

# Whitbread's Brittain swaps Premier Inn for Premier League as first female chair

The Premier League has snapped up one of Britain's top corporate executives to be its first female chair.

In a statement confirming Alison Brittain's appointment – minutes after it was revealed by Sky News – English football's top flight said the outgoing Whitbread chief executive would join early next year.

Ms Brittain's arrival, which was unanimously approved by the 20 Premier League clubs on Tuesday morning, means that the two most powerful chairmanships in English football will both be held by women.

She will replace interim chair Peter McCormick, and is intended to be a long-term successor to Gary Hoffman, who stepped down last year amid unhappiness about the Premier League's handling of Newcastle United's takeover by Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund.

Ms Brittain, who will leave Premier Inn-owner Whitbread in the coming months, has also been lined up to chair the listed homewares retailer Dunelm.

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Her in-tray at the Premier League will include ongoing discussions about the structure and powers of a new football regulator, a potential shirt sponsorship ban on gambling companies, and its next UK broadcast rights deal.



Image:

Alison Brittain

Ms Brittain said: "I have been a football fan since I was a child, and so am absolutely delighted to be appointed chair of the Premier League.

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"The game is of enormous national importance, is loved by so many people around the world and can have a tremendous positive impact on communities.

"It will be a real privilege to be able to help to develop plans for the future and work with all the key stakeholders in the game to ensure its long-term sustainability and success.

A spokesperson for the Premier League's nominations committee described her as "a first-class business leader with exceptional regulatory and governmental experience as well as outstanding personal qualities of integrity, energy and commitment to her work".