



**ANNUAL
REPORT
2021 / 22**



**BOWLS
DEVELOPMENT
ALLIANCE.**





WELCOME TO OUR ANNUAL REPORT 2021 / 22

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ●

The past year has been one of development and innovation for the BDA as we transitioned from our Play Bowls strategy 2017–21, towards building the foundations of our new vision to ‘place bowls at the heart of every community as an accessible sport for all’. Despite all the challenges Covid presented to our delivery on the ground, we feel we have made some great progress that will support us in moving forward with our ambitions for the sport.

With our core purpose to ‘sustain, grow and develop the sport in partnership with the bowls family’, we have continued to prioritise building closer working relationships with our National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners. We are extremely pleased that the English Short Mat Bowling Association (ESMBA) decided to rejoin us in October 2021 and become part of the collaborative partnership we already enjoy with Bowls England, British Crown Green Bowling Association, the English Indoor Bowling Association and Disability Bowls England.

With a collective vision to grow the sport, the BDA has a unique role to play as the central service provider in key areas that support growth in participation, tackling inequalities as well as educating and safeguarding our bowling clubs. We are now working with a significant number of bowls organisations and are more confident than ever that coming together as a collective, with aligned goals and objectives, will significantly improve the perception, reach and impact of the sport at all levels.

Over the past 12 months we have worked hard to create a new programme of activity that reflects our renewed collaborative working and aims to bring the sport closer together through joint interventions and shared resources. One of our key successes has been the evolution and enhancement of our Club Development Programme through the introduction of our new ‘Club Hub’ concept.

With a particular focus on strengthening the relationship clubs have with their local community, our aim is to broaden the reach of bowls, so it represents a more diverse group of people. With the National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners, we identified several large ‘Club Hubs’ which have already become the base for our community engagement projects, inclusivity development as well as volunteer education and support. Despite Covid getting in the way, the significant learnings we have taken from our first year of delivery have allowed us to spend valuable time shaping the programme, so we are ready for the next phase of our five-year funding cycle, where we will roll out the Club Hub model across the country.

To broaden the support given to clubs and to be more innovative in our approach, we have spent this year developing some excellent educational courses and online toolkits, which support our aim to engage with a wider audience. The creation of a new online learning platform has seen the first of several courses created. These courses aim to address some relevant topics which we feel will be hugely beneficial to our clubs and volunteers. We have also developed a comprehensive Club Health Checker tool which will allow clubs to benchmark themselves against best practice in core areas, including recruitment and retention, good governance, and safeguarding. This has been well received in our trial clubs and has been fully rolled out ahead of the 2022 outdoor season.





**“
Placing bowls at
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Other achievements this year have been the progression in our efforts to raise awareness of equality, diversity, and inclusion in bowls. We are very fortunate to have the support of a hard-working group of volunteers who have given up their free time to be part of our Inclusion Advisory Group to help with the creation of a new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategy for the sport. This is supported by our National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners and is due to be launched in spring 2022. We have also set up a working group which aims to focus on volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition across the codes; another great example of how we are working more collaboratively with our key stakeholders.

Significant progress has also been made in our efforts to improve safeguarding processes across the sport. Through the financial support of our National Governing Bodies, we are privileged to now have a full-time member of staff who is dedicated to driving standards and taking the lead on all case management. Policies and procedures have been refreshed and a new case management platform has been purchased to allow for secure sharing of information across the NGB safeguarding leads.

Our community care home programme, Just Bowl has continued to build on a turbulent year which has seen care homes slowly begin welcoming activity for their residents post-Covid. The product continues to be popular across the sector and the team have welcomed several exciting new contracts for delivery, as homes start to open their doors and get active again. We are also pleased to get agreement from Sport England to extend the funding period for this project to December 2023, which will allow us to make up for time lost due to Covid.

The BDA should feel proud of its achievements across the year. The whole team has worked extremely hard to create and develop the new programmes and initiatives introduced as part of our vision to make bowls a sport for all. We have also benefitted from a greater level of collaboration with our key partners and hope to continue to develop this as a positive example of how we will move forward.

With a new five-year funding cycle confirmed by Sport England, our next steps are to build on our strong foundations and continue to work closely with the National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners. We will continue with our core aim to reach out to new audiences whilst keeping our vision front and centre, to bring bowls to the heart of every community as an accessible sport.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY & DEVELOPMENT ●

Club Development Programme 2017–2022

The Club Development Programme was created in 2017 as part of the Bowls Development Programme Alliance's four-year Sport England-funded delivery plan. It offered Bowls England, English Indoor Bowling Association clubs, and most recently, British Crown Green Bowling Association clubs, a unique support programme to develop and better sustain their current membership and recruit new members into the sport. Every club that signed up to the programme received direct support from a BDA Development Officer to create a bespoke Club Development Plan, that would focus on key areas of development and help the club to support new recruitment initiatives, developing their presence in their community.

As part of Sport England responses to the impacts of Covid on sport, all Core Market Partners who were directly funded between 2017 and 2021 were given an additional rollover year of funding. This would enable organisations to start the process of recovering and reinventing from the impacts of Covid. For the BDA, this allowed us to review our programmes and delivery, with a new model of club support being created. This would see the success of the Club Development Programme built upon, while giving the team the time to sign off all clubs who were still part of that programme during the 2021/22 rollover period.

The BDA club team were able to use this time to support clubs to finish their Club Development Plans and run any remaining workshops, to train and upskill volunteers while also supporting them with their open days to recruit new members. During the 2017–22 period the Club Development Programme has had the following impact:



148 Clubs supported



1,509 Volunteers upskilled



2,348 New Members recruited



136 New Coaches trained

The numbers returned by those clubs proactively engaging with the Club Development Programme saw an average of 15.86 new members per club, 10.20 newly trained or upskilled volunteers and just under 1 new coach per club.

Planning and Reshaping our Programmes

With a new 5-year funding period on the horizon between April 2022 and March 2027, it was time for the BDA to do a wholesale review of its programmes, delivery and how we support the grassroots of the sport. Although the Club Development Programme has been a great success for those clubs who participated, most seeing continued growth after being signed off, the Club Team only had capacity to engage with 3% of the 5,000+ partnership NGB clubs. Therefore, we used the rollover period to not only sign-off all clubs from the current programme, but to evolve the programme with the view to increase our direct club reach with the same capacity across the next 5-year period.

Using the rollover period allowed to us by Sport England, we considered how we could reach even more clubs, volunteers, and participants. This would allow us to support the sustainability and growth of the sport more effectively while also supporting our National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners, their planned developments, and our core funders, Sport England.

The Sport England vision over the next 5–10 years is to drive the nation to become more equal and inclusive whilst developing more connected communities. Their new Uniting the Movement Strategy supports the creation of a country where people live happier, healthier, and more fulfilled lives. For the BDA and the sport to support this strategy, we needed to create programmes and an engagement model which would not only grow our reach and impact but also stand behind the message and importance of inclusivity, diversity and how we can all better connect to the communities which are the lifeblood of the sport.

For these reasons we have created a new three-tiered programme engagement model, which will work to provide a rounded offering to an increased number of clubs in order to support their development and growth. Not only this, but we will also be supporting individual volunteers and participants across the sport to learn and develop their understanding and knowledge.

NEW Club Health Checker – Online Self-assessment Tool

We are proud to announce the development of an online self-assessment tool which we call the Club Health Checker. The Club Health Checker offers an entry point for clubs to access BDA support. It is available to any club affiliated to our partnership National Governing Bodies to gain an understanding of where they are strong and their areas of development. Through the completion of a 30-minute questionnaire, a bespoke report is created which offers resources and suggestions on how to improve the clubs’ areas of development. It is recommended that clubs use this resource at least once a year to help measure their baseline participation, growth, and impact.

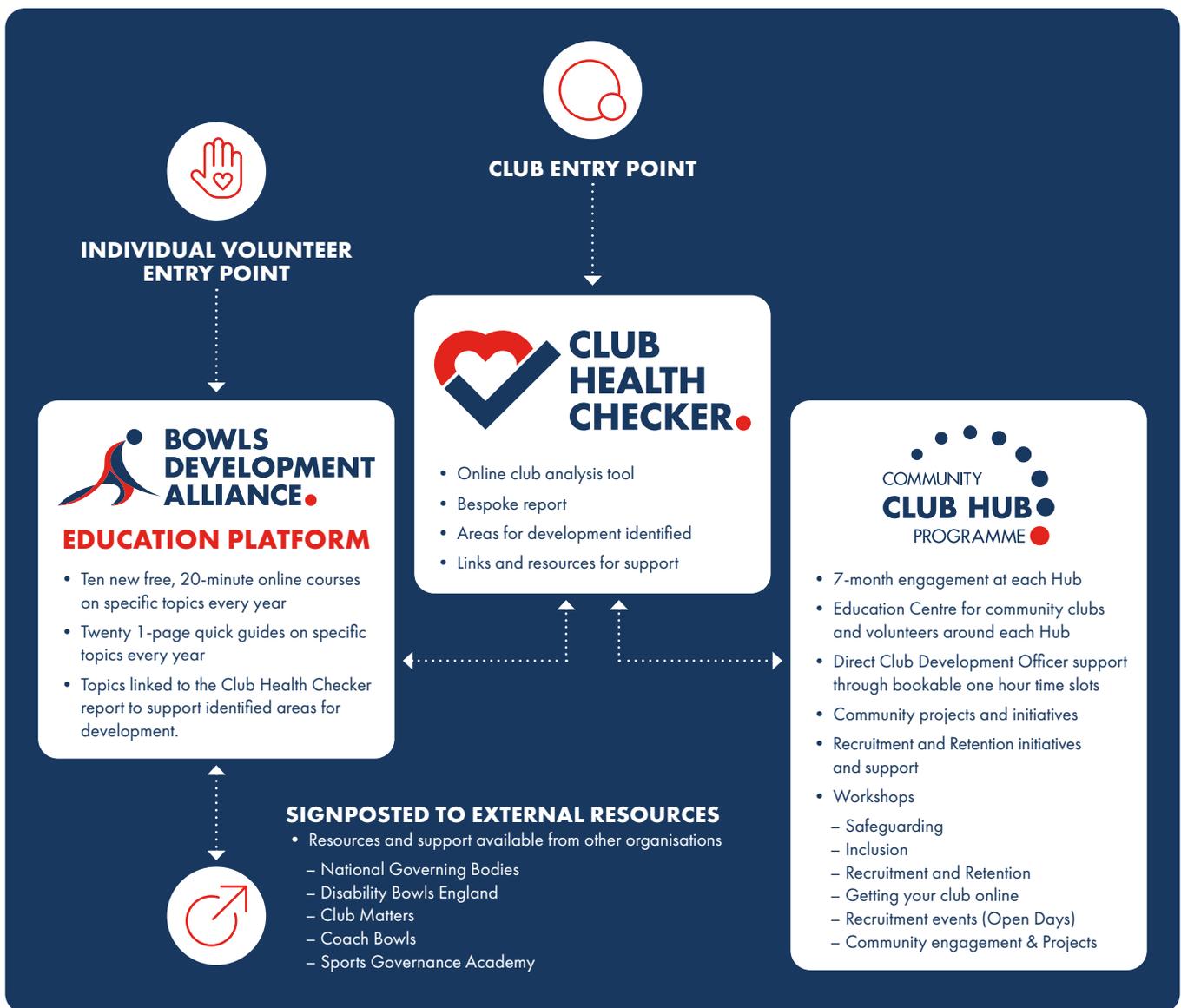
NEW Education Platform

Our new Education Platform, linked to the Club Health Checker, provides an alternative entry point for individuals and volunteers. This platform offers direct learning through free 30-minute online courses and quick guides to help educate individuals and volunteers who are keen to broaden their personal knowledge and understanding on specific topics. We will be rolling out 10 online courses per year alongside 20 quick guides to the platform. Again, this is a free offering to all clubs affiliated to our partnership National Governing Bodies.

NEW Community Club Hub Programme

This replaces the existing Club Development Programme as our place-based approach to supporting clubs and volunteers to develop, sustain and grow their presence in their local communities. Our development officers are based at each hub for a 7-month period, connecting with local clubs around the hub. They create a supportive network for clubs in the area to allow them to learn, develop and grow in partnership. The Hub programme also allows our team to host face-to-face seminars, courses, and development sessions. Additionally, development officers give advice and guidance to clubs who have received the Club Health Checker report through an online diary booking system. This work will be a driving force in supporting Bowls to become more diverse and inclusive, thus promoting the sustainability of our clubs for the future.

Below is a diagram to show how the different programmes will work in partnership with each other creating a rounded offer for all clubs, volunteers, and participants in the sport.





Community Club Hub Programme – A new place-based approach

The new Community Club Hub Programme was designed to use our resources to better effect. With a small team it is important that we maximise our club engagement and ensure the programmes that support it are joined up, inclusive and allow for the development of true community engagement.

The BDA has been trialling the new evolved Community Club Hub Programme since October 2021. This initial trial period has provided an opportunity to build relationships with Active Partnerships and Community Groups whilst implementing new activities within allocated Hubs and assisting clubs within approximately 40 minutes' drive of the venue. We have used this opportunity to trial the new programme and take key learnings which will help structure the delivery across the next 5-year funding period.

Our current trial Hubs are:

- South Shields IBC (North East)
- Boston IBC (East)
- Oxton Conservatives CGBC (North West)
- Erdington Court BC (Midlands)
- Bristol IBC (South West)
- Wey Valley IBC (South East)

We currently have over 120 clubs engaging with their local Hub and have over 25 community groups and associations who are in dialogue with the Development Officers around the country, regarding how they might utilise club facilities in the future or how the BDA might support their own activities externally. These groups range from Age Concern, Health Organisations, Local Councils, Residential Homes, Schools, and some fantastic collaboration with football foundations such as Bristol Rovers FC, Tranmere FC, Aston Villa FC, and South Shields FC. Building these relationships provides excellent opportunities for all clubs to work in partnership with these organisations and potentially introduce new faces to the sport.

With communities at the heart of all bowls clubs, it is important that we build solid relationships to introduce new audiences to bowls and support engagement at a local level. Through this new place-based approach, the aim is to build networks across the country, working in partnership with each other through joined up learning and development, whilst also driving inclusivity and diversity across the sport.

The Hubs will also be a base for workshops, courses, and seminars supporting local clubs and co-ordinating national initiatives such as the Bowls Big Weekend and the implementation of a new programme called Bowl for Health that has been hugely successful in Merseyside. This will be a core part of our Hub work with the aim of becoming a socially prescribed model in the future.

A selection of the courses and workshops that will be seen in the Hubs are:

- Club Helpers Workshop
- Recruitment and Retention
- Marketing and Promotion
- Social Media and Website
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Good Governance
- First Aid
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk and Children
- Coaching (i.e. Level 1)

Bowl for Health programme delivery

Bowl for Health was the brainchild of Eric Gowling at Formby Holy Trinity Bowling Club, Merseyside. Initially supported by the Merseyside Sports Partnership it was trialled at several clubs before being rolled out successfully across Merseyside.

It involves a 6 to 8-week programme of bowling sessions for people new to the sport to improve physical and mental wellbeing. Generally aimed at older adults 55+, this is an ideal opportunity for anyone who needs to improve their physical activity levels, are lonely or socially isolated and is proven to benefit mental wellbeing.

A 1-hour session of bowls followed by a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit is the simple basis of what is proving to be a very successful and beneficial activity for those taking part with 68% of participants saying it improved the physical activity levels, 50% of those isolated saying they had a feeling of being closer to others and from a club membership perspective a huge 84% of those attending went on to become members of the bowls club.

One of the sessions at our South Shields Hub has a cohort of 16 attending over an 8-week period. The sessions are 2-hours duration utilising two rinks and will consist of the session being split into two groups.

The first group of eight will try bowls on the green for the first hour whilst the second group have a tea and coffee and take part in a Health Education talk provided by the Active Partnership. The two groups will then swap over for the second hour. At the end of the 8-week session all attendees will complete a survey of critical and relevant questions to ascertain whether the programme has been of benefit to the individual and the reasons why.



Club Health Checker

The Club Health Checker (CHC) was rolled out to a group of 'critical friends' in December 2021 with the assistance of our National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners. It was highlighted to the clubs that this was by no means a finished product and their feedback would be invaluable for the identification of errors and bugs in the platform before it was promoted to a larger audience. The feedback received enabled the required changes and additions to be made and ensure the platform was as effective as it could be before resending to our critical friends for a second evaluation.

In March 2022 the CHC link was sent to all clubs in the Hub regions and within 10 days the following data had been received.

315 Interactions

Clubs have either opened the link and viewed the platform or started but not yet completed the questions.

36 Reports Completed

A very positive start in a short space of time. These clubs are now engaging with the Development Officers to provide support with their report and its suggested areas of development.

To date there has been no negative feedback from any of those utilising the tool or from any clubs questioning their reports which is very encouraging. The next steps will be to dissect the information and contact those clubs identified who qualify for extra support, based on criteria agreed with the National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners.

In April 2022 the CHC will be promoted countrywide to enable all affiliated clubs to produce a report that provides key information and highlights where improvement is needed or where they are currently doing things well. The long-term plan will be for the clubs to complete this annually to assist with their future development.

Links to education resources are provided on the final report which will assist with any requirements the club has and will work in conjunction with workshops and seminars hosted at the Hub clubs.

CASE STUDIES

We have had some fantastic delivery during the trial of the Community Club Hub Programme with some examples below:

Tranmere Rovers FC Underprivileged Children Christmas Event

During an event in the North West, we provided the opportunity for 60 underprivileged children aged 5–6 to try the sport. The feedback from the event was extremely positive and it opened up further opportunities within the club. A community event called 'Fit Fans' was also held at the North West Hub with 27 people in attendance and showing an interest in joining a Bowl for Health session in the future.

A cohort of 10 also attended a dementia session where they engaged in bowls activities.

School Events

The BDA also supported a Skelmersdale Schools Event in association with West Lancashire Schools Sports Partnership where seven schools and a total of 52 pupils tried bowls. This was followed by a similar event in Ormskirk, West Lancashire area schools where 14 schools and a further 112 pupils all had the opportunity to try the sport.

Targeted at children who were less keen on traditional team games, both events were again seen as a huge success and the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the exposure to an alternative sport.

Coaching Courses

Level 1 courses have taken place at the Boston Hub, Bristol Hub and South Shields Hub with over 30 potential new coaches taking part.

Further courses are planned for the future and will be accessible through the Coach Bowls Website.

Family Night and Women Only Night at South Shields

A Family Night was hosted at the South Shields Hub where various games were played both on and off the green. Twelve children attended with their parents and took part in target bowls and various games on the green. Off the green over 60 who attended had food and drink whilst taking part in games such as 'Play Your Cards Right' and 'Deal or No Deal'. Not only was this an opportunity for members to use the facilities on a Saturday night when the centre is usually closed but the club generated much needed revenue and there are plans for more Family Nights in the future.

At our Boston Hub there was a 'Women Only' night held, and this was to try and encourage more women to try bowls with a friend whilst having food and drinks at the club. Over 70 attended the event with positive interaction both on and off the green.

EDUCATION.

In this inaugural year of the education arm of the BDA, our main focus has been the development of a sustainable means for delivery of all education material to all involved in bowls, without additional ongoing funding.

After research was undertaken, 'Articulate' was chosen as the 'best fit' programme for delivery. As there is no 'per learner' charge, the BDA can ensure any education material developed can be accessed by all involved in bowls at no cost to the learner.

With the initial focus on diversity and inclusion, we began our year revising the bowls trans inclusion policy to ensure it is in line with current good practice in this area. To ensure clubs feel informed in this area, we developed an online education course to support the roll out of the new policy. This 30 minute online certificated course ensures those in clubs feel equipped to implement the bowls trans policy. By the end of the course, learners are able to explain the basic legislation that governs trans inclusion in sport, describe the requirements for trans participation in bowls competitions, define the process for notifying National Governing Bodies, list some of the barriers to participation a trans participant might face and most importantly ensure a safe and welcoming space for all those involved in the sport.

With the initial success of the online education course, two further courses have been developed. To support the BDA's work in the area of diversity and inclusion a 30-minute online course has been developed. The course enables clubs to explore the demographic of the community the club is serving and explain the basic legislation that governs equality in sport. Learners will commit to ensuring language and facilities reflect well for our LGBT+ community, ensure a safe and welcoming space for all bowlers or potential bowlers with disabilities, proactively embrace how to ensure the club does not inadvertently exclude based on race, religion and beliefs, list some of the barriers to participation for a broad age range and describe the barriers felt by many women in bowls. Most importantly the learners will notice who is not included within the bowls club and feel equipped to implement a plan to ensure the club is truly diverse and inclusive.

"The training looks great and the policy looks to be in a solid place as well. I am sure that this policy will go a long way to ensuring that trans and non-binary people will feel more comfortable in competing in Bowls and appreciate the time and effort that you have put into this."

Spencer Bundschuh – Stonewall

"I think the training linked with the policy is really brilliant and I'm so impressed! I've not seen this done linked with any other policies in the sector and think it's such a great idea and will really help so many people. Did you do this in-house?!"

Jamie Hooper – Inclusive Cultures

The third course developed is a short 10-minute course 'Running a Successful Open Day' which supports clubs in the running of an open day, including tips on planning and promoting the event effectively.

All courses are currently available for all members to access. Due to the popularity of the courses, we are working with Sports Structures to develop an education platform which will be fit for purpose for this fast-growing area of the BDA.

For shorter pieces of information, we have developed a quick guide template. This one-page document allows shorter specific pieces of information to be delivered to learners. We currently have 10 quick guides available to all. These include quick guides to organising a virtual club meeting, quick guide to committee roles and quick guide to membership options. These allow information to be captured and delivered on very specific topics in a printable format.

The online education platform together with the newly developed quick guides, will ensure the next step in education will be freely accessible to all involved in bowls.

The Education priorities for 2022/23

The next 12 months will see the new education platform made available and marketed so all clubs can access training. The next courses will focus on volunteers and clubs and will include topics such as; recruiting volunteers, finance and funding, marketing and safeguarding. The Volunteer Action Plan will inform the best way forward in terms of specific courses and quick guides.

Collaborative Working Groups

The BDA is very fortunate to have several dedicated volunteers who are willing to give up their time to support key areas of development. In the 2021/22 year we set up three working groups made up of a number of volunteers and staff members from the different codes. The aim was to ensure we continued working as a collective on initiatives that are important to the strategic alignment of bowls.



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WORKING GROUPS ●

1. DISABILITY ACTION GROUP

Previously the Disability Steering Group, it was renamed in April 2021 to better reflect the work that it is carrying out and to better link to the new Inclusion Advisory Group which has taken the lead on the strategic direction of the sport regarding inclusion and diversity.

The Disability Action Group is now tasked with focusing on short term development needs in regard to disability development and support for the whole sport. The group is made up of representatives from each of the National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners as well as Coach Bowls and Activity Alliance. This group is chaired by Disability Bowls England who report directly back to the BDA board on areas of development and any challenges or support needs.

Over the past year the Disability Action Group has focused on:

- Reviewing and relaunching the Love, Fisher, Brown Award which celebrates great work being delivered by clubs and volunteers across the sport.
- Updating and relaunching the Disability Mark which reviews clubs' development and work to support more disabled people and those with a long-term health condition to actively participate at club level.
- Review of approved equipment and aids which meet the laws of the game to support participants to play the sport.
- Review of the laws of the game which will support a more concise understanding across codes.
- Joined up promotion and advertising of Disability Bowls England and Coach Bowls 'Supporting Inclusion Module'.
- Support with disability development in the Community Club Hub networks, driving a better understanding of how to support people with a disability to play our sport and engage with clubs.



As leaders within our sport, we will champion good practice, empowering our current community to create an inclusive and accessible culture across the sport.



2. INCLUSION ADVISORY GROUP

In the summer of 2021, the BDA set up a new Inclusion Advisory Group (IAG) along with seven committed volunteers with the view to support the promotion of equality, diversity, and inclusion in the sport of bowls. Our efforts in this area have been strongly supported by our National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners with several key staff members from across the codes now actively participating on the IAG.

The group was given a number of clear roles and responsibilities:

- To be responsible for ensuring the development of the sport's inclusion agenda.
- To promote, champion, and encourage diversity, inclusion, and equality in bowls.
- To advise and make recommendations on appropriate initiatives and activities that will help the sport achieve its aims.
- To positively challenge the sports commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, celebrating that commitment and addressing obstacles to its implementation.
- To improve the representation and image of bowls as a sport for all and ensure inclusion is embedded throughout the sport.
- To act as a forum for staff and volunteers in issues relating to diversity and inclusion.

The group has met five times across the year with discussions initially focussed on the creation of a Diversity and Inclusion strategy for the sport. Conversations were based on current insight and data on the bowling landscape as well as the results of a 'real-time' survey for those who participate in the sport and those who don't. A face-to-face brainstorm meeting at one of our Club Hubs in Bristol in October helped to shape the first version of our new strategy which has been developed and refined since then. We are really pleased with the results and the passion and commitment shown by the volunteers and National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners alike. The new strategy is due to be approved by the Board in April and will be launched this spring as the outdoor season opens.

Next steps for the group will be to create an action plan for the sport with the aim to set some deliverables against the key pledges and support the process of embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion in the mindset of our clubs and volunteers. This is now a requirement of the new Code for Sports Governance.

Vision

A community where everyone is welcomed and embraced, regardless of their identity, background, or circumstances

Mission

For our sport to thrive, we must embrace new audiences and become representative of modern society. We have a collective moral responsibility to be respectful and welcoming to all. As leaders within our sport, we will champion good practice, empowering our current community to create an inclusive and accessible culture across the sport. Using our collective power, we want to build collaborations and partnerships that support our vision, ultimately becoming a sport that has removed all barriers and allows everyone to enjoy the benefits of #BowlsWithoutBias.

Pledges

1. Enabling a more informed and empowered community
2. Creating an inclusive and accessible culture
3. Collaborating with stakeholders that support our collective vision
4. Role-modelling inclusive governance and leadership
5. Championing equality, diversity, and inclusion across our sport

3. FUTURE OF VOLUNTEERING GROUP

This year has seen the initial set up of the Future of Volunteering Group. This group includes representation from across the codes together with representation from coaching and officiating. The group will develop the Volunteer Action Plan for the sport of bowls which will ensure cohesion in the recruitment, training, reward, recognition and retention of all volunteers involved in the sport of bowls.

The group will meet quarterly The Terms of Reference has been drafted and will be finalised following the first meeting in April 2022.

JUST BOWL ●

Introduction

The beginning of 2021 brought significant restrictions on delivery of Just Bowl training due to Covid infection rates increasing rapidly and many care homes and charity sites forced to shut their doors to visitors.

Once restrictions began to reduce, the Just Bowl team were able to make significant progress visiting care homes, charity sites and bowls clubs across England. To allow the team to build back stronger from this challenging period, we can confirm that Sport England extended the Just Bowl funding agreement by a further 12 months, to December 2023.

Regardless of the challenges faced, 2021 has been a positive year for Just Bowl with the introduction of four new team members based across the country, the continued success of the Sport England Research Project and commercial partnerships developed with national care providers.

Care Home Delivery

In 2021 the number of care homes the Just Bowl team had delivered training and provided equipment to had significantly increased. By the end of the year 97 homes had been involved with the Just Bowl project and this number is growing significantly. We are on schedule to meet the Sport England target of 200 homes by December 2023.

Partners and Sport England Research

Just Bowl has continued to work with Sheffield Hallam University as its preferred research partner following the success of the impact of the Just Bowl report produced as part of the initial Sport England funding phase. The team have developed a good relationship with the SHU team, and it is anticipated that this partnership will continue to flourish.

Just Bowl has also worked alongside several other partners during 2021 and continued to develop good relationships with those newly established in 2020 such as Headway and the Stroke Association. New partnerships have also been created with Versus Arthritis and Active Norfolk to provide Just Bowl to individuals with a range of physical, mental and social needs. Research conducted and collected, provided important understanding of how the programme can support those who have experienced an acute injury and/or live with a long-term condition. A relationship with the Active Partnership for Norfolk was developed to expand the number of Headway centres participating in the programme. Active Norfolk has provided funding towards the purchase of equipment for these groups, allowing Headway sites to continue to use Just Bowl in the long-term and thus improving sustainability. The partnership with Headway was a great success, with 11 sites receiving Just Bowl training and participating in the Sport England research.



The Stroke Association were initially hesitant to work with Just Bowl because of Covid restrictions placed on their groups. However, as soon as face-to-face support sessions were able to take place again, Just Bowl met with a representative from the organisation and re-established a partnership agreement to bring training to groups across England. This partnership looks to add to the Sport England Research Project and enrich findings to support the work of Just Bowl into the future.



TESTIMONIAL

Across the year an emphasis was placed on the gathering of case studies and testimonials to show how residents have responded to the bowling games and activities:

“We have used the bowling at least once a week and have noted that the game has brought out a competitive vibe in many residents. Most notably for us are the residents who usually depend upon a walking frame; surprisingly, several have been able to stand independently to bowl... others simply needing a little support in standing. This includes a 100-year-old woman who was previously a competitive sports player who managed to stand and successfully play.

Generally, it has increased motivation, participation, and movement for all residents regardless of physical ability. It has resulted in residents encouraging each other and ultimately, they have pushed themselves physically to participate. It has been clear to see when individuals have experience of bowling; even when memory of playing previously is not present, muscle memory is! We have used the equipment in all its various incarnations of point scoring games and residents have found it thoroughly enjoyable. The average age of participants is 87 upwards.”

Stapely Residential & Nursing Home, Liverpool



Sport Development Opportunities

During 2021 Just Bowl has been used as a development tool and been utilised by people of all ages, from a range of backgrounds and with differing needs.

The Accessible Community Games hosts a range of sports for those with a physical and/or learning disability and hopes to inspire individuals to try new activities. The Club and Community Development Officer (Midlands) has contacted the Accessible Games Events Manager and arrangements have been made for Just Bowl to take part in the event.

Just Bowl attended the Bowls England National Finals in Leamington Spa. The equipment was placed outside in the local park and children and families were given the opportunity to participate and enquire about the product. The contact details of individuals who were interested in trying the sport or accessing a bowls club were taken and later contacted to provide information about local opportunities to get involved in the sport of bowls.

A proposal has been submitted to access funding to run a Special Educational Needs (SEN) project in Birmingham colleges which would allow for cross organisational work to take place between the development team and the Just Bowl team. The project would see the Club and Community Officer for the Midlands be able to utilise her Club Hub to host a SEN colleges festival at the end of 12 weekly training sessions.

Other Areas of Work

The Just Bowl team attended the Dementia, Care and Nursing Expo in Birmingham in Autumn 2021 and took the opportunity to speak to several relevant organisations. One of which was the National Activity Providers Association (NAPA) which we joined and have received regular benefits as a result.

The Just Bowl priorities for 2022/23

- Care Homes – In the next 12 months the Just Bowl team will prioritise achieving the Sport England target of engaging 200 homes with the product. This will allow the team to start developing our portfolio in other sectors and increase the likelihood of us bringing in other commercial work from these sectors.
- Headway – Over the next few months our priority is to collect the data for all of the Headway sites we are currently working with and ensure that it is analysed by our research partners, Sheffield Hallam University and that a final report is available by August at the latest.
- Stroke Association – An invitation has recently been submitted to stroke support groups to take part in Just Bowl and the interest has been overwhelming. As a consequence, Just Bowl will prioritise being able to identify the 10 required sites to take part in the research plus additional ones to supplement the data collection. As a result, the team will attempt to work with 10 sites every 2 or 3 months in order to complete the data collection and analysis in the next 12 months.

- Versus Arthritis – At present this work has not commenced, therefore the priority is to begin this strand of the research work and identify enough centres to carry out the research with for Sport England.
- Commercial Work – The priority over the next 12 months is to attract more commercial work so that Just Bowl is able to become sustainable beyond the end of our funding agreement with Sport England in December 2023. Subsequently, the Just Bowl Manager aims to target more care sector groups as well as identifying work in other sectors such as education, SEN and the disability sector.

COMMERCIAL PARTNERS

Brighterkind

Following a successful partnership with Brighterkind, a proposal was submitted and accepted to deliver Just Bowl training, equipment and mats to all of the remaining 24 homes. This work was completed successfully and the relationship is still ongoing.

Maria Mallaband

A partnership with Maria Mallaband Care Group was developed with the Just Bowl team successfully delivering training to six pilot homes. A proposal was created by the Just Bowl Manager to introduce Just Bowl to an additional 16 homes, with the ultimate aim of introducing Just Bowl in all 80 Maria Mallaband homes across the country.

Porthaven

An additional partnership with Porthaven was established with two pilot care homes booked to participate in Just Bowl training and a proposal submitted to work with the remaining 16 homes.

Four Seasons

After the success of the Brighterkind work, Just Bowl have also submitted a proposal to deliver training to their sister organisation Four Seasons. An initial offer to work with 10 homes is being considered and it is hoped that positive news on this will be imminent.

These successful commercial partnerships allowed Just Bowl to plan and work towards becoming a financially independent part of the Bowls Development Alliance, paving the way for a future concept that is sustainable and commercially viable.

FUNDING PARTNERS

Just Bowl are particularly grateful to Sport England for their funding, support, guidance and flexibility throughout a difficult 12 months. Furthermore, we would like to thank the Rayne Foundation for their continued support and funding over the last year.

GOVERNANCE

In 2021/22, the Board of the Bowls Development Alliance (BDA) was delighted to be able to more completely represent the sport of bowls. New Directors were appointed: Mark Bircumshaw, from the British Crown Green Bowling Association (BCGBA) and Barry Hedges, from the English Short Mat Bowling Association (ESMBA) to join those representing Bowls England (BE) and the English Indoor Bowling Association (EIBA). The representatives of the four National Governing Bodies (NGBs), alongside the Independent Non-Executive Directors are all encouraged by the chair to provide constructive challenge to the BDA as well as share their perspectives and find common ground. Additionally, Steve Watson from Disability Bowls England was appointed in April 2021 as a Non-Executive Director to provide advice to the Board on disability issues. Lisa Graham, the Managing Director of the BDA, was appointed to the Board in April 2021 as an ex-officio Director.

The Board continues to be chaired by an appointed Independent Non-Executive Director and has nine members in total. The Board includes two further Independent Non-Executive Directors, one of whom, Amelia Lewis, the UK Regional manager for Player's 1st, was newly appointed in November 2021, bringing new skills and perspectives to the Board.

The Board of Directors of the Bowls Development Alliance (BDA) met four times (quarterly) during the year. The major governance issues discussed over the year included:

- Budget and finances
- BDA Board membership
- Memorandums of Understanding with National Governing Bodies
- Risk Register updates – with a detailed re-assessment in January 2022
- Key Performance Indicators
- The new Code for Sports Governance

The Board received a full operational report from the Managing Director and reports from the Audit Committee and Nominations Committee at every meeting. Safeguarding updates have become a standing item for Board meetings with a full annual Safeguarding report provided to the July Board meeting.

During 2021/22 the BDA remained in compliance with the Code for Sports Governance after successful completion of the action plan, in response to the 2021 BDO on site audit. Key completed actions included the revision of all relevant policies and procedures linked to governance; the strengthening of succession planning documentation, particularly in relation to key posts and working with National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners on joint membership questionnaires, which should allow for the gathering of qualitative information on items such as how to grow participation in the sport.

The new Code for Governance in Sport was published in December 2021. The Board meeting of January 2022 discussed this in outline and a gap analysis was requested to identify any elements of the new code where the BDA would need to develop resources or expertise. This is under way with a focus on developing the required Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, strengthening our People Plan with KPIs for each member of staff, a template to support environmental and wider societal impacts of any policy decisions and appointment of a Director responsible for Welfare and Safety. The BDA will provide guidance and leadership on governance to support the National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners and their County Associations and Clubs.

The Governance priorities for 2022/23

Meet the new requirements of the revised Code for Governance in Sport at Tier 3 by:

- Developing a Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, cascading best practice through the family of Bowls
- Developing a People Plan involving Key Performance Indicators for members of staff
- Identifying a stakeholder inclusion strategy to gather the views of bowlers
- Working collaboratively across the codes to continue to embed good safeguarding practice



Attendance Records of BDA Board Meetings – April 2021 – March 2022

Members	Role	Possible Attendance	Actual Attendance
Malcolm Douglas	Chair / INED	4	4
Terry Maywood	Senior INED	4	3
Amelia Lewis	INED	1	1
Mark Bircumshaw	British Crown Green Bowling Association	4	4
Jon Cockroft	Bowls England	4	4
Barry Hedges	English Short Mat Bowling Association	2	2
Peter Thompson	English Indoor Bowling Association	4	4
Steve Watson	Disability Bowls England	4	4
Lisa Graham	Managing Director of the BDA; ex-officio Director	4	4
Duncan Webster	BDA (Board Secretary) – from January 2022	1	1



The BDA will provide guidance and leadership on governance to support National Governing Bodies and their County Associations and Clubs.



SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding remains a core priority for the BDA and features, with appropriate increased prominence, in the new Sport England/UK Sport Code for Sports Governance. We have continued to support the sport of bowls by taking the lead on the oversight of Safeguarding Policy and referrals. We have further developed our Safeguarding Steering Group which looks at policy, procedures and promotion of safeguarding and the Safeguarding Case Management Group which was established in 2021. Both groups include the safeguarding leads from the BDA and the five National Governing Bodies of bowls. The Case Management Group is chaired by the Safeguarding Champion from the BDA Board. Additionally, it has support from an independent safeguarding expert with over 10 years' experience in safeguarding, in both health and education settings.

In October 2021, we increased the resource applied to Safeguarding, by the appointment of a new full-time Lead Safeguarding Officer with over 20 years of safeguarding experience in the Further Education sector. This post was part funded by the National Governing Bodies as it was recognised that it would support their own work on safeguarding children and adults at risk in the sport.

In December 2021, our safeguarding procedures and action plan were reviewed by the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU). We were delighted to be judged to have met their criteria with no conditions applied. Our newly revised action plan, mapped to the CPSU self-review tool and regularly reviewed in the Steering Group, was viewed as providing appropriate direction for our developments.

In January 2022, we purchased 'My Concern' bespoke, secure safeguarding software for use by members of the Safeguarding Case Management Group. All have attended online training on its use. This will improve safeguarding record keeping and reporting to the Board as well as reducing risks associated with safeguarding information being transferred by email. It will also facilitate secure safeguarding information sharing, where persons of concern cross the bowls codes.

During January 2022 the BDA was accepted onto the Case Management Support project which is jointly run by LimeCulture and Sports Resolution. This can provide additional expertise for complex safeguarding investigations in the future. Induction for the project begins in April 2022.

In January 2022, two new policies for Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults at Risk were approved by the Board. Creating two separate policies, to replace the single safeguarding policy which existed at that time, is seen as best practice in the sports sector. Safeguarding leads from the National Governing Bodies were involved in reviewing the changes which include streamlined referral procedures to the new Case Management Group. Additionally, the guidance templates, which have been available on the BDA website for use by clubs and county associations, have all been revised with some reduction in repetition.



The BDA is keen to widen the knowledge of participants in bowls on safeguarding issues.





We have continued to support the sport of bowls by taking the lead on the oversight of Safeguarding Policy and referrals.

Members of the Board received child safeguarding training from the CPSU in December 2021 and will receive training from the Ann Craft Trust on safeguarding adults at risk during 2022. The Safeguarding leads from the BDA and National Governing Bodies have received refresher training from the CPSU on Case Management. The new Safeguarding Lead Officer has attended two national conferences: one focused on creating safer cultures in sport and the other dealing with adult abuse and exploitation.

The BDA is keen to widen the knowledge of participants in bowls on safeguarding issues, to counter a perception that it has nothing to do with sport. Paragraph 63 of the statutory government guidance document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' emphasises the role that sports organisations can play. To this end, the BDA has begun to produce and distribute a regular bi-monthly Safeguarding Bulletin. We have also shared online and social media messaging in support of national campaigns, for example Adult Safeguarding Week and Anti Bullying Week. This promotional work will be reinforced via safeguarding workshops at our Club Hubs. Our website education platform contains new short interactive modules on safeguarding themes, and these will be continuously developed.

The Safeguarding priorities for 2022/23

- Embed the new membership of the Sport Resolutions/LimeCulture Case Management Project within BDA safeguarding procedures
- Prepare with NGB leads for the new CPSU annual review process
- Secure in-person training opportunities with NGB safeguarding leads
- Support Club Development Officers to develop a range of safeguarding workshops for delivery in Club Hubs
- Ensure delivery of regular bi-monthly safeguarding bulletins to clubs
- Refresh and rationalise the remaining guidance sheets and club safeguarding templates and develop new ones where required.

OUR FIVE YEAR STRATEGY ●

OUR PURPOSE:

To sustain, grow and develop the sport in partnership with the bowls family.

OUR VISION:

Together we will place bowls at the heart of every community as an accessible sport for all.

1. BUILD PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITIES

To ensure our role in the bowls family preserves the important connection with our partners and key stakeholders through the continuation of shared goals and objectives, aligning to our organisation's vision of transforming bowls into an accessible sport for all.

1. Nurturing our partnerships

To continue to build on the positive relationships with our National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners and wider bowls family with strategically aligned goals and objectives while helping them to recover from Covid.

2. Building new communities

To use a place-based approach through our new Community Club Hub model to reach a diverse range of people across all communities.

3. Using data and insight

To take a more strategic view of the sport across the codes in order to ensure there is improved alignment in what we are trying to achieve.

4. Broadening our network

To broaden and develop our national and regional partnerships and create a wider network of organisations from the sport, physical activity, health, and wellbeing sector which align with our shared vision, purpose, and strategies.

2. EDUCATE AND EMPOWER

To increase the impact we have on tackling inequalities through a more connected and educated volunteer workforce who fully support our efforts at a local level and who represent a younger, more diverse group of people, ensuring the sport has sustainability into the future.

1. Educating the workforce

To continue to develop our shared educational offer across the codes, linking in with our volunteers on the ground to provide the tools to deliver where appropriate. To improve the overall knowledge, understanding and culture of those in our sport regardless of the code they play.

2. Championing good Governance

To lead and drive good Governance across 5,000 clubs by setting an example and sharing best practice through our Community Club Hub model.

3. Promoting a safer sport

To lead on and embed good safeguarding practice in the mindset of all our clubs, volunteers and partners.

4. Empowering our volunteers

To ensure those who volunteer in our sport are given the right support and have the knowledge and expertise to feel confident in making the right decisions.

3. DIVERSIFY AND INNOVATE

To continue to take the lead on driving inclusion with the view to improving the culture of our sport through more inclusive and innovative practices on the ground linking in to the whole sport inclusion strategy.

1. Changing perceptions

To start to change the perception of the sport from one that is played by the older generation to one that supports a wider variety of people from different backgrounds, is fully inclusive and improves both physical, social and mental wellbeing of all those who play socially and competitively.

2. Improving the culture

To use our standing and influence in our Community Club Hubs and connected club network, supported by our Club Health Checker, Education platform and strategies to affect a cultural change in clubs which will engender the development of improved inclusivity across the club network.

3. Supporting our clubs

To support clubs to develop a strong understanding of the importance of equality, diversity and inclusion to help them reflect the communities within which they exist and offer a greater breadth of opportunities to participate.

4. Raising awareness through events

To use national and international platforms to portray a different perception of bowls and use these events as a community engagement tool to see the sport in a different light and encourage inclusive participation.



4. SUSTAIN AND GROW

To ensure we have tried and tested sustainability plans in place to recruit and retain volunteers and grow participation at our clubs, working closely with our wider network to broaden our reach and influence.

1. Connecting with Health and Wellbeing

To show a clear connection between Bowls and the health benefits for regular participants through our Bowl for Health initiative. To use evidence of its long-term success to improve understanding of how bowls has a positive impact in areas of physical, social and mental wellbeing.

2. Encouraging new volunteers

To recognise the importance of those in our sport who can act as leaders, as they are essential to the success of an inclusive environment. To ensure that clubs can retain, educate, recruit and reward volunteers, ensuring a robust and agile network across the country and the sport.

3. Delivering new programmes and products

To continue to build and roll out a suite of programmes and projects that target specific groups, delivered in our place-based Community Club Hub environment.

4. Continuing to learn and develop

To continue to use data, insight and our learnings to evolve what we do, ensuring we are listening to our audience and adapting where we need to.

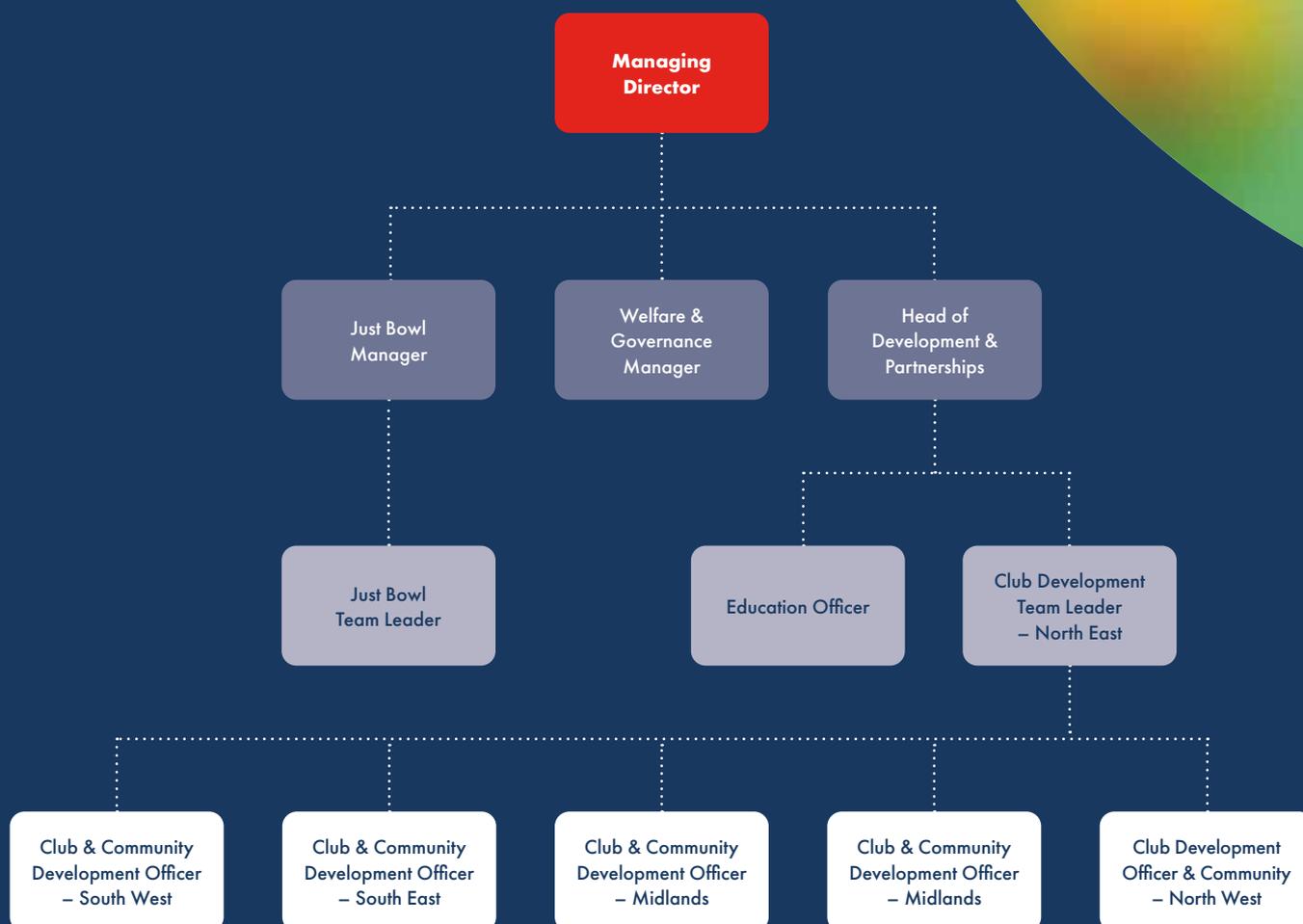


THE TEAM

In October 2021 we welcomed a new Welfare and Governance Manager to the team. Replacing our Safeguarding Lead, the role was broadened to include overseeing our policies and procedures alongside the task of helping us to achieve the new requirements for Tier 3. This role has been joint funded by our partnership National Governing Bodies.

Our Club and Community Development Officer roles also expanded to give us good coverage in the North, Midlands, and the South. These roles work across our core programmes as well as supporting Just Bowl which allowed for direct access to a wider geographical area and more opportunities for marketing and promotion nationwide.

For the next funding cycle, all Club Development Officers will be renamed Club and Community Development Officers which will align better with our new 5-year strategy and our community focus.





ABOUT US & OUR PARTNERS. ●

The Bowls Development Alliance is a partnership organisation with a core purpose to; ‘sustain, grow and develop the sport in collaboration with the Bowls family’.

Created by the Sport’s National Governing Bodies to channel Sport England investment into the sport, the Bowls Development Alliance’s primary goal is to increase participation in bowls whilst ensuring the sport is inclusive, safe, and accessible for all. It champions collaborative working across the sport and it works to develop NGB-affiliated clubs and their volunteers, safeguard participants and share best practice. It is a critical time for the sport of bowls to articulate its contribution to boosting activity levels across the country and helping people realise the physical and mental benefits of playing sport.

We look forward to working closely with the National Governing Bodies, Disability Bowls England and partners and developing a new, shared vision for growing participation in the sport.





**THANK
YOU**



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