

# Breaking Down Barriers

For underserved, lower socio economic groups

**Quote: Streetgames**

*“Breaking down barriers recognises the vital importance of local People planning Together, leading Tennis provision in their own communities and contributing to The LTA’s vision of ‘tennis opened up.’*

*Streetgames is delighted that the plan values the importance of supporting local people to grow and thrive as players, leaders, volunteers and coaches. Streetgames is committed to working Closely with the LTA, as we have for many years on the inspirational LTA SERVES programme, to implement this ground breaking plan for the Future of the game.”*

## Introducing our plan

For underserved, lower socio economic groups

**Tennis Opened Up is focussed on making the sport accessible to anyone regardless of age, gender, background, ability or disability and our Inclusion Strategy identifies further action we are taking to open the sport up.**

As a result, we made it a central motivation of ours to break down barriers wherever they exist, and to open up our sport to more people, not least children and young people from lower socio-economic groups. In doing this, we want to change hearts and minds in the process. As the guardian of tennis right across Britain, we want to ensure tennis is seen by all, regardless of background, as Relevant, Accessible, Welcoming and Enjoyable.

Our plan for underserved, lower socioeconomic groups is the second individual action plan that cover a range of ambitions relating to inclusion. Our plan in this area follows the release of our She Rallies women in tennis ambition earlier in 2022 – and, strategically, it aligns with other work being done across the Sport for Development sector, including the UK Government’s Levelling Up and Sport England’s Uniting the Movement Strategies.

The She Rallies and underserved lower socio-economic ambitions contribute towards us achieving the ultimate goal of our overall Inclusion Strategy that we launched in 2021 - to create a culture of everyday inclusion in tennis and ensure our sport reflects the diversity of the communities it serves.

**Quote:**

*We believe it's more important than ever to support underserved communities and provide a firm foundation for more people from more backgrounds to try this incredible sport."*

With this plan, we aim to address some of the stubborn inequalities that exist within our sport. We are determined to get our sport to a place where people involved in tennis – whether they be players, volunteers or those working in the sport – truly reflect the diverse communities across Britain. It also aims to address the disparity between different socioeconomic groups and their engagement in sport and physical activity – people in lower socio-economic groups are the most likely to be inactive (at just 33%) and the least likely to be active (at just 52% vs. 71% for the more higher socio-economic groups).\*

Inflation in the UK has reached its highest rate for 30 years, and with a cost of living crisis emerging following the Covid-19 pandemic, we are aware that, historically, tough economic times have resulted in a decline in sports and physical activity. That is why we believe it's more important than ever to support underserved communities and provide a firm foundation for more people from more backgrounds to try this incredible sport.

We are proud to be doing something ground-breaking and impactful in opening up tennis to the children and young people from underserved, lower socioeconomic groups, particularly through the LTA SERVES programme. LTA SERVES addresses economic inequalities by taking tennis to underserved communities and places it has not been played before, including youth clubs, community centres, church halls and faith centres. It has so far seen around 38,000 children and young people pick up a racket, many for the first time, with 80% of participants coming from the 40% most deprived areas in the country. At the end of this plan we have set out a number of actions to address the issues that have been identified and further open up tennis to all communities.

\*According to Sport England's Active Lives Children Survey (October 2021)

- It's widely recognised that 12 million people in England are in a lower socio-economic group
- Even before the pandemic, 4.3 million children were living in poverty

## **The tennis landscape: The way things are**

## **How tennis fares with the current underserved community situation in the UK**

**Tennis is under-representative with the infrastructure and opportunities available in most deprived areas of the country:**

- ONLY 17% of LTA registered venues are within IMDs 1-4 (40% would be the representative figure)
- ONLY 16% of LTA accredited coaches live in IMDs 1-4 (40% would be the representative figure)
- ONLY 12% of juniors competing 1+ match live in IMDs 1-4 (40% would be the representative figure)
- 35% of teachers trained on LTA schools are within IMDs 1-4 (40% would be the representative figure)

**In 2021 – Tennis and Adult participation across UK demographics:**

- Yearly play amongst ABC1s is 82% higher than that of C2Des at 8.0% and 4.4% respectively
- Monthly play amongst ABC1s is 67% higher than that of C2Des at 3.0% and 1.8% respectively
- Weekly play amongst ABC1s is 133% higher than that of C2Des at 1.4% and 0.6% respectively
- 20.7% of ABC1s have never played tennis vs 31.2% of C2Des

C2DE adult participation saw some of the largest YOY decreases in participation in 2021 vs 2020

**In 2021 – Tennis and Kids' participation across UK demographics:**

- Yearly play amongst ABC1s is 21% higher than that of C2Des at 41.7% and 34.4% respectively
- Monthly play amongst ABC1s is 56% higher than that of C2Des at 15.3% and 9.8% respectively
- Weekly play amongst ABC1s is 70% higher than that of C2Des at 6.3% and 3.7% respectively
- Participation in frequent play categories has increased faster among kids in AB households compared to other groups

## **Demographic Groups:**

- ABC1: Upper middle class, middle class and lower middle class
- C2DE: Skilled working class and working class

## **Factors affecting lower levels of activity:**

It's hard for sport to be high on your priority list when there are choices to be made in your household between putting food on the table and paying a utility bill.

Many people within underserved communities find it difficult to travel outside their immediate locality and for children and young people this is typically about one mile or less. This is for a number of reasons including: cultural traditions; access to and cost of transport; and, in some cases the fear of being a victim of crime. This obviously isn't the case for all children and young people targeted through this plan but it is certainly on the increase and a reality for many. Families are often deeply rooted in their local communities, having been so for generation after generation. Post Codes matter.

The perceived need for 'formal' dress code and equipment can prove a barrier for both males and females, and for some females, their faith / culture may require single sex sessions and consideration of dress code.

In some communities, there are structural, environmental and individual factors that make being active less of a 'social norm'.

### **Quote:**

*"On average, low-income households typically spend around £3.75 on active sport a week. The National average is around £12.67."*

Sport England's Active Lives Children and Young People data shows that children and young people from less affluent families are less likely to agree that they 'understand why exercise is good for me', 'know how to get involved and improve skills', 'feel confident when playing sport' and 'enjoy taking part'.

In addition, The Food Foundation found that our current food environments do not support healthy dietary choices, particularly in low-income areas. The density of fast-food outlets is greater in more deprived areas and choices are influenced by factors like household income, price of food and promotions such as buy one get one free or discounted offers.

Perception can be an issue, too, with views of traditional sport being that it is intimidating, expensive and not fun – true in some cases, not in all. Sense of belonging is a big factor – people will not engage if they feel they do not

belong to the sport and do not see people like them, hence the need for welcoming environments and loosening traditional outdated perceptions e.g., white middle class or have to play on a tennis court.

Teachers, coaches or leaders can and do often play a big part in influencing and encouraging children and young people from underserved, lower socio-economic backgrounds to get involved in sport in some cases where the parent is not sporty or interested:

- A long-term habit is most likely to be formed from a solid foundation set as a child.
- Negative experiences in young childhood can lead to an alienation from sport in adulthood.
- Many parents do have hopes and aspirations for their children, and they're not always framed around avoiding negative outcomes and situations.

And then there's COVID-19. The pandemic has disproportionality impacted people in lower socio-economic groups (partly due to the above average likelihood that they'll be key workers) and this in turn has widened the inequality gap further since pre-pandemic.

## **Some common misconceptions and mistakes engaging underserved, lower socio-economic groups:**

- There is often unconscious bias, albeit mostly well-intentioned, from people and organisations trying to engage with lower socioeconomic groups – not just in the sports industry.
- Firstly, too often lower socio-economic groups are treated as one group, but it's 12 million individuals.
- People in a lower socio-economic group are not all 'at risk' – quite often the extreme end of the spectrum is focussed on, when in reality most people face supply side factors such as lack of appropriate, local provision.
- Children and young people from lower socio-economic groups backgrounds are often perceived as being a "problem to be solved" or in other negative ways'.
- Organisations often consider economic status as being the sole issue, at the expense of others.
- Parachuting into a community with a short-term programme, delivered by 'outsiders', or programmes being 'done to' the community rather than 'with' often creates resentment and can be more damaging than not doing anything at all.

- There are individuals and groups from communities that want to play sport on an informal basis with friends and family in accessible places and spaces - not attend a community organisation or venue that deliver sports sessions to them as part of an intervention or programme.
- Language matters. Phrases such as 'hard to reach' and 'disadvantaged' are unhelpful and now deemed unacceptable. People within underserved, lower socio-economic and other targeted groups are not 'hard to reach', rather the services being provided are hard to reach, or not provided in a way which is attractive to those groups. See Appendix 2.

## **Intersectionality:\***

**As referenced above, it would be wrong to consider the 12m people that fall within LSEG as one, homogenous group, as the following points on intersectionality and other demographic groups highlight:**

- **Ethnicity:** There's a higher proportion of Black and South Asian people in lower socio-economic groups than any other ethnic group. They are also more likely to be inactive, regardless of their socio-economic background. However, when you look at both ethnicity and socioeconomic group together, there are differences.
- **Disability:** Roughly 31% of people in lower socio-economic groups are disabled/have a long term health condition, compared to 21% of all adults as a whole. People in lower socio-economic groups are more likely to be inactive, regardless of whether they have a limiting disability or not.
- **Age:** There are differences in how people of different ages engage with sport and physical activity across the socio-economic groups. Amongst people in high and middle socio-economic groups (NS-SEC 1-5), there is little difference in the rate of inactivity between the 16-24 age group and the 25-54 age groups. But the lower socioeconomic groups (NS-SEC 6-8) show a rise in inactivity levels once you move into the 25-54 age groups.
- **Gender:** 54.6% of the 12m people within underserved, lower socio-economic groups are female, with 45.4% being male. Girls transitioning to secondary school are much more likely to develop mental health problems than boys and experience shows a targeted approach may be needed in some instances (i.e. women/girl only sessions).

The statistics above are provided by Sport England.

\*Intersectionality is when two demographics, each with members who are less likely to participate for different reasons, overlap, which can have a significant multiplier effect on their likelihood to participate.

**Quote:**

*“Whether it’s venues, coaches, teachers or juniors playing, tennis fares poorly with participation amongst deprived populations – that has to change.”*

# LTA SERVES

**Our industry leading Sport for Development Programme that supports children and young people from the most deprived areas across England, Scotland and Wales.**

At the heart of the LTA’s Tennis Opened Up vision is the need to take tennis into the heart of local communities to people who may have never picked up a racket or thought tennis was for them. From Community Centres to Youth Clubs, Mosques to Gurdwaras, Mandirs to Church Halls, Housing Associations and other venues, our LTA SERVES Programme aims to encourage and engage children and young people aged 4 – 18 years to get active and involved in tennis. It’s about having fun with friends, keeping mentally and physically fit all the while learning new skills and increasing their self-confidence, knowledge on health and wellbeing and encouraging community cohesion. This, in turn, supports and empowers children and young people to develop as individuals and in tennis, learning life skills well beyond the tennis court.

Children and young people in these communities often face higher levels of crime, poorer health and well-being, lower educational attainment, and less access to skills and training and face higher levels of unemployment. Delivering the programme through trusted and respected community leaders themselves (volunteers, leaders and youth workers aged 16 and above) – rather than the approach of parachuting in tennis coaches in from a nearby tennis club – the programme is predominantly, although not exclusively, managed through trusted, expert partners such as Street Games.

- 14,000 monthly players

## **Our social impact toolkit themes:**

- Increase an individual’s self-confidence
- Increase knowledge of health & wellbeing
- Boost community cohesion
- The LTA SERVES programme is currently live in 391 venues (77% of which are in IMDs 1-4)

A key element of LTA SERVES is an income generation service, which supports community organisations running the programme, with expertise and practical help to become more financially sustainable. Over £3.2m of external funding has been generated since 2017 (with 70% being invested back into tennis) at a cost to the LTA of £600k.

- LTA SERVES material has been translated into 14 languages

## LTA SERVES in numbers

- Since launching the programme has reached 38,000 young people
- 77% of participants live in IMDs 1-4, the 40% most deprived areas of the country
- 80% of participants report better interactions and self-confidence, and 65% reported increased mental wellbeing
- 1500+ community leaders have been trained as activators to deliver the programme
- 98% of community leaders rated their experience as positive
- 42% of community leaders are from ethnically diverse communities
- The programme has delivered £15 million of social value since its 2017 launch\*\*
- £2.2 million has been spent on the programme since launching.

\*\* According to research conducted by The Change Foundation in 2021.

## Other LTA activity impacting LSEG

**LTA SERVES has specifically targeted undeserved lower socio-economic groups. There are also other areas of the business which have started to, or have planned activity that will positively contribute.**

- **Parks investment delivery project:**



Our transformational investment alongside the UK Government – totalling £30m – for local communities. 75% of the parks supported through this project will be targeted within IMDs 1-5.

- **LTA Youth Schools diverse programme materials:**

Our school curriculum-specific programme that brings together inclusive PE lesson plans, personal development resources, teacher training and much more. A conscious effort was made to ensure that imagery used diverse programme materials and that the delivery of the programme ensured a near representative reach into deprived areas with 35% of schools supported falling within IMDs 1-4. Work has now begun on expanding LTA Youth into Leisure Centres.

- **Play your Way:**

This is our commitment to open tennis up to the nation, with the ambition of inspiring people of all abilities, ages and backgrounds to pick up a racket and play tennis on their terms. Whilst not specifically targeted at underserved, lower socio-economic groups, Play your Way is tonally and visually different to anything we've done before and making positive inroads with different audiences.

## **What do we want to achieve?**

- More children and young people from LSEG playing tennis
- More young people from LSEG volunteering, coaching or working in tennis
- Social change and impact at scale
- More non-traditional venues offering tennis
- Diversification of player base, workforce and infrastructure (in general and those on the player pathway)
- Further positive change in the positioning and perception of tennis

## **Our 5 guiding principles**

**To deliver this plan, WE WILL work to the following principles:**

1. Recognise that we don't know everything, so we'll listen to local communities and not 'do to them'.
2. Invest in and enable local, community leaders to be agents of their own change and create their own tennis infrastructure.
3. Predominantly work through partnerships, with expert, sector partners and with the LTA Tennis Foundation and other tennis charities to support and complement our work.
4. Recognise the need for and be comfortable with, being flexible in the delivery of activity, being creative with monitoring and in taking some risks.
5. Be genuine in everything we do and not take short cuts. Like our education programmes and other areas of the business, what we do must meet community needs first, not tennis or the LTA – this gets success and impact.

## What are we going to do about it?

**Over the course of the next three years and beyond, with the support of Sport England's funding settlement allocated for LTA SERVES and through close collaboration with our partners, we are going to focus on five key objectives, supported by 15 clear actions to ensure we address the stubborn inequalities that exist within our sport.**

### **6. KEY OBJECTIVE 1:**

**Significantly scale LTA SERVES into more faith, youth and community centres, with a focus on IMDs 1-4, to increase the number of non-traditional venues and ultimately, the children and young people playing.**

- 6.1. Evolve our partnership with StreetGames, as our key, expert partner in the sector, to help deliver LTA SERVES at scale, but also other elements of the new plan more broadly.
- 6.2. Recruit new national/regional partners to help scale, particularly re-establishing relationships with football and rugby (U&L) club foundations + housing associations and community safety units.
- 6.3. Pilot innovative, highly visible, branded installations in LTA SERVES sites and the wider community, to encourage informal play – e.g., branded MUGAs, courts, hitting walls etc.

### **7. KEY OBJECTIVE 2:**

**Flex, collaborate and align with projects and programmes, to provide more support to more communities through tennis and extend our reach, with a focus on IMDs 1-4.**

- 7.1. Flex the LTA SERVES light model to use tennis to support community-led, local projects that address wider social agendas, for example: mental health, crime and anti-social behaviour etc.
- 7.2. Target the Holiday Activities & Food (HAF) programme to embed tennis within local provision and remain agile and nimble to align our work with other national programmes, agendas and campaigns.
- 7.3. Develop a small number of 'hot-housed' Community Hubs, to pilot and deliver impactful participation and workforce provision, positioning tennis in way in which it's never been done before.

**8. KEY OBJECTIVE 3:**

**Create ambitious, sustainable and mainstream opportunities for more children and young people to enjoy and progress in tennis longer term.**

- 8.1. Pilot different approaches to encourage continued play beyond LTA SERVES, where hyper-local opportunities exist with park, CITC or club (where appropriate) venues within IMDs 1-4.
- 8.2. Work with the Performance Team to explore new opportunities to identify raw, athletic talent in children, with a focus on IMDs 1-4, and provide support for them to progress through the pathway.
- 8.3. Diversify attendance by facilitating inspirational trips to the LTA's major events for children and young people from IMDs 1-4 as part of this plan and explore lower-cost options more broadly.

**9. KEY OBJECTIVE 4:**

**Deliver targeted interventions to introduce more children and young people to tennis in schools, within IMDs 1-4.**

- 9.1. Direct resource to over-index the number of teachers trained on, and delivering, LTA Youth Schools in primary, special and secondary schools within IMDs 1-4.
- 9.2. Learn from, expand and promote our education partnerships with Greenhouse Sports, The Prince's Trust to expand LTA Youth activity in schools with a focus on IMDs 1-4.
- 9.3. Explore opportunities and appropriateness around using FSM as a means-tested discount eligibility tool, to increase LSEG engagement with programmes and for coaches and venues to use at scale.

**10. KEY OBJECTIVE 5:**

**Support more children and young people from IMDs 1-4 to develop their life skills and opportunities through, whilst also diversifying the tennis workforce and increasing capacity.**

- 10.1. Scale the number of adult community leaders from IMDs 1-4, trained & deployed as Tennis Activators to deliver the LTA SERVES programme and opportunities in their community more broadly.
- 10.2. Scale the number of children and young people from IMDs 1-4 that complete LTA Youth Tennis Leaders and the Social Impact modules, focusing on their personal development and life skills.
- 10.3. Identify high-potential Tennis Activators and provide bespoke support to address barriers they may face in progressing through workforce pathways and explore the potential of Apprentices & Interns.