# Goalball UK People Plan 2024 and Beyond

## About goalball and Goalball UK

Only 11% of people with a Visual Impairment (VI) participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity per week, compared with 39% of the general UK population. This is a situation that helps to perpetuate issues around physical and mental health, as well as social isolation. Goalball UK’s Vision is ‘for goalball to empower people to live and play an active, successful part in an inclusive society.’

## What is goalball?

Goalball is a sport specifically designed for blind and partially sighted people that is played by both children and adults. Everyone wears eye shades to play, regardless of their level of sight, to ensure an equal playing field. The indoor 18m by 9m court is tactile to enable the players to feel where they are, and the ball is audible to enable the players to hear where it is.

The sport was created after World War II to assist the rehabilitation of injured soldiers and since 1976 has had global status as a much-loved Paralympic sport - it is the only team sport for visually impaired athletes in the 'Summer Games' that offers competitions for both male and female teams.

Whilst it is a 3-aside team game that fuses several sporting elements in to one, it is not an adaptation of another established sport. That independence means we can be focused and nimble on behalf of our community, although we also must work doubly hard to achieve the recognition and resources that a 'parent' National or International Governing Body might provide.

It is a very technical and tactical sport laced with strategies in deception; a brilliant balance of silence and celebration with a certain magic in how the players move so fluently despite not being able to see. An on-court human chess match where aerobic and anaerobic fitness is crucial, with a series of dynamic actions being repeatedly required during the 50-minute game. The power and accuracy of attack versus the speed and agility of defence, whilst maintaining mental focus and composure throughout to make and execute decisions in a high-pressure situation. As a sport, goalball offers a unique and exciting experience for players and spectators alike. With its emphasis on teamwork, communication, and skill, goalball is a sport that is accessible to all, regardless of age, ability, or background.

## Goalball UK

For the last decade, Goalball UK has been working at the heart of this community, the largest cohort within the disability spectrum, to provide transformational opportunities to experience the challenge and joy of team-based sport. Whilst we strive to succeed as a nation on the world stage, for many of our players and athletes their ‘medals’ are won each day as they are increasingly able to live independent and confident lives. Your support is crucial to bringing Sport’s best kept secret to many of the underserved population of 2 million people in the UK with total or partial sight loss. Goalball UK is the national governing body for the Paralympic sport of goalball in the United Kingdom.

We are proud to be a registered charity, where our mission is to develop and promote the sport of goalball, creating opportunities for people with visual impairments to participate and compete at all levels.

Goalball UK also provides support and guidance to players, coaches, officials, and clubs across the country, with a focus on promoting inclusion and equality in sport.

The organisation also works closely with schools and community groups to introduce goalball to new players and raise awareness of the sport’s benefits.

Through its partnerships with other organisations, Goalball UK strives to increase the visibility and accessibility of goalball, both nationally and internationally. The organisation also hosts events and three levels of competitions throughout the year.

## Key Principles of our People Plan

These principles are based on our contextual situation of being a small governing body who serve a community of people who are blind or partially sighted and consequently by definition are underrepresented within the sport and physical activity sector. These principles are:

* The People Plan is part of the Empowering our People Strategy (2024 and beyond)
* The People Plan’s focus in on the people who support the people who play goalball
* The People Plan will be agile, with an annual action plan and feedback mechanisms
* Goalball UK has limited resources and will balance the actions- between impact and time and complexity.

## Our Values

Our ‘Empowering our People’ Strategic Plan describes our core values and our commitment to our people and our constant efforts to improve.

We do this by being:

* Ambitious: Striving to improve outcomes for all.
* Caring: Caring for our people and providing safe experiences.
* Inclusive: Promote inclusion, champion equality, and celebrate diversity.
* Connected: Working together to make positive change.

These values will be at the heart of our guiding principles:

Our principles of inclusivity will run like threads throughout everything we do, fostering a sense of belonging and creating an environment where all people are valued for who they are.

These principles are that we will:

* Work cohesively to strengthen the spirit of the Goalball Community
* Value each individual and respect the dignity of all (person-centred)
* Make informed decisions based on factual evidence base and meaningful consultation
* Hold ourselves to be open and honest dialogue, where we share experiences and expect to be constructively challenged
* Enhance our connectivity and engagement across the community
* Retain and provide opportunities for people to develop
* Support players into volunteering opportunities
* Recruit new people to meet the needs of the sport across all levels
* Offer learning and development opportunities
* Encourage collaborative learning opportunities
* Continue to welcome a diverse workforce

## What do we know?

This plan, alongside the Empowering People strategy and our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan has been developed following, Staff Meetings, Board Subgroup Meetings, Board Meetings and informal discussions with key groups and individuals and our annual surveys. We must:

* Continue to engage and serve people who are blind or partially sighted and have been successful in doing this.
* Provide our people with opportunity to play a part in leadership.
* Grow more workforce in:

1. Clubs
2. Competitions (officials)
3. Performance Pathway
4. Fundraising
5. Communications

and they need to be supported by more robust pathways to improve their knowledge, skills and understanding, allowing them to support our players.

* Provide our people with more high-quality training and competition opportunities
* Care about our executive team and strive to support them whilst in our employment.
* Identify how we will also engage and support the development of Board members, members of other board subgroups and reference groups.
* Be mindful of the wider Goalball Community and continue to support their development. Many of whom were people who visually impaired and inactive prior to finding goalball and we must make sure their pathway is developed and extended.
* Support our players into volunteering opportunities. Consequently, maintaining long-term opportunities within Goalball UK and beyond

# Planned Actions

## Our Community

This People plan covers the people who support people that play goalball. While we are a large community of people we also belong to smaller communities. The actions in this plan will deal with each smaller community. Initially we will support:

* Clubs
* Coaches
* Officials and Volunteers
* Executive Team
* Players as volunteers

## Measuring Impact & Managing the Plan

* The Board will have overall responsibility of the plan but will delegate operational responsibility to the Goalball UK Senior Leadership Team
* The People Plan will be a standing agenda item for all Board Meetings
* A Member of staff will be given responsibility, with the aim of appointing a new position, to develop or ‘Empower our People’ utilising existing resources and creating insight led new resources and opportunities
* The Annual Survey will be updated to gather bespoke insight, based on role, referencing the People Plan. This will feed the forthcoming action plan.
* Baseline measures will be established in 2024

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| **Clubs**  **We will:** | **Lead** | **By when** |
| Support our clubs to generate more volunteers to support their activities | SC | Ongoing |
| Reestablish our Annual Conference with insight driven workshops to support clubs | SLT | September 2024 |
| identify clubs at risk and provide bespoke support by working with them and localised resources | SLT | August 2024 |
| Identify current needs of clubs through a renewed Annual Survey | MW/JH | December 2024 |

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| **Coaches and Teachers**  **We will:** | **Lead** | **By when** |
| Introduce Coach Development Days for Club Coaches | AB | July 2024 |
| Reestablish our Annual Conference with insight driven workshops to support coaches | SLT | October |
| Introduce online resources and regular workshops for coaches | SLT | December 2024 |
| Launch Online Schools Resources | SN/KF | March 2024 |
| Identify current needs of coaches and teachers through a renewed Annual Survey | MW/JH | December 2024 |

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| **Officials and Volunteers**  **We will:** | **Lead** | **By when** |
| Support officials in progressing their pathways | AB | Ongoing |
| Deliver at least one Goalball UK Referee Course each year | AB | December 2024 |
| Recruit a wide range of volunteers from diverse backgrounds to support competitions, clubs, and the performance programme | SLT | Launch Autumn 2024 |
| Identify current needs of officials and volunteers through a renewed Annual Survey | MW/JH | December 2024 |

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| **Executive Team & Board**  **We will:** | **Lead** | **By when** |
| Provide personalised CPD opportunities allowing staff and board members to fulfil their role | MW/ JG | Ongoing |
| Continue to provide a range of benefits to the executive team | MW/SLT | Ongoing |
| Deliver EDI and Safeguarding training to the Board | MW/JG | December 2024 |
| Identify current needs of coaches and teachers through a renewed staff survey and annual Chair meeting (Board) | MW/JH/JG | December 2024 |
| CEO to obtain regular feedback from our community and discuss development with Chair and SLT | MW/JG | Begin April 2024 |

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| **Players as volunteers**  **We will:** | **Lead** | **By when** |
| Identify present and past players who want to volunteer and support their pathway | SC/SLT | December 2024 |
| Through targeted consultation identify training needs of volunteers who are blind or partially sighted | MW | December 2024 |
| Identify current needs and barriers to volunteering through a renewed Annual Survey | MW/JH | December 2024 |