The graphic features a dark blue background on the left side, which transitions into a series of overlapping, curved bands of lighter blue and white on the right side, creating a sense of motion and depth.

British Fencing
New Membership Scheme
Guidance for Existing
Members
January 2016

1. Introduction

Over the last 12 months, British Fencing (BF) has been consulting with its members, its Home Country Governing Bodies (HCs) and potential members to look at options for creating a sustainable model to underpin a successful future for the sport of fencing. A review of best practice models in other Sporting Governing Bodies has also been undertaken.

The result is a new membership scheme upon which BF and the HCs have all agreed. (The principles under which the new scheme was put together were agreed by all and can be found in Appendix A).

This document is intended for use by **existing individual Full & Social members** of British Fencing to understand how and why the existing scheme is changing, and which membership category is right for them.

New members of British Fencing will be able to access information about the options available by visiting the British Fencing website.

2. Background

In 2002 BF and the HCs entered into an agreement about the Membership fees and structure. BF subsequently collected membership fees on behalf of the HCs. BF retained a portion of this fee (referred to as a levy or registration fee) as payment for the administration services that BF provided at that time.

Since 2002 neither the fees nor the levy has increased. This has meant that in real terms the income levels of BF and the HCs have dropped, whilst membership numbers have not significantly changed and costs have significantly risen.

Had the membership fees been increased in line with inflation there would have been an additional £1m investment in the sport since 2002. (A full competitive membership would be nearer £60 had membership fees risen at the rate of inflation since 2002.)

Fencing has benefited from £1m sponsorship from Beazley over the last 5 years. Unfortunately this deal came to an end in December 2015 and we have yet to find a successor of this magnitude. This will have a significant impact on the operations of BF and therefore its ability to support the HCs. Sports Governing Bodies are also expected to plan to become self-sustaining, and ensure that membership services and benefits for existing and new members is not subsidised by public funding.

3. The Role of the NGB

National Governing Bodies are responsible for leadership and the strategic direction of their sport. They deliver a wide range of activities to support their specific sport. The exact split between the management and responsibilities between HCs and BF varies but together the organisations deliver a range of products and services including:

- **Development & Participation**
 - Club Support
 - Communications and Access to Information
 - Coach Education
 - Workforce Management & Development
 - Advertising and promoting the sport, and attracting sponsorship
 - Supporting individuals and clubs in securing funding from local and regional funding bodies
 - Management and delivery of Participation programmes & projects for Funding Bodies - eg Sport England, **sportscotland**, SportWales, SportNI,

- **Performance**
 - National Competition Structure
 - Rules and Rankings
 - Management and delivery of pathway for talented athletes and associated access and subsequent distribution of funding
 - World Class Performance Programme
 - International squad management
 - Representational (GBR and HC) Team Selection and Management
 - World and European Governing Bodies – affiliation, support and competition delivery

- **Governance & Administration**
 - Governance structure
 - Monitoring and maintenance of good practice/industry standards in sport
 - Equality and safeguarding
 - Anti-doping
 - Insurance
 - Disciplinary Code
 - Management of relationships with key bodies eg Public Funding Agencies (PFAs,) Youth Sport Trust (YST)
 - Interface with external bodies – for example UK Sport, **sportscotland**, Sport England, SportWales, SportNI.

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4. The New Membership Scheme

In line with other sports, BF & the HCs have developed a membership model which broadens the membership categories available to fencers but also includes others involved in fencing who currently benefit from the services that BF and the HCs offer.

It is not reasonable to cover the cost of the services delivered to the entire fencing community by simply increasing the membership fees for the current set of competitive members.

The expansion of recreational fencing is vital if we are to grow our membership base and help sustain our sport long term. Understanding the needs of the broader community enables both BF and HCs to better support growth in the sport.

5. The New Membership Categories

There are now four categories of membership available.

Starter – For newcomers to the sport, irrespective of whether they ultimately intend to compete or simply just enjoy a recreational form of fencing

Recreational – For people who want to fence in a club, participate in inter-club matches, but do not want to compete in conventional fencing competitions

Compete – For people that want to compete (87% of current membership)

Support – For volunteers, fans, supporters and parents

Starter	Recreational	Compete	Support
'Start'	'Stay'	'Succeed'	
Beginners & Unlimited Plastic	Recreational Fencers	Competitive Fencers	Volunteers Fans Supporters and Parents
U18, 18+	U18, 18+	U13, U20, Full	U18, 18+

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6. Membership Benefits

6.1 Fencers

	Starter	Recreational	Compete
<i>Purpose</i>	Introductory, Entry Level for Clubs & Schools (C/Ss)	Basic Recreational for Fencers in Clubs & Schools	For fencers competing
<i>Insurance 3rd party liability /personal accident</i>	As for Recreational	Fence at any C/S session, friendly inter C/S matches held in member C/S's Not covered to fence abroad.	As for Recreational plus Regional/County/National training and competitive events Covered to fence abroad.
<i>Events Included</i>	BF & HC Nominated Recreational Events	BF & HC Nominated Recreational Events	Unlimited Category Competitions
<i>Maximum Renewal Availability</i>	Plastic – unlimited renewals Metal - U18: 2 years (one renewal), 18+: 1 year (no renewal)	Unlimited renewals	Unlimited renewals
<i>Sword</i>	Online Only	Online + 1 Hard Copy/year	Online + 1 Hard Copy/year
<i>'Upgrade' to</i>	Recreational/Compete	Compete	N/A
<i>'Downgrade' to</i>	N/A	N/A	Recreational
<i>Voting Rights</i>	18+ only	18+ only	18+ only
<i>Cost From</i>	U18 £10 18+ £15	U18 £15 18+ £24	Full £48 U20 £36 U13 £27

The 'Voting Rights' above refer to voting in the BF AGM and elections – for information on the Home Country voting rights conferred on each category please visit the relevant Home Country website.

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The prices shown include the maximum discounts which are available online through direct debit or through affiliated clubs and coaches.

6.2 Non Fencers

If you do not actually participate in fencing there is a new category of membership called 'Support' which gives you the insurance benefits of public liability and personal accident. This ensures that you are personally covered for the typical volunteer activities that are undertaken in fencing, whether you perform them on behalf of yourself, your section, your region, your club or a competition.

This membership category will have access to online copies of the Sword, but will not be entitled to vote at the BF AGM.

The cost of this membership is £12/year for 18's and over, £10/year for U18s.

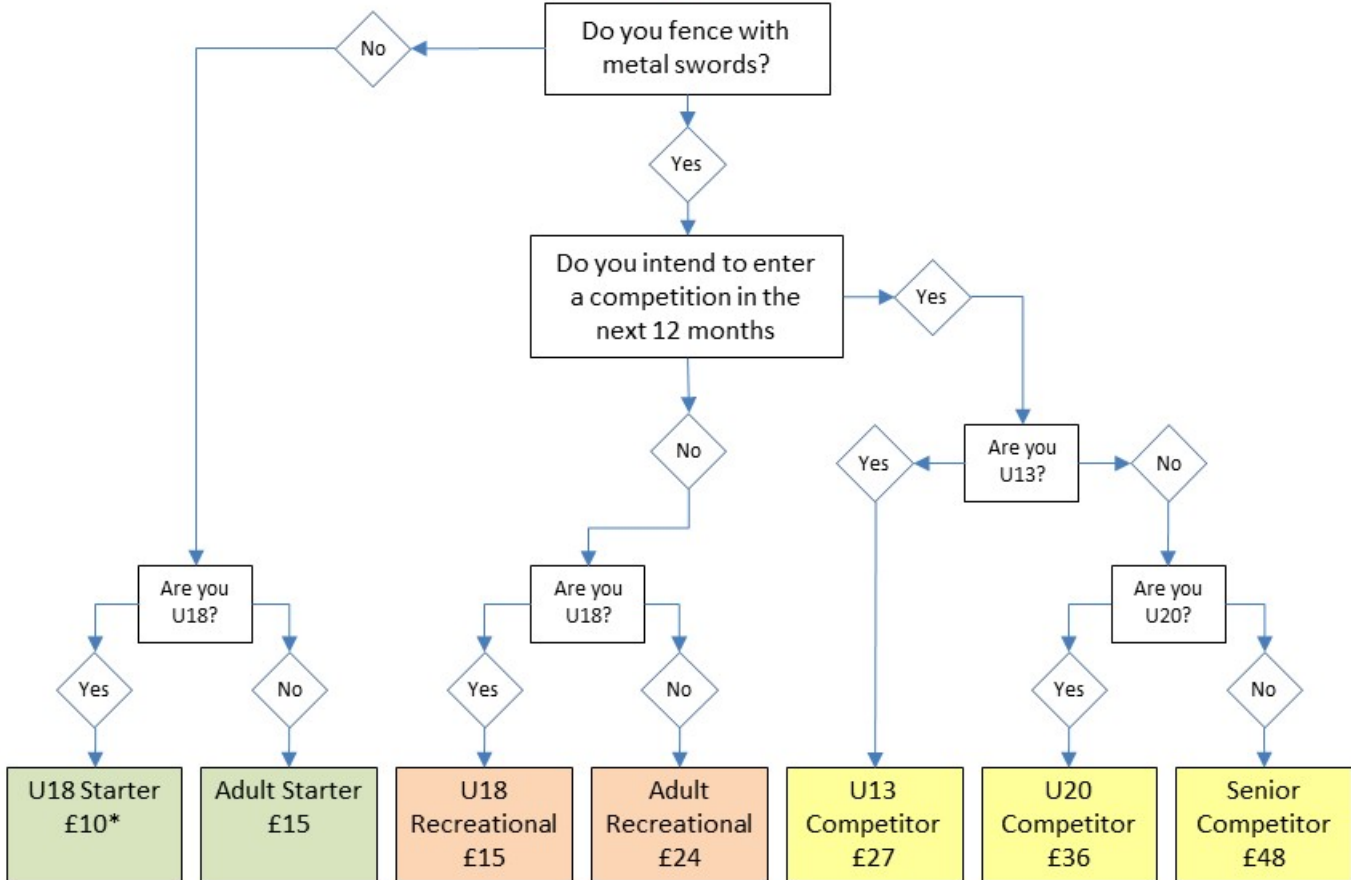
The standard Membership (whether Support/Starter/Recreational/Compete) does not include liability insurance cover if you are operating in a professional capacity – eg coaching or refereeing for payment. To benefit from this you must be on the relevant BF register to be fully covered. There may be an additional charge in some cases for this registration. For more information please contact headoffice@britishfencing.com.

7. Which membership is for me?

If you fence, please use the diagram below to help you work out which membership is suitable for you. If you do not fence please refer to 6.2 above.

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TRANSITIONING
EXISTING FENCERS -
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* U18 Starter members will be offered the same category for their next renewal ie 2 yrs of a reduced starter fee

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8. FAQs

When does this affect me? On annual renewal after launch date – currently scheduled for 15th February 2016. The existing category benefits will remain until then.

I am currently a Full member, what action do I need to take? - If you have a full competitive category licence and wish to remain at that category then you simply need to renew that licence when it expires. You will receive additional notification of the increase of fees and you will be able to cancel or adjust your membership to suit your needs. If you wish to take action now please contact headoffice@britishfencing.com.

I am currently a Social Member, what action do I need to take? – The benefits of Social membership will remain in place until renewal at which point you will be automatically offered Recreational Category membership. BF do not retain information about members that would enable automatic calculation as to which Social Category members participate in fencing. For insurance purposes, the assumption on renewal will be that everyone does require these benefits to ensure that coverage applies, hence the automatic offer of Recreational Category membership. Please contact us if you wish to downgrade your membership to Support Category.

I am on direct debit, what will happen on renewal? If you wish to remain at the same membership category then you do not need to take any action. You will receive additional notification of the increase of fees and you will be able to cancel or adjust your membership to suit your needs. If you wish to take action now please contact headoffice@britishfencing.com.

I am a coach, which membership level do I need? There is no requirement to take out anything other than a supporter membership – although this assumes that you don't engage in recreational or competitive fencing yourself. To receive the full benefits of public liability insurance, you must be on the BF Coach Register, irrespective of membership category. There may be an additional charge for joining the Register, depending on which level of membership you currently hold.

Additionally, coaches on the BF Coach Register are able to access other benefits including:

- 1) Bulk registration of members, with discounts of up to £5 on membership fees even if Direct Debit is not used
- 2) Discounted purchasing of BF achievement awards

I am unable to afford the increase in membership fees – what can I do?

British Fencing has set aside a small amount of money to be used to assist fencers in the Starter and Recreational Category for whom the membership fee is unaffordable and therefore creates a significant barrier to participation in club fencing. Grant forms will be available from headoffice@britishfencing.com and all applications must be requested and submitted through an affiliated club.

Are there any changes to a Club Membership?

There is currently no change to the registration cost for a club (£40). Benefits for the clubs include:

- 1) Public Liability (typically a pre-condition of venue hire)

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- 2) Fencers may affiliate in the competitive membership category and represent the club in BF/HC competitions
- 3) Non BF member fencers participating in beginner sessions are extended the benefits of both personal accident and public liability (subject to additional conditions)
- 4) Bulk registration of members, with discounts of up to £5 on membership fees even if Direct Debit is not used
- 5) Support for grant applications (typically NGBs are required to endorse applications for local public funding – a pre-condition to this is that the club is a member of the NGB)

Clubs are expected to encourage all fencers participating in a club to hold individual membership of BF. Individual non-members, even if they are fencing in member clubs or under the instruction of registered coaches are NOT afforded the insurance benefits of members except in specific circumstances (see point 3 above).

Over time there may be additional requirements in order that a club remains affiliated to an NGB – these are typically driven by best practice across the sport industry and developed in partnership with funding bodies.

9. Terms and Conditions

The Terms and Conditions that apply to the new membership scheme can be found here:

http://britishfencing.com/membership/new_membership_scheme/

10. Appendix A - Agreed Principles

In creating a new membership scheme the following principles were agreed:

1. Membership benefits including the right to vote, insurance etc will continue to be delivered at an individual level.
2. In order to receive the benefits of membership (including full insurance) an individual must purchase a membership.
3. The requirement to be a member to enter competitions and for a club to require all its participants to take out appropriate membership to be fully insured will be maintained.
4. Membership remains as a joint BF and HC membership.
5. The membership fee charged will reflect some price differential between those who use greater resource and those who do not, but **will not be set at full cost recovery** i.e. fencers will receive certain benefits aligned to the membership fee they pay, but may still have to pay for non-membership services on top of that.
6. BF & HCs can offer discounts by agreement between BF and the respective HC.