

SPORT AND RECREATION ALLIANCE STRATEGY: 2025-2030

A UNITED VOICE FOR SPORT AND RECREATION



90 years **SPORT+
RECREATION
ALLIANCE** EST. 1935

FOREWORD

Much has changed since our last strategy *Support. Recover. Achieve.* was conceived. Having weathered a public health crisis in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic, we almost immediately faced an intense cost-of-living crisis. While the severity of these crises has abated, they have left scars on both the country as a whole and our sector. Overall physical activity rates have recovered but a quarter of the population are still inactive and stubborn inequalities in participation remain.

However, even in these most difficult of times, the importance of sport and recreation to the nation has shone through. Whether it be going for a run during lockdown, cheering on our Olympic and Paralympic athletes at Paris 2024, or taking to the floor as part of our *Let's Dance!* campaign, it's clear that sport and recreation matters.

This is important as we look to the future. A new Labour government marked a change in political direction with a clear mandate built around five key missions for national renewal. The next period will therefore provide fresh opportunities for us and our members to demonstrate the life-changing power of sport and recreation and how it can make a significant contribution to these important ambitions.

Throughout this new strategy cycle, our unwavering focus will be to deliver with and for our members and in particular our national governing body members who play a foundational role in engaging and keeping people in sport and recreation.

Using our independent voice, we will protect members' interests with key decision makers and be bold and ambitious in promoting the benefits of sport and recreation and the

impact our members have. And we will seek to provide new and better services - be it enhancing our core policy and advocacy work, delivering innovative new research to showcase the economic and social value of sport and recreation or providing new digital tools to strengthen governance and share good practice - to help our members respond to emerging challenges and take advantage of opportunities.

Most importantly, we are committed to working with our members to service their needs, both now and in the future. Our recent member review highlighted that while we were doing lots of things right, there is more we can and should do to support the changing requirements of our members. As part of this, we will evolve our structures and ways of working to make sure we are better placed to deliver impact for members.

More broadly, 2025 marks the 90th anniversary of the Sport and Recreation Alliance. As such, it is an opportune moment to launch a new strategy which looks to the future but which at the same time is rooted in our longstanding role as the independent body for sport and recreation, representing our members' interests with both Government and the Sports Councils.

We are confident this strategy builds on our rich history but also demonstrates a willingness to change to remain modern and relevant, adapting to the ever-changing environment and member needs.

We look forward to supporting you, our members, as we head towards a century together as the Sport and Recreation Alliance.



DAME JANET BEER
CHAIR



LISA WAINWRIGHT MBE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

2020-25



***SECURED CRUCIAL FUNDING TO HELP MEMBERS
THROUGH COVID-19 AND THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS
INCLUDING THE £600M SPORT SURVIVAL PACKAGE AND
£63M SWIMMING POOL SUPPORT FUND***



***PROTECTED SPORT AND RECREATION THROUGH
CHANGES TO POLICY AND LEGISLATION INCLUDING
ENSURING A PROPORTIONATE APPROACH TO GAMBLING
SPONSORSHIP AND REDUCED BURDENS FROM NEW
ANTI-TERROR LAWS***



***DELIVERED THE FIRST EVER UK-WIDE CONCUSSION
GUIDELINES FOR GRASSROOTS SPORT, PROVIDING
MEMBERS WITH EVIDENCE-BASED GUIDANCE FOR
HOW TO IDENTIFY AND MANAGE CONCUSSIONS AND
ENSURE SAFE RETURN TO SPORT***



***UNDERTOOK GROUND-BREAKING RESEARCH TO
EVIDENCE THE SOCIAL VALUE OF MOVEMENT AND DANCE,
DEMONSTRATING THE £3.5B IN HEALTH AND WELLBEING
BENEFITS OUR MOVEMENT AND DANCE
MEMBERS DELIVER EVERY YEAR***



DELIVERED AN EXTENSIVE RANGE OF GOVERNANCE REVIEWS, WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING SESSIONS TO HELP STRENGTHEN MEMBERS' GOVERNANCE AND SUPPORT THEM TO BECOME MORE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE



SECURED THE UK'S HOSTING OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP (IWG) ON WOMEN & SPORT, CULMINATING IN A GLOBAL SUMMIT ON GENDER EQUITY IN SPORT IN 2026

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

While we have achieved a huge amount over the last five years, we know that the landscape our members operate within is changing and the next five years will continue to present a range of challenges:

- 1 While overall participation levels have recovered following COVID-19, **significant and stubborn inequalities remain** with women and girls, disabled people, people from less affluent backgrounds and people from diverse communities less likely to be active.
- 2 **National governing bodies of sport face a growing range of capacity and compliance pressures** with constrained public funding and rising costs alongside increasing regulatory burdens making it harder to grow participation, run events and recruit and retain volunteers.
- 3 The importance of **providing safe, inclusive and welcoming experiences for everyone** in sport and recreation - and the risk of harm from not doing so - means we and our members must maintain the very highest standards of governance and integrity and continually strive to improve.
- 4 The wider **policy, legislative and regulatory environment is increasingly complex** and members need more support to navigate these changes, ensuring the negative impacts of policy change are minimised and opportunities to leverage more support are maximised.
- 5 **Further structural changes within the sporting landscape are likely to lead to greater consolidation and different ways of operating** as reflected in UK Sport's System Master Planning and related workstreams.
- 6 Wider factors including **increased competition from other sectors, changing social attitudes, new technologies and growing environmental threats from climate change and pollution** will place a premium on agility and the ability to innovate and adapt quickly.



A NEW APPROACH:

A photograph of a sailboat on a body of water, with a green overlay. The sailboat has a white sail with a red star logo. The water is a deep blue-green color.

EVOLVING TO BETTER SERVE OUR MEMBERS

In light of this wider strategic context - and in advance of this new strategy - we undertook a comprehensive member review with a view to ensuring we remain sustainable and well-placed to meet the current and future needs of our members. The review was particularly timely given the significant and rapid changes happening within and outside the sector and which will ultimately shape the future landscape in which we and our members operate.

As part of the review and strategy development, we undertook an extensive process of engagement with members to understand their views. This included a detailed analysis of our existing products and services and members' engagement with them and a series of in-person events across the country to gather feedback on our findings and future strategic direction.



As a result of the review, we will make a number of changes to the way in which we are structured and how we operate. We will:

- **Evolve our membership structures and services** to better support our members and strengthen our role as the independent voice for sport and recreation, bringing together sport and national governing bodies to reflect and elevate their systemic role in delivering sport.
- **Be smarter in the way we work together with our members**, collaborating more effectively to identify key priorities and focusing our resources on delivering against these.
- **Enhance our communications and engagement** with members to increase awareness of and support for the work we and our members are doing.

In order to implement these changes, we will work with our members - through our divisions - to identify the priority issues for us to focus on, creating space for a mixture of proactive and reactive activity, on an annual basis. These priorities will be reflected in more detailed delivery plans which will include, where appropriate, specific measures against which we will track progress.

These commitments demonstrate our desire to remain a modern, agile and efficient organisation, which can continue to deliver the range of products and services for our members and respond to prevailing issues as they evolve with time.



OUR VISION, PURPOSE AND MISSION

VISION

A vibrant, safe and sustainable sport and recreation ecosystem which enables everyone to participate when, where and how they choose.

We believe a different future is possible. One in which sport and recreation is at the very heart of national life, built on the organisations, places and people that make it all happen.

PURPOSE

We believe the power of sport and recreation should be recognised from the highest levels of Government to the grassroots.

Sport and recreation matters. Not in an abstract sense but in a real, life-changing way. It brings enormous benefits to individuals and communities – it unites and inspires us, improves health and wellbeing, breaks down barriers and brings joy and happiness to millions. We believe this deserves to be recognised.

MISSION

We enable sport and recreation bodies to do more than they can alone through the power of our collective advocacy and the strength of our services.

As a member body we're here for the organisations that deliver sport and recreation. Everything we do, every day is designed to make our members' lives easier and to create the conditions for their success. We do this by providing independence and scale – aggregating hundreds of different organisations together into a collective voice and delivering shared services which save time and money and empower our members to do what they do best.



OUR VALUES

Values are more than just words on a page. They underpin everything we do - how we operate, how we behave and how we engage with our staff, members and stakeholders. We are driven by:

PERFORMANCE

We set high standards and hold ourselves to account for achieving them.

TEAMWORK

We're at our best when we're working as a team, collaborating to drive improvement.

INTEGRITY

We recognise the importance of acting with professionalism and ensuring that what we do is consistent with what we say.

OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Throughout this strategy cycle we will focus on three core strategic objectives which reflect our longstanding role as the independent representative body for sport and recreation.

Our success will ultimately be determined by the impact that the delivery of our strategy has on our members, key stakeholders and the wider sector. Our headline measures provide a means of identifying what success will look like across the new strategy cycle against each of our strategic objectives.

1

PROTECT SPORT AND RECREATION WITH KEY DECISION MAKERS

We will:

- Defend the interests of our members with Government, Parliament, funders and other bodies whose decisions have an impact on sport and recreation.
- Leverage our members' experience and expertise to enhance our evidence base and to support our engagement with key decision makers.
- Maximise our research, policy and advocacy expertise to proactively influence key decisions on policy, governance and funding, ensuring that the voice of our members is heard.

Success measures:

- Substantial extent and depth of engagement with key decision makers in Government, Parliament, funders and other agencies over the strategy cycle.
- Our engagement and policy and advocacy work will have positively shaped key decision makers on the issues that matter most to our members.
- Our members will be satisfied that our work to inform and shape policy and regulations has had a positive impact on their organisation.

2

***PROVIDE* SERVICES, SOLUTIONS AND CONNECTIVITY TO MAKE OUR MEMBERS' LIVES EASIER AND ALLOW THEM TO FOCUS ON WHAT THEY DO BEST**

We will:

- Regularly convene our members to understand the ever-changing challenges they face and the support they need.
- Provide the means for our members to share information, knowledge and good practice and help connect them to opportunities across the wider sport and recreation eco-system.
- Take the load off our members by providing services which enable them to focus on what they're best at - be it growing grassroots participation and/or achieving elite success.
- Focus our research, policy, advocacy, and governance support as well as our events and training programmes, on helping our members unlock their biggest challenges.

Success measures:

- Working in collaboration with our members, new/revised services will have been identified and delivered to support their needs.
- Our members will be satisfied with the quality, value for money and support provided by our services and that the services provided have reduced the burden on their core operations.
- Our events and training programmes will have been well attended across the strategy cycle, with our members satisfied that they have supported them in achieving better connectivity and more effective, inclusive and sustainable operations.

3

***PROMOTE* THE POSITIVE POWER OF SPORT AND RECREATION TO CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS**

We will:

- Be bold and ambitious in how we use our voice, taking every chance to publicly shout about sport and recreation, the enormous economic and social value it brings to individuals, communities and the country as a whole and the brilliant work our members do.
- Conduct new and innovative research and collaborate with our members and partners to build the evidence base and demonstrate the positive power of sport and recreation as a key driver of improved health and wellbeing, community cohesion and economic growth.
- Use our reach and networks to raise awareness and recognition of these benefits amongst key decision makers and help foster a positive sentiment towards sport and recreation and the contribution it can make.

Success measures:

- Our research will have developed the evidence base for and demonstrated the economic and social benefits of sport and recreation.
- Our research and activities will have been promoted to key stakeholders, increasing their awareness of the benefits of sport and recreation and their positive sentiment towards sport and recreation.
- Our website traffic, social media reach and external press/media interactions will have reached a wide audience, ensuring there is broad awareness and recognition of the benefits of sport and recreation.



Sport and Recreation Alliance

Holborn Tower
137-144 High Holborn
London
WC1V 6PL



For more information, please visit our website:
sportandrecreation.org.uk

Or email us:
info@sportandrecreation.org.uk