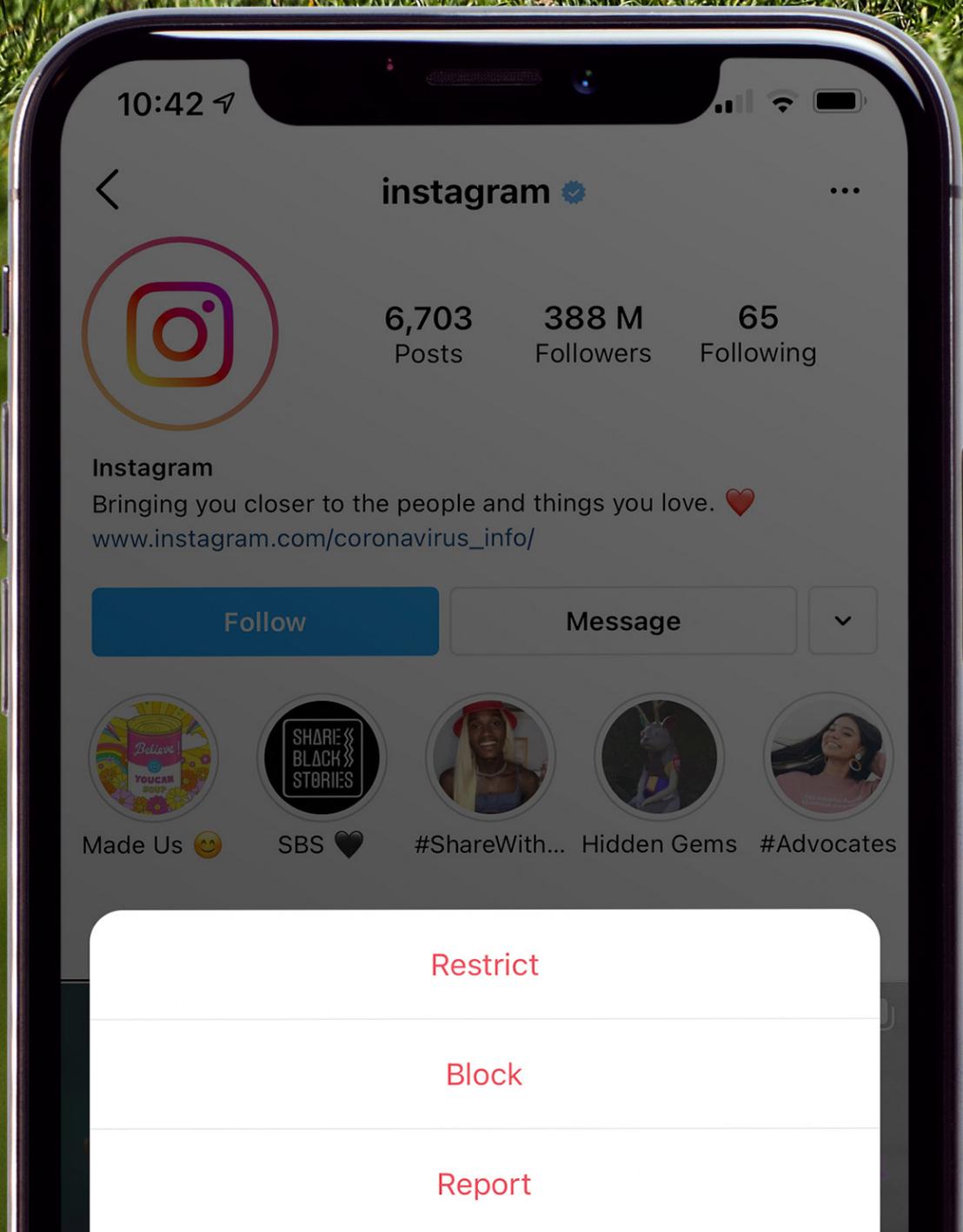


PFA SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES





PFA SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES



SOCIAL MEDIA can be a fantastic way to stay connected, and the PFA understands that many of our members use their platforms to uplift and support others and positively engage with their fans.

However, we continue to see high levels of racist incidents and other forms of online abuse aimed at professional players, despite the issue being repeatedly highlighted to the social media networks by players, fans and the PFA.

We know from our members' first-hand accounts that online hate causes trauma, and a player's mental health can be deeply affected by online abuse. The impact of the abuse can also extend to family members and impressionable fans, with many players and their families publicly sharing how isolated they felt following abusive incidents.



These painful experiences highlight how racism and other forms of discrimination can impact wellbeing and serve as a stark reminder that footballers are not immune by virtue of their profession.

A recent PFA report into online abuse aimed at professional footballers revealed social media networks had significant blind spots when combatting online abuse. The six-week study undertaken during Project Restart analysed 825,515 tweets directed at selected players. Over 3,000 explicitly abusive messages were identified, of which 56% were racist.

The PFA is committed to holding social media networks to account and will continue to demand a safer space for players. To achieve this, we have been engaging with the UK Government, police and football authorities, who all share our aim.



SOCIAL MEDIA

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

We want all players to be aware that the PFA will:

» We consider social media an extension of a player's workplace, as their public accounts are used to promote their club, sponsors and commercial partners.

01

Speak out on your behalf

05

Ensure the player's voice is heard

02

Fight discrimination and inequality within football

04

Use football as a tool to promote equality and diversity

03

Protect professional football players facing discrimination





SOCIAL
MEDIA

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

» If you ever experience racism or any other forms of discrimination as part of your football career, you can count on the following support from the PFA:

01

Advice and guidance on how to take action following a discriminatory incident. This support is available for both online and offline instances.

02

Free, confidential support from a network of counsellors if you have experienced racist abuse that affects your wellbeing.

03

Representation from an experienced member of the PFA team throughout any FA investigation that stems from an incident of discriminatory abuse during a game.



We will continue to lead the industry in the fight against discrimination, but your wellbeing will always remain our number one priority.

One-to-one support will be available whenever you need it.



SOCIAL
MEDIA

WELLBEING SUPPORT

Many footballers have spoken publicly about the negative impact abuse had on their careers and wellbeing. Dealing with the effects of discriminatory abuse can have a lasting impact and even cast a shadow over your life. The volume of online abuse players face can make this feel worse, but you are not alone.

The PFA has dedicated specialist support available in this area, and we urge any players who are struggling with the emotional impact of abuse to get in touch so we can help.

- **PFA Online Abuse Helpline:**
0800 368 8484
- **Email:**
Wellbeing@thepfa.com

All calls will remain private and confidential, and our experienced team will direct you to the appropriate level of support for your needs.

Many of our counsellors are ex-sports professionals and understand the unique challenges associated with football. Unfortunately, some of them have also navigated similar issues related to discrimination in their careers, which means they can relate to your experience and offer realistic solutions to improve your wellbeing.

We have been in your shoes. We know how it feels to hear racist taunts from the terraces, to be racially abused on national television and for our families to see racist comments in the press and online.

We understand the enormous effort it takes to maintain your performance and mindset while playing through that experience.

Our number one priority at the PFA is to protect players, and while we won't be able to eradicate racism from football or society, we will do everything we can to address it and support those who are impacted by it.





SOCIAL MEDIA

REPORTING ABUSE

We do not believe individuals should have to manage the abuse they receive. We have made it clear to social media companies that policing their platforms should be their responsibility.

However, we also want perpetrators to be held accountable offline for their online behaviour, so we encourage all players to report every incident of online abuse.

The PFA has also committed further investment to proactively monitor social media for abusive messages aimed at Premier League, EFL and WSL players. We're collaborating with Signify, a data specialist company, who use machine-learning technology to collate and document online abuse. We will make this data publicly available for members and send regular updates identifying abusive messages and accounts to social media companies.

In addition, we have been working with football's stakeholders on a monitoring initiative to search for and remove illegal and discriminatory abuse directed towards players around match days.

How to report

We have created these guidelines to help you take action when you encounter abusive posts on social media. Here are the steps you can take:



RECORD

Once you or another user flag the abuse, the post may get deleted. It is important that you take and keep screenshots of the abuse as evidence.





SOCIAL
MEDIA

REPORTING ABUSE

»» REPORT

01

Contact the Police - If you feel threatened or feel you or your family members are in imminent danger, you should call 999 immediately.

02

Report in App - You must report any online abuse in-app on the social media platform. Although we know that there are limited amounts of times you can do this, platforms prioritise first person-reports.

03

Send to the PFA - Once you have reported any threats to the authorities and the abuse to the social media network, please report the incident to the PFA. You should send screenshots, confirmation that the incident has been reported in-app and any other relevant information to enough@thepfa.com.

04

Get support - Any form of abuse or discrimination can be difficult to report or speak openly about. If you have been affected by online abuse, you can contact our Wellbeing department for confidential support.



PFA Online Abuse Helpline:
Email: wellbeing@thepfa.com

0800 368 8484



SOCIAL MEDIA

REPORTING ABUSE

» REFER

In the first instance, the PFA will report the post directly to the relevant social media platform and Athletia – we will request that the post be swiftly removed and appropriate action taken against the account holder.

Then, with your consent, we will:

> Liaise with your club

Your club has a duty of care to ensure an internal process is actioned when a player is the victim of online abuse. Players should also be offered practical support via the club's channels.

> Report the posts to the police via a Dedicated Football Officer (DFO)

If an offender is identifiable, we can help you pursue a prosecution. A DFO will arrange to take your statement. The content of this statement will not be shared publically, though this may change if the case goes to trial. The statement will be taken at a location that suits you - the training ground, via video call or over the phone. The DFO will update you on the progress of your case as often or little as you want.

> Help you access on-going support

We know the impact that abuse can have on an individual, so we encourage any affected players to seek emotional support. The PFA has a dedicated online abuse helpline staffed by counsellors specifically trained in this area, and all services are entirely private and confidential.





SOCIAL
MEDIA

HOW TO REPORT ON INSTAGRAM

» Reporting abusive comments, posts or accounts on Instagram is anonymous.

Report an account on Instagram

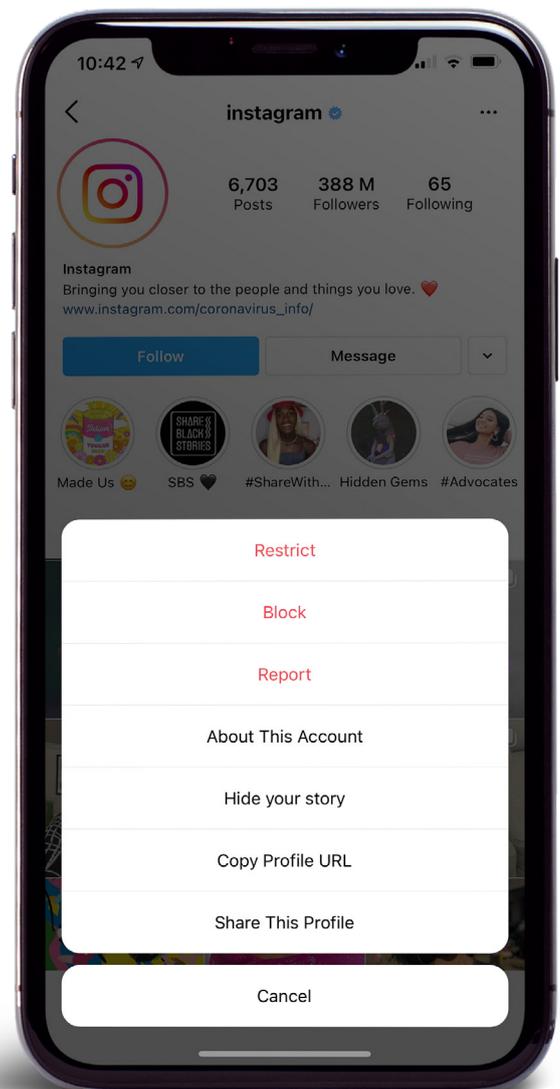
1. Press the three dots on the top right of the profile (...)
2. Press 'Report'
3. Then follow the on-screen instructions

Report a post on Instagram

1. Press (...) above the post
2. Press 'Report'
3. Follow the on-screen instructions

Report a comment on Instagram

1. Swipe over the comment
2. Press the (!) icon
3. Follow the on-screen instructions





SOCIAL
MEDIA

HOW TO REPORT ON TWITTER

» You can report abusive behaviour directly from a tweet, account profile or a DM.

Report an account on Twitter

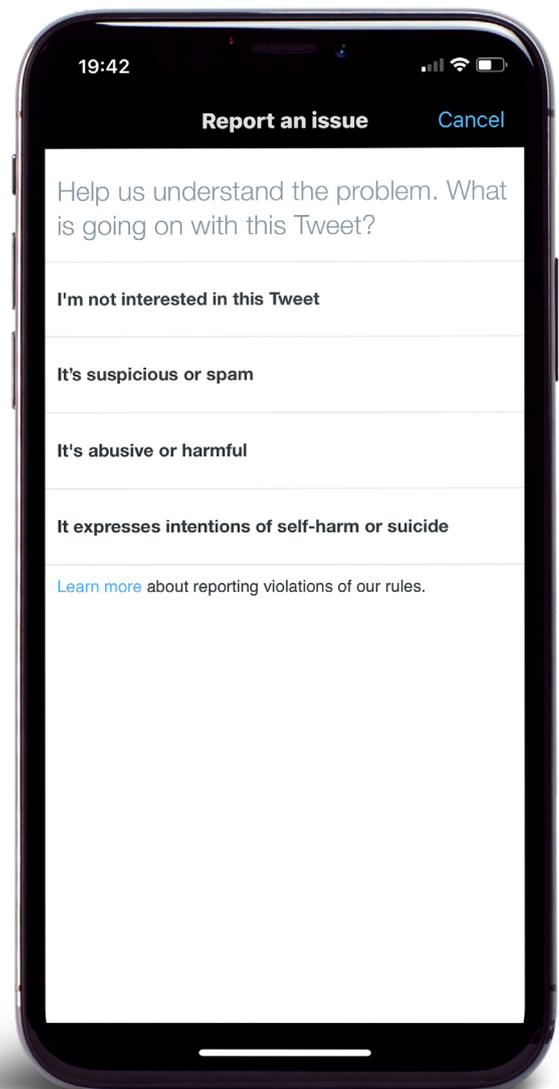
1. Press (...) on the top right of the account profile you want to report
2. Press 'Report'
3. Then follow the on-screen instructions

Report a tweet on Twitter

1. Find the tweet you want to report
2. Press the (...) icon
3. Click 'Report'
4. Follow the on-screen instructions

Report a DM

1. Swipe left on the message and click the flag icon
2. Follow the on-screen instructions





MANAGING YOUR EXPERIENCE ONLINE

Although the emphasis should not be on players to manage the abuse received online, there are tools available on social media platforms to help control your experience.

By blocking abusive accounts and filtering inappropriate words and language, you can limit the offensive material you see.

Instagram

Blocking accounts on Instagram

Blocking allows you to stop specific accounts finding your profile, posts or story on Instagram. People aren't automatically notified when you block them. However, unlike the muting function, the other user can work out if they have been 'blocked'.

To block someone

1. Click (...) on the top right of the account profile you want to report
2. Click 'Block/Unblock'
3. Select 'Block' to confirm

Blocking Comments

After you block someone, their likes and comments will be removed from your photos and videos.

- People you block can still see your likes and comments on posts shared by public accounts or accounts they follow.

Blocking Mentions and Tags

- After you block someone, they won't be able to mention your username or tag you.

Blocking Direct Message

- After you block someone, your messaging threads with them will remain in your inbox, but you won't be able to message them.
- You won't receive any direct messages the person you blocked sends you, and they won't be delivered later if you unblock them.

Using Mute on Instagram

When you mute someone on Instagram, you won't see the stories, pictures and videos they post on your feed. However, the other person can still view your content, and both of you can visit each other's page. The other person will not know that you have muted them.

To mute someone:

1. Click 'Following' under the profile
2. Select to mute their posts and/or stories

Filter comments by keywords on Instagram

You can also turn on a keyword filter to hide comments that contain specific words, phrases, numbers or emojis that you'd like to avoid. These filters will be active until you remove them.



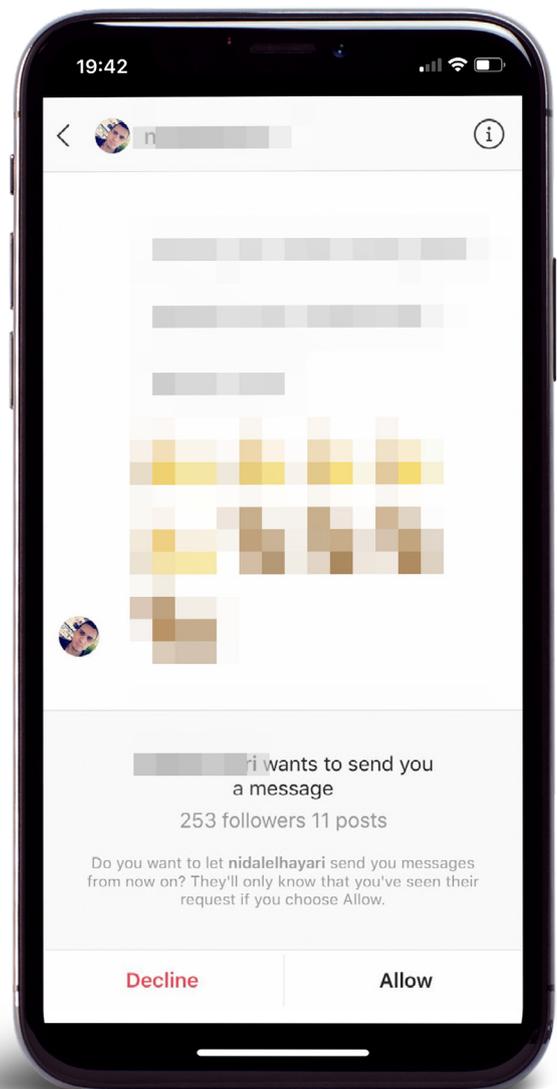


SOCIAL
MEDIA

MANAGING YOUR EXPERIENCE ONLINE

To filter abusive words or emojis on Instagram:

- 01** Go to your profile picture
(in the bottom right-hand corner)
- 02** Click the ☰ menu button
- 03** Click 'Settings'
- 04** Click 'Privacy' & then 'Comments'
- 05** Click and turn the 'Manual Filter' on
- 06** Enter specific words, phrases,
numbers or emojis in the text
box to filter out comments





MANAGING YOUR EXPERIENCE ONLINE

Twitter

Blocking accounts on Twitter

If you block an account on Twitter, it prevents the person behind it from contacting you. They will not see your tweets when logged in on that account, and they will not be able to follow you from that account.

People are not notified when you block them. However, unlike the muting function, the other user can see if they have been 'blocked' when trying to view your profile.

Tweets from blocked accounts will not appear in your timeline. However, you may see their tweets or notifications in your timeline if someone else you follow or view mentions them in their post.

To block someone:

1. Click (...) on the top right of the account profile you want to report
2. Press 'Block'

Mute accounts on Twitter

On Twitter, mute is a feature that allows you to remove an account's tweets from your timeline. Muted accounts will not know that you've muted them. Muted accounts can still follow you, and they will still be able to send you a Direct Message.

To mute someone:

1. Click (...) on the top right of the account profile you want to report
2. Press 'Mute'

Mute keywords, hashtags & emojis on Twitter

You have the function to mute tweets that contain particular words, phrases, usernames, emojis or hashtags. Muting will remove these tweets from your Notifications tab, push notifications, SMS, email notifications, home timeline and from replies to tweets.

However, you will still see muted words and phrases via the search functionality, and if you have mobile notifications enabled when an account you follow tweets, muted words and hashtags will still appear.





MANAGING YOUR EXPERIENCE ONLINE

To mute keywords, hashtags and emojis on Twitter:

- 01** Click 'More' from the side navigation menu, then click 'Settings and privacy'
- 02** Click the 'Privacy and safety' tab, then click 'Mute and block'
- 03** Click 'Muted words'
- 04** Click the plus icon
- 05** Enter the word or hashtag you'd like to mute
- 06** Select 'Home Timeline' if you wish to mute the word or phrase from your timeline
- 07** Select 'Notifications' if you wish to mute the word or phrase from your notifications
- 08** Specify 'From anyone' or 'From people you don't follow'
- 09** Under 'Mute timing', choose how long you would like to mute the word (24 hours, 7 days, 30 days or forever)
- 10** Click 'Save'





SOCIAL
MEDIA

#ENOUGH



In April 2019, professional footballers across the leagues took part in #Enough, a 24-hour social media boycott led by the PFA.

The boycott made a huge impact globally, with a reach of over 90 million users. The campaign demonstrated that professional players have a powerful voice when speaking as a collective.

However, #Enough was not just 24-hours of action. Since the boycott, we've been continuing the campaign by working directly with clubs, football's governing bodies, social networks, the police and the UK Government on your behalf.

The campaign made the social networks take notice and opened a dialogue between the football industry, Government, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Since you supported the 24-hour social media boycott, we have made significant progress in this area. We share your frustration that changes have been slow, but we have been steadily applying pressure and will continue to hold those who enable discriminatory abuse accountable.

Progress Following #Enough

The PFA called for the adoption of systems that compile evidence of abuse.

In 2020, the PFA launched a pilot AI monitoring service that analysed 825,515 tweets during a six-week period. The players' union has now committed to funding Signify's Threat Matrix service moving forward and extending the number of players monitored. Additionally, the Premier League is now funding a monitoring service from Athletia Sports to track and remove abusive posts directed at players from all five divisions.

We called for greater action from the police and a change in practice so that repercussions are not solely reliant on victim complaints.

The PFA is working and meeting regularly with the UK Football Policing Unit to continue dialogue on active cases and will now be working to ensure players and clubs are informed and supported throughout the reporting process.

Victim impact statements remain an important step in the process due to the Malicious Correspondence Act. The PFA has met with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and will lobby for the Act to be updated to tackle online harms more effectively.



SOCIAL MEDIA

#ENOUGH



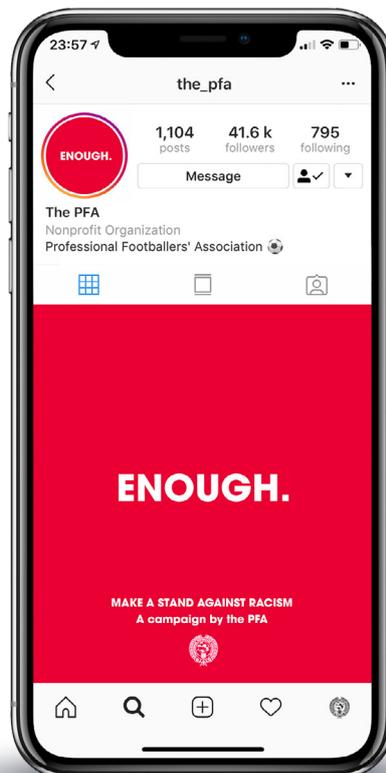
We called for a Government inquiry & further legislative intervention for online abuse.

The PFA has worked with the Government on the forthcoming Online Harms Bill and the White Paper that preceded it. The Bill is due to come before Parliament later this year, with the Government pledging to ensure that tech firms are held accountable for online abuse, including the use of substantial fines and potential sentencing.

In January 2021, the PFA met with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Oliver Dowden, for a roundtable discussion alongside a group of players, including Troy Deeney, Karen Carney, Anton Ferdinand, Jordan Henderson, Renee Hector and Tyrone Mings, to put forward a player's perspective on the effects of online abuse.

The PFA cited the need for 'evidence led' pressure on social media platforms.

In 2020, a six-week PFA study into online abuse identified over 3,000 explicitly abusive messages aimed at players. 56% of all the discriminatory abuse identified during the study was racist. This data powerfully demonstrated the extent of online abuse and also highlighted a lack of thorough monitoring by social media networks.



The PFA have called on social media platforms to address abusive emojis.

In the 2020 study, 29% of racially abusive posts recorded came in emoji form. We now want to see greater use of monitoring and technology to address the use of emojis as a form of abuse.



#ENOUGH

SOCIAL MEDIA



We urged football's stakeholders to come together to address all forms of online discrimination collaboratively.

Recently the PFA joined the Premier League, EFL, WSL, LMA, PGMOL and Kick It Out to send a letter to Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey and Facebook's founder, chairman and CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, amid continuing levels of abuse aimed at footballers on social media.

As a collective - players, clubs, and football's stakeholders- are now working together as part of a joined-up approach to tackling online abuse.



PROFESSIONAL GAME
MATCH OFFICIALS



#ENOUGH

SOCIAL MEDIA



Although the responsibility for tackling this issue should not fall on those receiving the abuse, your contribution has made a genuine difference in an area that expands far beyond football. Footballers' collective voice and influence has a worldwide reach. Your solidarity has the power to hold multinational companies to account and sends a compelling message to a global audience - abusive behaviour is unacceptable.

Simone Pound, Director of EDI at the PFA:

“ Social media channels are an extension of the working environment for professional footballers, and we are committed to finding solutions that better protect players.”

As part of our work to address this issue, which started with the 24-hour boycott of social media channels, the PFA has been pushing for collaboration between the platforms, the game, the Government, police and CPS to to protect players from online abuse.

This joined-up approach is the only way to achieve the tangible change needed to effect policies and, ultimately, online user behaviour. We hope that this work will result in a safer online space for future generations of players and fans, have a positive impact on online discourse and benefit society as a whole.”





THANK YOU
