

Press release: Sports Minister Tracey Crouch praises governing bodies for reforms that will 'collectively strengthen sport'

Tracey Crouch announced her plan for the new code in the government's sport strategy 'Sporting Future' in December 2015 in a move to ensure that sports bodies in the UK lead the world with the highest levels of governance and transparency.

The [code was published](#) by Sport England and UK Sport in October 2016. Sports governing bodies are working with Sport England and UK Sport to become compliant by 31 October 2017.

If sports bodies do not adhere to the code and cannot demonstrate full commitment to becoming compliant with its requirements they will not be eligible to receive public funding. Governance requirements include:

- Greater transparency
- Increased skills and diversity in decision making – with a target of at least 30 per cent gender diversity on boards – and a commitment to greater diversity more generally
- Constitutional arrangements that make boards the ultimate decision-makers

The changes will mark the single, biggest collective step forward in sports governance in the UK, and will set a template for global best practice.

Significant progress is being made, with 50 sports bodies including the Football Association, England and Wales Cricket Board, Lawn Tennis Association, Rugby Football Union and British Cycling all having plans already agreed on how they will become compliant.

The FA's board, council and shareholders have agreed to reduce the board in size from 12 to 10 members, introducing term limits of 3 x 3 years for both the board and the FA Council while also ensuring that the inclusive and diverse nature of English football is better reflected.

The Lawn Tennis Association agreed all article changes to become compliant with the code in May. This includes reducing council term limits and confirming the primacy of the board as the decision making body.

The RFU has formed an action plan that includes making changes to the composition of the board, including ensuring primacy of the board and the introduction of maximum term limits for council members. The proposals are to be formally presented to the Council in October 2017.

The ECB has committed to reducing the size of its Board and ensure its

appointment process and term limits of directors are compliant with the code. The ECB has also initiated its own governance review to ensure that it is best in class for sports bodies.

British Cycling's National Council agreed at its recent EGM to make the necessary changes to enable it to become compliant with the Code by October. This includes an increase in the number of openly recruited independent board members and an independent chair. The reforms also include a limit for directors of three, three-year terms, with six of the eight current elected members of the board who have exceeded that maximum due to stand down in the autumn.

Sports Minister Tracey Crouch said:

I am really pleased with how governing bodies have responded to the introduction of the code. I appreciate for many sports this is not an easy task, due to the complexities of current governance structures, but virtually all of them have stepped up, understand the importance of this work and have changes in the pipeline that will collectively strengthen sport in this country.

Good governance and transparency in sport is absolutely paramount – not just for effective decision making but to increase diversity, maintain sport's integrity and ensure millions of sport fans have complete faith in those that run sport.

UK Sport CEO Liz Nicholl said:

Our funded sports, in receipt of support from Government and The National Lottery, have all embraced the new code for sport governance, with 100% of the summer Olympic and Paralympic sports with funded World Class Programmes having agreed detailed action plans with us to be compliant by October.

The changes that are required do present some challenges as they represent a transformational step up for sports governance in this country. It's time to focus energy on the opportunity to develop a modern sporting system that can grow and adapt to the challenges of the 21st century.

Sport England CEO Jennie Price said:

Implementation of the Code has been a huge undertaking but we are very pleased with the progress NGBs have made. A lot of change is now happening in a relatively short period of time. Despite the

hard work involved, sports bodies have embraced the Code, recognising that better governance means better decision making, and have welcomed the chance to bring their business processes in line with best practice in other sectors. We think these changes will pay off for years to come, with British sport leading the world.

Progress is also being made throughout Olympic and Paralympic sport governing bodies. This includes:

British Gymnastics having strong gender diversity on its board, with 50 per cent of it female, while article changes to ensure the sport is code compliant are due to be agreed at its AGM in October

Royal Yachting Association – board committed to implementing the code in full and “create a world class solution” to its governance.

Boccia UK – already adheres to the majority of the code with 43 per cent of its board being female. The sport is committed to improving transparency through better communication of how it operates.

Notes to Editors:

Angling Trust, Archery GB, England Athletics, UK Athletics, Badminton England, Baseball Softball UK, British Amateur Boxing Association, British Basketball Federation, England Basketball, Boccia UK, Bowls Development Alliance, England Boxing, British Canoeing, England and Wales Cricket Board, British Cycling, British Equestrian Federation, Exercise Move Dance UK, British Fencing, Football Association, Goalball UK, English Golf Union, British Gymnastics, England Handball, GB Hockey, England Hockey, British Judo, English Lacrosse, England Netball, British Orienteering, Modern Pentathlon Association of Great Britain, Rounders England, British Rowing, Rugby Football League, Rugby Football Union, British Shooting, British Swimming, Snowsport England, England Squash, Swim England, GB Taekwondo, British Triathlon Federation, British Weightlifting, Lawn Tennis Association, Disability Table Tennis, Volleyball England, British Waterski and Wakeboard, Great Britain Wheelchair Basketball, Wheelchair Rugby, British Wrestling, Royal Yachting Association

- There are two sports governing bodies that do not have action plans agreed to become code compliant with Sport England and UK Sport. These are: Table Tennis England and the British Mountaineering Council.
- Table Tennis England has called an Extraordinary General Meeting for 12th August to consider its Board’s proposal on governance changes to become code compliant.
- The British Mountaineering Council is undertaking an independent governance review and Sport England will continue to work with them to

agree an action plan.

Quotes from National Governing Bodies

FA Chairman Greg Clarke said:

Good corporate governance is essential for any successful organisation and The FA is delighted to have agreed the changes necessary to meet the best practice outlined in the code. I would like to thank Sport England for striking a considered balance between constructive engagement and commitment to excellence in governance

We have started putting the new governance structures in place. This month, the newly structured Council will meet for the first time with new members ensuring better diversity and representation across football. From next year the Council will be subject to term limits too. We have also started to change the structure of Board, reducing the size and ensuring we have at least 30% female representation. It is great to see that the code is helping improve governance across all sports and I am delighted that everyone in football is embracing its principles.

ECB Chairman Colin Graves said:

We look forward to continuing to work with the Government and Sport England to ensure good governance across the sports sector. For ECB, ensuring good governance is an integral part of making sure that we have the right structures and plans in place to be able to make the right decisions to grow cricket across England and Wales.

LTA Chairman David Gregson said:

The Lawn Tennis Association believes that world-class governance is essential for any sport to thrive, and as a result has warmly welcomed the new Sports Governance Code. Over the last decade, we have made wide-ranging governance reforms, enabling us to become SGC compliant earlier this year with a small number of additional changes. We look forward to working closely with Sport England to continue improving our corporate governance for the benefit of tennis in Britain.

RFU Chief Executive Officer Ian Ritchie said:

The RFU has been focusing on strengthening our governance for some time. Good governance is a core part of any well run organisation – the RFU council has been reviewing a series of governance reforms which are in line with the Sport England Code recommendations, which will be put to the members for approval later this year.