

COMMITTED
TO INCLUSION



Committed to Inclusion

FOREWORD



British Rowing is committed to making rowing an inclusive and diverse sport that welcomes and has an offer for everyone. This commitment is at the heart of our updated National Strategy *Rowing - Everyone's Sport*. We absolutely support inclusion and diversity in its broadest sense.

Committed to Inclusion, British Rowing's Inclusive Sport Plan, has been written to complement our *Inclusive Club Guide* which was published in 2018. Through a comprehensive diversity and inclusion survey undertaken early in 2021, we have listened to our members who said they wanted rowing to be more accessible and inclusive and by achieving greater diversity we will gain stronger and livelier clubs.

Committed to Inclusion sets out to support and empower everyone across British Rowing to play their part in making change happen and this is not a short-term initiative. Achieving real and sustainable change will take time but, working together, we believe we can create an inclusive and diverse sport where participants truly reflect the society in which we live.

Liz Behnke
British Rowing Board Inclusion & Diversity Champion

With the full support of the British Rowing Board and Executive Team.

* These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
** <https://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/British-Rowing-Inclusive-Club-Guide-2018.pdf>

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WHY IS INCLUSION IMPORTANT?



Committing to inclusion is the right thing to do and it is also critical to the future success of our organisation and sport.

Rowing provides opportunities for fun, friendship, community, health and personal growth. It is a healthy and life-enhancing sport and, in a modern, and progressive society, everyone should have equal opportunity to access these positive impacts.

An inclusive and diverse sport, where current barriers are removed and where participants reflect the society in which we live, will:

- attract more people to the sport who, in turn, may become club members, volunteers and officials
- support a larger and more diversified fan base
- widen the talent pool that feeds into pathway programmes
- achieve greater individual and societal impact
- expand commercial opportunities and broadcast interest
- reflect key funding partner and commercial partner objectives.

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ONE PART OF THE SOLUTION



The implementation of this plan will not, on its own, address all of the barriers and challenges which currently limit access to rowing, but it is a critical part of the solution, alongside wider sports sector and societal change.

It is also important to recognise the positive work already being undertaken to drive inclusion and diversity within the sport. Existing British Rowing plans, initiatives and programmes which are focussed on inclusion and diversity include, for example:

- Grow Coaching Programme (2021)
- British Rowing Charitable Foundation, Love Rowing (2019)
- Sport England and SportsAid supported Backing the Best programme (2019)
- British Rowing's Inclusive Club Guide (2018)
- Sport England supported mass market Go Row Indoor programme (2017)

The framework for change presented within this plan aims to align and build upon existing activity in a way which supports systemic and cultural change and avoids high quality but stand alone initiatives which fail to achieve long-term change.

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THE CURRENT PICTURE

44%

of members are female and 56% male. Over 45 years old this changes to 32% female and 68% male

11%

of rowing community identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual vs 2.7% nationally

10%

of the rowing community are from lower socio-economic groups vs 47% nationally

8%

of the rowing community indicate they have a disability (as per the Equality Act) vs 19% of the population

6.2%

of the rowing community are from ethnically diverse backgrounds vs 14% nationally

"As a rower, I've always felt slightly different to the rest of my crews that I've been with, because I've always been the only non-white rower. It saddens me that I've never been in a crew with a single black person... I know GB rowing is impossible for someone like me because I don't feel we would ever get the same support or drive to get to anywhere near that position."

"As a gay rower, I notice this more than others, but micro aggressions happen all the time from junior rowers up through masters. I hear guys yell fag and faggot at each other as a put down and never think twice about it. My skin is thick but it happens in front of kids, some who I know aren't out or sure of their sexual identity yet and it's damaging."

"Rowing is the only sport I've ever done that has a class system that snubs you if you aren't from the same background. The irony is that it's not the coaches that do it, it's the other athletes, as well as their parents. Remarks are made, exclusion happens and unnecessary comments all float about. Sport shouldn't have classes. In any other sport I've done there haven't been classes. Nobody cares who you are or where you come from, just that you show up."

"If clubs could allow monthly membership fees, I feel that would help a lot of people."

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THE CURRENT PICTURE



Whilst there are examples of inclusive rowing programmes across the country, the evidence shows that rowing is not currently representative of today's society and this is reflected in people's perceptions of the sport.

Our 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Survey demonstrated that whilst rowing has made good progress with respect to gender parity and LGB representation, there remains significant under-representation amongst ethnically diverse communities, people with disabilities, as well as socio-economically disadvantaged communities.

In the wake of Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020, we asked the rowing community to tell us about their experiences of diversity and inclusion. The 48 responses fell into five categories:

- Feeling like an outsider
- Inappropriate comments and behaviour
- Exclusive culture
- Barriers to entry
- Solutions.

These lived experiences bring to life the varied structural, cultural and practical barriers to inclusivity which exist within rowing. They need to be heard, understood and addressed if we are to achieve our vision of a sport that truly welcomes and has an offer for everyone.

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A FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE



British Rowing's commitment to inclusion is focussed on:

- building a culture that values and champions diversity and inclusion
- taking positive action to improve diversity and inclusion at all levels
- delivering real change in the diversity of our sport.

These overarching commitments will be achieved through the delivery of a series of organisation wide as well as Board/ Directorate/ Team and individual actions.

Underpinning these commitments is a recognition of our responsibility to:

- acknowledge/ understand the varied barriers that exist and educate ourselves
- be open/ transparent about our current diversity
- commit time and resource to achieve our goals
- address negative actions/ behaviours – recognising silence is acceptance
- take positive action – reassess processes, behaviours and activities
- take individual and collective ownership.

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A FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE

COMMITMENTS	1. Building a culture that values and champions diversity and inclusion	2. Taking positive action to improve diversity and inclusion at all levels	3. Delivering real change in the diversity of our sport
WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?	People of all backgrounds and cultures feel included, welcome, valued and empowered. Individual differences are respected and the advantages they provide recognised.	Demonstrable individual and collective ownership and delivery of diversity and inclusion commitments/ action plans.	Evidence of increased diversity and an inclusive culture across our governance structures, workforce, membership, volunteers, coaching and umpire communities as well as our national team and path-way rowers.
ACTIONS	<p>Organisation led actions designed to inspire, support and enable cultural change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Show good practice/shared responsibility● Educate workforce● Support development of team action plans● Communicate vision● Establish Staff D&I Group/ Forum● Support flexible working culture● Establish inclusion as a key objective/ priority● Promote openness & transparency● Allocate budget● Establish clear processes to address issues	<p>Board, directorate, team and individual actions targeting specific processes and activities</p> <p><i>The Board and all directorates have committed to developing and taking ownership of action plans for their respective areas of work. These are in development.</i></p> <p><i>Alignment of the varied directorate and cross-organisational action plans will be overseen by the Staff Diversity and Inclusion Group.</i></p>	<p>Organisational actions designed to measure, monitor, share and celebrate diversity & inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Implement D&I research and insight programme● Establish KPIs that align with the National Strategy's vision of success● Regular reporting on progress● Sharing successes and challenges
SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Acknowledge, understand, and educate● Open and transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Commitment, time, and resource● Address negative behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Take positive action● Individual and collection ownership

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1. BUILDING A CULTURE THAT VALUES AND CHAMPIONS DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



What does success look like? People of all backgrounds and cultures feel included, welcome, valued and empowered. Individual differences are respected and the advantages they provide recognised.

- To achieve change we need to foster and build a culture (within British Rowing and across the wider sport) that values and champions diversity and inclusion.
- We need to recognise the barriers that exist, be open and transparent about our current diversity and stop using dated stereotypes and excuses. We have a fantastic sport with unique benefits that more people would access if barriers were removed.
- Culture comprises an interlocking set of goals, roles, processes, values, communications practices, attitudes and assumptions that are mutually reinforcing. This is why achieving cultural change that sticks is difficult. We therefore need to use all of the tools available to us to inspire and support change.

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1. BUILDING A CULTURE THAT VALUES AND CHAMPIONS DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



Organisation led actions to inspire and support cultural change include:

- Role model good practice and shared responsibility – diversity & inclusion is everyone's responsibility. To achieve lasting change we all need to take ownership and make changes - top down, bottom up, middle out. We will:
 - lead by example
 - collaborate with and learn from rowing and other organisations with expertise and lived experience of diversity & inclusion matters
 - identify diversity & inclusion champions to act as role models
 - empower all teams to shape and deliver this plan.
- Educate our workforce with respect to diversity & inclusion including language, responsibilities and barriers, as well as how to listen/ support, be an ally, educate and/ or challenge behaviours.
- Support the development of individual Directorate/ Team action plans that align with our commitments and overarching actions – starting with diversity & inclusion planning workshops.
- Communicate our vision – internally and externally across platforms.

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1. BUILDING A CULTURE THAT VALUES AND CHAMPIONS DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



- Establish a Staff Diversity & Inclusion Group which hosts quarterly Diversity & Inclusion Forums to discuss, debate and share experiences, good practice & questions.
- Support a flexible working culture that supports goals including reasonable adjustments that support individual needs/ differences.
- Establish diversity & inclusion as a key objective and priority within all strategies, policies, plans and Committee Terms of Reference.
- Promote openness and transparency in relation to diversity & inclusion - current picture and future plans (and understanding why this is important).
- Allocate budget to support diversity & inclusion activities.
- Establish clear processes to address issues (small and large) as they arise e.g. inappropriate language, situations or practices that are contrary to our commitments.

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2. TAKING POSITIVE ACTION TO IMPROVE DIVERSITY & INCLUSION AT ALL LEVELS



What does success look like? Demonstrable individual and collective ownership and delivery of diversity and inclusion commitments/ action plans.

Having agreed that diversity and inclusion is everyone's responsibility...

- The Board and all directorates have committed to developing and taking ownership of action plans for their respective areas of work that align with the three overarching commitments detailed within this plan. These will form the organisation's wider Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan which will serve as a working document against which we can report on our effectiveness, efficiency and impact in this space.
- At an individual level, addressing diversity & inclusion can feel overwhelming but change will result from collective action. No individual or action is too small to make a difference.
- Alignment of the varied directorate and cross-organisational action plans will be overseen by the Staff Diversity and Inclusion Working Group.

Example Board, Directorate, team and individual actions targeting specific processes and activities are included in the appendix to this plan.

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3. DELIVERING REAL CHANGE IN THE DIVERSITY OF OUR SPORT



What does success look like? Increased diversity and evidence of an inclusive culture across our governance structures, workforce, membership, volunteers, coaching and umpire communities as well as our national team and pathway rowers.

- We recognise that this process can't just be about educating ourselves. We need to take action and see it through. We need to harness the current commitment and build a movement. We recognise that changing processes, systems, content and initiatives does not equate to success. Success means change.
- We recognise that perceptions of the sport will only change if we change the sport. Our primary focus should therefore be on making change happen not changing perceptions.
- We understand that not all change will be visible. We therefore need to evidence change, report on progress and celebrate success.
- We also need to evidence change at all levels – organisationally (top down, bottom up and middle out) and across the sport (grassroots to performance).

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3. DELIVERING REAL CHANGE IN THE DIVERSITY OF OUR SPORT



Organisational actions designed to measure, monitor, share and celebrate diversity & inclusion:

- Implement a comprehensive diversity & inclusion research/insight programme to:
 - establish baseline understanding of current diversity and inclusion in rowing and the case for change
 - inform decision making with respect to our action plans, communications and ongoing development of our Inclusive Sport Plan
 - monitor progress and evidence change.
- Establish diversity & inclusion KPIs that align with the National Strategy's view of success.
- Commit to regular reporting on progress, to include:
 - quarterly progress reporting at the staff Diversity & Inclusion Forum
 - annual reporting to the British Rowing Board
 - annual reporting to our members, partners and wider rowing community.

APPENDIX

BOARD

Example Board, directorate, team and individual actions targeting specific processes and activities

- Establish an inclusive Board recruitment plan.
- Set targets for gender and ethnic diversity at Board level that reflect current society.
- Implement Board education programme.
- Sustain Board diversity & inclusion lead.
- Lead by example.
- Promote leadership accountability.
- Engage in diversity & inclusion progress reporting.
- Embed diversity & inclusion within governance review process.

PERFORMANCE DIRECTORATE

- Performance staff and team diversity & inclusion group to be formally established.
- Actively evolve the Performance Pathway to become more inclusive.
- Monitor progress towards the ambition of developing 'GB Rowing Teams that are more representative of British society by 2032.'
- Develop an inclusive high performance culture at all levels.
- Support GBRT led engagement with diversity & inclusion communication plan – articles, interviews, features, successes etc.
- Current rowers engagement in Love Rowing activities/ fundraising.

APPENDIX

STAFF TEAM

- Equal access to training development, and support for staff.
- Clarity on staff expectations/ requirements/ codes of conduct.
- Improve diversity & inclusion data collation via clubhub as well as other existing and new tools.
- Fair, open and inclusive recruitment/ promotion processes.
- Embed inclusion within appraisal and line management processes.
- Explore government apprenticeship programmes.
- Commit to sharing successes as well as challenges.
- Lead quarterly staff Diversity & Inclusion Forum.
- Support team/ directorate diversity & inclusion action planning.
- Engage in/ optimise value of Inclusive Employers Membership.
- Develop guides on key diversity & inclusion topics – micro-aggressions, everyday sexism/ racism, disability awareness, anti-racism, unconscious bias, diversity & inclusion language etc.
- Implement robust diversity & inclusion communication plan.
- Create content to educate and engage, have more diverse imagery, and showcase role models.
- Proactively recruit diverse content contributors.
- Annual diversity & inclusion campaign support - timetable and contribute to national celebrations of diversity.
- Manage relationships with stakeholder organisations incl. Sport England, UK Sport, Sporting Equals, Women in Sport and others who share our diversity & inclusion goals.

APPENDIX

ROWING COMMUNITY

- Proactively support adoption of the 2018 Inclusive Club Guide in clubs and across the wider rowing community.
- Assign team members to provide diversity and inclusion support for key community groups.
- Address common 'excuses and stereotypes' informed by research.
- Promote recreational rowing.
- Embed inclusion & diversity principles within all current and future community programmes.
- Establish MOUs or equivalent with key community partners.
- Continue to develop and promote indoor and coastal rowing as important, inclusive disciplines of the sport.

LOVE ROWING

- Encourage staff engagement in Love Rowing activities, fundraising, education activities, programme delivery etc.
- Develop role as a voice/ champion for diversity & inclusion in rowing.
- Share learnings from Love Rowing programmes.
- Establish new Love Rowing GBRT and Alumni Programmes to engage current and former athletes in Love Rowing activities/ programmes.

ROWING, EVERYONE'S SPORT

If you have any comments, ideas, or stories about diversity and inclusion within rowing, then we would like to hear from you. You can contact us at inclusion@britishrowing.org

