



Goalball UK Annual Report 2025



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Introduction from John Grosvenor, our Chair

Dear Members, Supporters, and Friends of Goalball UK,

2025 has been a year of substantial progress against a backdrop of wider economic change for Goalball UK. As I reflect on this past twelve months, which happens to be my final year as Chair of the organisation, I am immensely proud of the real, tangible difference goalball continues to make across our community.

This report highlights a period where the sport has grown at almost every level. We have centralised our High-Performance operations to better support our international athletes, welcomed a fantastic number of new players through the Goalball Academy and Aspire Days, and successfully expanded our domestic competitions. Bringing major international events to home soil, such as the European Champions League and our inaugural International Trophy, have been particular highlights.

Goalball is far more than a sport; it is a community that builds independence and confidence. The achievements detailed in this Impact Report are down to the hard work of our players, coaches, officials, volunteers, and partners. Thank you for making my time as Chair so rewarding, and for your continued backing in making 2025 such a strong year for goalball in the UK.

John Grosvenor, Chair, Goalball UK

Message from Mark Winder, CEO

Welcome to the Goalball UK Impact and Progress Report for 2025. You will notice this report is reaching you a little later than usual. We took the decision to spend some extra time working together to improve the members' survey, ensuring we accurately capture the voice and needs of the community before publishing our findings.

It has been a landmark year for the organisation. We successfully unified our performance system into a single integrated pathway, engaged 40 individuals through our major recruitment drives, and secured a 96% uplift in combined investment from UK Sport and Sport England for the LA 2028 Paralympic cycle.

A key milestone in 2025 was the official launch of our new strategic plan, "Empowering Our People". As the title suggests, this strategy places the community at the heart of our decision-making. It provides a clear roadmap focused on growing our players, developing our workforce, and providing high-quality, inclusive experiences.



This year is also highly significant for our leadership, as it marks John Grosvenor's final year as Chair. On behalf of the entire Goalball community, I want to express my gratitude to John. His steadfast leadership and guidance have been invaluable over the years. Thank you, John, for everything you have done to champion the sport.

Looking ahead, we have a lot to be positive about. With the continued dedication of our staff, volunteers, and partners, we are in a strong position to build upon the foundations laid in 2025.

Mark Winder, CEO, Goalball UK

Annual Survey results 2025

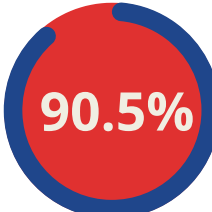
The 2025 Annual Members Survey returned positive results regarding engagement and satisfaction across the sport.

A primary indicator of this is the overall Net Promoter Score (NPS), which rose to 58, up from 56 in 2024. This year-on-year growth suggests increasing member loyalty. Thank you. Please remember; if you are happy tell other people, if not please do not hesitate to tell us!

When reviewing our core services, confidence levels remain high:



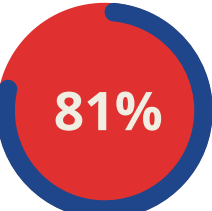
Support and Administration: 100% of respondents were satisfied with the support received from Goalball UK staff when raising queries or issues.



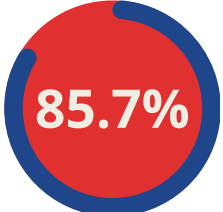
Competition Venues: 90.5% were satisfied with the location of venues.



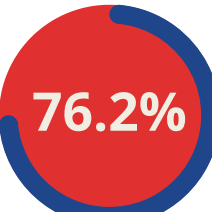
Safeguarding and Welfare: 94.6% of respondents felt confident in reporting a safeguarding concern.



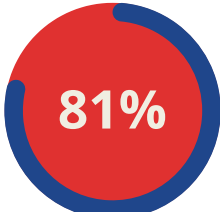
Officiating Standards: 81.0% were satisfied with the standard of officiating at their level.



Performance Pathway: 85.7% were satisfied with the organisation and information provided.



Competition Format: 76.2% were satisfied with the current formats of our competitions.



Competition Frequency: 81.0% were satisfied with the frequency of competition opportunities.

Growing and developing our players

The Los Angeles 2028 Paralympic cycle began in April 2025, but the High-Performance transformation started a year earlier. Traditional men's and women's squads were replaced by a single integrated Performance Programme, placing athletes on a structured pathway through three distinct levels: High Performance, Performance Potential, and Talent. Centralising operations at the English Institute of Sport (EIS) in Sheffield has helped standardise professional support across the pathway.

Recruitment activities engaged 40 individuals across three major programmes over the year. This included 22 players engaged through Talent Identification Days, 22 engaged through Female Future events, and 9 young players engaged through Aspire Days hosted in Newcastle, Winchester, Croydon, and Cardiff.

As a direct result, four new female athletes progressed into the Performance Pathway, and six new players joined the Goalball Academy.

The Goalball Academy itself delivered a comprehensive schedule, hosting five in-person camps (two Regional Camps, a joint camp, a Futures Camp, and a Central Camp), alongside 15 virtual sessions.



The effectiveness of this pathway is becoming evident in the data. One player graduated to the Talent tier, made their senior debut at the Goalball UK International Trophy, and scored their first international goal at the European A Championships.

Five additional players graduated from the Academy: one moved into Pathway Potential, three transitioned to club level, and one is currently unconnected. Currently, seven of the 18 players across the Talent, Pathway Potential, and High-Performance squads have progressed through the Goalball Academy.

On the international stage, the Great Britain teams competed at the Nations Cup in Berlin, while the Goalball UK International Trophy showcased continued refinement of operational processes and the successful integration of talented athletes into senior teams. Both teams achieved podium finishes, with the men securing silver and the women claiming gold after defeating Canada in the final. The men's team also competed at the Great Lions Cup in Lithuania, recording a notable victory over Paralympic silver medallists Ukraine.



The European Championships in Pajulahti, Finland, marked the first major tournament delivered with a fully integrated performance staff supporting both teams. The Great Britain Women's team finished fifth overall, achieving their primary objective of qualifying for the World Championships. Lois Turner finished third in the tournament scoring charts with 17 goals.

Despite competing with a reduced squad due to injuries, the Great Britain Men's team finished eighth overall, with Dan Roper ranking among the tournament's leading scorers. Unfortunately, the result also meant relegation to the second tier of European competition for the next championship cycle.

This year also marked the departure of longstanding Head Coach, Faye Dale-Cook. We would like to formally thank Faye for her years of dedication to the programme and the athletes. She will remain a vital part of the programme in her role as Talent and Inclusion Director. Moving forward, Ferhat Esatbeyoglu has been appointed as a performance coach for the men, forming a new coaching partnership with Alex Jones.





Growing and developing our workforce

Over the course of the year, the team delivered 14 School Leaders' courses, upskilling 156 individuals to deliver Goalball in educational settings. We also focused on club-level development, running a dedicated Club Leaders' course in Cambridge that trained seven new coaches from four different clubs. In September, an Attack & Defence Workshop was delivered for nine club coaches, supported by the Primary Club. We are now planning to relaunch the workforce development conference in 2026.

Our officiating and volunteer networks saw steady growth. We supported 82 individuals in completing the Introduction to Officiating Course, and six newly qualified referees formally joined the sport. Our activator network saw 98 people register interest, resulting in 38 new activators joining and 30 returning to support the community. We partnered with six universities and welcomed two placement students.

Across the community, we had six players actively volunteering and 22 referees offering their services, enabling us to provide 272 volunteering opportunities in competitions alone. The scale of this workforce requirement was evident at the Surrey International Trophy event, which required five Goalball UK referees, two international referees, nine table officials, and nine goal judges. To keep learning accessible, we continue to direct learners to the Goalball UK written module for the UK Coaching and British Blind Sport 'Coaching Blind and Partially Sighted People' e-learning course.

Providing high-quality experiences



Officials, activators, and event staff delivered more than 35 regional, intermediate, national, and international competition days in 2025. These events saw over 235 domestic players take to the court.

The This Girl Can Open returned on Saturday 8th March, coinciding with International Women's Day. The event saw 40 people in attendance (27 players and 13 volunteers) and featured a session on female health led by Kirstie Urwin of the True Athlete Project, alongside an equipment showcase by pathway player Alex Ulysses. In June, we delivered the flagship Goalfix Cup at the University of Worcester.

For children and young people, we delivered 75 sessions within schools, educational settings, and partnership events. We helped plan and deliver the Greater Manchester VI Sports Day for over 70 children, an effort that resulted in a case study being shortlisted for a 2026 Youth Sport Trust Impact Award.

We also delivered at School Festivals in Newcastle and Teesside, and supported West Yorkshire Goalball Club with a 'Junior Day'. Through these initiatives, we worked with 1,119 children and young people, including 197 individuals who are blind or partially sighted.

Creating and developing partnerships for our people

Our relationships with UK Sport and Sport England were strengthened as both organisations endorsed our four-year performance strategy. We are currently in the final year of our funding cycle from Sport England and will be applying to them as system partners to continue our work.

To expand our educational reach, we partnered with Smile Through Sport in the Northeast to embed the Goalball School Leaders' Course into their CPD offering. At the club level, Watford successfully transitioned into an established club, joining Greater Manchester, Blackburn, and Chelmsford. Cross-club collaboration was evident when West Wales Goalball Club and Fen Tigers Goalball Club held a joint 'Inspire Day'. We continue to support Sheffield, Bristol, Surrey, and North Wales as emerging clubs preparing to transition in 2026.

Internationally, we supported the Fen Tigers in hosting the European Champions League in the UK for the first time.

We also delivered our inaugural International Trophy for national teams at Surrey Sports Park. This event marked the production of our first in-house livestream, and we are actively seeking investment to deliver the tournament again in 2027. We continued to develop links with FC Porto, welcoming their team and staff to our Centre of Excellence camp for shared learning. To support athletes practically, we established a Service Level Agreement with The London Clinic Eye Centre to navigate international classification changes.

In terms of advocacy, we attended the IBSA Extraordinary General Assembly (EGA) in October for the first time. We were there to support British Blind Sport, an organisation we are working closely with, and we will shortly be announcing a new Memorandum of Understanding with them.

We are grateful for the backing of funders and partners including:

- Boost Charitable Trust
- Boshier-Hinton Foundation
- British Blind Sport
- CAST
- Direct Business Group
- Disability Sport Wales
- Ego Stitch
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- GM Moving
- Goalfix Sports Ltd
- IBSA
- Manchester Sensory Support Service
- Northern Accountants Ltd
- Paralympics GB
- PE Office
- Perfection Travel and Events Ltd
- Sol PV Group
- South Yorkshire Community Foundation
- Sport England
- SportsAid
- Sport Wales
- TASS
- The Edward Gostling Foundation
- The FA Para Football
- The Factory Young People's Centre
- The Hays Travel Foundation
- The National Lottery
- The Powell Family Foundation
- The Primary Club
- The Spectacle Makers' Charity
- UK Sport
- UKAD
- UKH Foundation
- VICTA UK
- Will Charitable Trust
- Youth Sport Trust





Ensuring we continue to improve our organisational health

Operating a National Governing Body in the current economic climate is challenging. With inflation reaching 22% since 2022, we are facing obvious financial pressures across our delivery and operations. Despite these economic hurdles, we have maintained a focus on sustainable structures and are proud to confirm that we remain fully compliant with A Code for Sports Governance.



Strong governance and effective leadership are central to this compliance. To ensure our board remains diverse, independent, and highly skilled, we recruited a new Senior Independent Director, Lisa Gannon, replacing Peter Elliott (MBE, OLY) after eight years of service to the sport. We also welcomed new non-executive directors Adam Knott (PLY) and Ian Clarke, who brings essential marketing experience to the board. To ensure we listen to the next generation, we co-opted Chelsea Hudson onto the Board for a one-year term to represent the youth voice.



Upholding the highest standards of conduct and welfare, we continued to strengthen our safeguarding practices. We delivered two Safeguarding Children and Young People courses and one Time to Listen course for welfare officer training.

This was actively supported by direct club visits aimed at embedding good practice locally, and we are supporting clubs to meet minimum standards to improve the experience of everyone.

To ensure our internal policies and processes meet the demands of our new strategy, a staffing restructure led to the creation of a new Director of Development and Learning role, generating dedicated capacity to strengthen our learning pathways. In addition to our internal operations, we are fully committed to working with UK Sport's System Master Planning and have played an active part in all the work surrounding this initiative to ensure our long-term sustainability and alignment with the wider sporting sector.

Finally, our commitment to transparent communication and accountability was demonstrated by dedicating extra time this year to overhaul the annual members' survey. This ensured we accurately captured the voice and needs of our community, a vital listening process that formed the very foundation of our new 'Empowering Our People' strategy. Continuing this commitment to community engagement and collaboration, Connect 2026, our conference, will take place in September this year.

Continuing to raise awareness of our sport and our people

Throughout 2025, we partnered with various visually impaired organisations to raise the profile of the sport. We delivered taster sessions at Paralympic GB's 'Discovery Day' and 'Potential Day'.

Additional awareness events included British Blind Sport's 'Festival of Sport', RNC's 'Celebration of VI Sports Day' and 'Summer Weekend', VICTA Sport's 'Family Weekend', Guide Dogs 'Family Day', the Bardet Biedl Syndrome UK conference, Vision Through Action's 'Summer Fun sessions', and the Disability Sport Wales conference.

We provided information at Sight Village exhibitions in Cardiff, Birmingham, Blackpool, and London. Furthermore, we engaged the educational and corporate sectors by presenting to the Association of College Sport and delivering corporate events to staff from Lloyds Bank in London and Everyone Active in Sheffield.



Your support is vital

Did you know only 11% of people with a visual impairment participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity per week, compared with 39% of the general UK population?

This is a situation that perpetuates issues around physical and mental health and social isolation.

For over ten years, Goalball UK has worked at the heart of this community, the largest cohort within the disability spectrum to provide transformational opportunities.

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 through living more independent and confident lives.

We'd like to ask you to consider becoming a Goalball Visionary to transform the lives of blind and partially sighted people through goalball.

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.

Whether you are an individual supporter, a foundation or a company, please join our family of Goalball Visionaries and donate your money, time and support in a variety of ways.

To find out more please visit goalballuk.com/support-us. Or email mark.winder@goalballuk.com



Our Contact

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Supporting information

[GBUK Financial Accounts 2024-25](#)

[About Us](#)

[Meet the Team](#)

[Meet the Board](#)

Credits

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