



BRITISH FENCING

BRITISH FENCING ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2016 – MARCH 2017

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DIRECTORS' REPORT

This year brought about significant changes for British Fencing (BF). The 12 months ending March 2017 was the final year in the four-year funding cycle 2013-17. This provided us with the opportunity to reflect on the successes of our programmes as well as re-examine our goals for the next four-year cycle in light of progress and our future income/public funding position.

In the first half of the year the Board continued its work to oversee delivery against the previously stated 2024 goals and programmes for BF - to achieve repeatable Olympic medal success; to grow the membership to 50,000 plus (supported by high quality, good value services, meeting the needs of members and clubs); and to deliver sustainable, quality infrastructure and governance that is financially resilient.

The Men's Foil Team performance at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games was a credit to the athletes and everyone involved in the World Class Programme. Richard Kruse achieved the best British individual result for 66 years, coming fourth, and the team put in an outstanding performance finishing in 6th place.

After Rio, the fencing season ended with two GBR athletes and one GBR team ranked in the World Top 10 – Richard Kruse (3) and James Davis (9) and the GBR Men's Foil Team sitting in 6th place.

Despite the progress of the UK Sport funded World Class Programme in December 2016 we received the unexpected news that there would be no funding for fencing for the Tokyo cycle. UK Sport announced that it would no longer be funding sports that were considered 'possible, not probable' medallists for Tokyo. Given rising costs, they took the decision to fund fewer sports.

The Board decided to make representations to the Board of UK Sport and lodge an appeal. Following unsuccessful representations and limited likelihood of success with the formal appeal, the Board decided not to pursue the matter further.

The Board can confirm that the closure of the programme has not left BF with any outstanding related financial liabilities. However, the impact of losing this funding will have a significant impact on the support that BF can give to athletes pursuing international success at the highest level, something that the Board started to address in its updated Strategy communicated to the members by email in March 2017. The Board would like to thank UK Sport and the National Lottery for all the support that the sport, and in particular the World Class Programme athletes, have received over the years.

The UK Sport decision also impacted the Talent Programme plans. The strategy and resulting submission to Sport England for funding from April 2017 onwards had to be re-drafted in light of the absence of a World Class Programme. The submission was successful, resulting in an award of £250,000 a year until March 2019, dependent on BF meeting agreed targets.

Alongside the responsibility of delivering a World Class Programme, BF was also responsible for delivering a variety of projects and programmes in England funded by Sport England as part of the 2015-2017 award agreement.

With the support of England Fencing and Sport England, the BF development team successfully scaled up its new, innovative participation programme to attract over 3,000 more young people into our sport. Our national and regional level relationships with The Scouts Association, BUCS (Higher Education) and London Youth continued, resulting in the Sport England participation targets being met or exceeded in all areas. Working with England Fencing, a new Club and Regions Development Officer post was created and filled, designed to improve communications with the England Clubs and Regions and better support them in the work that they do in delivering fencing.

Alongside the continual improvement and delivery of our Coach Education Courses, this year saw the articulation of the Coaching Journey, a leading edge strategic document, endorsed by our multi-sport partners and stakeholders. This document will underpin all our work in Coaching Development. Our primary objective continues to be to create a coaching workforce that meets industry-wide education and best practice standards and has the skills to support both our grass roots and elite programmes. This document was published on the BF website and in The Sword in April 2017.

In financial terms, the Board approved an initial budget of a £40,000 deficit for 2016-17 in light of the loss of sponsorship income, reflecting the need to make an investment to find further sponsors. In light of the further uncertainty around future funding as a result of the UK Sport decision, expenditure was significantly reduced in all areas to avoid further reducing the reserves.

For the 2016-17 financial year, BF recorded a deficit of just over £6,000, which was £34,000 better than budget. This was primarily due to a combination of additional sponsorship revenue, reduction in legal fees plus a continued tightening of expenditure across all areas.

In our Directors' Report last year we reported that we were entering a period of significantly greater financial uncertainty. While the loss of the UK Sport funding was unexpected, the expected reduction in Sport England funding has also materialised and will be profiled by a year on year reduction in funding up to 2021.

The contribution that UK Sport, Sport England and Sponsorship made to the core operating costs is now significantly reduced. In many areas we must endeavour to increase sustainability, commercial income and efficiencies. Rather than significantly raising membership fees, it is most likely we will need to increase the role of volunteers to deliver important aspects of the work that we do for the members. The Board does not believe it is the role of the organisation to use up member's reserves to subsidise ongoing participation in fencing and that the core of the organisation, supporting the core of the sport, must find a way to be self-sustaining.

Now, more than ever, the future of our sport will be reliant on our members, clubs, coaches and volunteers, up and down the country.

Board of Directors as at March 2017

Paul Abrahams	Caryl Oliver
Thomas Cadman	Gillian Palmer
Janet Campbell	Brian Speight
Anne-Catrin Sallaba (appointed Oct 2016)	David Teasdale (Chair, term expired Oct 2016)
Clare Halsted	John Troiano
Mark Lyttle (Chair, appointed Nov 2016)	Paul Wedge

Diversity Progress Statement as at March 2017

As at 31st March 2017, 5/11 Board Directors are women (45%). The Board met its targets in respect of gender diversity (minimum 30% of either gender) and other identified protected diversity characteristics. The Board continues to work towards greater gender diversity and greater representation from young people, BAME and disability.

As at 31st March 2017, 7/14 BF Staff with managerial responsibilities were women (50%).

Governance Progress Statement as at March 2017

In 2016 BF underwent an independent governance audit, conducted by Moore Stephens on behalf of Sport England and UK Sport. For the first time, BF was independently assessed as “Green”. The newly published Code for Sports Governance set out a further range of requirements that BF and other organisations in sport must meet to be eligible for public funding. The work already done in this area means that we are in an extremely good position to meet these new requirements.

The items of the Code identified by Sport England as ‘not met’ which the Board will be working on in 2017-18 to ensure compliance are summarised below:

1.15 When a director has completed their maximum term, at least four years must elapse before they can be eligible to stand as a director for that organisation again.

Action: Minor updates to articles to be proposed at September 2017 AGM.

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.

Action: The Board will publish an updated Diversity Statement and 2021 Diversity Objectives. Progress will be reported as part of the Diversity Progress Statement in the Annual Report.

2.4 Each organisation shall have a formal, rigorous and transparent procedure for the appointment of new directors to the Board, and all appointments shall be made on merit in line with the skills required of the Board.

Action: The Board will review the election procedures, the associated procedures and remit of the Nominations Committee, the relevant bye-laws and propose any updates to articles to be proposed at September 2017 AGM.

4.2 External evaluation of the Board shall be facilitated at least every four years or at the request of UK Sport / Sport England.

Action: The Board will undertake an external evaluation as requested by Sport England.

5.4 Each organisation must prepare annual accounts which:

(B) give specific disclosure of income received from public investors and clearly account for the expenditure of such funding; and

Action: Sport England will be providing details on the format of this disclosure by end 2017 and this will be reflected in changes to the 2017-18 Annual Accounts.

5.8 The Board shall conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of the organisation's risk management and internal control systems to ensure that they provide reasonable assurance.

Action: The BF Audit Governance and Risk Committee will conduct a thorough review on behalf of the Board and add this to the annual work plan.

Board Director Attendance

	Full Board Meetings	Audit, Governance & Risk Committee	Nominations Committee
Paul Abrahams	6/6	-	3/3
Tom Cadman	5/6	5/5	-
Janet Campbell	5/6	-	3/3
Clare Halsted	5/6	4/5	-
Caryl Oliver	4/6	-	-
Gill Palmer	5/6	-	-
Anne-Catrin Sallaba	4/4	-	-
Brian Speight	6/6	-	-
John Troiano	6/6	4/5	-
Paul Wedge	5/6	-	3/3
Mark Lyttle (Chair)	4/4	2/2	2/2

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



The period from April 2016 - March 2017 included the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games in Rio, followed in November by the four-yearly elections for the FIE (Federation International d'Escrime). At the start of a new Olympic cycle, and with a new FIE Executive Committee in place, we can expect new plans to be formed which will impact on those involved in the international arena. Coupled with this our own international relations programme is affected by the recent devastating cuts in external funding, which so shocked and disappointed us all. We are therefore looking ahead to a period of significant change.

On the international relations front I have continued in a number of roles including:

- FIE Chief of Protocol
- Member of the EFC (European Fencing Confederation) Competition Commission
- Member of the Commonwealth Commission for Re-entry into the Games
- FIE-IWAS (International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports) Joint Council member
- IWAS Wheelchair Fencing Executive Committee member

I stood down from the IWAS Executive Committee at their 4-yearly elections in January 2017, where I am pleased to say that our new candidate, Peter Huggins, was elected.

During the past year I represented GBR at a number of events overseas. These included:

- Head of Delegation at the FIE Annual Congress in Moscow
- Member of the DT (Directoire Technique) and FIE Chief of Protocol at the Junior & Cadet World Championships in Bourges, France
- Attendance at the Moscow Grand Prix
- Head of Delegation at the European Fencing Confederation (EFC) Congress in Torun, Poland, followed by the European Championships
- Member of the DT and FIE Chief of Protocol at the Olympic Games in Rio 2016
- Technical Delegate at the Paralympic Games in Rio 2016
- Supervisor at the World Cup in Warsaw

At home I attended a number of junior, senior and veterans events at both domestic and international level. Domestic events included the British Championships where I was delighted to present a number of awards at the first ever BF Awards Dinner – a very successful occasion. The international events included the European Veterans Team Championships in Gillingham and Eden Cup (Junior World Cup) in London – both of which received widespread recognition for being such well-run events. I was pleased to be able to make special arrangements with the FIE for an additional referees seminar and examination which was held in conjunction with the Eden Cup. As hosts we were able to submit extra candidates, all of whom were successful.

Great Britain continues to be recognised for its strong representation as technical officials and commission and council members at both FIE and EFC level. Rio 2016 Olympic officials included Janet Huggins and myself, and Paralympic officials included Peter Huggins, Chris Farren, Duncan Rowlands and myself. Of our increasing number of commission and council representatives, I would mention in particular Steve Higginson and Peter Jacobs, who have kept our flag flying high with their recent contributions in the areas of FIE Rules and EFC Statutes respectively.

Hilary Philbin, President



CEO'S REPORT

2016-17 represents the final year in the four-year public funding cycle. Whilst continuing to deliver on the broader UK Sport and Sport England (SE) funding conditions and meeting the Board approved budget, the operational priorities were:

- Deliver on the agreed World Class Programme Olympic targets
- Deliver on the agreed 2017 Sport England participation and retention targets
- Improve the sustainability of the core NGB
- Maintain a Green governance rating

Further to the UK Sport decision in December that fencing was to receive no funding to support its World Class Programme to Tokyo, operational priorities shifted in the latter half of the year to deal with the enormous impact of this decision on the sport.

World Class Performance (WCP) & Talent

This year was the final year of the four-year funding cycle – focussing on delivering the agreed targets for the WCP senior performances (as listed in the Directors Report), and working to deliver a strategy for funding for the 2017-21 cycle.

The targets set by UK Sport were met through the qualification and subsequent performances of the WCP Rio Men's Foil Squad (Richard Kruse 4th and the Men's Foil Team in 6th).

Meanwhile, the WCP Tokyo Squad continued to demonstrate the progression expected of a World Class Programme. During the first half of the year, the BF team worked with UK Sport to finalise the strategy for 2017-21. The news on the 9th December that fencing was to receive no WCP funding was unexpected - a considerable shock in light of the progression and positive feedback received from UK Sport on the BF WCP strategy and plans.

Notwithstanding the subsequent efforts to appeal the decision, a significant amount of work was undertaken to ensure that the WCP was closed in accordance with UK Sport rules and no outstanding liabilities existed for BF. An innovative and highly successful crowdfunding campaign was started to ensure that every athlete competing at the Europeans and Worlds would have the funds to do so.

After the April 2016 World Championships, the Talent Programme underwent a fundamental review with Sport England. Talent athletes were moved to a new Performance Foundation programme which was supported by the WCP activities whilst the intention was that Talent Identification and Confirmation (TIC) athletes would be supported where possible through a new Talent Development Centre concept.

Sport England Talent funding was used to support all six weapons through the provision of Talent Coaches, training camps and financial support for the Cadet and Junior World and European Championships.

Without sponsorship or membership funding for the Talent Programme, the 2017-21 Sport England funding strategy continues to have the biggest impact on what can be delivered in this area. As public funding cannot be guaranteed long-term other options must be explored to make a Talent programme sustainable.

Growing Participation

Supported by England Fencing, the BF Development Team continued to adopt an accountable and professional approach to growing participation in fencing through the Sport England funded programmes. 2016-17 represented the second year of the 2015-17 funding award and predominantly focussed on scaling up the projects delivered in 2015-16, successfully engaging a total of 3,385 participants through programme delivery, ranging from half termly and termly blocks of activity to participation engagement events run with a wide range of partners. The success of BF's Sport England funded programmes has largely been due to the partnership approach taken with Universities and youth organisations such as the Scout Association and London Youth. By working closely with these partners, it has been possible to ensure that the model of delivery meets the needs of the young people, staff and volunteers that work with the varied groups of young people in a variety of different settings and environments.

The Coaching Development Programme continued to deliver coach development opportunities designed to support the participation and performance objectives. Completing the articulation of the new Coaching Framework and Journey is a significant piece of work which will underpin all our Coaching Development work in years to come.

BF remains committed to ensuring that all coaches that engage with the programme have the opportunity to develop the skills to understand the needs and motivations of participants and adapt accordingly. This will provide better experiences for participants and ensure that coaches are better able to meet the needs of the 'market' they operate in. Schools, Universities, youth clubs and many other organisations involved in sport delivery, expect all coaches, irrespective of sport to have an ability to understand the motivations of participants (whether 'have-a-go', recreational or competitive).

Sustainable NGB

The loss of UK Sport funding has meant that work previously undertaken by paid accountable staff with professional skills and experience will now, in many areas, have to be transitioned to a volunteer workforce. This will inevitably result in significant changes to the services that some members and athletes have been fortunate enough to benefit from whilst the WCP existed.

BF secured a year-long sponsorship deal with Wilkinson Sword which, with the help of Network Rail enabled additional promotion of the sport to the wider public in the run-up to Rio 2016.

The introduction of new Membership Categories and a Direct Debit/recurring payment facility has contributed to a rise in numbers of member and membership income.

However, the gap between the membership fee income and the direct costs of membership services remains significant, and in the long term unsustainable. The decision to continue to raise fees annually in line with inflation is preventing the situation from worsening, but the pressure remains for introductory 'starter' memberships to remain low and affordable.

The development of future commercial opportunities (including sponsorship, and pay-as-you-go options for add-on BF services) must be fully explored to find alternative income to enable BF to provide the level of support that participants, clubs, volunteers and parents increasingly expect.

As with any NGB, BF cannot and will not be able to sustain the sport without the many volunteers who selflessly give their time and skill to support the sport. Volunteers are found throughout the sport – including running clubs, organising competitions, refereeing, acting on committees, coaching and managing teams. These volunteers deserve our continued support and thanks as they form the backbone of the sport up and down the country.

Green Governance Rating

Much of the governance work of BF was consolidated and continually improved as part of a repeatable, 'business as usual' cycle. All the UK Sport and Sport England major governance requirements were met, and this was recognised by the independent auditors appointed by Sport England rating BF as 'Green' in 2016 for the first time. The launch of the Code for Sports Governance during this period set out the new requirements for National Governing Bodies (NGBs) from April 2017 and work began early to ensure BF will meet these requirements.

Georgina Usher, CEO



BF COMMITTEES

Safety Committee

Chair: Peter Jacobs

The committee continued to advise British Fencing on safety issues and to respond to members' queries. Notably the committee reviewed mask safety in the light of several recorded incidents in Britain and abroad of masks falling off during the bout, issuing advice to fencers and referees, and it's members engaged in dialogue with the FIE, who have set up a task force on this subject. The committee also met with the BF exec team to advise on the appropriate clothing and equipment for the Sabre:Lite initiative.

Overall we continue to monitor accidents and assess the risks facing those involved in our sport; although fencing continues to have one of the best safety records across Olympic sports but we must remain ever vigilant.

Rules Committee

Chair: Steve Higginson

Since much of our activity is dictated by the FIE schedule, there was little activity in the year 2016/2017. The 2016 Congress was a purely elective one and there were therefore no rule proposals to discuss. We met on 21st March 2017 to discuss various proposals BF wishes to present to the 2017 FIE Congress: these were duly forwarded to the FIE.

As ever, over the year the Committee has responded to a variety of queries from members of BF concerning the wording and interpretation of the Rules.

In the FIE elections in November 2016, two members of the committee were re-elected to FIE Commissions: Peter Jacobs to the Legal Commission and Steve Higginson to the Rules Commission. In February, at the first post-election meeting of the FIE Commissions, Steve Higginson was elected Chairman of the FIE Rules Commission. We are thus well placed to maintain strong links with the FIE at the top level, which should be of benefit to British Fencing.

Refereeing Committee

Chair: N/A

Much of the activity around coordinating and delivering the Referee Pathway Scheme is still being undertaken by BF Head Office with the support of volunteers as and when the requirement arises. A report on the progress can be found in the executive reports below. Moving forwards it is likely that skills-based Working Groups of volunteers will be formed to address different aspects of the work required to support referees.

International Cadet Management Group

Chair: Clare Halsted

This season (Sep 16 to April 17) 18 cadet squads competed in nominated European Cadet Circuit events abroad, with Manchester Foil and Camden Sabre again providing opportunities for many more of our fencers. Highlights were:

- CWE Laura Sheffield, Bronze Grenoble, Bronze Europeans
- CWE team Silver Europeans
- CWF Yasmin Campbell Bronze Europeans, Isabella Gill, Bronze Moedling, 7th Europeans
- CMS James Edwards, Silver Sofia
- CMS team 4th Europeans.

Heartfelt thanks are due to our 3 volunteer squad managers, Nickie Bailey (foil), Maggie Maynard (epee), Margie Mascolino (sabre), the other members of the ICMG for all their hard work through the cadet season and to Pat Aiyenuro and Tim Greenwood for managing the cadet teams at the major championships.

BF Honours Committee

Chair: Peter Jacobs

Proposals for the 2016 BF honours were solicited from the membership in the summer of 2016. The Honours Committee met on 30th August and the awards were announced at the AGM in October 2016 and are listed in full at the end of this Annual Report.

International Relations

Chair: Hilary Philbin

For much of the year attention was focussed on the FIE elections and appointments at the Moscow Congress in November 2016.

The election results were:

- Legal Commission - Peter Jacobs
- Medical Commission – Clare Halsted
- Rules Commission – Steve Higginson (Chair)
- Semi Commission – Janet Huggins

Hilary Philbin was appointed FIE Chief of Protocol for the season 2016-17 and continues as one of the three FIE representatives on the FIE-IWAS Joint Council. Georgina Usher was appointed to the Women in Fencing Council.

Our International Relations (IR) strategy is financially supported by a UK Sport grant covering the 2015-17 period. This funded a range of referee development activities including hosting the first single-weapon FIE exam in December 2016, and enabled BF representatives to attend the FIE Congress in Moscow and the EFC Congress in Torun, Poland.

BF submitted a successful application for the 2017-19 funding period to support IR activities, which will allow us to continue to play an international role, working with the FIE to support and develop the future of International fencing.

MEMBERSHIP

Over the reporting period, the total year-on-year individual membership rose to 10,023 (compared to 9,191 individual memberships as at March 2016). Club membership rose from 392 to 407.

This has, in part, been as a result of the new membership model launched in March 2016, and in particular the success of a new category of recreational membership. Recreational membership is aimed at fencers that do not compete but wish to be insured to participate at club level and in other recreational fencing activities – for example, inter-club matches. This membership model helps to spread the cost and benefit of key services provided by BF more fairly across the participating community. In creating a new category the intention was to avoid future increase of competitive or affiliated club membership fees to subsidise the cost of benefits (eg insurance, safeguarding) recreational fencers receive.

The effect of the Direct Debit/recurring payment facility introduced in late 2015 is reducing the lag between expiry and renewal across all categories of membership and reducing the administration cost required to manage offline renewals.

Membership income came in at just under £192K (compared to £170K in 2015-16), once the Home Country Associations recharge had been taken into account. The majority of this income was taken up in five expense categories – insurance, The Sword, safeguarding, events and standard office/organisation running costs (rates, utilities and so on). The lack of membership funds to cover staff cost, support athlete development or drive development of and participation in the sport continues to be of significant concern.

Home Nation	Compete			Recreational		Starter		Supporter		Life	Grand Total
	Full	U13	U20	18+	U18	18+	U18	18+	U18		
England	2591	1889	2165	427	268	204	388	88	3	26	8049
Scotland	315	91	216	41	43	24	156	23	0	3	912
Wales	197	95	133	65	45	72	86	4	0	5	702
Northern Ireland	81	55	58	4	4	0	4	2	0	1	209
Guernsey	39	21	36	2	3	5	2	1	0	1	110
Jersey	12	14	12	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	41
Grand Total	3235	2165	2620	539	365	305	637	118	3	36	10023



SAFEGUARDING

BF is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children in the sport of fencing across the UK. Protecting children in fencing from harm and creating a safe and positive place to participate in our sport is our greatest responsibility and this commitment sits at the heart of everything that we do.

As a result of allegations of historic abuse in other sports, BF, along with every National Governing Body of Sport, undertook a full review of its Safeguarding policy and the handling of historic cases and reported back to the Minister for Sport in December 2016.

Alongside this review, work has continued to implement the BF policy that every club must have a trained welfare officer in place. The role of BF club welfare officers has been reviewed to ensure alignment with current industry-wide standards of good practice, and work continues to adapt these roles to the changing needs of the participation community.

A rolling program of welfare courses, mainly attached to national level competitions has been delivered to facilitate and support the development of club welfare officers. 20 courses have been delivered over the year alongside BF competitions and in conjunction with regions (Southern, East Midlands, West Midlands). To ensure these can be offered on a sustainable basis, courses have been priced in line with those offered by other NGBs and County Sport Partnerships, with discounts available for members. Additionally, we have extended places on our welfare courses to volunteers in other sports.

Ultimately safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in the sport and we continue to rely on everyone in the community to help ensure that it is embedded into every fencing experience. Anyone responsible for leaving an adult at risk or a child at a fencing activity, whether training or competition should ensure that there is an identified Welfare Officer. Coaches should also be on the BF Register which is available for anyone to check on the British Fencing website.



As always if you have any safeguarding concerns, then please contact our Lead Safeguarding Officer on 077177 40125 or by email on equality@britishfencing.com.

Supported by:



Child Protection in Sport Unit

NSPCC

EVENTS

For the 2016-17 financial year, the BF Event Portfolio consisted of

- **Five British Championships:** Senior British Championships (Apr 2016), British Youth Championships (May 2016), Cadet British Championships (Jul 2016), Junior British Championships (Jul 2016), and British School Team Championships (Feb 2017).
- **Four International Tournaments:** GLL Camden International EFC Cadet Sabre Tournament (October 2016), Camden Men's Sabre FIE Satellite (October 2016), Eden Cup Junior Men's Foil FIE World Cup (December 2016) and Leon Paul Cup Men's Foil FIE Satellite (December 2016).
- Level 4 School Games (September 2016)
- BF Awards Dinner (April 2016)

Participant feedback scores continued to be high across the programme, and participant numbers grew in almost all events. The 2016 Eden Cup and Leon Paul Cups, in particular, attracted a high number of competitors with 34 countries entering, including Russia for the first time.

Income from events for the period 2016-17 fell slightly to £98,375. This was primarily due to the loss of sponsorship income, as the majority of competitions attracted greater entry numbers. This small loss was compounded by a larger than expected increase in expenditure (excluding attributed staff costs) to £126,760.

Despite some positive financial results in the British Youth Championships, the Cadet and Junior British Championships and the British School Team Championships, the events portfolio as a whole continues to make a significant and increasing loss, thus offsetting the increase in membership revenue. This loss is primarily due to the running of FIE & EFC international events where there is limited ability to affect income levels due to entry fee limits and a requirement for minimum standards that are costly to implement.

Despite the financial losses, BF remains committed to running its remaining FIE Event - the Junior Men's Foil Eden Cup – which continues to lose nearly £13K (net).

The EFC Camden International, held in October 2016, resulted in a deficit of approximately £10k (excluding staff time). As a result, in January 2017, the Board agreed that BF could not continue to suffer such losses and made the decision that the competition could not remain as part of the core BF event portfolio. The search for a significant sponsor, patron or club to take on the competition began immediately after.

The biggest expenditure for events continues to be volunteer and officials expenses, with total claims for travel, accommodation and catering coming in at just under £60K. This amount continues to rise faster than the ability to raise income either through raising entry fees or sponsorship. One way to address this is to increase the pool of volunteers so that we have a more localised team which will help reduce these costs. However, this is not something that can be achieved in the short term.

Further changes are being made to the Events Portfolio in 2017-18 to reverse the trend of increasing losses, with the view to creating a more financially sustainable and quality events programme. The format of the 2017 Senior British Championships was altered with three out of six weapons run on one day (of a two day event). It will be further altered in April 2018 so that all six weapons are completed in one day (expected three on each day) intended to have a positive impact on entry numbers. Fencers wishing to be selected to represent GBR must now compete at the National Championships at the relevant level which increases both the size and the quality of the competitions.

Detailed research into those who attend and support at BF events is being conducted in order to build a more accurate profile of our audience to help in attracting sponsorship for the programme. Investment is also being made into developing a merchandise offer for each event as a way of creating a new revenue stream.

In conjunction with the Regions and in response to feedback from members, BF is exploring the potential to introduce a new competition aimed at increasing participation amongst adult novice and intermediate fencers. The expectation is that this will operate in a similar way to the BYCs with a regional qualifier and a national finals event. The aim of the tournament is to stimulate additional adult intermediate participation in the Regions by providing a mechanism to qualify and compete in a new annual National tournament – ‘The GB Cup’.

BF will also be introducing Event Licensing as a way of providing all fencing event organisers with appropriate insurance and increased public liability cover for events. An additional benefit will be that over time a comprehensive searchable list of licensed events will be created and made available on the BF website. This will allow fencers, parents and coaches to easily search for competitions and events that meet their needs. This scheme will also enable significant improvements in calendar management, helping BF, Home Countries and major event organisers to avoid clashes.



MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

The Rio 2016 Olympic Games significantly increased media interest in the sport of fencing in the UK. The BOA Team announcement was held at the Leon Paul Centre attracting a significant number of journalists. BF supported appearances and features on BBC Breakfast, in The Times, The Telegraph, The Daily Mail, the FIE website and magazine show, Strictly Come Dancing, A League of their Own, Made in Chelsea and various radio interviews including BBC R2's Drivetime show.

Social Media presence, predominantly on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube continued to grow. Followers (Facebook increased by 2K/30%, Twitter by 1.5K/20%), likes and reach continue to grow. Facebook and Twitter were used, live where possible, to report on results from all senior World Cups and Grand Prix events plus the two World Championships and Senior European Championships. Results and live stream links were posted for all senior events (where available) in advance on the competition weekends. Top 8 results from Cadet and Junior events were reported on social media.

BF supported social media campaigns of stakeholders and partners, including but not limited to UK Sport, Sport England, TeamGB, SportsAid, SRA, Women in Sport, FIE and the NSPCC.

Online reports were posted for all major international championships, Senior World Cups and Grand Prix events, top 8 finishes for Cadet and Junior internationals and all British Championships. The senior British Championships were live streamed (at finals stage) for the first time, attracting over 11.5K views. The finals of the Cadet and Junior Championships were filmed, edited and posted to our YouTube channel within one week of the tournament, attracting 5.3K views.

The Sword Magazine continued to be managed by BF with Ed Rogers as volunteer Editor. Issues covered a broad range of topics with a regular Development section. Each issue was published electronically attracting over 4K unique visitors, mailed directly to all members and promoted on social media. The October issue had a full hard-copy print-run. Ed Rogers stood down as Editor (May 2017) and Karim Bashir is now covering the role on an interim basis.

Media activity supported the Wilkinson Sword and Logitech partnerships and the first BF crowdfunding campaign #FundFencing, launched in response to the UK Sport funding announcement. The money was raised to assist athletes attending the Senior European and World Championships. In total BF received £16,870. As the European Championships were held before all the money had been collected an estimate of 50% was made in advance of the final figure. Therefore £8,380 was divided equally between all the 10 athletes competing at the European Championships. The remaining amount, subsequently confirmed as £8,490 was equally divided between all the 10 athletes competing at the World Championships.

Unfortunately the loss of UK Sport funding, alongside the reduction in Sport England funding and sponsorship, will result in a significant impact on BF's ability to manage media requests or to provide a timely and reactive international result reporting service. BF will be reaching out to the volunteer community to help produce the content (photos, videos, result write-ups) to help sustain a positive media presence for fencing.

COACHING DEVELOPMENT

After extensive community and expert consultation, the work on the BF Coaching Framework, as started in 2015-16 was completed and approved in early 2017 by the BF Board and endorsed by Sport England.

The Framework is designed to empower and support a network of coaches and leaders to grow the sport at a grass roots level, as well as deliver coaching excellence at every stage of the coach pathway which is central to a highly successful world-class fencing programme.

Work on coaching development is funded primarily by Sport England, however the BF team are working to establish synergies with the systems operating in the other Home Countries.

Courses & Resources

Coaching courses and the associated resources are currently being re-designed to support the new BF Coaching Framework.

Core Coach is designed primarily for Activity Providers and replaces the old FALA qualification (Fencing Activity Leaders Award). This course is specifically being designed to act as one entry point into the new Coaching Framework.

The old Level 1 & 2 FES (Foil/Epee/Sabre) courses have now been replaced with:

- Introduction to Coaching Fencing (ITCF) – This is aimed at coaches delivering beginner/have-a go experiences in communities, schools and clubs. 11 courses were delivered in 2016-17.
- Coaching Fencing (CFL2) – This is aimed at coaches working with beginner/intermediate fencers, most often in schools and clubs. 6 courses were delivered in 2016-17.

New Level 3 FES courses have been created and the first one piloted in 2016. Going forward these will be referred to as Level 3 Weapon Specialist Courses. They are aimed at coaches working with athletes moving from intermediate/novice to a competitive standard, typically in more traditional club environments.

In addition, a new Leadership in Fencing course for 14-18 yr olds has been created, piloted and delivered 4 times with different partners.

Licensed Partner Training programmes have been delivered to 3 partners and a pilot Athlete to Coach programme was run involving 6 athletes.

Coach Developer Workforce

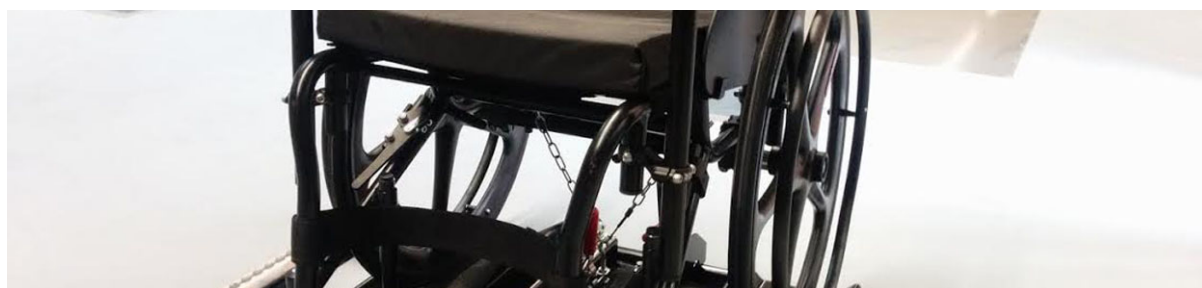
Focussed work continues with a smaller group of educators willing and able to invest the necessary personal time to upskill to meet industry standard. A positive start has been made but all involved recognise that as a sport we face a continual challenge to ensure that courses produce coaches with the skills that both employers and participants expect.

There are now 27 active coach developers forming part of the BF Coach Developer Team delivering across England, Wales and Guernsey. Work is also underway to align coach development activities with Scottish Fencing.

Internal Verification and Quality Assurance (IV&AQ) has taken place on 5% of Core Coach courses and 78% of the updated courses (ITCF & CFL2).

In 2017-18 pilots will be run for two newly written courses:

- A mentoring course for Coach Developers and those coaches aiming at Performance Coaching.
- A seated/wheelchair fencing course aimed at coaches and clubs looking to become more inclusive.



Coaches Register

Whilst the numbers of community coaches working with partners are increasing, the number of coaches on the BF register remained static from 494 to 499 as the year finished in March 2017. There is however a gradual increase in the refresh rate, with around 7 new coaches per month joining the register.

As at the end of March 2017 the ratio of male/female coaches was 391/108 representing a 78%/22% split. This has been fairly constant, in comparison to the overall membership which is around 70%/30%. Increasing diversity in coaching is important as a diverse workforce has been proven to be more likely to encourage and support diverse participation in sport.

Access to Safeguarding and Protecting Children training remains a challenge, which is currently required to be renewed every three years, and work continues on exploring alternative methods of delivering refresher training, without compromising on quality.

Work has continued on a comprehensive Coaching Register, to align with the new BF Coaching Framework. The new register will better meet the development needs of new and existing coaches, connecting coaches appropriately to strengthen the club network and providing better information about our trained workforce to fencing providers.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT – REFEREES

This last year has been a very successful one for the BF Referee Pathway Programme (RPP) which supports the training and development of GBR referees aiming for International EFC and FIE qualifications. Individual Home Countries continue to be responsible for Domestic referee development and training activities.

The Referee Pathway Programme also supports Associate referees – these are referees living in Britain who are not eligible for a GBR FIE affiliation but are active in supporting fencing at the highest competitive level in the UK.

FIE training was held at the European Veterans Championships held in Kent (May 2016) presented by Iana Davkova, member of the FIE Referees Commission. Mock FIE exams were run in foil and epee (November 2016 and January 2017) run by FIE referees Vilem Madr and Daniel Vasquez to prepare candidates for exams.

The pathway activities have been successful in creating a backlog of referees wishing to sit their exams, however with one FIE exam taking place in 3 out of every four years and a maximum of 2 candidates (min 1 female) the opportunity to sit an exam is a limiting factor in referee development. After discussions with the FIE about these challenges, shared by other nations in Europe, the FIE agreed that BF would host an FIE foil refereeing exam in London, December 2016. This attracted 20 candidates from 16 countries including 3 GBR candidates (the maximum permitted). All GBR candidates passed. An additional 2 GBR and 1 Associate passed their FIE exams held during the Cadet & Junior Europeans in Plovdiv in March 2017.

The 2016-17 EFC season was the second season that the EFC awarded C grade licences to referees on the European Cadet Circuit competitions. 2 GBR and 1 Associate pathway referees were awarded C grades for the 2016-17 season on top of the ones awarded at the end of the 2015-16 season. The EFC C grade licence is now an FIE requirement for candidates wishing to sit their FIE exams.

Nick Payne and Adrian Speakman were confirmed as FIE Grand Prix listed referees for the 2016-17 season and GBR referees were selected by the EFC/FIE to referee at the European and World Championships at Cadet, Junior and Senior level.

The majority of funding to support referees at the highest level of the sport comes from the UK Sport International Relations Programme. The funding was primarily used to fund training for GBR candidates on the Referee Pathway Programme who were intending to sit FIE exams in the next 1-2 years. It was also used to subsidise opportunities for existing GBR FIE qualified referees to further their careers as they seek Grand Prix listing and ultimately Senior World Championship and Olympic selection.

Towards the end of the 2016-17 period, a new referee working group was created to review and redevelop the current domestic level 3 and 4 qualifications with Julian Rose as the Chair.

SUSTAINABLE AND EMPOWERING PARTICIPATION PROGRAMMES (ENGLAND)

BF's work in this area is almost entirely funded by Sport England and as such the work is England based. Case studies and information are made available to the wider membership and stakeholders to support participation growth.

The number of young people engaging and enjoying swordplay in a variety of community and education settings through the SE funded projects continued to grow.

BF met the 2017 SE agreed target of an additional 3,750 young people engaged in fencing. An overall total of 4,857 young people took part in fencing activity through the projects, programmes and partnerships delivered by BF, during the 2015-17 period.

Through the partnership with the Scout Association, 15 Core Coach courses were delivered directly to Scout Groups during 2016-17. Fencing was delivered to over 100 Scout Groups from 12 different Scouting Districts across England. During the 2015-17 period, over 200 Scout Leaders have benefited from the training and support that BF has offered, as well as 30 Youth Club leaders through our partnership with London Youth.

The impact of creating fun, inclusive sessions using plastic fencing equipment in these settings continues to redefine the perception that participants and leaders have of the sport.



"It's a sport I have always fancied trying but had the preconception that it was elitist and the kind of thing if you'd not done at a private school you had no chance of getting into. Today blew those misconceptions out of the water and I am going to look to join a club for my own enjoyment as well as Scouts." Scout Leader

The success of the BF Sabre:Lite product in Universities has been supported by the roll-out of the University Fencing Officer (UFO) training programme, creating a sustainable delivery model that looks to within Universities to deliver this tailored fencing offer. In 2016-17 Sabre:Lite was rolled out to an additional 15 Universities, bringing the total number of Universities involved in the programme to 20. Work also began with a further five Universities to develop sustainable Student Fencing Clubs. This creates the next step for students who want to progress from Sabre:Lite to a more traditional fencing offering. New products were piloted (eg LED sabre, HEMA) to broaden the range of Swordplay opportunities available to attract new participants into the sport.

In October 2016, the Athlete to Coach Programme was offered to GB athletes interested in gaining their ITCF and Level 2 Coaching Fencing Awards. Five athletes gained their ITCF with three working to complete their CFL2. The athletes supported two events held in partnership with London Youth

and hosted by Leon Paul, giving young people either their first experience of fencing or the opportunity to fence with metal equipment for the first time. The athletes also delivered swordplay experiences in a number of youth clubs in London, supporting participants in gaining their BF Bronze Awards.

BF's social responsibility initiative, Muslim Girls Fence (MGF) has continued to grow, with delivery taking place across London and Birmingham and a further two cities to join the programme in 2017-18. The original participants from Frederick Bremer School were given additional leadership training and as a result they have set up their own lunchtime fencing club, to enable more girls at the school



to get involved with fencing. In an example of how BF projects and programmes can help sustain each other, the UFOs in Universities have also supported the delivery of the MGF project in London and will be supporting the project in Birmingham as well.

BF supported an application by the Maslaha Charity for Comic Relief funding to allow the project to continue to grow. In January 2017, Comic Relief awarded the Muslim Girls Fence project £75,000 as part of their 'Sport for Change' project.

Key Statistics 2016-17

Number of young people engaged: 1,986

Number of community leaders trained: 87

Number of adult community Core Coaches trained: 277

Geographical areas delivered in: 12

CLUBS & REGIONS (ENGLAND)

The majority of work supporting clubs is being done through the new Development Officer – Clubs and Regions (England) post. This post is being funded by England Fencing and is primarily aimed at supporting clubs in England. However, much of the output is just as relevant to clubs across the UK and anyone interested in the work can sign up to receive regular communications.

One of the primary purposes of this new role is to act as a bridge between British Fencing, England Fencing, the Regions and their clubs. In the first six months since being appointed in October 2016, the Development Officer visited a significant number of regions, clubs and competitions across England to understand and identify what support they required and how these can be aligned to the strategic outcomes of EF, BF and the new Sport England strategy. 7/10 Regions are now formally engaged in ongoing consultation and working in collaboration.

A new monthly newsletter - The Club Digest – aimed at Clubs (based in England) was launched. The primary goal of this communication is to share best practice through club case studies. This is supplemented with information on how BF is successfully making fencing more accessible, top tips on applying for local funding and information on upcoming BF events and coaching courses. This newsletter and BF social media channels have also been used to promote awareness throughout the core fencing community of the SE funded project work such as Scouts, Muslim Girls Fence and London Youth to share lessons learned and insights into increasing participation and club growth.

BF aligned with the new SE Club-mark Accreditation process which will be offered to clubs at the start of 2017-18.

‘Understand our Club Survey 2017’ was launched to provide BF & EF insight into a number of areas including:

- How fencing clubs are governed, managed and facilitated
- Areas where clubs require more support
- Club Workforce Structure
- Club Membership Base
- Club’s approach to welcoming beginners
- Access to Regional Support
- Attendance at events.



The results of the survey will be used to inform the work that is undertaken to support England Clubs and Regions in 2017-18. As part of this work, we will be encouraging clubs to maximise the resources already available, for example through the Sport England Club Matters programme. The intention is also to work with Development Officers in other Home Nations to encourage the adaptation of guidance and support for local club needs.

LEISURE MARKET STANDARDISATION AND COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

As mentioned in the Directors' Report, the reduction in public funding means that BF must find ways to make the NGB sustainable if it is to continue to serve the sport. This has resulted in the development of a Commercial Strategy, approved by the Board and designed to make BF financially viable in the long term.

Part of this strategy is to work with commercial (and often multi-sport) providers, utilising the insight and knowledge that BF has, to enable them to create quality introductory fencing experiences for their customers. This benefits all parties as their customers enjoy the sport more, their instructors enjoy delivering the sessions more and it allows the participation of fencing to expand into the recreational swordplay space. In addition, it allows BF to signpost participants and instructors toward club fencing and coaching.

This work has served to highlight the large sphere of influence that recreational fencing/swordplay has and how popular the sport is, outside of traditional fencing clubs and schools. Just one of BF's partners (PGL Travel Ltd) delivered over 81,000 unique fencing experiences last year, suggesting that previous estimates of a total of 100,000 experiences per year falls considerably short of the total impact that fencing has on the overall leisure market.

Alongside the ability to share insight on participant numbers and needs, our Partnership Programme enables partners to deliver coach education and training customised to the needs of their organisations. PGL Travel Ltd and Kingswood Inspiring Learning are the first partners to formally join this Partnership Programme and in 2017-18 the intention is to expand this network.

BF has also established a formal partnership with Premier Sport, as an Official Delivery Partner in Primary Education. This relationship will enable fencing to be introduced to Primary Schools across the UK that may not otherwise have exposure to the sport. To build on this initial contact, BF will be working to connect local clubs with Premier Sport to ensure a seamless participant journey exists for aspiring young fencers.

To complement many of the activities above, BF is currently developing a new interactive app providing coaches and instructors with quick and easy mobile access to information such as session plans etc. This app will not only provide a range of free resources but will also offer premium content that allows our partners to customise the content of sessions to meet their individual needs. BF has also developed a FIE Fencing Rules app that allows mobile access of the rules. This app has been launched on the Apple Store and Google Play and is available for download.

In summary 2017-18 has been a developmental year which will put BF in a stronger position to generate revenue to support the services being delivered to the fencing community and start to address the gap in income created by continued year on year reduction in public funding.



WORLD CLASS PROGRAMMES - PODIUM POTENTIAL / TALENT

Podium and Podium Potential

The BF World Class Programme (WCP) existed to provide fencers, who have the identified talent and commitment to succeed at the highest level, with the support they need to maximise their potential. The highest two levels of the WCP, Podium and Podium Potential, have been funded by UK Sport through the funds generated from the National Lottery.

The focus of the last three years has been the development of a World Class Performance Programme, to maximise the chances of qualifying athletes to and delivering a medal at the Olympic Games in Rio 2016.

As this was the last year of the funding cycle, work was undertaken with UK Sport to develop the WCP Strategy for 2017-2021 and this was submitted in Spring 2016.



Following the 2016 Rio Games, the WCP Strategy was updated in light of the results in Rio and the total funding request agreed and confirmed. In December 2016, UK Sport informed a number of Sports, including fencing, that whilst recognising they had medal potential, and acknowledging that in the case of fencing all targets had been met, there was not enough money in the budget to fund sports identified in 'Band Four' ('possible medallists'). This is the first time that Band Four and sports with identified medal potential have not been funded.

In December 2016 the WCP immediately moved from full operational mode to a UK Sport defined 'transition' mode. The final three months of the cycle were focused on winding down the Programme and exiting both athletes and staff from the programme, whilst simultaneously going through both the Representation and Appeals processes.

BF instructed lawyers acting on behalf of BF to notify Sports Resolution UK of our wish to appeal. In addition, BF made its written representation to UK Sport and subsequently met with the UK Sport Board on Tuesday 7th February 2017. The Board of UK Sport concluded that there was not a strong enough case to warrant a re-consideration of fencing to be moved from Band Four (possible medallists) to Band Three (probable medallists). Therefore, the representation was rejected. In consideration of this and the limited likelihood of success with the formal appeal, the Board decided not to pursue the matter further.

Talent

Over the past year, the Talent Programmes have been further developed and refined following a fundamental review with Sport England. The existing two talent programmes, Talent and Talent Identification and Confirmation (TIC) have been reviewed and revised.

Those athletes that were on the Talent Programme have been moved to a new Programme called Performance Foundations with TIC athletes being realigned with the Talent Development Centre concept.

The Talent programmes have received £250,000 from Sport England over the last year to support the further development of the Talent Pathway. In addition to supporting the Talent Coaches across the six weapons, the funding has enabled training camps to be delivered focusing on physical and tactical development. In addition, significant support was provided at World Championships in April 2016 and the European Championships in March 2017.

Elite Training Centre (ETC)

Since the decision by UK Sport in December 2016, BF and Leon Paul have worked hard to ensure that a legacy remained, despite the necessary termination of the lease. As a result, the ETC will remain intact (rather than the contents sold and the space returned to warehouse as is typical at the end of a lease).

Going forward, Leon Paul will assume responsibility for the ETC including the Physiotherapy and S&C spaces and the equipment within those. BF will use the office facilities under a new lease agreement. BF will continue to use piste space in the Leon Paul Centre for Talent and Development activity.

Notable Results

The Men's Foil Team achieved qualification for the Olympics in February 2016 and the first half of 2016-2017 was focused on providing the best package of support services to those athletes, to ensure we could achieve medal-winning success.

At the Olympics, Richard Kruse achieved 4th place in the Men's Individual Foil event, which was his best ever finish at the Games. In the Men's Team Foil, Great Britain were narrowly beaten by Russia in the L8 match and went on to secure a 6th place finish.

The Men's Sabre squad, under the direction of Pierre Guichot, developed and progressed throughout the year. The focus over the last six months of the year was to prepare and focus on delivering at the 2017 European and World Championships. Unfortunately, despite their best results at a European and Worlds (2016) the UK Sport funding decision has meant that despite the significant progress made by this squad, there will be no WCP for Men's Sabre going forward.

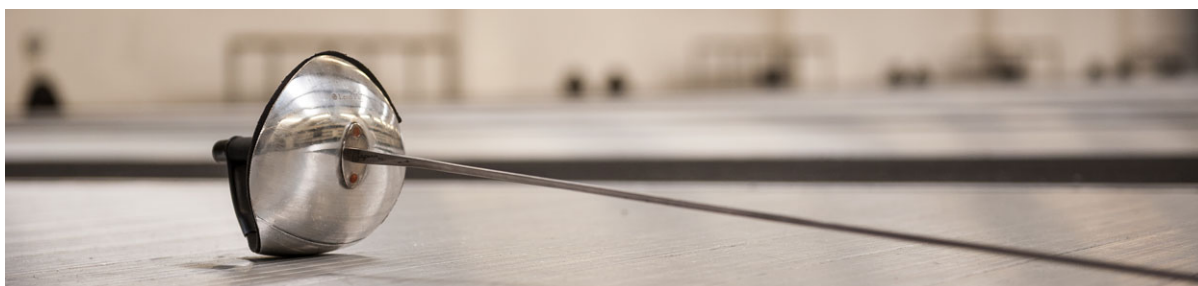
Looking Forward to 2017-18

Over the first three months of 2017, alongside 'closing down' the WCP, it has been a priority to establish a new voluntary structure which will help and support the Senior International Programme.

A new BF Senior International Selection Panel has been established for each weapon and over time they will work with the wider BF team to help support and drive forward senior international success.

The limited funding from Sport England will allow the continuation of the development of the Talent Pathway to help and support talented athletes become the best they can be. The new Talent structure is now operational and over the course of 2017-18, we will roll-out Talent Development Centres with the aim to initiate three, one of which to be fully operational by the end of March 2018.

It is likely that BF will create more #fundfencing crowdfunding initiatives such as the one started in this financial year to raise funds for the athletes representing GBR in the 2017 European and World Championships at Cadet, Junior and Senior levels.



BF HONOURS 2016

Gold Medal

Janet Huggins

Silver Medal

Richard Kruse
Gillian Aghajan

Bronze Medal

Pam Price
Laurence Burr

Tankard

Maciej Wojtkowiak
Paul Wedge
GB Olympic Men's Foil Team 2016
The Bourges 2016 Junior World
Championships British Men's Junior Foil
Team

Award of Merit

Marilyn Wheelband

WITH THANKS TO

BOA

BUCS

Comic Relief

Eversheds Sutherland

Leon Paul

London Youth

Maslaha Charity

National Lottery

NSPCC CPSU

Scout Association

Sport England

Sports Aid Foundation

UK Coaching

UK Sport

Wilkinson Sword

Youth Sport Trust

And all the volunteers that give their time so generously to support our sport.

