

# Board Diversity Action Plan 2023-2024

## 1. Message from our Chair

A message from John Coyne CBE, Chair of British Canoeing:

“The Board members of British Canoeing all recognise that leadership, governance and decision making are greatly improved and enhanced when an organisation is able to draw upon and harness a wide range of different opinions.

This is why my fellow Board members and I are fully committed to driving greater diversity within British Canoeing in order to achieve long term benefits for the sport.

#WePaddleTogether, British Canoeing’s equality, diversity and inclusion strategy, sets out our vision, action plan and wholesale commitment to increasing access to paddling, championing diversity and creating inclusive and welcoming environments for everyone. As a collective, the Board members will hold the executive team and ourselves to account for delivery of #WePaddleTogether and ensure we understand the impact and success of the many actions we have committed to. We will lead by example, ensuring we drive greater diversity and that equality, diversity and inclusion brings breadth of perspective to the heart of our decision making.”

## 2. Introduction

2.1 **About Us** – We are British Canoeing, the national governing body for paddlesports in the UK.

2.2 **Our Purpose** is;

“To encourage everyone to go paddling; for enjoyment, health, challenge and achievement.”

2.3 Our year Strategic Plan **“Stronger Together 2”** was launched in March 2022 and has the following ambitions:

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|----------------|--|
| Ambition One   | Engaging recreational paddlers and attracting new paddlers         |
| Ambition Two   | Increasing membership and improving member services                |
| Ambition Three | Promoting access, places to paddle and environmental awareness     |
| Ambition Four  | Supporting clubs and delivery partners                             |
| Ambition Five  | Developing and supporting coaches, leaders, instructors and guides |
| Ambition Six   | Developing and supporting volunteers                               |

Ambition Seven	Developing talent and achieving international success
Ambition Eight	Providing excellent championships, competitions and events
Ambition Nine	Focused on governance, people, equality and sustainability
Ambition Ten	Improving digital services and communications

2.4 Equality, diversity and inclusion is a cross cutting theme that runs through each ambition, driving inclusion in all that we do.

### 3. Our Values

- **Every person matters:** Making time to listen and understand others; supporting people to grow and develop; treating others as we would like to be treated; respecting diversity and being inclusive.
- **Striving for excellence:** Learning from mistakes; being open-minded and embracing new ideas; constantly seeking new ways to improve; producing high-quality, accurate work.
- **Always with integrity:** Doing what we promise; respecting our environment; being open and honest; being consistent and fair.
- **Enjoying the journey:** Celebrating success as a team; taking a friendly, enthusiastic approach; taking time to switch off and refresh; setting realistic targets.
- **Individually committed:** Working proactively and taking the initiative; being punctual and ready; being focused on our work; having our own clear objectives and development plan.
- **Stronger together:** Working towards a common goal; sharing our knowledge and expertise; sharing the load and working as a team; respecting the priorities of others.

### 4. Our Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

4.1 #WePaddleTogether, British Canoeing’s strategy for equality, diversity and inclusion sets out our vision for a more inclusive organisation:

*“We will ensure there is more equal access to paddling, ongoing championing of diversity in all paddling communities, and that we make a greater effort to better understand how we can collectively create inclusive and welcoming environments where everyone is able to enjoy paddling, regardless of their identity, background or circumstances”. We commit to delivering this vision through excellent governance, championing diversity and building insight and knowledge.*

4.2 We commit to annually reporting openly and honestly on the progress made in the delivery of #WePaddleTogether, celebrating success and

identifying areas of challenge.

- 4.3 British Canoeing will continue to work closely with UK Sport and Sport England to ensure it meets the requirements of the Code for Sport Governance in relation to its inclusion obligations.
- 4.4 British Canoeing is proud to have achieved the Intermediate Equality Standard and will continue to work to meet the Moving to Inclusion framework in 2024.
- 4.5 British Canoeing aims to embed its equality, diversity and inclusion values into every day practice, policies and procedures so that inclusion becomes the norm for all. This cultural change will be driven from the top by the Board and senior staff but will be embedded from the bottom across clubs and centres, regions and disciplines in keeping with the ambitions of British Canoeing strategic plan. British Canoeing supports and recognises the importance of diversity in its broadest sense throughout its organisation, including on its Board.
- 4.6 British Canoeing Board believes in fairness and equity and values diversity in all its dealings, both as the governing body for paddlesport, and as an employer. A diverse organisation will value and benefit from differences in canoeing and sports skills, regional and industry experience, background, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, belief and age, as well as socioeconomic status, culture and personality.
- 4.7 British Canoeing will continue to encourage diverse candidates for Board roles and is committed to continuing to target a minimum of female representation on the Board of 30% and to increasing its representation of diverse ethnicities and disabilities.
- 4.8 British Canoeing reviews the Board's effectiveness and composition each year and, in particular, considers the balance of skills, experience and independence of the Board. It also considers the benefits of all aspects of diversity, but without compromise as to the calibre of directors, when identifying candidates for appointment.
- 4.9 British Canoeing engages with Perrett Laver in Board recruitment to maximise opportunities to reach out to a diverse range of candidates.
- 4.10 British Canoeing recognises that leadership and decision making is greatly improved when a Board is able to draw on and harness a diverse range of opinions. The Board also recognises its important role in supporting the strategic direction and leadership of British Canoeing's equality, diversity and inclusion agenda and is accountable for the organisation's delivery against objectives.

4.11 The Board will monitor progress against the actions below and discuss updates required for the next year.

## 5. Action Plan Objectives

The Board is committed to the following key objectives of this Action Plan:

- Seeking out and encouraging diverse high calibre candidates for Board level roles.
- Consider candidates for Board appointments from a wide pool.
- Ensure Board appointment 'long lists' include diverse candidates.
- Report against these objectives and other initiatives to promote diversity annually.
- Report annually on the outcome of the Board evaluation including the diversity of the composition of the Board and meeting the target of a minimum of 30% of each gender on the Board and increasing representation of diverse ethnicities and disabilities.

## 6. Indicators

6.1 The following indicators will allow our stakeholders to judge how representative the Board is. Current Board Diversity:

- Gender: 45.5% Man (including transman) 45.5% Woman (including transwoman) 9% prefer not to say. 91% matched gender identity to that identified at birth whilst 9% preferred not to say.
- Age: 18% aged 25-40, 27% aged 41-55, 46% aged 55-70, 9% aged over 70
- Disability: 73% no disability, 18% with disability, 9% preferred not to say
- Sexuality: 73% heterosexual/straight, 27% preferred not to say
- Religion: 27% Christian, 18% Atheist, 9% Sikh, 46% preferred not to say
- Ethnicity: 73% White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, 9% Any other ethnic background, 9% Asian Indian, 9% preferred not to say
- British: 91% said yes, 9% preferred not to say.

6.2 This action plan has been approved by the Board of British Canoeing on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023. It is part of a wider good governance strategy which notes and promotes the principles of the Code for Sports Governance. It is also part of British Canoeing's wider EDI Strategy.

6.3 The Director of Governance will be responsible for overseeing delivery of this action plan, working in conjunction with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, all members of the Senior Management Team and the Board itself.

#### 6.4 Overall success will be measured by:

- Delivery of the actions and measures of success of #WePaddleTogether, a strategy for EDI
- Achieving compliance with the Moving to Inclusion Framework and the Code for Sports Governance; this can only be done if good inclusion practice is embedded across the whole of the organisation.
- Capturing data and demonstrating that Board recruitment drive has attracted more diverse candidates.
- Increasing the diversity of candidates from under represented backgrounds.
- Retaining the target of a minimum of 30% of each gender on the Board and increasing the diversity of representation of ethnicity and disability on the Board.

### 7. Actions

<b>Aim:</b> To recruit and engage people with diversity of background, thought, independence, skills and experience to take effective decisions that further the organisation's goals and best serve their communities, stakeholders and wider UK society.		<b>Why:</b> Diverse, skilled and experienced decision-making bodies which contain independent voices and engage in constructive and inclusive debate enable good decision-making and help create trust with stakeholders.	
	<b>Action</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>Data</b>	Gather and analyse diversity data of all Board Members	Director of Governance Nominations Committee	November 2024 (and annually thereafter)
	Identify areas of under-representation	Director of Governance Nominations Committee	November 2024 (and annually thereafter)
	Report on progress against diversity targets	Director of Governance Nominations Committee	November 2024 (and annually thereafter)
	Capture monitoring data of all Board applicants.	HR Director	Ongoing and as Board Vacancies arise
	Recruitment through People HR system to allow for continuous diversity monitoring.	HR Director	Ongoing
<b>Recruitment</b>	As vacancies arise actively seek representation on Board and Board committees and working groups through positive action, e.g. guaranteed interview scheme.	HR Director	As vacancies arise
	Engage with organisations which represent those	HR Director	As vacancies arise

	under- represented groups and which may be able to assist with identifying candidates.  Women in Sport English Federation of Disability Sports Sporting Equals		
	Board Level Posts will be advertised as widely as possible so as to attract a diverse group of candidates and reference will be made to this in the Recruitment Briefing.	HR Director Director of Governance Nominations Committee	As vacancies arise
	Attention will be paid to how the advertisement and role profile/person specification is written to be sure it is not precluding any applicants, including gender de-coding.	HR Director Director of Governance Nominations Committee	As vacancies arise
	Use of recruitment consultant to widen even further – including Perrett Laver. Hold them to account if they have been used to show what steps they have taken to ensure diversity.	HR Director Nominations Committee	As vacancies arise
<b>Monitoring</b>	Regularly review Board composition, skills matrix, succession planning, talent development and the broader aspects of diversity;	Director of Governance Nominations Committee	November 2024 and annually thereafter
	Regularly review and monitor the impact of this Diversity Action Plan	Director of Governance Nominations Committee	November 2024 and annually thereafter
<b>Publishing</b>	Publish Board Diversity Action Plan including Board diversity data	Director of Governance Nominations Committee	January 2024 (and annually thereafter)
	Report on progress against this Action Plan and #WePaddleTogether, a Strategy for EDI	Director of Governance Nominations Committee Board	March 2024 (and annually thereafter)
<b>Training</b>	Ensure EDI training is included in Board Training Plan, with training delivered at least every three years	Director of Governance	Review Board Training Plan November 2024 EDI training delivered by April 2026