facilitated by Lincolnshire County Council, which covers mental health and dementia awareness training.
- Staff continue to engage with the EFL to complete the Playing for Inclusion course.
- Staff have access to the Police training course in counter-terrorism, called ACT/PROTECT awareness.
- Staff have access to Beyond Autism's 'Introduction to Autism' course.
- Foundation staff have access to the FLICK learning portal, which contains a vast array of modules for them to upskill and develop their knowledge and progression.





# MEET OUR DLO

Many of City's supporters will know Heidi Langham well, she has been at the club for a number of years, and her work and knowledge is vital to ensuring that the matchday experience for supporters is as good as it can be.

Heidi's base on a matchday is inside the ticket office, and she is there to answer any questions that supporters may have regarding accessibility – as well as providing a helping hand should you need it.

Outside of a matchday, Heidi is an important point of contact for the Club as we continue to develop our policies and initiatives going forward, to continue to create a matchday that we can all be proud of. Heidi can be contacted by supporters by email at [DLO@theredimps.com](mailto:DLO@theredimps.com).







## **MEET OUR SLOS**

Heidi is part of a wider Supporter Liaison Officer (SLO) group who are dedicated to ensuring a positive matchday experience for all fans. Along with Alan Long,

Libby White, Kev Morley, and Lindsey Warwick they provide much-needed engagement for home and away supporters and provide opposition clubs with all visitor information they may require with stadium announcements, pre-match activity and helping guests with the matchday experience. Our SLOs can be reached on social media, via @LCFCSLO on 'X'.



# REPORTING DISCRIMINATION

We encourage supporters to report any discrimination or anti-social behaviour which they may encounter, be that at a match or online. You may have recently noticed that we have included reporting QR codes on teamsheets and on posters around the ground which signpost the best ways to contact us:

## Reporting on matchday:

If you witness or hear any anti-social or discriminatory behaviour on a matchday, please report this to us on our Safe Text service via 07718 483367 (standard message rates apply), or by email via [feedback@theredimps.com](mailto:feedback@theredimps.com). Incidents can be reported to a steward or other member of club staff. Our stewards are trained to be confident in a range of situations which could occur on a matchday, and are always there to help should you need it. You can also report incidents via the free Kick it Out app.

## Reporting social media activity:

We encourage supporters to report any incidents witnessed on social media platforms that directly affect Lincoln City Football Club, staff, players or supporters by email to [feedback@theredimps.com](mailto:feedback@theredimps.com) (including incident details and/or screenshots where possible). We advise not to engage with any of these accounts, but to report the post to the relevant social media platform and block the user/account from any further contact.

## Ways to report to Lincoln City Football Club:

Email: [feedback@theredimps.com](mailto:feedback@theredimps.com) or [mmur@theredimps.com](mailto:mmur@theredimps.com)

Telephone: 07908 829499 (Matthew Murgett, head of governance and compliance)

Contact Kick it Out (0800 169 9414) or the Football Association (0800 085 0508)

Via the free Kick it Out app.







# SUPPORTER GROUPS

We work alongside amazing people throughout our community. So many of these people support the club to ensure that we can have greater representation at matches, with their input shaping the way the club works, and ensuring the matchday experience is as enjoyable and accessible as possible.

## **Lady Imps Supporters Association**

Founded in March 2017 to encourage and enhance the experience of supporters and encourage diversity and family attendance.

## **Lincoln City Disabled Supporters Association**

Recently founded, this association will work alongside the Club and external advisors to ensure that education of needs, and improvements in accessibility are achieved.

## **617 Squadron**

Founded in December 2011, the 617 Squadron play a vital role in improving the matchday atmosphere at home and away games.





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## **The Red Imps Community Trust**

Formed in 2001, The Red Imps Community Trust has more than 5,000 members (including 150+ ex-players), who own more than one million shares in the club and arrange a wide variety of functions, often alongside other fan groups linked to the club. The Trust also regularly meets with the Club's chief executive Liam Scully to discuss a wide variety of issues, often with a focus on the matchday experience.

## **Fan Advisory Board**

A voice for supporters within the Club, and formed in 2018, the Fan Advisory Board's input on non-Footballing matters is important in terms of strategy, finances, and other Club-related matters.





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## **Imptoons**

Lincoln City cartoons and artwork, Imptoons is a fan-driven club sponsor that regularly raises money to support the club and local area. Chris Wray, founder of Imptoons, often collaborates with the club and Foundation on products or matchday activities.

## **The Stacey West Blog**

Fan-Led website, YouTube channel and podcast dedicated to covering our club and providing the latest news, views, and opinion.

## **Vital Lincoln City**

Fan forum, where supporters can discuss the club, and a range of related topics, with their fellow supporters online.







# CASE STUDIES

## TEAM TALK

Team Talk is our mental health programme for people aged over 16. We provide safe spaces and physical activity sessions to help break down the barriers that prevent people from asking for help, whilst also offering a network of social support. This year our Team Talk project focused on raising awareness of the importance of maintaining positive wellbeing and advocating asking for help. We held events in conjunction with East Midlands Railway and home matchdays, in addition to delivering numerous workshops and presentations at Lincolnshire businesses.

## FIGHTING FIT

Fighting Fit is our physical activity programme designed to support people living with or recovering from cancer. The programme aims to help individuals to maintain or increase physical activity levels, whilst also allowing individuals to connect with people with shared experiences and gain peer-to-peer support.





# CASE STUDIES

## EXTRA TIME HUB

Our Extra Time Hub programme is designed to increase social interaction and physical activity for older adults, aiming to bring people together, enabling them to feel less isolated, live well, and do things they enjoy.

## ENGLISH IN THE COMMUNITY

Our English in the Community project aims to provide accessible English language provision for non-native speakers. The project seeks to improve the communication skills and confidence of migrant residents and their ability to fulfil their potential for employment and integrate successfully into communities.





# CASE STUDIES

## TWINNING PROJECT

The Twinning Project is a partnership between HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and the Foundation which aims to engage prisoners in a football-based programme to improve their mental and physical wellbeing and offer a potential employment pathway.

## GREEN LEADERS

This year we delivered our first Green Leaders project, a five-day programme which aimed to develop young people's sustainability, leadership, and creativity skills. The programme proved to be much more for the young people involved, with a number continuing to explore green projects in collaboration with the Foundation and club.







# CASE STUDIES

## NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE

National Citizen Service (NCS) is aimed at 16-17-year-olds providing a bespoke programme that promotes social mixing, supports the transition into adulthood, and enables social action projects to be delivered in local communities. This year the Foundation offered various NCS programmes across summer, as well as a tailored programme in partnership with Lincoln College.

## VOLUNTEERS & SINCIL BANK COMMUNITY

Volunteers are vital to the longevity of all funded programmes at the Foundation. Volunteers working alongside staff give those staff members an opportunity to provide a better quality, more attentive ratio at sessions. Some of our sessions are also volunteer-led, with Foundation staff support. Volunteers enable us to expand and diversify our offerings and without volunteers we would be limited to what we can deliver. Our community work in the Sincil Bank area of Lincoln aims to create positive change by enabling local people to shape the future of their place. We support and empower residents to undertake social action to create the neighbourhood change they want to see.

