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University of Birmingham selected as FA Women's High Performance Football Centre

The University of Birmingham has been selected as one of eight universities in the country which will become official High Performance Centres for women's football.

The new initiative from the FA will provide an educational and community-based setting to recruit, develop and deploy coaches, who will lead and inspire player development specifically in the women's and girls' game.

The High Performance status will enable the University to develop as a central facility of excellence for women's football, pulling all of the region's resources together to push the boundaries of the sport together. In addition to being this hotbed of growth, the label will add value to the already high level of coaches at the University, and enhance the drive for high performance players and members.

For Gemma Davies, Head of Women's Football and Football Development Officer at the University of Birmingham, it's a fantastic time to get involved with the sport:

'We are really excited to be selected to be a Women's High Performance Hub. As well as recognising what we have achieved so far in the sport, it also allows us to become an accredited hub of excellence for women's football and a site of best practise. We have so much we want to build on, from broadening our grass-roots coaching support, to workforce development, to continuing to drive for high performance players and coaches. It's a great time to be encouraging more women and girls into the sport in Birmingham.'

The University has been playing its part in encouraging women's football in the community for a number of years, and the title of being an FA Women's High Performance centre clearly recognises the achievements so far. From supporting local school's sports festivals, to coach mentoring and support, to workforce development, the University of Birmingham Women's Football Club has been instrumental in increasing participation levels of the number of women involved in football in Birmingham. It's an exciting time for the University, which has invested a lot in making Birmingham the go-to place for sport. In addition to the new £55million world-class Sport & Fitness Club, the University are investing in new outdoor sport facilities including new pitches and a pavilion.

ENDS

For further enquiries: Harriet Cockill – h.cockill@bham.ac.uk / 0121 4147526 / 07738494099

Notes to the editor:

- *University of Birmingham Sport & Fitness opened in May 2017, it features Birmingham's first 50m pool, six glass back squash courts, 200+ station gym, five activity studios, an indoor sports arena, 10m climbing wall and more.*
- *The University of Birmingham is currently ranked in the top ten universities for sport in the UK.*
- *The University have invested in new outdoor sport facilities which are planned to open this year including new pitches and a pavilion.*
- *The University of Birmingham is ranked amongst the world's top 100 institutions, its work brings people from across the world to Birmingham, including researchers and teachers and more than 5,000 international students from over 150 countries.*
- *University of Birmingham Women's Football Scholars and Alumni include Aoife Mannion, a current scholar who plays for Birmingham City Ladies and England Under 23s, and Izzy Christiansen (Alumni) and Emma Follis (Alumni), who play for Manchester City Women and Birmingham City Ladies respectively.*