

Board Diversity Statement and 2021 Diversity Objectives

Last Approved by Board: 21/09/2017

1. Purpose of Document

Under the Sport England/UK Sport Governance Code, the Board is required to ensure that BF prepares and publishes on its website information (approved by the Board) about its work to foster all aspects of diversity within its leadership and decision making, including an annual update on progress against the actions identified in accordance with Diversity requirements as set out by the Code.

This document is intended to be the description of the work set out as part of the overall Diversity Objectives for BF.

A separate document will be published annually as part of the annual report pack as an update against progress.

2. Background - Governance Code Requirements

Organisations shall recruit and engage people with appropriate diversity, independence, skills, experience and knowledge to take effective decisions that further the organisation's goals.

Why is this important? Diverse, skilled and experienced decision making bodies which contain independent voice and engage in constructive, open debate enable good decision-making.

Diversity (Requirements 2.1–2.3)

2.1 Each organisation shall:

(A) adopt a target of, and take all appropriate actions to encourage, a minimum of 30% of each gender on its Board; and

(B) demonstrate a strong and public commitment to progressing towards achieving gender parity and greater diversity generally on its Board, including, but not limited to, Black, Asian, minority ethnic (BAME) diversity, and disability.

2.2 Each organisation shall identify proportionate and appropriate actions to be taken to support and/or maintain (as appropriate) the diversity targets set out in Requirement 2.1.

2.3 The Board shall ensure that the organisation prepares and publishes on its website information (approved by the Board) about its work to foster all aspects of diversity within its leadership and decision making, including an annual update on progress against the actions identified in Requirement 2.2.

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3. Board Diversity Statement

The Board is committed to maintaining a minimum of 30% of each gender on the Board. The Board will publish annually the %age of each gender as part of the Annual Report.

The Board is committed to progressing towards achieving gender parity and greater diversity generally (includes BAME, disability, LGBT etc) specifically regarding both the Board and also the leadership of the sport, including the senior executive. This information will not be published due to its sensitive and personal nature, but will be shared anonymously as required by funding bodies.

The Board is also committed to ensuring that diversity is increased across the sport and will ensure that an appropriate Diversity and Equality Plan is in place and the progress against that plan reported to and monitored by the Board. This will include conducting an annual Equality Survey.

The Board strongly encourages all affiliated bodies eg Home Countries, Regional and County organizations to adopt a similar diversity statement.

4. 2021 Diversity Objectives

BF will work towards 5 major objectives in its 2021 Diversity Plan. The objectives have been informed by the annual Equality and Diversity Survey and specific diversity measures already collected by BF:

4.1 Increased gender diversity in all aspects of leadership in BF

Specific 2021 targets include:

1. Board Composition target 40% of either gender req'd minimum of 30%
2. Senior Leadership (Staff) min 40% of either gender
3. Senior Leadership (Volunteers on BF Standing Committees) min 30% of either gender
4. International Leadership (GBR Post holders at FIE/EFCE Level) min 40% of either gender
5. BF will look to identify and train future young female leaders from the Sport through specific leadership training activities as part of our funded Projects and Programmes.
6. BF will also work with the Home Countries and the Regions to adopt similar gender diversity targets.

4.2 Increased gender diversity in all aspects of participation in Fencing

The gender split is roughly 60/40 in fencing but there is some evidence that the numbers of women in certain age groups are dropping. (17/18, 25-44)

Specific 2021 targets include

1. Increase participation in all aspects of Fencing – athlete, coaches, coach developers, officials, and so on. Specific targets to be set and monitored.

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2. Ensure gender diversity within selection structure – Target 40% of either gender across the selectors. Minimum set 25% within any individual selection panel.
3. Implement Mentoring schemes to support women in fencing
4. 50% of athletes on the talent programme are female with a minimum target reflecting British Fencing's current membership (ie 40% female).

4.3 Increase the numbers of people participating in fencing from BME sectors and any other identified under-represented diversity characteristics (eg LGBT, religious beliefs etc).

1. Increase participation in all aspects of Fencing – athlete, coaches, coach developers, officials, and so on. Specific targets to be set and monitored.

4.4 Increase the numbers of people participating in fencing with disabilities.

1. Adopt an inclusive and accessible approach to all new fencing activities owned by British Fencing.
2. Work with charities to identify opportunities to educate people that sports like fencing can provide inclusive and accessible participation opportunities, e.g. those with physical disabilities and amputee's.

4.5 Work to overcome the socio-economic barriers apparent in the sport

1. Identify opportunities for projects and funding/sponsorship to bring fencing to communities experiencing socio-economic barriers to engaging with the sport
2. Provide grants to cover NGB membership and NGB competition entries for the socially disadvantaged clubs, schools and individuals.
3. Work with the BF Charity to identify and support young talent experiencing socio-economic barriers to participating in fencing.
4. Support clubs, schools and individuals to become self-sufficient and maximise access to locally available funding.

5. Supporting activities

To deliver on these targets and objectives BF will:

1. Create and build on relationships with key stakeholders in the relevant diversity landscape – eg BDFFA, Street Games, Sporting Equals, WIS and Muslim Women in Sport to better inform our diversity work and identify opportunities to work together on diversity matters.
2. Establish baseline measurements for identified groups.
3. Maximise the use of positive media coverage to demonstrate fencing is an inclusive and diverse sport. Eg Ensure there is a diverse set of imagery used in The Sword, publish articles/case studies, etc
4. Identify specific projects to target diverse communities to introduce them to fencing – eg Muslim Girls Fence
5. Ensure all partnership work includes a requirement to report against appropriate diversity characteristics.

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6. Continue building on the participant insight work, based on Tribal Insight work, to ensure that opportunities delivered by BF are participant centred.
7. Support clubs and wider fencing workforce to deliver fencing experiences that enables and encourages diversity.
8. Provide appropriate opportunities for BF staff and Board members to undergo equality training.

5.1 Review

This document shall be reviewed annually by the Board alongside the results of the annual Equality and Diversity Survey.