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June 2026

This month's update focuses on preparations for the 2026/27 academic year, with key actions and updates across BUCS Play, workforce development programmes and university engagement. As many institutions begin planning for next season, we encourage you to review the opportunities and actions below, including BUCS Play participation confirmation, updates on funding applications, Emerging Club Leaders recruitment and maintaining accurate institutional contacts. We would also like to thank all institutions for their continued engagement throughout the year. Your support plays a vital role in strengthening football and futsal across higher education, and we look forward to continuing this work together as we begin planning for another exciting season ahead.

#### **UPDATES:**

1. **BUCS Play IMS & Turn Up & Play 2026/27 - Participation Confirmation**
2. **Football Development Funding Opportunities – Application Window Closed**
3. **Emerging Club Leaders 2026/27 – Student Pairing/Review Underway**
4. **University Contacts List Review**
5. **WLP Cohort 8 Applications**
6. **Football & Futsal Sport Advisory Group Update**
7. **England Futsal Community Of Practice (COP)**

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#### **[BUCS Play IMS & Turn Up & Play 2026/27 - Participation Confirmation](#)**

The BUCS Play Participation Confirmation Survey for 2026/27 is now open. Thanks to continued FA investment, BUCS Play for IMS remains available to universities at no cost until July 2028, providing a dedicated platform for the delivery and management of recreational football opportunities. Alongside IMS Football, universities can now also deliver Turn Up & Play Football, providing flexible, low-commitment opportunities for students who may not wish to participate in traditional league structures. The platform supports institutions in capturing participation data, understanding student engagement and strengthening their overall recreational football offer. Institutions currently using BUCS Play are asked to confirm their participation for next season, while universities not currently using the platform but interested in exploring IMS Football or Turn Up & Play opportunities are encouraged to get in touch.

Survey Link: [BUCS Play Participation Confirmation Survey - 2026/27 – Fill in form](#)

For further information or to discuss your plans for 2026/27, please contact Alai Ayyakannu at [Alai.Ayyakannu@bucs.org.uk](mailto:Alai.Ayyakannu@bucs.org.uk).



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### **Football Development Funding Opportunities – Application Window Closed**

The application window for the Football Development Projects, Referee Development Hubs and Coaching Hubs funding opportunities has now closed. We would like to thank all institutions that submitted applications and for the continued commitment shown towards developing football and futsal opportunities across higher education.

The BUCS Football Development Team will now begin the evaluation process, reviewing applications against the published criteria and available funding. We anticipate communicating outcomes to all applicants during the **first week of July**, allowing successful institutions sufficient time to prepare for delivery ahead of the 2026/27 academic year.

If you have any questions regarding the process, please contact the relevant member of the BUCS Football Development Team.

### **Emerging Club Leaders 2026/27 – Student Pairing/Review Underway**

Thank you to all universities involved and who supported student applications for the Emerging Club Leaders 2026/27. We are now in the matching phase of recruitment, working to place students with National League System (Step 2-6) and Women's National League (Tier 3-4) clubs across the country.

Inductions are confirmed to begin in July 2026 onwards and if you know of a club that would be a great fit for the programme, we'd love to hear from you.

Please get in touch with Kelvin Newell ([kelvin.newell@bucs.org.uk](mailto:kelvin.newell@bucs.org.uk)) if you have any suggestions or questions.

### **University Contacts List Review**

As we reach the end of the academic year and begin planning for 2026/27, we would like to ensure that our contact records are accurate and up to date. This helps us make sure important information, funding opportunities, programme updates, deadlines and sector communications are reaching the right people within your institution. **If there have been any staff changes, role changes, maternity or paternity leave, sabbaticals, or if there are additional colleagues who should be receiving BUCS Football Development communications, please let us know.**

If you would like to check who we currently have listed for your institution, or update your contacts for the 2026/27 academic year, please get in touch with the BUCS Football Development Team. Your



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support in keeping our records up to date is greatly appreciated and helps ensure no opportunities or important updates are missed.

### **WLP Cohort 8 Applications**

Applications for students to be part of cohort 8 of the BUCS FA Women's Leadership Programme have now closed and are currently under review. Students will be notified of their outcome in the next few weeks.

Any institutions who have questions around the £300 sponsorship for a student's place on the programme, please reach out to Beth Edwards on [beth.edwards@bucs.org.uk](mailto:beth.edwards@bucs.org.uk).

### **Football & Futsal Sport Advisory Group Update**

For the 2026-27 season, the BUCS Football & Futsal Sport Advisory Group will split into two separate groups, ensuring that both sports receive focussed attention. As part of the transition, some changes have been made in roles and new members have been recruited. Current Chair Paul Jones (Cardiff) will chair the Futsal SAG, and current Vice Chair Gareth Smith (Manchester Met) will become the chair of the Football SAG. Thank you to both for your continued hard work to ensure the group meets its aims.

Additionally, 4 new members have joined the respective groups:

- Daniel Corlett (Nottingham Trent) - Football Performance Rep - Male Pathway
- Molly Catlin (Surrey) - Football Performance Rep - Female Pathway
- George Mead (Surrey) - Football Student Rep
- Ben Taylor (Derby) - Futsal Student Rep

For any questions about the SAG, please contact [Sean.Lofting@bucs.org.uk](mailto:Sean.Lofting@bucs.org.uk).

### **England Futsal Community of Practice (CoP)**

England Futsal continues to support the development of futsal across the higher education sector through its Futsal Community of Practice (CoP). The network brings together university staff, coaches and practitioners from across the country to share best practice, access CPD opportunities and engage with experienced futsal coaches working at different levels of the game. The Community of Practice provides regular updates from England Futsal on coach development opportunities, creates a space for members to discuss local challenges and successes, and enables universities to contribute to the future



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direction of futsal within the BUCS landscape. England Futsal is also exploring opportunities to further enhance the offer for coaches and student leaders in the future.

Universities interested in joining the network can do so via the following WhatsApp group:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/CZGIH9sYlsCGAk0TiG1AU>

For further information, please contact [Joe Ryan](#) at the University of Liverpool.

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