

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2025-26



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This narrative is provided alongside our formal compliance report to give a fuller picture of how the Board has governed over the past year. Whilst the compliance report demonstrates that we have met all statutory and regulatory obligations, this statement explains how we have operated, our focus, and our future intentions.

This year has been an important transition for the Board, following the conclusion of Adam Walker's tenure as the previous Chair, and the subsequent appointment of Rowena Hackwood following a period of interim stewardship by Alison Shipway (Vice Chair). The Board has been focused on continuity and stability during this period, as well as embedding the leadership and vision of the new Chair to ensure a strong platform for Volleyball England's next phase.

We have sought to govern with both discipline and perspective recognising that good governance is not only about assurance, but about judgement, relationships, and collective responsibility for long-term impact. While maintaining compliance and robust oversight, the Board has also been attentive to culture, engagement, and the way we work together, ensuring we are continuously improving our collective approach.

We have remained fully aligned with the requirements of Tier 3 of the UK Code for Sports Governance. The attached report provides a detailed overview of our meetings and activities. Attendance and engagement have been strong, and we have continued to refine how we work, placing greater emphasis on the quality of discussion, forward-looking insight, and collective decision-making.

We have purposely focused on ensuring the Board is equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities Volleyball England's faces.

We have a diverse mix of skills, experience and perspectives across the Board further strengthened by the appointment of an additional Elected member - this includes significant leadership and management experience and expertise spanning finance, risk, governance, strategy development, auditing, people development, marketing and communications.

In addition, Board members carry a depth of understanding and experience of areas relating to our sport such as safeguarding, welfare, sports development, national governing bodies, and the wider sport landscape. Elected Board members hold rich knowledge, connections, and lived experience of the game bringing the lens of players, coaches, referees, officials, and club management.

This year, we will sadly see some elected members step down as their tenure comes to an end. We recognise the breadth of expertise, experience, and insight that will leave the Board with their departure. In response, we are committed to recruiting new members in a transparent and robust way, fully aligned with our governance requirements, whilst ensuring we continue to attract high-performing, inspirational, and motivated individuals who will strengthen and energise the Board team.

While fully meeting its compliance, risk and oversight obligations, the Board has focused its time and energy on the issues that truly matter to the organisation's mission and long-term impact. These have been:

Strategic Priorities: ensuring that Volleyball England remains clear on its purpose, effective execution of its Game Plan and ability to adapt in response to emerging needs. Our approach has been to focus deeper on the difference being made and the impact our actions are driving.

Engagement and Reach: We have widened our reach into the volleyball community, for example by supporting the development of a players' community and inviting members to attend and participate in Board discussions along with exploring the Member's survey findings. This helps us better understand more perspectives and align our decisions with the needs of those directly involved in the sport.

Understanding: We have deepened our understanding of key areas by inviting colleagues to share insights and needs around e.g. Sitting Volleyball, regional competition development and clinical governance.

People: We have strengthened our commitment to the Board's role in actively shaping culture, developing leadership, and strengthening capability. We have driven development of the People Plan and supported actions which help build the Hub team's resilience, skills, development opportunities, and diversity and inclusion.

Building on a year of transition and the appointment of Rowena Hackwood, the Board will continue to focus on what drives impact. We will prioritise strategic areas within the Game Plan as well as emerging disciplines like beach volleyball and international events.

We will maintain close engagement with players, clubs, officials, coaches and wider community representatives, to ensure decisions are informed by those most directly involved in the sport. At the same time, we will continue to support leadership, talent development, and organisational culture across the organisation.

We will continue to strengthen our board in line with the principles of good governance and our board skills matrix to ensure that we continue to govern all forms of the game with the appropriate mix of skills. Our governance will remain purposeful and forward-looking, asking the questions that matter, focusing on progress and outcomes, and ensuring the Board adds lasting value.

INTRODUCTION

Organisation

Volleyball England

Role

Volleyball England is the recognised National Governing Body for volleyball, beach volleyball and sitting volleyball in England. Volleyball England is responsible for the development, promotion and delivery of volleyball across England.

It is subject to the Code for Sports Governance (the 'Code') and is committed to the principles of good governance.

The Annual Governance Statement provides the Organisation's stakeholders, members, supporters and sponsors with an annual report on the governance performance of the Organisation.

This Statement is made in accordance with the Code for the reporting period

From

1st April 2025

To

31st March 2026

PURPOSE AND VALUES

The purpose of the Organisation is to

At Volleyball England, our purpose is to lead the growth and improvement of all disciplines of volleyball in England.

Its Values are

Open – We will be honest and transparent in everything we do, accountable for our actions and open about the rationale for our decision-making.

Innovative – We will foster a culture of innovation across the entire volleyball community, encouraging people to innovate and take measured risks to improve every aspect of our sport.

Respectful – We will treat every member of the volleyball community with the respect they deserve, encouraging others to do likewise, both on the court and off.

Connected – We will work to bring together all aspects of volleyball in this country, creating a single, connected volleyball community, able to communicate, collaborate and innovate effectively.

Inclusive – We will actively seek out the broadest range of views and experiences, listen to those who understand why there are barriers to participation and work with them to develop our sport as one which provides opportunities for all.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Legal status of the entity

Volleyball England is a company limited by guarantee – not having share capital.

Governing Documents

Articles of Association and supporting Framework Document

Governing Documents can be found at

[VE Articles of Association](#)

BOARD

Role

The Board is collectively responsible for the long-term success of the Organisation and is exclusively vested with the power to lead it.

Independent Chair

Rowena Hackwood

Meetings and Key Decisions

Board Meetings

The Board shall meet as often as is necessary to discharge their duties in accordance with the Articles and the Companies Act, and in any event no less than four times in any 12-month period.

Board Meeting Description	Date	Key Decisions
Board Meeting	20 th April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board approved the 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement Board approved the Q4 and year-end management accounts Board approved the safeguarding development plan
Board Meeting	18 th July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board agreed changes to the transgender policy
Board Meeting	25 th October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board confirmed the appointment of Rowena Hackwood as the new Chair of Volleyball England Board approved the new Volleyball England x Volleyball England Foundation 'Ways of Working' document
Board Meeting	29 th November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board approved all proposed changes to Volleyball England policies Board confirmed Alison Shipway as Volleyball England's representative on the BVF Board Board approved the publishing of competition disciplinary outcomes
Board Meeting	7 th February 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board approved changes to the NVL rules & regulations Board approved the 2026 AGM date & venue Board approved the Volleyball England x UKBT 'Ways of Working' document Board agreed on the 2026 Peter Wardale Award recipient
Board Meeting	23 rd February 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board approved the 2026/2027 Operational Plan & Budget

Board Composition

The Board is made up of a maximum of 12 Directors.

Current Directors Appointed	12
Independent Chair	Rowena Hackwood
Senior Independent Director	Andres Hernandez
Independent Directors	4
Elected Directors (elected by AGM)	8
Co-opted Directors	0

Board Composition Continued

The following persons served as Board members during the Reporting Period

Name	Role Description	Date joined / left the Board	Board Meetings attended	Committees	Committee Meetings attended
Adam Walker	Independent Chair	Retired July 2025	2*	Disciplinary Committee Nominations Committee	0
Alison Shipway	Elected Director & Vice Chair	June 2024	5	Finance, Strategy & Risk (Observer) & Nominations Committee (Observer)	11
Simon Griffiths	Elected Director	Retired in July 2025	2*	An Ace Service Sub-group	1
Phil French	Independent	July 2021	3	Volleyball For Life Sub-group Disciplinary Committee	4
Tracy Newton	Elected Director	June 2024	5	Board Safeguarding Champion & Get Keep Grow Sub-group	8
Richard Harrison	Elected Director	July 2018	6	Nominations Committee, Volleyball For Life Sub-group	11
Brendan Fogarty	Elected Director	July 2019	6	Finance, Strategy & Risk & An Ace Service	8
Jake Sheaf	Elected Director	July 2021	3	Volleyball For Life Sub-group	4
Jessica Keen	Elected Director	June 2024	6	An Ace Service Sub-group & Get Keep Grow Sub-group	8
Andres Hernandez	Senior Independent Director	July 2019	4	Finance, Strategy & Risk Nominations Committee	10
Jess Plumridge	Elected Director	July 2021	5	Get Keep Grow Sub-group, Disciplinary Committee	4
Jill Osleger	Independent Director	June 2024	4	Nominations Committee & VEF Trustee	12
Anton Kornilov	Elected Director	July 2025	4**	Volleyball For Life Sub-group	2
Rowena Hackwood	Independent Chair	October 2025	3***	Finance, Strategy & Risk (Observer), Disciplinary Committee' Nominations Committee	2

*Completed 8-year term in July 2025, therefore only able to attend a maximum of 2 Board Meetings

**Appointed in July 2025 therefore only able to attend a maximum of 4 meetings

***Appointed in October 2025 therefore only able to attend a maximum of 4 meetings

Board and CEO Recruitment

Recruiting activity in the Reporting Period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Election of Anton Kornilov as Elected Director in July 2025 Appointment of Rowena Hackwood as Independent Chair in October 2025
Please note that Alison Shipway (Vice Chair) held the Chair position on an interim basis between July – October 2025.

Board Evaluation

Chair	Adam Walker
Internal Board Skills Assessment	Undertaken in March / April 2025

Remuneration

In the Reporting Period, the following remuneration was paid to Non-Executive Board members

Name	Amount
n/a	n/a

COMMITTEES REPORTING TO THE BOARD

The Board has established the following Committees, which report directly to the Board. Each Committee has clear Terms of Reference which identify its responsibilities and any powers delegated to it by the Board.

Finance, Strategy & Risk Sub-Group

Composition	3 x Directors, CEO/DCEO, Financial Consultant
Role	The Sub-Group has delegated powers from the Board to implement actions and initiatives in support of the Organisation's strategy and to oversee finance matters, ensure the adequacy of the Organisation's financial reporting and internal controls and maintain the risk register. The Sub-Group shall be the Audit Committee for the purposes of the Code for Sports Governance and the Articles.
Delegated Powers	FSR ToR June 2024.pdf
Meetings in the Reporting Period	4

Nominations Committee

Composition	Independent Chair, 3 x Directors
Role	The Nomination Committee ("the Committee") has responsibility for leading the process for Board and senior management appointments and making recommendations to the Board. In respect of Board appointments, this includes evaluating the Board's current capability against the agreed skills matrix, and, in light of this evaluation, agreeing a description of the role and capabilities required for a particular appointment.
Delegated Powers	NomsCom ToR June 2024.pdf
Meetings in the Reporting Period	7

Get Keep Grow Sub-Group

Composition	
Role	The Sub-Group has delegated powers from the Board to implement, oversee and monitor actions and initiatives in support of the Board's wider the Game Plan strategy in respect of the Get Keep Grow priority in order to strengthen the English volleyball club structure by working hand in hand with clubs to help them achieve their ambitions.
Delegated Powers	Get Keep Grow ToR June 2024.pdf
Meetings in the Reporting Period	4

Volleyball For Life Sub-Group

Composition	
Role	The Sub-Group has delegated powers from the Board to implement, oversee and monitor actions and initiatives in support of the Board's wider the Game Plan strategy in respect of the Volleyball for Life priority in order to aim to better understand, articulate and promote the opportunities that volleyball provides for anyone, at any stage of their life.
Delegated Powers	Volleyball for Life ToR June 2024.pdf
Meetings in the Reporting Period	4

An Ace Service Sub-Group

Composition	
Role	The Sub-Group has delegated powers from the Board to implement, oversee and monitor actions and initiatives in support of the Board's wider the Game Plan strategy in respect of the An Ace Service priority. That is to work collaboratively to deliver and continuously improve the products and services that most benefit our clubs and the wider volleyball community, while also ensuring they provide healthy revenue streams that enable reinvestment in the sport.
Delegated Powers	An Ace Service ToR June 2024.pdf
Meetings in the Reporting Period	4

Strategy

The Board sets the strategy of the organisation.

Period	September 2020 – September 2030
Published in	September 2020
Last Revision	March 2023
Access the Strategy Document	The Game Plan

RISK MANAGEMENT

The organisation has agreed a Risk Management Policy to ensure that effective processes are in place to track and report on existing and emerging risks which could affect the Organisation’s ability to meet its Strategic Objectives and/or cause damage to the organisation or its stakeholders. The objective is to support better decision making and management of risk through a comprehensive understanding of risks and their likely impact.

The respective responsibilities in the policy are:

Executive Management Team	Scheme of Delegations (website).pdf
Finance Strategy & Risk Sub-Group	Scheme of Delegations (website).pdf

In the Reporting Period, the Finance Strategy & Risk Sub-Group reviewed the Risk Registers at each of its meetings to consider new risks and review existing and identified risks. The Risk Management Policy and Strategic Risk Register are reviewed on an annual basis by the Board. In the Reporting Period, this took place on:

Date	February 2026
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STAFF SURVEY

The Board acknowledges its duties to employees both under the Companies Act and the Code.

A staff survey was undertaken in	August 2025 & February 2026
Key learnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, most staff are satisfied, motivated and enjoy working for Volleyball England. Positive feedback in relation to relationships with senior leadership and the board. Flexible working arrangements are highly appreciated, as is the empowering culture and ethos of Volleyball England. Roles and responsibilities are clear and there is an improved sense of strategic alignment.
Areas for improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More can be done to reward and recognise staff for their efforts and commitment.

GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The Organisation is committed to the Code for Sports Governance and having achieved compliance with the Code in:

Date	March 2024
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Has put in place an ongoing governance development programme to ensure that it continues to develop its governance practices and procedures.

At its Board meeting on:

Date	7 th February 2026
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The Board reviewed the Organisation’s compliance with the Code in the Recording Period. The Board has communicated openly with Sport England.

The Organisation was compliant in the Reporting Period	April 2025 – March 2026
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REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

In compliance with the Code, the following practices and procedures were reviewed and approved by the Board in the Reporting Period.

Practice / procedure reviewed	Code requirement	Next review	Review in Reporting Period
Directors' Code	Every 4 years	April 2029	November 2025
Terms of reference	Every 4 years	April 2029	November 2025
Policies	Every 4 years	April 2028	November 2025
Financial policies and procedures	Every 2 years	January 2027	November 2025
Risk management and internal control	Annually	January 2026	February 2026
Stakeholder Strategy	Annually	September 2026	September 2025

COMPLAINTS / DISCIPLINARY / WHISTLEBLOWING

In the Reporting Period there were:

Complaints & disciplinary matters	42
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These were dealt with in accordance with the Grievance Procedure.

Resolved	40
Remain outstanding	2
Reports of wrongdoing (whistleblowing)	0

DIVERSITY

The Organisation is fully committed to the principles of equality of opportunity and to creating a diverse environment. We work with our members and partners to enable:

Sports	Volleyball, Beach Volleyball & Sitting Volleyball
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To be an accessible and inclusive sport that provides opportunities for enjoyment and achievement for all.

Strategic lead for equality and diversity	Richard Harrison
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Our target is to maintain a position where a minimum of 30% of Board members are from each gender, whilst working towards gender parity. The current composition of the Board is as follows:

Female	50% (6)
Male	50% (6)

We are committed to increasing the diversity of staff, volunteers (including Board and Committee members), participants and coaches, and will carry out initiatives to encourage more women, people with disabilities, and people from black and ethnic minorities to become more actively involved in all aspects of volleyball activities.

Approved by the Board on

Date	25 th April 2026
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And signed by the Chair on behalf of the Board.



Rowena Hackwood, Independent Chair