

Background & Approach

The *Learn Before Wicket* (LBW) Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) education programme was launched in January 2023. It was developed in response to:

- Feedback from previous PCA player surveys
- Insights gathered through Personal Development Manager (PDM) conversations
- Findings from the ECB Dressing Room Culture Capture review

Programme Objectives

The LBW series was designed to empower, support and provide both players and coaching staff the skills and knowledge to:

- ✓ Embrace diversity and promote equity and equality
- ✓ Foster inclusive behaviours within the cricket dressing room
- ✓ Enhance their understanding through open and meaningful conversations in a safe space
- ✓ Challenge perceptions and unconscious/conscious biases
- ✓ Promoting respectful behaviours and empowering individuals to address inappropriate conduct

Delivery

To contextualise the content and delivery, the programme referenced findings from the [Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket \(ICEC\)](#) report, ensuring relevance and resonance with participants.

The LBW series offered seven topic areas. Players were invited to select two sessions from a menu based on team interest and learning gaps and the third session, **'Shifting the Dial'**, focused on anti-discrimination was mandatory for all participants. Each academy selected one session from the same menu:

1. Inclusive Language
2. Faith & Religion
3. Allyship
4. Intersectionality
5. Unconscious bias v Conscious bias
6. LGBTQ+ Inclusion
7. Disability Inclusion

To maximise engagement while accommodating player training/game schedules, the sessions were arranged via the respective club Directors of Cricket and the EDI Leads and the sessions were delivered in person, lasting between 90 minutes and 2 hours.

The LBW series was aligned with **Recommendation 5** of the ICEC report, which calls for:

- Mandatory, high-quality racial literacy training for senior leadership within six months
- Ongoing education to build EDI leadership competency across the game

Although the recommendations within the report targets ECB leadership, the PCA proactively extended this commitment to its members, ensuring education was embedded across the professional game and for its employees.

Historically, the PCA's player education initiatives have focused solely on players. However, the *Learn Before Wicket* (LBW) series marked a significant shift by actively encouraging the participation of coaches and support staff. This inclusive approach aimed to foster shared understanding, promote open dialogue, and support the development of inclusive team cultures.

Facilitators and Inclusion Champions

The LBW series was delivered with the support of experienced external facilitators and PCA Inclusion Champions (former and current players):

- **LGBTQ+ Inclusion** – Lachlan Smith & Leo Skyner ([Out4Cricket](#))
- **Faith & Religion** – Harun Rashid ([Nujum Sports](#))
- **Anti-Discrimination: Shifting the Dial** – Khembe Clarke & Phil Newman (*Senior EDI Consultants*, [AKD Solutions](#))
- **PCA Inclusion Champions** – David Thompson, Arul Suppiah, Gemaal Hussain, Abi Sakande, Nancy Harman, Georgia Elwiss and Alex Tudor
- **Player Support** – Jahid Ahmed (Anti-Discrimination: *Shifting the Dial* only)

Sustained Engagement and Behavioural Change

To ensure lasting impact:

- Each club engaged with the delivery team on three occasions, enabling the measurement of behavioural change and empowering captains to continue the dialogue within their teams.
- Post-workshop feedback surveys informed the continuous improvement of session content and delivery.
- Two months after the *Shifting the Dial* workshops, follow-up sessions were held with the EDI Lead, Director of Cricket, and team captains. These sessions evaluated team progress based on a self-assessment task focused on becoming anti-discriminatory and moving into the “Growth Zone.”

Key Findings

1) Topic Selection Trends

- *Series 1:* The most selected topic was **Inclusive Language**.
- *Series 2:* **Allyship** and **Unconscious Bias vs Conscious Bias** were the most selected.
- *Disability Inclusion* was not selected by any club.

2) Engagement through Former Players

The involvement of our Inclusion Champions in delivering sessions significantly improved engagement, as current players found them relatable and credible.

3) Communication Challenges

In some clubs, poor communication between EDI Leads, Directors of Cricket (DOCs), Head Coaches, and players led to:

- *Players being unaware of sessions*
- *Last-minute training schedule changes*
- *Coaching/support staff either absent or disengaged*
- *Conflicting education sessions reducing LBW session time*

4) Academy Engagement

Communication and engagement at academy level were notably smooth, with strong participation from both players and support staff.

5) Mixed Sessions

Where there was an appetite, sessions were delivered to both men's and women's teams together. These sessions revealed:

- *Women were generally more receptive and constructively challenging*
- *Some men were less engaged, but the sessions prompted valuable peer-to-peer learning and awareness*

6) Negative Influences

On a few occasions, coaching/support staff shared personal views that conflicted with the session's purpose, negatively influencing player engagement.

7) Awareness Gaps

- Some players and staff were unaware of the **ICEC Report**

- Some players and coaching staff demonstrated a reluctance or lack of awareness in adopting more inclusive language, which is essential for fostering a respectful and harmonious team environment.
- Misconceptions about anti-discrimination were evident, with comments such as “racism doesn’t exist”

Attendance Overview

Series	Players	Coaching/Support Staff	Notes
1	400	67	<i>Includes Sunrisers & Middlesex combined session</i>
2	378	70	<i>Includes Sunrisers & Middlesex combined and Lancashire and Thunder combined</i>
3	360	40	<i>Excludes Northamptonshire – to be delivered in 2026</i>
Academies	133	17	<i>Includes 3 female players</i>

Additional Sessions

- Sussex requested a fourth LBW session focused on **LGBTQ+ Inclusion**.
- Essex received a fourth LBW session on **Anti-discrimination** specifically for coaching and support staff, who had not attended the player sessions.

Future Evaluation

The PCA will as usual conduct a player survey in 2026 which will include a question about EDI education to assess the long-term impact of the *Learn Before Wicket* (LBW) series. This will help determine whether the programme has contributed to a more inclusive dressing room culture across the professional game compared to previous survey results.

Conclusions

The LBW series has contributed to positive cultural shifts and good practices within several clubs. However, progress is hindered in some areas by influential individuals both players and staff who either lack understanding or resist EDI education, whether intentionally or not.

Recognising that each club is at a different stage in its understanding of anti-discrimination, the third instalment of the LBW series, **‘Shifting the Dial’** was designed to help individuals reflect on their current mindset and behaviours. The objective was to support participants in identifying the "zone" they currently operate in, enabling them to take meaningful, incremental steps toward eliminating discrimination within the game.



Feedback from facilitators and participants highlights the need for continued, targeted education particularly for coaching staff. While some felt two-hour sessions were too long, others found them insufficient for deeper discussions.

Recommendations

1. **Continue EDI education** across all levels of the professional game.
2. **Schedule sessions in the morning** to optimise attendance and engagement.
3. **Deliver separate sessions** for players and coaching/support staff to maximise impact.
4. **Implement six-monthly follow-up calls** with the EDI Lead, captain, Director of Cricket and Head Coach to monitor progress.
5. **Ensure consistent messaging** from the ECB and PCA, reinforcing that EDI education is a professional responsibility.

Club Spotlight

AKD Solutions identified two clubs as demonstrating exemplary behaviours in their *Shifting the Dial* session. Participation at Durham CCC and Leicestershire CCC were constructive, insightful, and aligned with the programme's objectives.

Durham Men & Women

"Encouraged Durham to share their unique approach to widening participation and best practice which I think could benefit other clubs and wider cricket." **Khembe Clarke, AKD Solutions**

Leicestershire Men

“From the outset, the session was positive, with strong engagement from participants throughout... the culture within Leicestershire CCC allowed for open discussion. This was underpinned by the presence of senior leadership, including Cricket Operations Manager Dan Nice and Director of Cricket Claude Henderson, both of whom were proactive and supportive of the discussion.” Phil Newman, AKD Solutions

Club Reflections on Inclusion and Cultural Change – Claude Henderson, Director of Cricket, Leicestershire County Cricket Club

Post-ICEC Report Challenges and Responses - *“Following the publication of the ICEC report, one of the key challenges identified was a lack of understanding of the diverse backgrounds and personal journeys of individuals within the club. This gap was addressed through intentional relationship-building and improved communication, which has significantly strengthened internal awareness and cohesion.”*

Positive Changes Since LBW

Implementation – *“Since the first Learn Before Wicket (LBW) session, the club environment has evolved into one that is more transparent, respectful, and culturally curious. This shift has fostered stronger team unity and contributed to the development of a positive and inclusive team culture. The club plans to continue measuring progress through ongoing dialogue and observation of team dynamics.”*



Pride in Inclusive Culture – *“The club takes great pride in the visible support and camaraderie among its members. Witnessing individuals come together to support one another through both challenges and successes is seen as a key indicator of the inclusive culture being embedded.”*

Dan Nice, Cricket Operations Manager, Leicestershire County Cricket Club

“I think we have created a culture and atmosphere that people enjoy being a part of, and when new players join, they settle in very quickly and are happy with the things away from cricket that then makes playing and training that bit easier.

Also I have had the pleasure with working with so many good people who instantly share their values and methods and add to the changing room environment. We appreciate that sometimes it is challenging for new players because of all of the arrangements that go into moving to a new club, including experienced county players who may be making a move for the first time, or have spent a long time at another county. We understand it can be difficult for overseas players when they first join too with complex logistics involved. We don't take anything for granted and ensure everyone is treated with equity and welcomed into our environment. We're also only a message or call away if anything is needed, and welcome people on site for the first time, and show them around the venue and rooms. Also everyone has a voice. We welcome families to join us as we appreciate it is important for partners and children, and other family members, to be a big part of the club too. I'll never forget the scenes when we won the Metro Bank One Day Cup Final at Trent Bridge, with everyone together in one room, including family and friends. It will be my main memory when I leave in a few weeks. I'm proud that people have observed that we have something special here.”