



BUILDING A BALANCED, INCLUSIVE AND SKILLED BOARD

RECRUITMENT GUIDANCE FOR
SPORTS ORGANISATIONS

Author: Amanda Bennett, FairPlay Ltd

CONTENTS

The Recruitment Cycle	04
01. Strategic Priorities and Leadership Model	05
02. Skills and Diversity Audits.....	07
03. Role description and advert.....	09
04. Route to board.....	11
05. Nominations Committee.....	12
06. Leadership development and talent identification	16
07. Succession planning.....	18
08. Training and development.....	18
Promoting your organisation to potential board members	20
Succession Planning	29





INTRODUCTION

Board recruitment can be a time-consuming and complex task, but a clear vision and sound planning can help you find high quality Directors and bring long-term stability to the board.

It is useful to think about the process as cyclic, or continuous, reflecting changes in an organisation's mission and priorities, and circumstances. There are a number of steps to successful recruitment and this guidance aims to provide practical advice on each of the steps in this process.

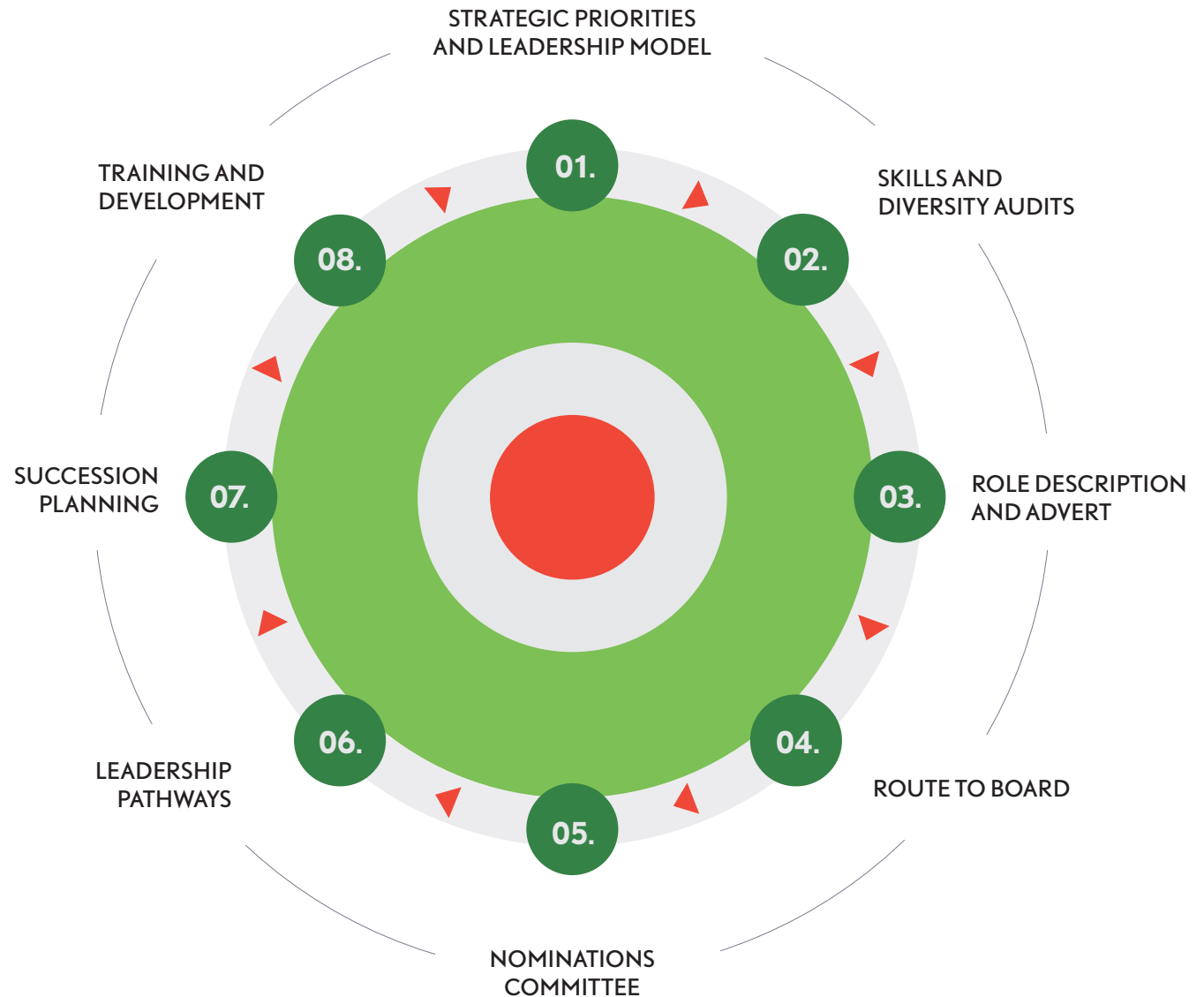
THE RECRUITMENT CYCLE

Codes of practice and governance frameworks, including the Governance and Leadership Framework for Wales (GLFW), encourage organisations to consider board composition very carefully with specific attention paid to skills and diversity. This guide will ensure these are integrated into all aspects of recruitment.

Recruitment takes time and, as the majority of board members are volunteers, this can be challenging. However, if you weigh up the risks of appointing someone who does not meet your expectations or, in extreme situations, causes harm to your organisation, it is time well spent.



OUR MISSION IS TO OPEN UP THE SPORT TO EVERYONE IN WALES, BY MAKING IT ACCESSIBLE, WELCOMING AND ENJOYABLE.



01.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND LEADERSHIP MODEL

Based on the adage 'form follows function', the structure of an organisation, including its board should be firmly rooted in its mission or vision, i.e. the reason why the organisation exists. For example National Governing Bodies (NGBs) will want to include people on the board who understand the sport itself but, in 21st century sport, NGBs are now micro or small businesses that need financial, commercial, communications and governance expertise as well as sporting experience.

In addition, appointing people all of whom have the same knowledge, for example of women's artistic gymnastics or men's 15-a-side rugby, potentially excludes others with vital expertise on other formats and target groups, especially where these are the future areas of growth. It might also create a situation where group think starts to appear as several board members share the same experiences and viewpoints. This is a major risk for sports boards as the need for diversity of opinion and experience is critical to sound decision-making and innovation.

Whatever your strategic priorities, which may be sporting e.g. grassroots growth and medal success; or non-sporting e.g. health and wellbeing, revenue generation or stakeholder confidence, these should be reflected in the skills, knowledge and experience of the people on your board.

It is worthwhile creating a leadership model or framework as an expression of your mission and values, and listing your leadership objectives including diversity goals. The model can be underpinned by the Director role description and person specification along with the board

terms of reference, code of conduct and organisational equality policy. It is not just what board members do, but the culture they lead and how they conduct themselves. More importantly, this sets the direction of your recruitment process. It might look like this:

Our mission is to open up the sport to everyone in Wales, by making it accessible, welcoming and enjoyable.

WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY:

- Strengthening clubs and creating talent pathways
- Creating new partnerships and opportunities to play
- Making the sport enjoyable and accessible to all
- Developing our dedicated volunteers, coaches and officials
- Building a sustainable future for the NGB through good governance and financial stability

OUR VALUES ARE:

- Commitment to excellence
- Integrity
- Inclusion
- Team working





Whilst there is still a full commitment to the core, club-based sport, diversification is clearly a priority in terms of sporting experiences, new partners, new participants and different sources of revenue.

Therefore, the leadership framework will align all of the above and be reflected in relevant board documents including the Director role description, board terms of reference and code of conduct.

THINKING POINT

Considering your organisation's mission and priorities, what might your leadership model look like?

02.

SKILLS AND DIVERSITY AUDITS

Skills list - now that you have established a leadership model that defines what you want from your board, it is time to think about the specific competencies, skills, knowledge and experience you need. The best place to start is by building a skills list that is unique to your organisation and the skills list exemplar is a good starting point. For example most sports bodies will include finance as a high priority which means one of the Directors will have relevant qualifications and experience in finance and accounting to offer board level expertise and oversight.

Facilities and property management may not be a high priority to organisations that don't own or invest in facilities, whereas sports bodies are now increasingly prioritising marketing and commercial expertise when seeking new Directors.

Using the template skills list, identify what is most important for your organisation – the competencies should be treated as essential and you can add more to this list. Select the skills and knowledge you think are high, medium or low priority not just for now but also into the future – at least the period of the current strategic cycle if not beyond. It is sometimes useful to involve a few people in the process of prioritisation and

this could be an established governance group, nominations committee or an ad hoc group made up of the Chair, one or two board members and the CEO or General Manager.

Remember to check your Articles of Association as these determine the maximum of number of board members, as well as how they are to be appointed, for example decided by the board or elected by members.

Skills audit - once the skills list is complete, it is time to carry out a skills audit. This is the process by which you assess the degree to which the composition of your current board meets the competencies, skills, knowledge experience you have identified. A skills audit is a useful tool to see if you have right mix and to identify any gaps in the board's overall skills. It will also help you see how you may be affected if a board member leaves or your organisation faces new challenges. The product of a skills audit is a skills matrix which presents the results of the audit against your priority competencies, skills and knowledge.

Skills audits should be done regularly because your Directors' skills and experience will change, and you will be able to respond more quickly when



you need new board members if you already have an up-to-date skills matrix. There are different ways to carry out a skills audit, including:

- A survey where every board member rates themselves on a scale (from 1 = limited knowledge up to 5/6 = highly qualified and expert in the field) for each area. This can be completed online or printed with one person receiving and collating the results
- The Chair includes the audit as part of annual face-to-face meetings with each board member and collates the results
- An independent person carries out 1:1s with individual Directors and produces a report.
- Internal or external process – some organisations already have dynamic performance management systems for the board which include board evaluation, annual appraisal and regular feedback on performance.

These boards may be very comfortable with an internal skills audit where people understand the benefits and can be honest about their contribution.

Where a skills audit is a new process, it might be worth inviting an external co-ordinator who can take each Director through the self-assessment activity, helping them give accurate ratings and ensuring these are moderated across the whole group.

Even organisations that are confident with a skills audit may ask for an externally led process every few years as this guarantees a wholly independent view on the board's composition and capability.

Whether the audit is led internally by the Chair or another board member, or you commission an independent person, the process should encourage honest reflection. The results should help to drive individual and collective performance by:

- Identifying strengths
- Highlighting any gaps in key business areas
- Contributing to the ongoing development of the board – collectively and individually.

Diversity audit - in addition or in conjunction with the skills audit, understanding the composition of your board on the basis of diversity is important

and a diversity audit should be carried out.

Some organisations ask candidates to complete an equality monitoring form as they apply and, subject to submissions, can track whether the role description and advert have reached different communities and professional groups.

The Business Case for Board Diversity sets out, with compelling evidence, why a diverse board is good for any organisation and sports bodies are no different. Whatever the strategic goals – participation growth, medal success, commercial innovation or financial stability, a diverse board is more likely to contribute new ideas and make better decisions.

Organisations working towards an equality framework such as the Equality Standard for Sport, will already use diversity audits for their board and staff. Aiming for a diverse board is also a listed under Principle 4 of the GLFW. Template monitoring forms and guidance are available on the Equality in Sport website.

In short, the skills list and audit, and diversity audits allow you assess how close you are to your leadership model and optimum board composition.

TRIAL THE TEMPLATE

Using the template skills list, tick the areas you believe to be the skills and knowledge for your board now and in the future. Make sure you frame your selection against your mission and strategic priorities.

03.

ROLE DESCRIPTION AND ADVERT

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Effective board members must understand their individual and collective responsibilities, whether they are Directors, Trustees or board members of an unincorporated body, and these need to be explicit in the role description. It is unhelpful and even unfair for a newly appointed board member to discover the extent of their legal duties after they accept the position.

The role description is also a great opportunity to explain and promote your organisation's mission and aims for the future. Using a brief introduction, you can tell potential candidates why you exist, what you stand for and the contribution they can make.

Research has shown that certain types of language and words can put women off applying as adverts may inadvertently contain masculine-coded language. To ensure you are creating a role description that appeals to both women and men, you can check the text against a Gender Decoder. All you have to do is paste your role description onto the Gender Decoder website and you will receive immediate feedback that you can use to adjust the text if necessary.

The role description should also focus on the essential elements, including behavioural aspects, as research by Hewlett Packard shows that women will only apply for positions if they meet 100% of the specification (compared with 60% of men).

Avoid long lists of bulleted requirements, keeping to the most important, and make



ABOUT US

- Who you are and what your organisation does
- Vision, mission and strategic goals
- Why you are looking for a board member, new position, structural changes etc

THE ROLE

- Main purpose
- Legal duties
- Responsibilities and expectations

THE PERSON

- Core skills and competencies
- Specific skills and knowledge
- Diversity and inclusion - we welcome nominations or applications from... (under represented groups)

HOW TO APPLY

- Information pack and application process
CV, letter, application form,
closing date and interview date
- Named contact for further information

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Remuneration and expenses
- Location and time commitment



sure your values and the expected leadership behaviours are clearly visible.

As well as some background and a list of the duties and responsibilities, it is also reasonable to describe what you are looking for in terms of skills, competencies and expertise – a person specification.

This is where your skills audit is valuable as you can specify areas where the audit has identified gaps. NGBs are now frequently looking for business and communications specialisms such as digital marketing, strategic communications and organisational development.

You can make this clear in the role description so potential candidates will not waste their (or your) time applying if they don't have what you need.

The advert can be broken down into 5 key sections:

SOCIAL MEDIA

A study by the Aberdeen Group found that 73% of 18 to 34 year olds found their last job through social media. If you are looking for younger board members with professional skills, you will most likely find them through LinkedIn and other social media such as Twitter.

These are powerful tools to spread information quickly and creative use of social media will help you reach a much bigger talent pool than those visiting your website.



**SUCCESSFUL RECRUITMENT
HAPPENS WHEN YOU
SAY CLEARLY WHO YOU
ARE AND WHAT YOU'RE
LOOKING FOR, AND DO
SO IN THE RIGHT PLACES.**

04.

ROUTE TO BOARD

There are few organisations in the sport sector that openly advertise all of their board positions. It is more common, particularly amongst NGBs and national sports organisations, for the board to be made up of people whose route is very different. These include:

- Nominated - put forward by one organisation/group for a position on another organisation's board
- Appointed – to be selected for a position (may involve an application and/or interview)
- Elected – voted into position by a designated group
- Co-opted – invited to fill a vacancy or to provide specific expertise
- Ex-officio – on the board by virtue of holding another position, e.g. Chair of regional committee or CEO

Whatever the route, you will still be seeking individuals who meet your leadership model and can contribute in the areas of greatest importance, as determined by your skills audit.

Democracy is a central pillar of voluntary bodies including sport, and the rights of members to appoint Directors is enshrined in many organisations' Articles. This does not mean a transparent, skills-based process should not be applied and members' rights can be protected even as candidates progress through a skills-based process.

It is a worthwhile exercise to review your current Articles of Association to check if there are any blockers to building a balanced, skilled and inclusive board.

For example, are your board members elected on a regional basis? How many board positions require candidates to express their ability to fulfil the role and meet the person specification? Are elections, as described by NGBs, a "beauty parade" or popularity contest" where members are elected based on their longevity, popularity or other factors unrelated to the role? If most positions are from the membership, to what extent are under represented groups able to gain access to leadership roles within the sport? Are there limits on terms of office that ensure you can refresh your board with new skills?

If any of these are preventing you from running a comprehensive, focused and inclusive recruitment campaign it is worth considering changes to open up your board. To ensure you are able to focus on board skills, expertise and diversity, and you can consistently maintain the standards set out in your leadership model, you will need a nominations committee (also known as a selection or search committee) for all positions.



05.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Governance frameworks and codes from across sectors require and recommend the formation of a nominations committee to lead the appointment of board members. As a board committee, its terms of reference and direction are set by the board and it will usually include the Chair (unless the vacant position is the Chair), a small number of board members (including at least one independent Director) and the CEO or General Manager.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The nominations committee's role is set out in the terms of reference and its main purpose will be to lead a formal, rigorous and transparent procedure for the appointment of new Directors to the board. The committee may have authority to appoint directly, make recommendations to the board or to members at the AGM.

If a position is for the membership to elect, you can invite members to put themselves forward for board positions by application. These might be closed or open adverts, for example:

- ♦ Open only to individuals from a designated region or section, e.g. youth and junior sport
- ♦ Open to all members
- ♦ Open to people from within and beyond the organisation

Candidates are then shortlisted by the nominations committee and invited for interview after which the committee will make recommendations to the membership at the AGM. This allows the organisation to incorporate essential sporting

insight on the board and a vital connection to those delivering the sport across the country. Insight can be further defined on the basis of strategic priorities, for example growth of women's sport, youth development, elite performance etc.

Members then have the ultimate power to elect from the shortlisted candidates and, if these are rejected, you can repeat the process with new applications. Note, it is very rare for members to reject shortlisted candidates as the process is not only transparent, but members have access to much more detailed information about applicants and are reassured they have been through a rigorous process.

Even if your organisation employs different routes to board, consistency of approach is critical to maintain stakeholder confidence and to build the board you need. To this end, the nominations committee should be involved in all appointments wherever possible, including nominated, elected, co-opted and openly recruited Directors. Guidance on nominations committee terms of reference has been produced by the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA – the Governance Institute) and can be found here.

Nominations committee preparation – with terms of reference and members in place, the nominations committee can start planning board recruitment in earnest. This needs planning with clear dates and milestones for completion of the role description, advertising, closing dates, shortlisting, interview dates and venues, and presentation of recommendations or decisions.



**RECRUITMENT
TAKES TIME AND,
AS THE MAJORITY
OF BOARD
MEMBERS ARE
VOLUNTEERS,
THIS CAN BE
CHALLENGING.**

As well as the logistical factors, committee members themselves will want to be fully prepared and one of the most important steps they can take towards ensuring board diversity is to take an Implicit Association Test (IAT). Devised by Harvard, the test helps people find out where their personal biases lie.

We all have biases - it is an inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group. In other words, biases are unconscious feelings we have towards other people – unconscious feelings that play a strong part in influencing our judgement of certain people and groups.

The brain uses shortcuts to speed up decision-making and unconscious bias is a by-product. There are times when this sort of quick decision making is useful, for example if faced with a dangerous situation, however it is not a good way to make decisions when recruiting people.

KEY POINTS

- ◆ It's natural.
- ◆ It's unintended.
- ◆ It can affect decisions.
- ◆ It can be mitigated.

Unconscious bias can influence decisions in recruitment, promotion, staff development and recognition, and can lead to a less diverse workforce. Talented people can be overlooked recruitment decisions may favour those who share the characteristics or views of selection

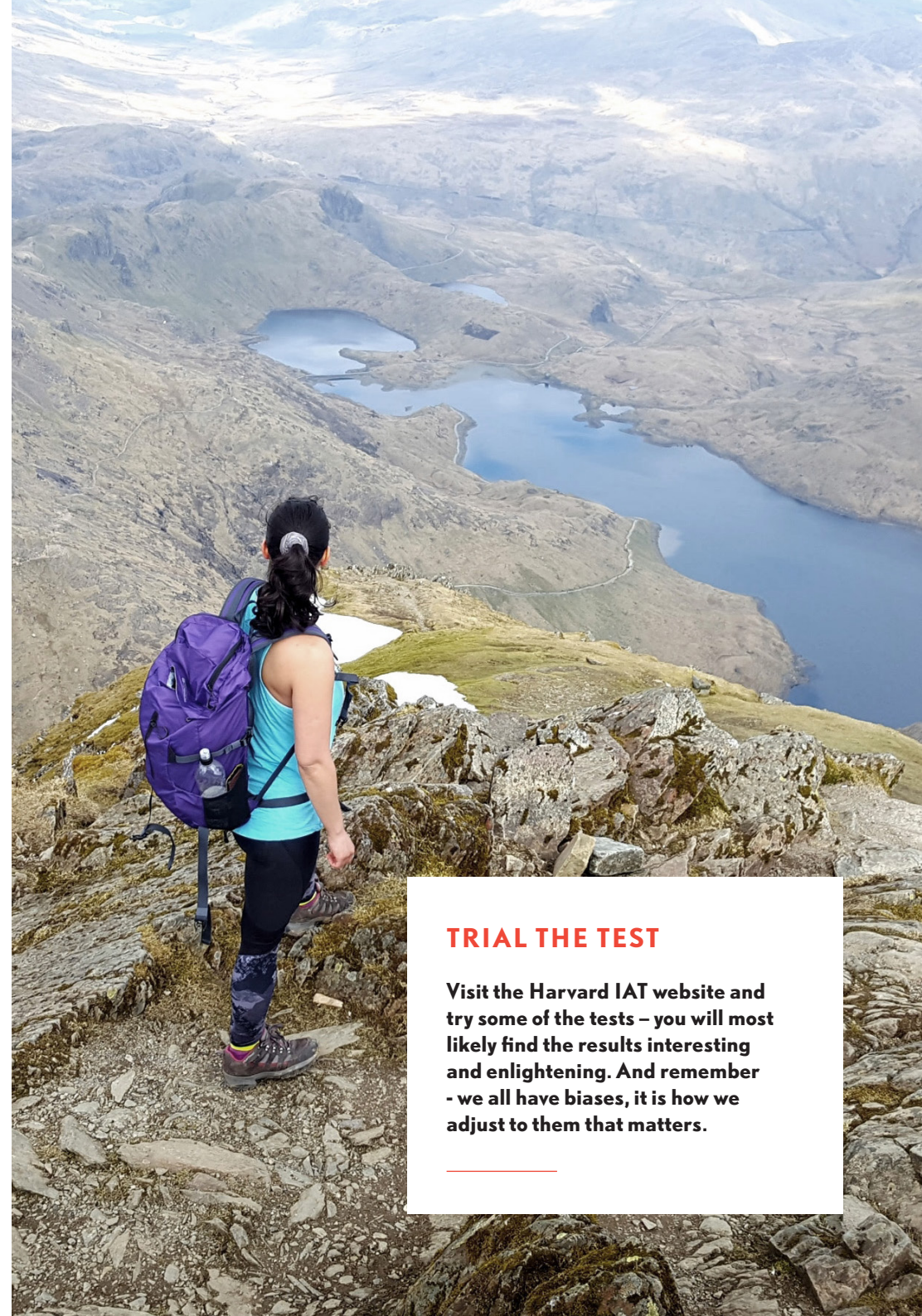
panels. The Harvard University website has a number of useful tests you can take in order to establish where your biases lie, from gender to race to age. Each test only takes a few minutes and could be invaluable to committee members (and, in fact all board members) finding out more about themselves.

Research shows that individuals and organisations that believe they are meritocratic often have the poorest outcomes. That's because when biases aren't acknowledged, we can't deal with them. Tests are available on the IAT – Harvard IAT - Project Implicit website.

The most common form of bias is performance bias, which tends to manifest itself in two ways – gender and race. When it comes to gender, relative to females, male performance is often overestimated. This is especially true in traditionally male-dominated industries. In addition, the Research Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship at the University of Bristol reported that Muslim men are 76% less likely to be employed than their white Christian counterparts.

Mitigating bias can be helped by using blind applications, whereby one person receives applications or nominations then removes essential information such as names, gender, age etc. The committee and those who carry out the interview can shortlist solely on role related information.

Research has shown that blind CVs have an immediate and positive effect on shortlisting for under represented groups. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) recommends blind recruitment as it makes a



TRIAL THE TEST

Visit the Harvard IAT website and try some of the tests – you will most likely find the results interesting and enlightening. And remember - we all have biases, it is how we adjust to them that matters.

difference to the numbers of people from minority groups, in particular for ethnic minorities. In addition, CIPD state this is relatively easy to implement and there is no reason for recruiters not to be using blind applications.

Nominations committee members (and board members) can also enhance their understanding of legal factors and best practice in recruitment through online courses such as those offered by ACAS. A range of free equality and diversity courses are available on the ACAS e-learning website.

Before the interview – there are a number of ways in which you can interview board candidates. These include face-to-face, telephone and online conference. The first is probably the most common and preferred method as both panel members and candidates can connect more easily with eye contact and non-verbal communication.

If you have a shortlisted applicant who lives overseas you might want to offer a conference call with a possible face-to-face follow up if she or he becomes the preferred choice. Providing candidates with information about the interview at the earliest stage will mean more of your shortlisted applicants can attend.

You will also have to pay due regard to applicants with disabilities who have the legal right, under the Equality Act 2010, to expect reasonable adjustments to be made in order for them to gain equal access to the process. Planning the venue, room layout and timings carefully will pay

dividends not only in terms of accessibility but also to make candidates comfortable. You should also ask when you invite people for interview if might need any assistance.

If your organisation has achieved a level of the Disability Confident scheme (formerly Two Ticks Scheme), you will already be considering positive action for candidates with disabilities in your recruitment policy.

During the interview – the right candidate will respect you for conducting a thorough and professional recruitment process, and for asking probing questions. It signals that you are serious about your board composition and governance. Plan your questions in advance and aim to have a clear idea of what you are looking for in terms of responses.

This will help with the scoring system which you should put in place to demonstrate transparency and consistency. Most scoring systems range from 0/1 = not demonstrated to 3/4 = exceeds requirements. With all panel members rating candidates and taking notes as evidence of how each one responded, you (and candidates) can feel confident the interview is being conducted fairly.

Interviews offer an opportunity for you to tell an interviewee more about your organisation, as well as for you to find out more about them. Be honest - it is important to sell your organisation to candidates during an interview, but you should also be clear about the challenges they may encounter and the commitment you need them to make.

KEY AREAS FOR QUESTIONS INCLUDE:

- Do they fully understand your mission, vision and strategic direction?
- Do they fit in with your organisation's ethos and values? What is their understanding of equality and diversity?
- Do they understand the role and responsibilities of being a board member?
- What skills and qualities does the candidate bring? These should form the majority of questions including those on specified areas of expertise.
- Do they have the capacity and willingness to commit sufficient time to the role?

THINKING POINT

Thinking about your most recent board appointments, how did you ensure candidates had sufficient information in advance of the interview? Did you manage telephone and email queries swiftly? How prepared was your interview panel? Did the questions focus on values, skills and competencies? What could you do to improve the overall interview process?



AFTER THE INTERVIEW

As each interview ends you should explain the next steps to each candidate so they understand when they might be contacted and what to expect if they are selected, especially if there is an election process at AGM to follow.

As an interview panel, you will be expected to share scores and evidence, and reach agreement on the best person for the role. This may be the final decision or it may be a recommendation to board or members.

It is important to let down rejected candidates gently and this should be done by phone. They are also entitled to constructive feedback which may help them in their search for other roles. If you have a number of exceptional candidates – and this is not unusual through open recruitment, think carefully about other opportunities in your organisation, for example committee roles, and consider offering them alternative positions. Leadership talent is precious and you may not find similarly skilled people until your next campaign.

The successful candidate should be informed that the appointment is subject to references or checks, and it is important you carry these out swiftly in order to confirm the appointment or, if there are any problems identified in the checks, offer the position to another interviewee.

Once the checks are confirmed, your new board member should receive a formal letter of appointment. This is an important document that sets out the terms of the appointment including legal duties and expectations. The exemplar Board Member Letter of Appointment provides a starting point.

INDUCTION PROGRAMME

– your new board member's life as a board member with your organisation begins now and she or he will want to get started plus, once the letter is signed, they are Directors in the eyes of the law and you will want them to be as effective as possible as quickly as possible.

The Higgs Suggestions for Good Practice stated that the induction process should aim to:

- ♦ Build an understanding of the nature of the company (the organisation), its business (core purpose) and the markets (environment) in which it operates
- ♦ Build a link with the organisation's people
- ♦ Build an understanding of the organisation's main relationships.

A well-planned induction isn't just about reading papers, it should aim to make new board members feel welcome, valued and well supported. A comprehensive induction could include as a minimum:

PAPERS:

- ♦ Articles of association
- ♦ Annual report and accounts
- ♦ Strategy and business plan
- ♦ Budget and finance report
- ♦ Minutes of recent meetings
- ♦ Role description and code of conduct

PEOPLE

- ♦ Meetings with the Chair and board colleagues
- ♦ Meeting with CEO and senior team
- ♦ Organogram with role purposes
- ♦ Committee structure and membership
- ♦ Stakeholder map and strategy

PROCESS

- ♦ Board meeting protocols - circulation of papers
- ♦ Access to key policies and procedures
- ♦ Key dates - board, committees and events
- ♦ Expense policy and claims process
- ♦ Premises layout and facilities



IT IS IMPORTANT TO GIVE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK WHICH MAY HELP THEM IN THEIR SEARCH FOR OTHER ROLES.

06.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND TALENT IDENTIFICATION

One of the challenges facing sports organisations is the depth of the Internal pipeline – people who volunteer at each level and are prepared to put themselves forward for board positions.

Many sports report dwindling numbers of volunteers which creates situations whereby individuals are appointed because they stepped forward, not because they met the role specification.

Whilst board positions come with duties and responsibilities, it is still important to make sure they are accessible to all, not just those who may be retired, do not work full time or do not have caring responsibilities. Your board positions may be available to all, but are they truly accessible?

The workload is more likely to be shared if there are more people involved and the creation of committees, working groups and advisory groups offers a number of benefits:

- ♦ More people assisting with the decisions and their execution
- ♦ Broader group of people bringing diversity of opinion, ideas and challenge – this includes the appointment of independent committee members whose expertise can be added to those from within the sport
- ♦ A leadership pathway through which people with board aspirations can learn about the organisation and better understand leadership responsibilities

- ♦ Committees tend to require less time so are more accessible to busy people, so under represented groups can get involved before considering the more senior board role
- ♦ Women, people with disabilities and individuals from BAME groups can be identified and co-opted onto committees to bring greater insight and diversity of background
- ♦ Building a robust and effective governance structure that involves members, independent experts and is genuinely diverse, will enhance stakeholder confidence.

When NGBs were asked in 2018 what steps they had taken to improve the skills and diversity of their boards, they reported a number of innovative ideas.

One interesting, and highly effective mechanism from overseas that aimed to increase female leadership included options on voting rights. The Canadian Students Union AGM was attended predominantly by male representatives from universities.

To encourage more women in decision-making, the National Union adjusted its Articles so that each university would have two votes on all matters if it sent woman and man, but only one vote if universities sent one or two men. The impact was immediate as more women attended

the AGM (and could therefore influence major decision on university sport) and also got involved in university boards and committees.

Other ideas that support the involvement of women include moving meetings to early evening rather than daytime and offering childcare for certain meetings or events.

An organisation's leadership pipeline is as important as its athlete pipeline. Make sure your Articles do not create unnecessary barriers and plan a range of options to make your talent pool bigger and your board positions more accessible.



THINKING POINT

HOW ACCESSIBLE ARE YOUR BOARD POSITIONS?

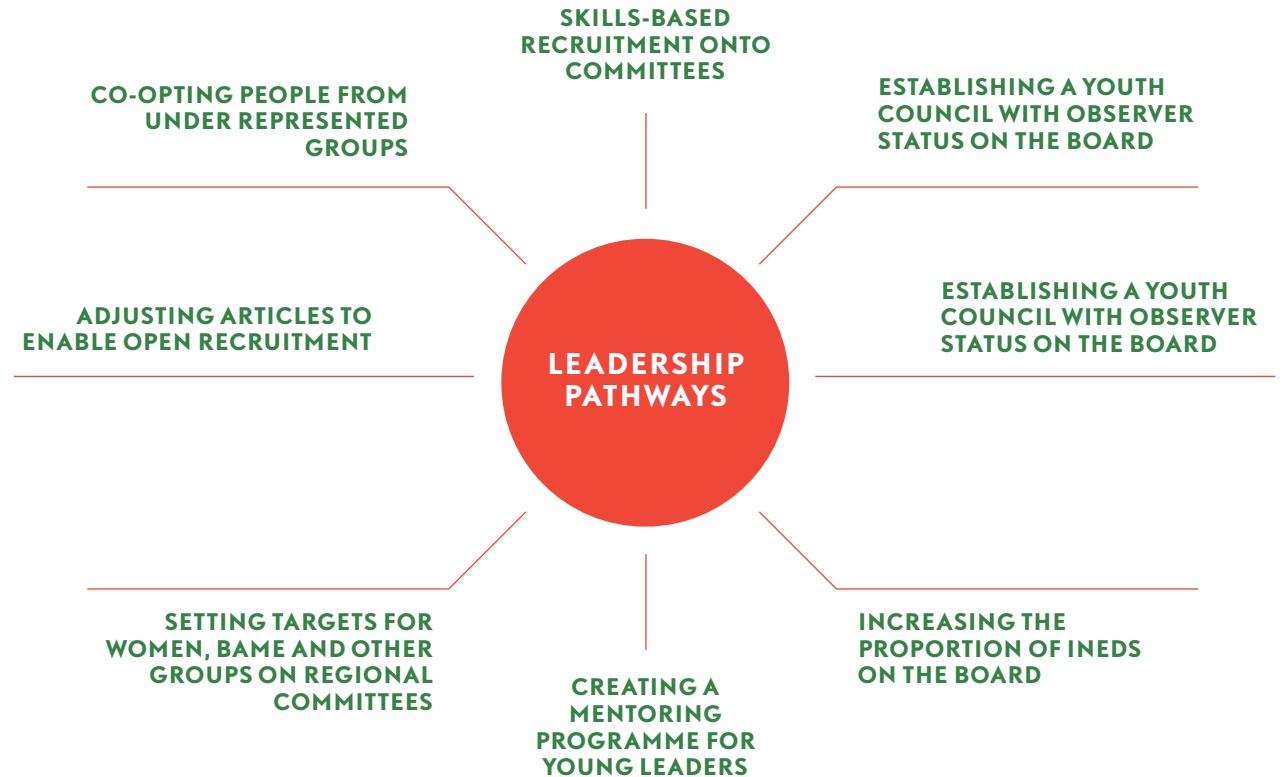
What is the actual time commitment for those in post? Is it as written in the role description or are there additional expectations, e.g. attendance at most/all sporting events; involvement in a number of board committees.

Are there current board members who dedicate several days per week to their role and may put others off as this is above and beyond what is actually required?

Are board meetings always held in the same place? What does this mean for those who have long journeys?

When are your meetings held? If during the day, how do you make these accessible for working Directors?

Do you provide any childcare assistance when board members are engaged in meetings?



07.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

The GLFW recommends that sports bodies plan for the departure of board members and senior staff as this will help prevent gaps in service or knowledge and ensure a smooth transition as new people join the organisation.

Using the skills audit results, it is possible to quickly see what expertise will be lost when a board member steps down. However, there is more that should be considered, for example, the individual's sphere of influence – they may have a powerful network in areas of importance such as government, commerce or international sport.

Furthermore, they may have offered particular competencies and behaviours that helped the board function such as negotiation or conflict resolution skills. Some people are brilliant at analysing details, whilst others prefer looking at the big picture. Balanced boards will ideally have a range of personality types as well as diverse opinions, skills and backgrounds.

Being aware of all the facets of leadership you need will ensure you find the right person for each role and you will benefit from setting rigorous standards in your recruitment process.

08.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

To be successful over a sustained period requires a learning mentality, especially on the board. It is no longer acceptable to be appointed onto a board then become comfortable and complacent – being curious and wanting to learn should be at the heart of your leadership model.

The skills audit will provide useful information on collective and individual areas for development, and regular (at least annual) Chair and board member one-to-ones will also allow Directors to discuss where they want to grow and improve.

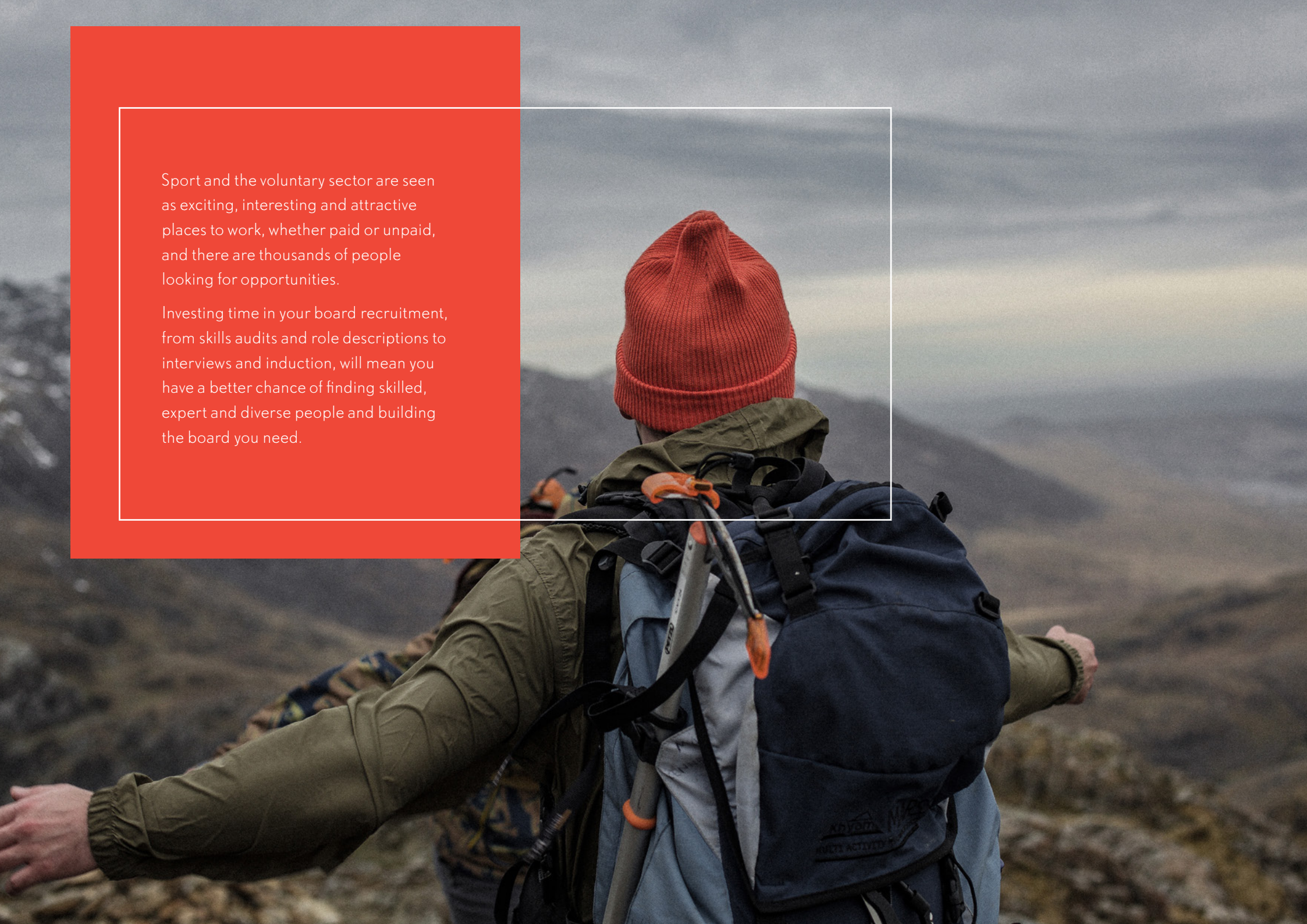
Ideally, this will all be captured in a board development programme which sets how what, who and how Directors will enhance their competence and skills. Moreover, it helps with budget planning and time management.

It may feel like just another thing that has to be done by busy volunteers, but people of all ages enjoy learning and shared development can also bring the team together.



Sport and the voluntary sector are seen as exciting, interesting and attractive places to work, whether paid or unpaid, and there are thousands of people looking for opportunities.

Investing time in your board recruitment, from skills audits and role descriptions to interviews and induction, will mean you have a better chance of finding skilled, expert and diverse people and building the board you need.





**PROMOTING YOUR
ORGANISATION
TO POTENTIAL
BOARD MEMBERS**

In tandem with the guidance resource, Building a Balanced, Inclusive and Skilled Board- Guidance on Board Recruitment (link to online resource?), this note aims to highlight some of the ways in which you can promote your organisation if you want to attract a broader skills base and more diverse candidates.

You will want to be sure you are presenting your organisation in a way that will encourage the people you need to stand for election or apply for a position. It's worth thinking about not just what you want to say, i.e. the messages you would like to communicate, but what different people will hear, i.e. what will resonate with them to get their interest and involvement.

This guidance note will cover some of the available communications mechanisms, as well as aspects of the recruitment process that can reaffirm your inclusion commitment. Some of the commonly used means of promoting your organisation to potential board members include:

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN RECRUITMENT

Promoting your commitment to inclusion is known to be a positive factor in encouraging people to find and apply for positions, paid or unpaid. Glassdoor reported in 2014 that the diversity of an organisation in one of five criteria job seekers consider before they apply for a role.

If the impression is one of homogeneity, for example predominantly white males are in leadership roles, or there is limited evidence

of commitment to equality, women and people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities are far less likely to apply.

The main reason for this is that are unsure that they would fit the culture and ethos of the organisation, or they may not be heard or be taken seriously.

This perception is underscored in the Women in Sport Beyond 30% - Workplace Culture in Sport report (2018) which showed that 40% of women had experienced discrimination because of their sex but 72% of their male colleagues say they saw no inequality.

The Race Equality Foundation Race, Racism and Participation in Sport report (2018) found that racism and racialised inequalities significantly influence BAME communities' access, participation and experiences of sport. Information on the structure and culture of your organisation can attract or discourage potential leaders and this means sports bodies are missing out.

YOUR PEOPLE

Firstly, remember that the services you offer and the people who deliver them reflect your values — and your biases. What does your workforce (paid and unpaid) say about who you are? Is it reflective of your customer base and/or members? Do you fully understand the varied experiences of those who participate in your sport or activity? There are no quick fixes and your recruitment policy might be the starting point to be sure your workforce evolves to align



with your values and your strategy. You may want to undertake an audit of your staff, board and other senior volunteers to find out exactly how diverse your organisation is.

This is a requirement at the Foundation level of the Equality Standard for Sport and more information on diversity audits can be found on the Foundation level page of the Equality in Sport website. Your staff and volunteers are the faces of your organisation, its values and its mission, and they should be expected to understand, demonstrate and promote these constantly.

Once you have a detailed understanding of your workforce, especially board and senior staff members, you will be in a better position to address any under representation. You can also continuously remind your teams of the importance of your values as they are lived day-to-day.

Many sports bodies publish the names and biographies of their board members, often with images, and this will have an immediate impact on public perceptions of your leadership. If your board composition is not yet what you are striving for, this is fine so long as your commitment to building a diverse board is visible.

For example, you probably publish various documents that will tell the world about your purpose, aims and successes. Is inclusion visible? Have you made commitments in your strategy, equality policy or activity programmes that will attract people from different backgrounds? Is this actually happening?



THINKING POINT

How would you describe the current profile of your staff and board? Is it younger, older, mainly white or female? Consider how people inside and outside of your sport might see the workforce. If you have identified under representation, particularly on your board, think about how you can get support from Directors for positive action when your next vacancy arises.

YOUR WEBSITE

Most people who want to know more about your organisation will visit your website. This is especially true of high quality board candidates, inside and outside the organisation, who carry out due diligence and research before they apply.

Trying to meet all possible visitors' demands is not easy but you can certainly use this opportunity to make some clear, unequivocal statements about your values, mission, achievements and commitments. In addition, most if not all of these should have an inclusion or diversity aspect to them, for example many sports bodies will include diversity or inclusion in their values and are specific about a long-term mission that ensures everyone can enjoy the sport.

For example:

As the National Governing Body, our vision is "Tennis opened up in Wales". We want to grow tennis by making it relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable.

These commitments need to be backed up with news, images and language that reflect your actual profile and activity, not just a well-written aspiration. Imagery that shows who you want to involve (as participants, coaches, officials or volunteers) is as valuable as photos of those currently involved. If your sport does not yet have a large BAME participation group but your values and mission are clear that accessibility and enjoyment for all

are important, aim to go further on your website. Systematically promote images, news stories and events where BAME groups are clearly engaged and enjoying your sport. The same principles apply to any groups that are not actively involved but are target groups for the future including women, older people or people with disabilities.

The systematic approach comes from ensuring whoever is responsible for website content has diversity woven into their work objectives. Further to this, you can complete the Equality Standard Communications Audit that helps organisations work through a range of communications questions from website imagery to accessible formats. Examples of completed audit forms are available on the Equality Standard Foundation Level page.

One of these questions is about website accessibility and there are now globally recognised standards that any organisation can adopt. The Equality Act 2010 requires website owners to ensure that their websites are accessible to users with disabilities.

Accordingly, neglecting to provide a service to a disabled person that is normally provided to other persons is unlawful discrimination, including access to information on the board, board vacancies and application process.

Visually impaired board candidates may use speech synthesiser software to read the text in the HTML code of web pages and translate it into audible speech. However, many websites include images that contain text as part of the pre-rendered picture file. This may be unreadable by the software and, before you even start the board shortlisting process in earnest, you may have lost potential candidates. You should also



be offering recruitment information in different formats if at all possible, for example large print.

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are a series of guidelines for improving web accessibility. Produced by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) the WCAG are the best means of making websites useful to all users. Although they are not an all-inclusive list of issues facing web users with disabilities, they are internationally recognised and adopted standards.

The guidelines explain how to solve many of the problems that your users with disabilities face and can be viewed at www.w3.org/WAI/intro/wcag.php.

Website accessibility is important, both from the perspective of legal compliance and because a more accessible website is one with a greater potential user base.

THINKING POINT

When did you last check your website for the diversity of images? To what extent does it reflect your equality statement and commitment to an inclusive organisation?

Have you ever asked someone from outside your organisation to visit and review your website to see if it presents your organisation as accessible, inclusive and welcoming of different people?

SOCIAL MEDIA

Many of the points made in the Your Website section also apply to your social media activity - Instagram imagery, Facebook posts and Twitter tweets. Potential board candidates, especially those from outside the organisation, will find out a lot about your organisation's ethos, priorities and programmes from a brief spell browsing your social media activity.

According to 3M Corporation, approximately 65% of people are visual learners. The brain processes visual information 60,000 times faster than text so think about what an image can do that a stream of text might not when social media users want short, impactful information.

A study by the Aberdeen Group found that 73% of 18 to 34 year olds found their last job through social media. If you are looking for younger board members with professional skills, you will most likely find them through LinkedIn and other platforms.

Advertising on social media can be very powerful and you might also want to copy in organisations of interest. For example if you have a board vacancy, you can create a tweet or LinkedIn post with a link to your website and also include @BMESportCymru or @chwaraeteg. If they share your post, you could be reaching a whole new audience in a matter of minutes. It also sends a message to those who already follow you that you value these connections, reinforcing once again your commitment to diversity and inclusion.

RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS

There are several steps to a well-planned, successful board recruitment process and these are covered in the Guidance on Board Recruitment. We focus on two aspects here.

YOUR ROLE DESCRIPTION

In the Guidance on Board Recruitment the section on board role descriptions and adverts encourages clarity on the duties and responsibilities of the position as well as the competencies, skills and experience sought. The language adopted in the role description can have a direct impact on the candidates who apply.

Research has shown that certain types of language and words can deter women and individuals from BAME groups from applying as adverts may inadvertently contain masculine-coded language.

Adverts that set out to attract ninjas or superheroes are unlikely to appeal to women. "Analyse" and "determine" are typically associated with male traits, while "collaborate" and "support" are considered female. Avoid aggressive language like "dominate".

To ensure you are creating a role description that appeals to both women and men, you can check the text against a Gender Decoder. All you have to do is paste your role description and advert onto the Gender Decoder website and you will receive immediate feedback that you can use to adjust the text if necessary.



A STUDY BY THE ABERDEEN GROUP FOUND THAT 73% OF 18 TO 34 YEAR OLDS FOUND THEIR LAST JOB THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA.

ADVERTISING

Successful recruitment happens when you say clearly who you are and what you're looking for, and do so in the right places. Your website and other sporting sites such as UK Sport, Welsh Sports Association and the Sport and Recreation Alliance will reach large numbers of people looking for positions in sport.

However, these may not be the places where your potential candidates are actually looking. In fact, if you have specified finance, marketing, legal or other business specialisms, it is a good idea to place your advert where they will be looking, for example professional associations or institutes, community organisations and specialist media. In addition, you will want to ensure you are reaching as diverse a talent pool as possible.

If you choose to appoint a recruitment agency, it is perfectly reasonable to set diversity criteria and expect at least a shortlist of men and women. You can also task the agency with finding BAME individuals who meet the role specification.

If you want to reach out beyond the sport sector, relying on sporting websites will not be enough. Be prepared to formally and informally engage with commercial, professional and community bodies to make them aware of the opportunities on board and your genuine desire to attract new leadership talent.

The list of places to advertise below is not exhaustive but has proved to be helpful in finding leadership talent and skills:

NON-SPORTING

- Women on Boards
- Inclusive Boards
- Reach Volunteers
- Trustees Unlimited
- Law Society Jobs
- Board Appointments

SPORTING

- Welsh Sports Association
- Sporting Equals
- Activity Alliance
- Chwarae Teg
- Sport and Recreation Alliance
- UK Sport
- Women's Sport Network
- Careers in Sport

Your advert should reinforce as much as possible your desire to attract under represented groups and, where possible, promote your achievements.



These might include:

- ♦ Equality Standard logo for the level you have achieved
- ♦ LGB&T Sport Cymru logo if you have signed up to the Charter
- ♦ Inspo logo for the level you have achieved
- ♦ Disability Confident logo (formerly Two Ticks) if you have achieved the scheme's criteria

Hockey Wales use their website to promote some of their diversity achievements and these can be included in any job or board role adverts: Recruitment is an area that would benefit from an equality impact assessment so that you can feel confident that you have considered all protected characteristics to create a truly inclusive (and therefore more attractive) process.

NETWORKS

Don't forget that your existing board members, staff and other senior volunteers will also have extensive networks. Whilst no one should be guaranteed a position simply because they have been identified as having the skills or insight your board needs, it is perfectly legitimate to encourage to people from your networks to stand for election or to apply.

If you already have a diverse board, this will help not only in reaching many more and different networks but will also present your organisation as inclusive to anyone who might be interested. Your board and senior volunteers can be fantastic advocates, sharing recruitment

information and promoting your diversity credentials, having already experienced an inclusive environment themselves.

ELECTIONS

Most sports bodies appoint some of their board from within the membership through elections. Even if a designated group (section or region) has the right to elect a board member, this does not mean that the organisation cannot or should not continue to emphasise the skills and diversity required on the board.

Some in the sport sector have described elections as a "popularity contest" and it is even more important to communicate clearly what your board needs to attract the best candidates.

It is good practice to appoint a Nominations Committee or Selection Panel to review and shortlist candidates, even if these are to be elected by sections or all of the membership at a general meeting. As well as your skills matrix and diversity audit, you can specify and prioritise candidates from under represented groups for shortlisting.

This does not mean you appoint solely on the basis of protected characteristic, i.e. selecting someone because they are female/ BAME/disabled/younger, however it can be a consideration if they meet the criteria and you want to balance your board.

As set out in the Guidance on Board Recruitment, building the internal leadership pipeline is key to long-term board strength and stability, especially if a proportion of your

board is elected. This should be supplemented by a succession plan whereby you can plan for departures and put your inclusive recruitment process into action when necessary.





IN SUMMARY

Make sure you understand the current profile of your workforce as this may influence whether internal or external candidates feel they will fit in.

Ensure your staff, board and other volunteers consistently demonstrate your values and have an understanding of diversity as failures to do so undermine the whole organisation, not just your board appointments.

Take time to review your website to check that language, imagery, news stories and features reflect your diversity aspirations and inclusion goals, even if your current participants, staff and volunteers are not yet as diverse as you want.

Consider undertaking a communications audit to benchmark your general communications against good practice.

Make sure those tasked with generating content for your website and social media channels are clear about their role in promoting diversity achievements and goals.

Taking each step of your recruitment process, from skills and diversity audits to shortlisting and interviews, consider the equality impacts.

Draw on all those within and beyond your organisation whose networks may offer future board candidates.

Even though elections may limit the talent pool to members or sections of the membership, you can still implement good practice through a Nominations Committee and by reinforcing your board diversity goals.

SUCCESSION PLANNING



SUCCESSION PLANNING – PREPARING FOR THE (UN)EXPECTED

Preparing for the unexpected or in reality, preparing for what is expected – board members and senior staff moving on, can help minimise disruption. Leadership change is inevitable and how you plan for it determines its impact on your organisation. Without effective succession planning the risks to the organisation are increased and the absence of a succession plan might also be seen as an indicator of poor governance

Sports bodies face pressure to build a strong and sustainable leadership pipeline although this is no easy task, especially as these are voluntary positions at every level, from local communities and clubs, through to regions and national governing boards.

Many sports report declining numbers of volunteers due to time constraints and commitments – work and caring responsibilities are often reported as being barriers. There may be a tendency to retain board members for fear of failing to find replacements, however this merely delays the inevitable and may not be good for your organisation or the board members involved.

The sports sector's leadership needs to be finely balanced between those with plenty of relevant corporate memory and fresh new blood with ideas and innovation, and from both outside and inside the sector. To provide some thoughts and ideas to sports bodies, this guidance will take you through the what, why (the benefits) and the how of succession planning.

The Governance and Leadership Framework for Wales states, at Principle 4: building and balanced,

inclusive and skilled board, that board succession planning should be proactively undertaken as a minimum expectation. The plan does not need to be a lengthy narrative, however it should contain all the essential information you need:

- ♦ Current board members' terms of office including end dates.
- ♦ Current board skills matrix and diversity profile.
- ♦ High level information on internal leadership pathways and potential development activity to identify and encourage skilled people to stand for election (where election are held).
- ♦ A recruitment timeline to ensure the plan can be enacted, especially if role descriptions and adverts need to be developed.

Many organisations use a simple spreadsheet which is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the organisation is ready to act in the event of a change on the board.

WHAT IS A SUCCESSION PLAN?

A succession plan is one component in building effective boards and maintaining the optimum balance over a longer period of time. Understanding strategic business goals and preparing for future opportunities are what drive the succession planning process. Your strategy and your board succession plan (and recruitment



policy) are inextricably linked as the board carries most responsibility for delivering the long-term business strategy.

An effective succession plan prevents organisations from taking a reactive approach to filling vacant roles. Instead, it proactively prepares a smooth transition to ensure leadership changes don't interrupt major initiatives or board business as usual.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CREATING A SUCCESSION PLAN?

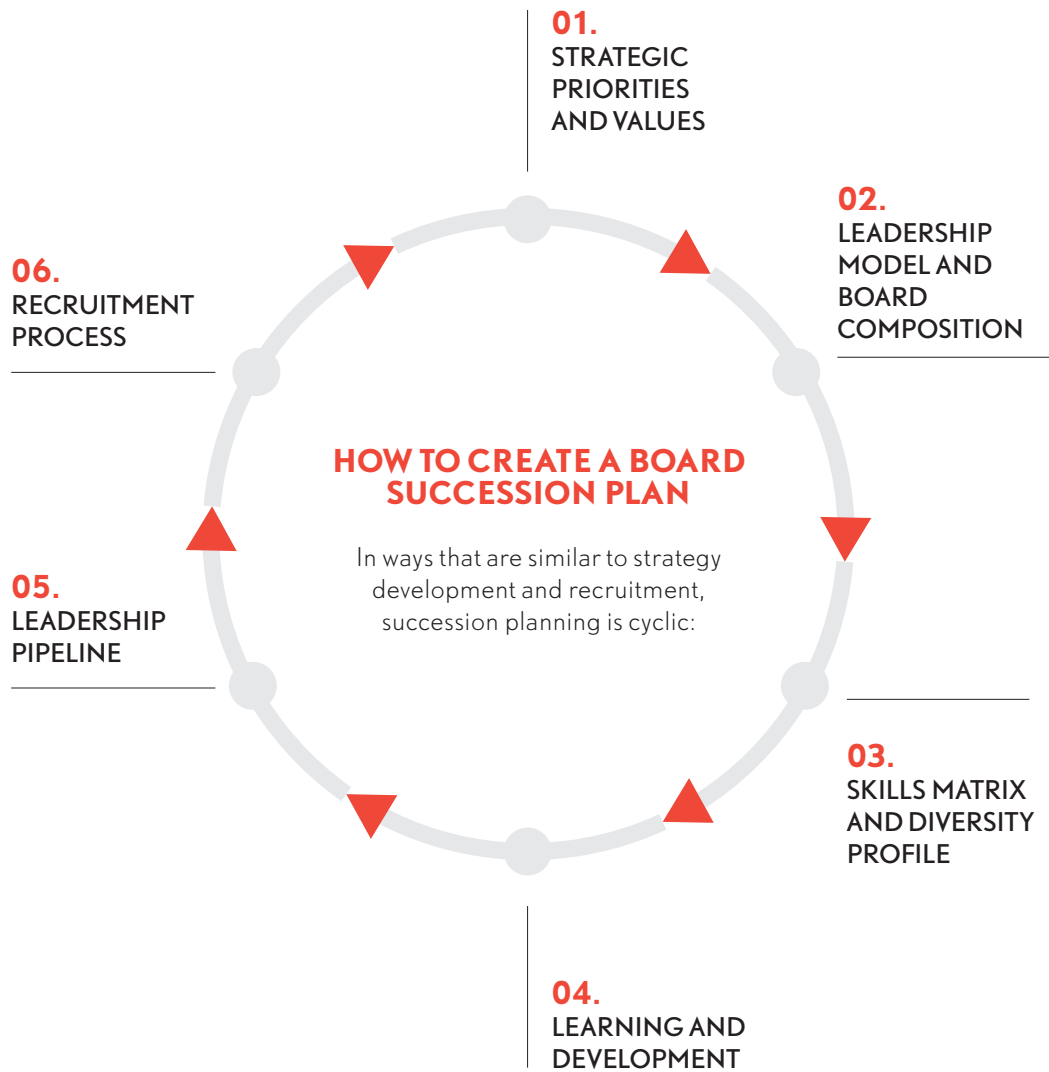
You are already busy with the here and now, why spend precious time on something that may not happen until long into the future? Think about the benefits - the planning process and the resulting plan deliver a number of benefits, including:

- ♦ Identifying and replacing essential skills
- ♦ Adapting your organisation to anticipated environmental changes
- ♦ Preserving organisational knowledge
- ♦ Identifying and developing the internal leadership pipeline in preparation for vacancies
- ♦ Methodical planning instils confidence with stakeholders
- ♦ Creating stability within your organisation, even in times of change
- ♦ Being ready to find the top talent

- ♦ Preventing groupthink on the board
- ♦ Helping ensure a diverse board composition
- ♦ Maintaining the balance of sporting, business and other knowledge
- ♦ Ensuring that members and other stakeholders are unaffected by changes in leadership.

It's important to know that succession planning is about more than filling gaps or finding replacements. Rather, the goal is to ensure a smooth transition whilst maintaining a balanced, inclusive and skilled board. In addition, it is not just planning on paper – one out, one in. It is about people - their passion, their skills, experience, knowledge, networks and their commitment to the organisation. It is highly unlikely you will be able to replace somebody with an identical 'like-for-like'. Just as your strategy and priorities evolve, so will the composition of your board.





1. ALIGN SUCCESSION PLANNING WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND VALUES

Your succession plan cannot be developed in a vacuum. In other words, the successors you identify and develop will guide your organisation into the future so choose them with the mission and strategy in mind. Equally important, your succession plan should align with organisation's values. Getting this wrong can have serious implications for your organisation's success, so make sure ensuring you stay true to your principles when setting planning for changes on the board.

Your strategic focus may be shifting, for example, you want to retain your traditional clubs, with members playing in competitions and leagues, whilst also expanding in new areas with different formats and new participants. You may want to retain funding received from strategic investors such as Sport Wales whilst also seeking commercial and other revenue streams. You will be committed to good governance, managing risk and finance with probity, and you might also want to build your digital communications capacity with new infrastructure, but this may move up the agenda until 2021.

Establish a culture of transparency. Your current, and future, board members need to know the purpose and goals for the succession plan and transparency throughout its development can prevent misinterpretation of its intended purpose. Otherwise Directors and senior executives may assume their future in the organisation is at risk. Succession planning is not about "getting rid" of anyone, it is doing the right for the organisation's future.

If form follows function, then your board now and in the future (three to five years) should reflect what you are aiming to achieve in that time. Even

if your board members have terms of office that enable them to stay in position for that whole period, for example three terms of three years, it doesn't mean to say everyone will stay. There are any number of reasons why someone may have to step down mid-term so you will want to be ready with your skills matrix and succession plan in place.

2. LEADERSHIP MODEL AND BOARD COMPOSITION

Your leadership model captures the overall profile, diversity, skills and conduct that you are looking for. It is underpinned by your board terms of reference, Director role description and code of conduct, and is aligned to your mission and values.

This broad view of your board is a useful place to start when thinking about your current board's strengths (and possible gaps) and what you will be seeking to acquire or replace each time you recruit.

Balance is critical and whilst you need the essential insight that members bring, independent judgement and business skills will also feature in your leadership model. Diversity is a key factor – diverse boards perform better. This is explained in depth in [The Business Case for Board Diversity](#) (link to the business case?), and working towards a diverse board is as important as the professional expertise and skills you appoint.

3. SKILLS AND DIVERSITY PROFILE

A basic succession plan will contain names, appointment dates, terms of office and anticipated departure dates, however this only really tells you when you should start

preparing for an appointment process. Making the most of an opportunity as a vacancy arises depends on accurate information and, as well as dates, your plan should also include:

Your skills matrix incorporating each person's skills audit results. This will tell you exactly what competencies, expertise and skills will be lost to the board.

Aim to carry out an annual skills audit so this is up to date whenever a vacancy arises. People evolve and develop so their audit results may change each year especially if they are provided with learning and development opportunities as a Director.

- ♦ **Sphere of influence** – your stakeholder engagement plan might include how individual Directors actively contribute as they bring with them extensive and valuable networks, for example business communities, governmental connections or sporting relationships.

This might be a consideration when you need to replace people and it will influence the text and placement of your advert.

- ♦ **Diversity profile** – you want to build and maintain a diverse board so you will need to understand the current profile in order to manage future changes.

For example, if you currently have seven women and one man on your board, you can legitimately highlight a desire to appoint a man when a vacancy arises. Alongside the prioritised skills and knowledge (from your matrix) this will also influence the content of your advert and where it is placed.

- ♦ **Qualities, attributes and competencies** that may not easily be defined on a skills matrix. These might include the someone's ability to act as informal mediator in meetings when tense discussions are in danger of becoming conflicts; or the overall contribution in between meetings, for example speed of response to email debates and decisions, or attendance at sector events.

Whilst these may not be the highest priorities on your skills matrix, they can make a difference to overall board performance.

The succession plan template (link to the template?) is a starting point for you create a plan for your organisation.

Try and think about your leadership model, strategic goals and values as you build your succession plan.

THINKING POINT

Is your skills matrix up to date (completed in the past 12 months?)

To what extent do you consider behaviours and professional networks when building a profile of your board?

Have you completed a diversity audit with the current board?



4. FOCUS ON TARGETED INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT

While you will recruit externally to fill some roles, there might be people within your structure who are already familiar with the mission, goals and ways of working. These could include committee members or regional representatives.

Whilst no one should be 'tapped on the shoulder' and given a board position, it is perfectly reasonable to alert internal candidates to positions that may become vacant so they can apply or stand for election.

Succession planning is more than just identifying future leaders it can also help map out their development to ensure they'll be ready to assume leadership roles when the time comes.

Firstly, ensure you understand the strengths and weaknesses of your internal pipeline – do your Articles of Association allow for anyone to stand for board positions? If these are based on regions or the membership, how do you identify and encourage people to seek positions? Your internal leadership pipeline is most effective when you can also provide development opportunities.

For example:

- Information workshops or road shows where you can explain the role of the board, Directors' responsibilities, the expectations in terms of values and competencies, and how individuals can make a difference.
- Mentoring schemes whereby board members provide potential Directors of the future with support, guidance and advice on their leadership journey. Mentorship can reduce learning curves, training costs, and Director induction and development time.

This might be particularly valuable if you have a youth council or committee.

- Appointment onto a committee of the board to build knowledge and confidence.

Director training for those who sit on committees or regional groups.

However the development opportunities are created, the role description should retain core elements and provide clarity to any interested candidates on the legal duties, responsibilities and expectations of the position.

THINKING POINT

Are some board members elected by the whole membership or sections, for example North Wales? Is the process open to all members in that region or do they have to be nominated on the basis of an existing position, for example club or league position? To what extent might this reduce your available talent pool?

How do you identify people within the membership who may become future board members

(whether these are elected or through open advert)? Are you able to offer learning and development opportunities? These might include observing a board meeting, being offered a mentor, Director training.



TRIAL THE TEMPLATE

Using the template skills list, tick the skills and knowledge your board needs now and in the future. Make sure you frame your selection against your mission and strategic priorities.

IN SUMMARY

Ideally, your succession plan will be a regular topic of discussion in board meetings, not just as someone steps down or when an AGM is on the horizon.

Sometimes the hardest thing is starting the conversation about changes on the board. Some Directors may be comfortable that their period of leadership has a defined end date, others may be looking to contribute in other roles once the term of office has ended.

Boards with no limits on terms of office may find conversations with long-standing members difficult but this doesn't mean they shouldn't happen. Whatever the situation, don't make assumptions. The lack of a clear plan can lead to unease on all sides, with

senior figures feeling a sense that there's no future for them, or aspiring Directors waiting for them to move on so they can seek appointment.

If there are no limits on terms of office, this will make effective succession planning harder. Drawing on the good practice identified in the GLFW, think about introducing limits on terms for all board members. This means you can refresh your board with new ideas and energy, and continue to align board composition with your mission and strategy.

Moreover, it creates transparency amongst Directors and members, demonstrates that you are working to good governance standards, and builds confidence with external stakeholders.