

United Kingdom Boccia Federation Annual Governance Statement 2022

Chair's Introduction

I am pleased to introduce this annual governance statement for the UK Boccia Federation ("Boccia UK"). Over the past 12 months, the Board of Boccia UK has invested in its governance framework in order to ensure our decision making remains fit-for-purpose and gives the organisation the best opportunity to deliver its ambitious strategy.

In April 2022, the Board came together for a two-day **strategy** session. The purpose of the session was to refresh our strategy as well as our vision, mission and values following a successful Tokyo cycle. In line with our vision to be the world's leading Boccia nation, the Board wished to set new and ambitious targets that encompassed both sporting excellence and the "and more" expected by UK Sport. Our focus was on revisiting our competition and squad structure, putting in place measures to increase squad depth, defining the value we add beyond sporting performance and further honing our governance arrangements. We now have a well-developed strategy underpinned by a range of KPIs that we believe will ensure the continued success of Boccia as a sport in UK. The strategy will be published and available on our website during 2023.

As part of our strategy, the Board reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with Boccia International Sports Federation ("BISFed") at the **international level**. Boccia UK and BISFED have a good relationship and we wish to build on this to ensure the continued development of Boccia as a **global sport**. We have begun discussions with BISFed about how we might work together with other nations to further improve the governance of the sport internationally. We hope to report the outcomes of this work in our 2023 Statement.

The revised **Code for Sports Governance** was published in late 2021. Our newly formed Governance Committee undertook a comprehensive review of the Code during 2022 which confirmed that we are broadly compliant with all requirements. However, Boccia UK seeks to continually improve its governance arrangements and we have developed a comprehensive action plan to ensure we are further strengthening compliance with the Code. This has included work on our committee structure, policy framework, approach to EDI and Board succession.

Boccia UK is committed to **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** and has previously achieved the Foundation and Preliminary Levels of the Equality Standard. During 2022, the Governance Committee developed a set of EDI ambitions and objectives which were formally adopted by the Board. These ensure that EDI is at the heart of our decision making and our organisational

culture. The Board is aware that the Equality Standard is currently being revised and is due to be published imminently. A further review of our approach will be undertaken against the revised standard to ensure full alignment. Our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is now available on our website.

Given external challenges, limited resources and competing priorities, I am delighted with the progress made by Boccia UK during 2022. This year we have put in place foundations for Paris and LA that we believe will deliver sporting success as well as a resilient and well-led organisation.

This statement was approved by the board of directors on 2 March 2023 and signed on behalf of the board by:

David Richmond

Chair

United Kingdom Boccia Federation

Boccia UK's Role

Boccia UK's **role** is to act as the UK National Governing Body (NGB) for the sport of Boccia. We develop and prepare the UK's most talented Boccia players, coaches and officials to represent the country internationally with a particular focus on the Paralympic Games.

Boccia UK is a federation comprising the four home nation sports organisations, some of whom are recognised by their respective sports councils as being the NGB responsible for the development of the sport in their home nation.

We facilitate home nation collaboration around the development of the sport including a UK-wide performance player pathway. The grassroots development of the sport, including school and community participation initiatives, club development and local competitions and leagues remains the sole responsibility of the four home nation member organisations. Home nation sports organisations are also responsible for talent identification and performance development within their respective nation, where necessary in collaboration with other home nations.

Vision, Mission and Values

Our **vision** is to be the world's leading Boccia nation, inspiring through sporting excellence and Performance achievement.

Our **mission** is to deliver a World Class Programme, and collaborative Performance Pathways, which enable boccia athletes in the UK to maximise their potential.

Boccia UK's **values** are:

- Equality
- Excellence
- Openness
- Accountability
- Community and Well-Being

More information on Boccia UK's role, mission, values and strategy can be found on our website, through the above link, in the summary of the 2022 - 2026 strategic plan.

How Boccia UK is Governed and Organised

Board composition

Boccia UK is a company limited by guarantee with 4 members (Boccia England, Disability Sport Northern Ireland, Disability Sport Wales and Scottish Disability Sport). Each of the members nominates one person to be a member of the board of Boccia UK. In addition, there are currently six independent directors including an independent Chair. The independent directors are recruited through a transparent and competitive process. All board members may serve for up to two terms of 4 years each.

During the year, there has been some changes to Home Nation representatives. **Elaine Reid** left Disability Sport Northern Ireland and consequently stood down from the Board in April 2022. She has been replaced by **Rhian McCarroll** who joined the Board in September 2022. **Gavin Macleod** stepped down from the Board in September 2022 at the end of his second term. He has been replaced by **Jennifer Barsby**.

In December 2022, two new people also joined the board as Independent Non-Executive Directors. **Charlie Hayter** brings significant athlete experience to the Board having played rugby professionally for over 10 years at clubs including Wasps and Worcester and having been part of

the England Rugby 7s programme. Charlie is now the Women's and Sevens Performance Manager at the Rugby Football Union. An Independent Director with athlete experience is a new role and designed to strengthen the Board's understanding and focus on the athlete experience.

Andrew Maynard brings financial expertise to the Board and as Chair of the Finance Committee. Andrew is currently Financial Controller at Protium, a Green Hydrogen company, where he leads on governance, financial reporting and risk. He was previously Head of Finance and Risk at UK Sport, where he got an understanding of how World Class Programme funding is awarded and monitored. Andrew picks up where **Abbie Laybourne** left off following her retirement after two terms on the Board and as Chair of the Finance Committee.

The Board wishes to place on record its thanks to Elaine, Abby and Gavin for their support of Boccia UK.

Board Committees

The board delegates some of its activities to three committees:

- **Boccia Pathway Group** is responsible for overseeing and advising the Board the Boccia UK Talent Pathway, chaired by Nik Diaper (meets 4 times per year)
- The **Finance Committee** is responsible for overseeing and advising the Board on Boccia UK's financial performance and sustainability. It also acts as the organisation's audit committee taking responsibility for the overall control framework. Its focus over the past 12 months has been the review of the financial position and reporting, the 2023-24 budget and the review and updating of key policies. It is chaired by Andrew Maynard and meets 4 times per year.
- The **Governance Committee** is responsible for advising the Board on all governance matters. It also acts as Boccia UK's Nominations Committee and leads on recruitment and selection on the Board's behalf. The Committee's focus this year has been on undertaking a thorough review of the revised "A Code for Sports Governance", leading on an action plan to strengthen compliance with the Code, and on developing a Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. It is chaired by Steve Maiden and meets 4 times per year.

In addition, an **Appeals Committee** may be formed to consider any appeals on World Class Programme selection for certain competitions. The Appeals Committee consists of one home country director and one independent director. This committee has not had a requirement to meet during the year.

Board attendance

The board met five times in this year and the attendance during the year was as follows:

Name	Jan 22	April 22	June 22	Sept 22	Nov 22	Total
David Richmond	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5
Abby Laybourne	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	3/3
Jane Jones	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	4/4
Nik Diaper	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	4/5
Steven Maiden	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5
Gavin Macleod	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5
Fiona Reid	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5
Chris Ratcliffe	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	4/5
Elaine Reid	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	N/A	2/2
Andrew Maynard	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓	3/3
Charlie Hayter	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓	3/3
Rhian McCarroll	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	1/1

The board considered standing items on the following topics:

- **World Class Programme:** *Core to our time as a Board is our oversight of the World Class Programme and ensuring strategies are in place to diversify and strengthen.*
- **Performance Development:** *The Board regularly receives updates on performance development and the work of the Boccia Pathway Group.*
- **Home Country Updates:** *Each Home Nation provides the Board with an update on key developments in respective nations, ensuring we are well informed to facilitate UK-wide collaboration.*
- **Financial Performance:** *The Board considers management accounts at every meeting and has strengthened performance against budget reporting during the year.*
- **Risk management:** *The Board reviews the risk register at every meeting and has in-depth discussions on specific risk areas on a regular basis.*

In addition to standing items for progress discussion and review, the major items of discussion and decision making have been:

- **Refreshing the Boccia UK strategy, vision and mission:** *This has been a major area of focus which will build foundations for Paris 2024 and beyond. Further details will be available on our website during 2023.*

- **Policy and procedure reviews:** *We have developed a policy framework to ensure policies are given the right level of scrutiny. Under this, the Board has approved a new Safeguarding Policy, Diversity and Equity ambition and Anti-Doping Policy.*
- **Governance action plan:** *Further details on the action plan are covered below.*
- **Review of Performance structures:** *This has focused sharply on the creation of the new Talent Transition Squad to ensure the identification and careful development of athletes of high potential and to close the gap between Home Nation Programmes and the World Class Programme.*

Summary minutes can be found on our web-site, through the above link, along with board and committee terms of reference, board member profiles and our Directors Code of Conduct.

The board considers that it and its committees have discharged their duties effectively during the year.

The Code for Sports Governance

In late 2021 UK Sport and Sport England published a reviewed “A Code for Sports Governance” (the Code) which is mandatory for all grant funded bodies within the sector. Boccia UK welcomed the revisions to the Code and the new focus on EDI, welfare and safety and people. Having been compliant with the earlier version of the Code, the Board was confident it could further improve its governance arrangements through compliance.

As such, the Governance Committee undertook a comprehensive review of the Code with a view to identifying areas to strengthen compliance. An action plan was developed and agreed with the Board in mid-2022 and work to deliver actions is now well underway. This has included:

- Reviewing our approach to EDI and developing a Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan which is available in full on our website.
- Reviewing and improving the Board succession planning, recruitment and selection processes. This has also been picked up in our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.
- Reviewing Governing Documents and key policies to ensure alignment with the Code and good practice.
- Revising Committee terms of reference to ensure clarity and that they remain fit for purpose.

Despite the identification of actions to strengthen compliance, the Board of Boccia UK confirms that it complies in the Code in full.

Risk Management

In late 2020, Boccia UK introduced a new Risk Register which covers all key areas of the organisation and the sport. The board reviews this risk register at every meeting and highlights any new risks or major changes. In addition, the Board puts aside time annually to undertake a deep dive on key risk areas. The embedding of the new risk register has been successful and has ensured that the Board fully understand both internal and external risks and that these are reflected in our decision making.

The Board has identified principal risks around the long-run sustainability of funding, bridging the gap between national and international performance and the development of new medal winning talent. We have put in place strategies and mitigations to ensure these risks are managed well and brought down to our agreed target risk scores.

Policy Areas and Exception Reporting

The board maintains a review framework to monitor which policies require updating on a regular cycle. This feeds into the board agenda at each meeting.

There have been no complaints or whistleblowing during the year.

Looking Forward

Looking forward, the Board will work hard to ensure that it provides the strategic leadership and effective governance required for our World Class Programme athletes to achieve even greater successes at international competitions, while ensuring that the programme is run well and in accordance with the Code for Sports Governance. The Board's focus will be on three areas: performance, and ensuring our athletes are as well prepared as they can be to achieve medal success in Paris in 2024 and in the international competitions that lead to it, while also supporting the Performance Director in making the changes deemed necessary to the programme to build towards further success at LA in 2028 and beyond; publishing and implementing our new strategy, in particular ensuring we can identify and develop those high potential athletes who have the desire, commitment and talent to be our medal winners and role models in future and, separately, in further developing our international influence through our support of BISFed our International Federation; and governance, through ensuring that Boccia UK is well led and remains compliant with the Code for Sports Governance.

More information can be found through looking at source and reference documents published in the resources section of the Boccia UK web-site: boccia.uk.com/resources/

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November 2022