



**Innovation during the Covid-19 pandemic:  
Volunteers and voluntary sports  
organisations in England**

## **Case Study 8: Increasing volunteer inclusion and diversity**

**Research report for Sport England**

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# Case Study 8:

## Increasing volunteer inclusion and diversity

**Sport:** Cricket

**Size of club:** 300

**No of volunteers:** Unknown for whole club, although 5 female volunteers for girls group

**Own premises/land:** No, lease playing field from an independent school

**Age Range:** 5-75

**Paid staff:** Coaches

### What is the innovation?

The club created a new role of 'team manager' for its girls' cricket sessions. The role was created to assist the team coach with non-coaching aspects of delivery and offer general support and assistance to the girls. The club encouraged Mums and other females to fill these roles, even if they did not know anything about the sport of cricket.

### Why was this innovation implemented?

The role was created to ensure Covid-19 requirements were adhered to. In particular, there was a requirement to operate coaching sessions in small groups and to enforce hand sanitising and social distance rules. Furthermore, the new role was designed to recruit more women as volunteers and raise the profile of women within the sport.

### What impact did this innovation have on the club as a whole?

The involvement of more women as team managers has created a positive, nurturing and supportive role for the girls in the cricket team.

### What impact did this innovation have on sports volunteers?

The innovation helped to recruit new female volunteers for the club. It has also increased the 'visibility of women in the game' and helped to overcome the perception that cricket is 'a dad's game'.

*"More women are now saying 'ah there is a role for me to play here, okay, let me get involved'."*

### What were the challenges faced when implementing this innovation?

There was some resistance from established coaches and other volunteers who felt that team managers should know more about the sport. Since cricket has hitherto been a male dominated sport, much of this resistance came from male

club members. The challenge was overcome by making the team manager a supportive role, not a coaching role.

### What prevented this innovation from happening before Covid-19 restrictions?

There was a desire to create a similar role prior to Covid-19, however there was uncertainty about how to implement it. The requirement for small group sessions provided a window of opportunity to introduce the change.

*"It was something I had been thinking about, but I didn't know how. How would I go about it? How do I manage it? But because there was this whole concept of bubbles, it was 'Oh, wow, that's how I'll do it'. It's only a limited number in the bubble and so that's how I'm going to do it....If there was no pandemic, I think it would have just been a concept, and it would have been 'ah, we'll think about this'."*



## **Eight short case studies that showcase innovative practices in sports volunteering:**

**Case Study 1: Introducing technology to enhance participation**

**Case Study 2: Forming buddy groups to enhance engagement**

**Case Study 3: Using a survey of members to spark modernisation**

**Case Study 4: Using social media to attract new members**

**Case Study 5: Purchasing own land to offer an outdoor format of the sport**

**Case Study 6: Getting involved in the local community**

**Case Study 7: Implementing club membership management app**

**Case Study 8: Increasing Volunteer Inclusion and Diversity**