

UK WIDE OFFICIALS STRATEGY

NOVEMBER 2021



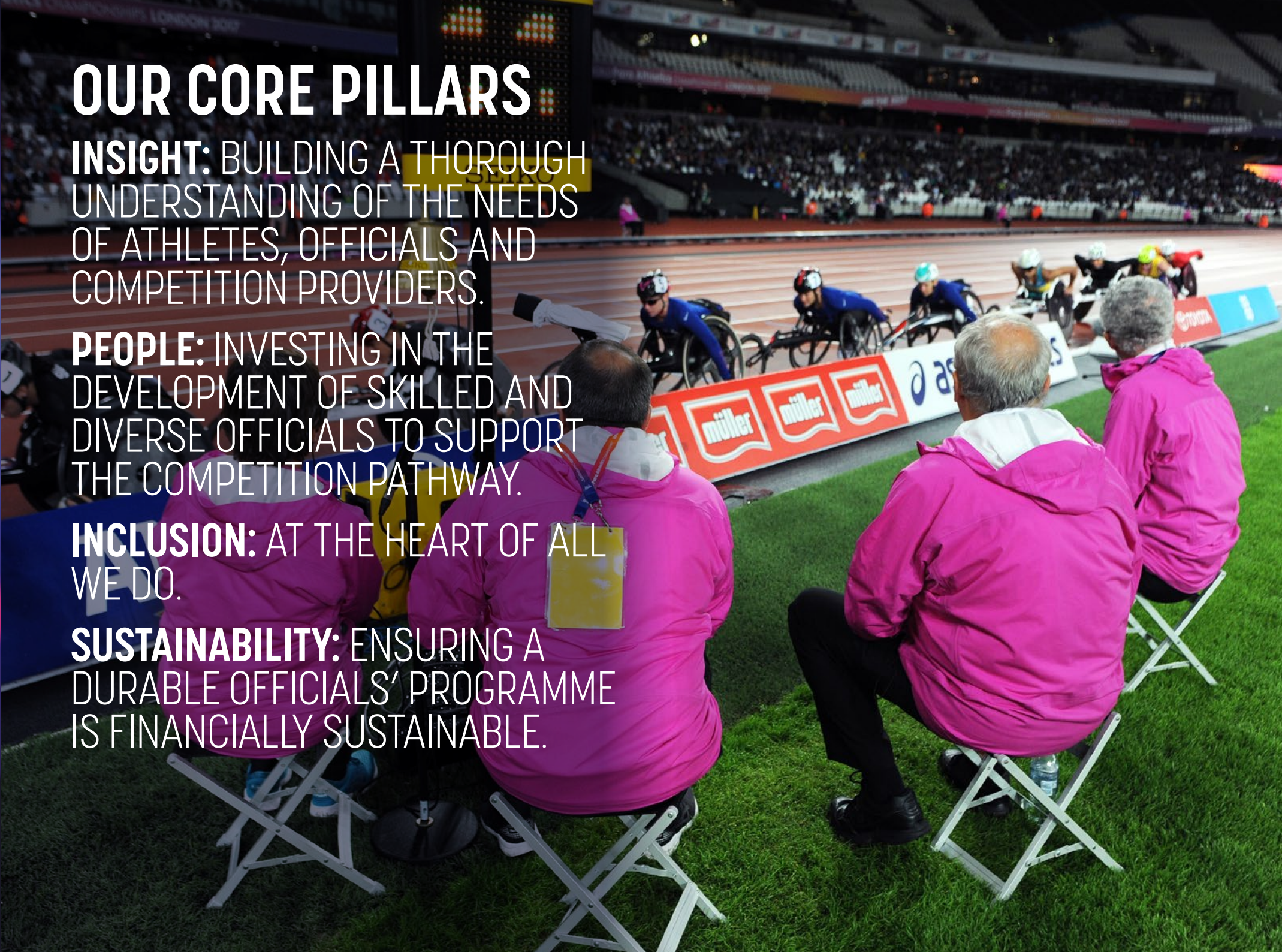
OUR CORE PILLARS

INSIGHT: BUILDING A THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEEDS OF ATHLETES, OFFICIALS AND COMPETITION PROVIDERS.

PEOPLE: INVESTING IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLED AND DIVERSE OFFICIALS TO SUPPORT THE COMPETITION PATHWAY.

INCLUSION: AT THE HEART OF ALL WE DO.

SUSTAINABILITY: ENSURING A DURABLE OFFICIALS' PROGRAMME IS FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE.



LIVING OUR VALUES

- People Centred
- Athlete Focused
- Valued and supported
- Two-way Communication
- Two-way Respect
- Inclusive
- Equity of opportunity
- Collaborative
- Excellence



INTRODUCTION

This plan sets out the officials' strategy to 2032.

Building a diverse, respected, expert and both, dual-focused athlete-centred and people-centred officials' community is central to increasing and retaining athletes participating within our sport. This strategy will support our 3 key goals as laid out in Athletics Unified, the high-level UK-wide strategy for the sport;

GOAL 1:

In 2032, Great Britain & Northern Ireland will have a representative in every discipline at all senior international events.

In 2032, 95% of the Paralympic team will reach their final.



GOAL 2:

A world-renowned infrastructure of athletics and running clubs, competitions, coaches and officials that retains over 250,000 registered athletes across the UK by 2032.



GOAL 3:

Athletics, running and pushing is the nations' choice to stay active: 9 million regular participants by 2032.



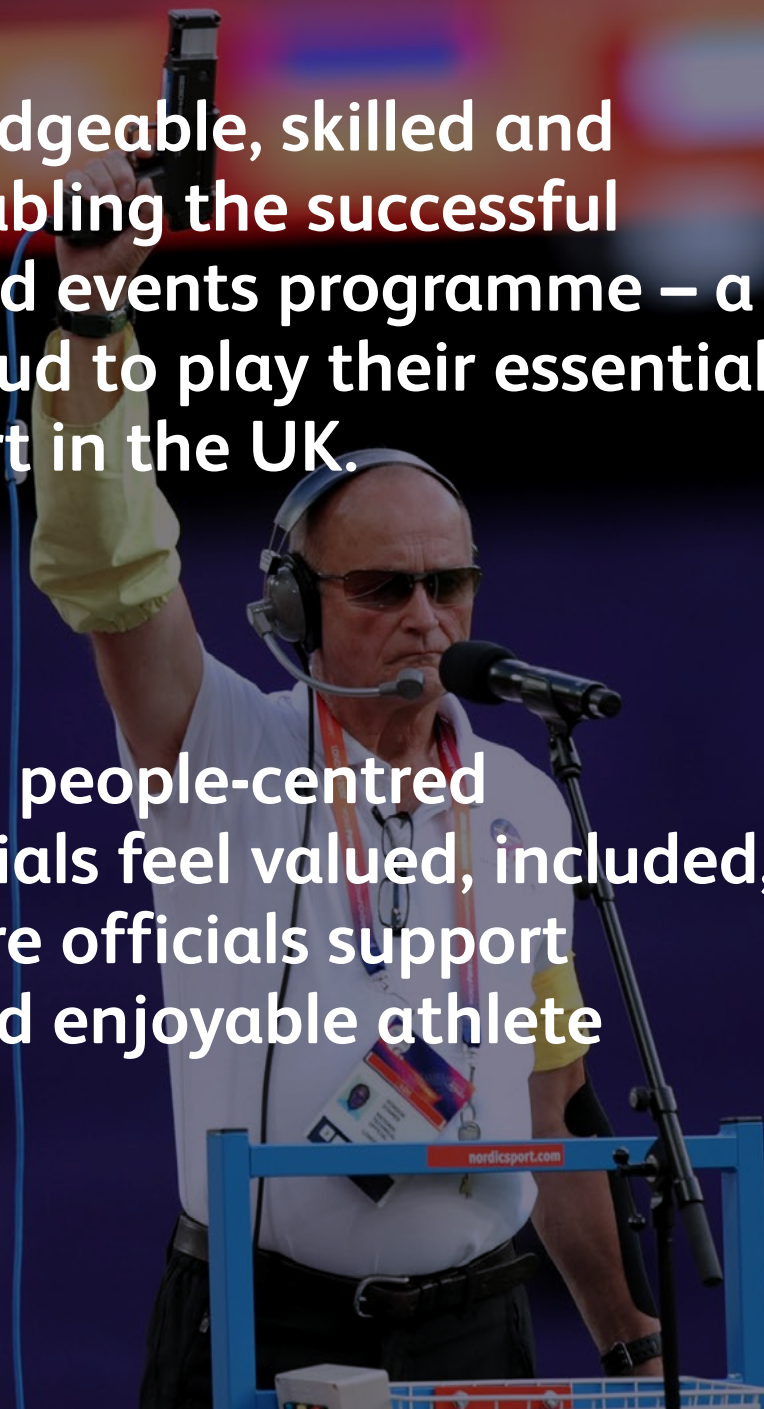
The strategy has been created in consultation with the athletics officiating community across the UK through a combination of surveys, focus groups, individual discussions and desk-based analysis. Whilst this strategy sets out a clear plan for all officials (off-track endurance plus track and field combined) to 2032, it will be reviewed at the end of every four-year cycle to ensure it remains time relevant and effective.

OUR VISION

A diverse, valued, extremely knowledgeable, skilled and motivated officials' community enabling the successful delivery of the UK's competition and events programme – a community of officials who feel proud to play their essential role across all disciplines of the sport in the UK.

OUR MISSION

Building a dual-focused athlete and people-centred officials' community where all officials feel valued, included, supported and motivated, and where officials support the delivery of inclusive, positive and enjoyable athlete competition experiences.



BEHIND EVERY PERFORMANCE IS AN OFFICIAL

Athletics does not happen without officials, no matter whether delivering at a local club event or within a global championship. We recognise and value the commitment and dedication of all officials in enabling a safe, fair and level playing field with enjoyable competition at all levels. In order to continue delivering quality competition to meet the needs of athletes we recognise the need to train new officials and support the development of existing officials and commit to ensuring that we have a dynamic pathway that will enable us to successfully achieve our ambitions now and in the future. Currently there are circa 5,000 licensed officials with around 50% actively officiating on a regular basis. Whilst this currently just meets the demand (circa 2,800 officials required in busy weeks at present) for competition delivery, on busy fixture weekends it is becoming more challenging and therefore, recruitment and retention of officials is vitally important to meet future market demand.

There is a significant amount of work to be done together and it is crucial that this work is carried out collaboratively with all officials operating at all levels being treated as equals and recognised as a core part of the UK competition programme. It is also hugely

important that safe environments are created for officials and athletes where a zero-tolerance approach exists towards unacceptable behaviour for which we all have a responsibility.

Following the consultation process, there are a number of key themes that have been identified and incorporated within this strategy. These include;



Value of Officials: the whole sport must recognise the role that officials play as volunteers, the absolute need for officials within our sport and the value they play in the sport. Without officials there is no structured competition. As such, their role should be celebrated and recognised by athletes, parents, coaches, clubs, event organisers and national bodies.

Wellbeing of Officials: treating officials as ‘people’ and creating a safe environment for officials to connect, share and develop both personally and professionally through cultural change of behaviours and practices.

Visibility of Officials: increase the visibility and recognise the value of officials across all areas of sport. Officials should be role modelled on a regular basis, not just at international level where we have many world

class officials who should be celebrated, but also across all levels of the officiating pathway.

Officials Progression: we must ensure that the officials progression pathway is as transparent and seamless as possible. Not every official will have the motivation or skill set to reach international championship levels, however, it is important that every official is aware of the pathway, is supported through their journey at every level, and that the pathway is as accessible and transparent as possible with equity of opportunity, particularly at the higher levels.

Future Officials: whilst supporting and retaining existing officials is hugely important, having a clear plan for recruiting the next generation of future officials is also a priority. This includes understanding the motivations of young people, targeting existing and retiring athletes, as well as emphasising the role of, and supporting clubs, in recruiting officials.

Role of Clubs: There are some excellent examples of clubs who actively recruit, train, support and retain officials within their local environments. However, the club landscape is very inconsistent and it is critical that clubs understand their role in the retention and recruitment of officials, as well as showcasing what ‘good’ looks like, and the importance of the Home Country Athletic Federations (HCAFs) (and UKA) in providing resources and tools to support clubs in this area.



OUR GUIDING PHILOSOPHY - PEOPLE FIRST

We believe in a philosophy where officials are respected by everyone as well as each other. We will commit to working together collaboratively, and where all officials operating at every level are treated as equals (as are the disciplines in which they operate) and recognised as a core part of delivering the competition pathway enabling the athlete development journey.

We will evolve the network of valued and experienced officials working in all environments across all the ages and stages of the competition pathway. We believe positive athlete experiences are provided through exceptional competition experiences underpinned by an Athlete First philosophy that is supported by brilliant officials.



THE CURRENT ANALYSIS

- Officials' pathway – needs reviewing to ensure it is user friendly, easy to navigate, transparent and straightforward to progress when appropriate to do so.
- Officials need to be supported more on their journey as an official – by UKA and the HCAFs, other officials, local clubs and officials' secretaries.
- Officials generally feel valued (particularly at local level) but more can be done in this area to improve the experiences of officials at events and on their progression/development as an official.
- There is a need to raise the profile of officials. To celebrate the achievement of officials including the use of role-modelling, and to educate athletes, coaches and parents on the role of officials.
- A review of competition format must happen to ensure a more consistent experience for officials, especially in relation to the welfare of officials at events (length of day, refreshments, expenses, rest breaks, food etc).
- More structured support networks for officials are required. Less formal at the lower levels and more structured as officials progress through the pathway.
- A need to increase the diversity of our officials.
- Whilst some good examples exist, prioritise the role of clubs in recruitment and retention of officials to support competition at the local level.
- Communications need to be more consistent and effective across UKA and the HCAFs, and can often be overburdening for officials receiving many communications at once from multiple sources.
- We need to improve the voice for the officials' community that feeds into the NGBs



OUR HEADLINE OBJECTIVES (BY 2032)

1. We will ensure the sport has the required number of officials trained and supported to the appropriate level to meet the market demand for event delivery across the UK.
2. 90% of all active officials will rate their experience in the sport as enjoyable.
3. 90% of all athletes will rate their experience of officials as excellent.
4. All clubs will recruit the appropriate key roles (e.g. Officials' Coordinator within their clubs to facilitate and prioritise the recruitment, support and retention of officials).
5. Consistent programmes across the UK recognising the value and role of officials to the UK-wide athletics system.
6. Officials in the UK will be rated as the best in the world based on major event delivery and athlete satisfaction.
7. Improve the diversity of active officials in the UK to create a community that is representative of UK society.
8. An ongoing review and evolution of the progression pathway (levels) for officials to ensure it meets the current and future needs for competition delivery.
9. Increase the number of people qualifying as level 1 officials following attendance at courses from 40% to 85%, in order to support local club competition delivery.
10. An investment into technology systems to support effective planning and competition delivery across the UK.
11. An appropriate staff infrastructure within UKA and the HCAFs to support the effective delivery of the UK wide officials' strategy.



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



INCLUSIVE, VALUED AND SUPPORTED OFFICIALS' COMMUNITY:

A diverse (representing diversity within UK population), highly skilled, highly-connected officials' community that is highly valued at each stage of the competition pathway.



OFFICIALS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION:

A clear and effective system of recruitment, support and retention for officials within the UK system.



OFFICIALS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

Empowered officials engaged in a role-based officials learning system accessing a comprehensive, measured and flexible learning and development programme across the UK.



EXPERT TECHNICAL OFFICIALS (WORLD-CLASS):

A diverse network of supported, well educated, experienced, highly skilled international level officials, capable of continuing to deliver the best events in the World.

OUR KEY MEASURES OF SUCCESS

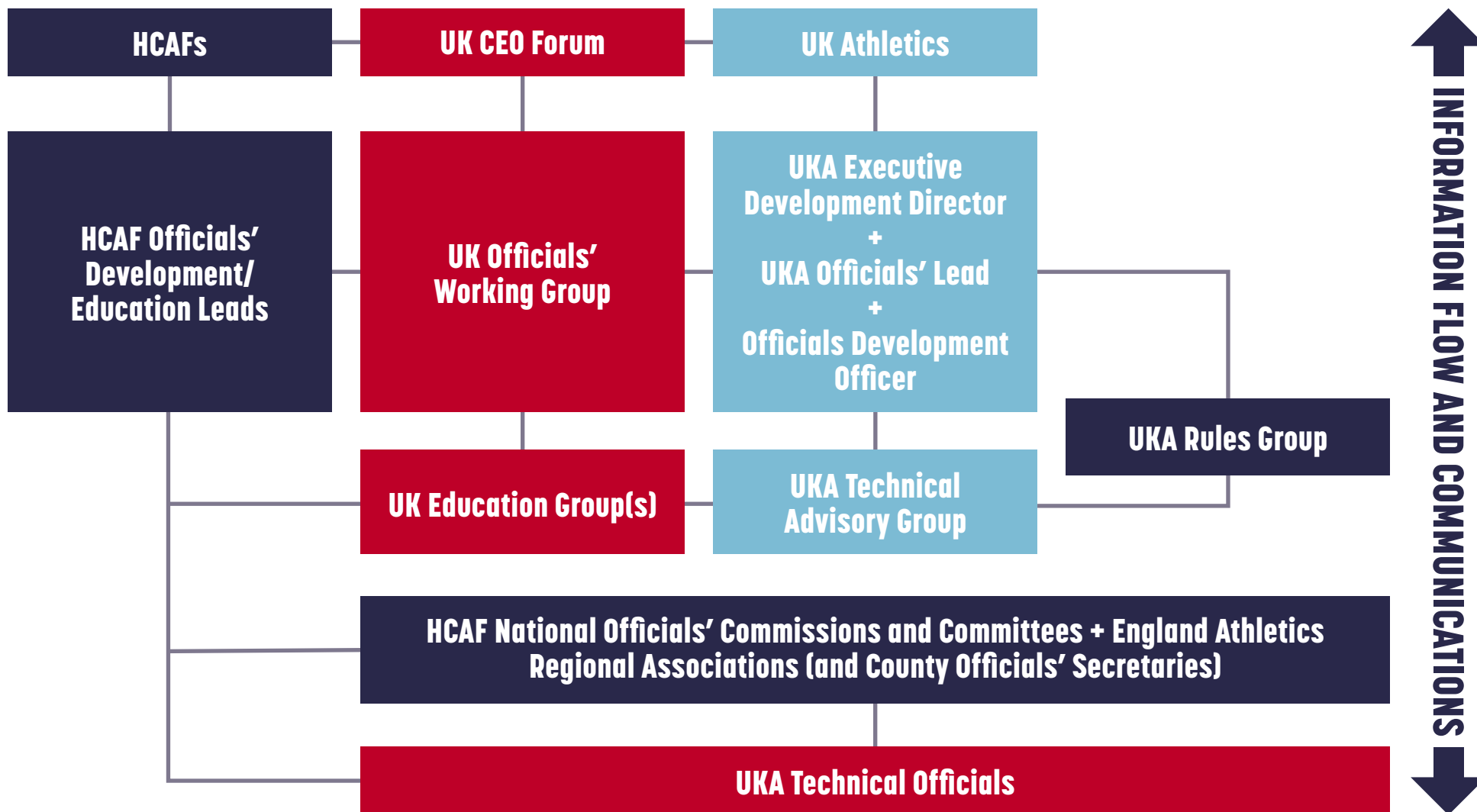
1. A regular measure of officials' satisfaction against their experiences within the officials pathway and competition pathway.
2. A regular measure of athletes' satisfaction against their experiences of officiating within the competition pathway.
3. Increased number of officials to meet the needs of an evolving competition framework – measuring retention, progression and recruitment levels.
4. Improved diversity of officials which more accurately reflects UK society.
5. A sustained improvement in the conversion rates from level 1 course attendance to licensed official.
6. A world leading officials' education and training programme which shows an increase in the number of officials developing expertise and developing through the pathway.
7. Measured evidence of clubs' prioritisation in the recruitment, retention and development of officials to support the competition pathway.
8. The number of clubs implementing specific roles to support officials' recruitment and retention (eg. Officials' recruitment and development roles).



MANAGEMENT, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

The UK officials' strategy will be overseen by a UK Officials' Working Group, chaired by UKA with membership from each HCAF and co-opted experts. The working group will report into the UK Chief Executive Officers Forum.

The following diagram illustrates the structures and communication channels within officiating in the UK.



The following table also provides some clarification on the roles and responsibilities of the governing bodies within an officials context:

HOME COUNTRY ATHLETICS FEDERATIONS

- Leadership for HCAF officiating development and implementation plans.
- Delivery of officials' education and training pathway at Levels 1-3 and introductory levels within a HCAF context.
- Delivery of CPD and other programmes to support officials' development, retention and recognition.
- Training of officials' tutor workforce (education levels 1 – 3).
- Equal partner and contributor (and reporting) to UK Officiating Working Group.

UK ATHLETICS

- Leadership and oversight of the UK Officials' Strategy.
- Leadership and oversight of the UK-wide advisory panels (e.g. Technical Advisory Group).
- Responsibility for development, licensing and quality assurance of the officials' education pathway and tutor training programmes.
- Training of officials' tutor workforce (education levels 4 and 5).
- Co-ordination, facilitation and reporting for the UK Officiating Working Group.
- Delivery of education and training pathway for officials at levels 4 & 5.



OFFICIALS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

VISION

A diverse, valued, extremely knowledgeable, skilled and motivated officials' community enabling the successful delivery of the UK's competition and events programme – a workforce who feel proud to play their key role in the sport in the UK.

MISSION

Building a dual-focused athlete and people-centred officials' community where all officials feel valued, included, supported, motivated, and where officials support the delivery of inclusive, positive and enjoyable athlete competition experiences.

STRATEGY		TACTICS
OBJECTIVES	<p>1. Inclusive, valued and supported officials community: A diverse (representing diversity within UK population), highly skilled, highly-connected officials community that is highly valued at each stage of the competition pathway.</p>	<p>1.1 Communication: Ensure a clear, transparent and streamlined communication plan is in operation to make sure officials are updated with information on what is happening within the officials and competition community, feel valued, and have a voice to feed back into the system.</p> <p>1.2 Officials' Profile and Value: Ensure greater communication to the wider sport with the role modelling and profiling of officials across all levels to ensure a greater understanding of their role and the high value and importance of officials to the sport.</p> <p>1.3 Competition Planning and Officials' Welfare: Work with the competition directorate to ensure competition formats and delivery meet the needs and motivations of the officials' community. This would include calendar planning, delivery formats and length of the competition day.</p> <p>1.4 Competition Providers: Work with competition providers to ensure the welfare of officials is considered at all times. This also includes the process of organisers 'meeting and greeting' officials to ensure they feel welcomed as well as ensuring a point of contact and signposting to relevant areas/individuals.</p> <p>1.5 Officials' Progression Pathway: Ensure a clear and transparent pathway (off-track endurance + track and field) is in place for officials to progress, that provides appropriate support at each stage of the pathway and equity of opportunity, particularly in national level appointments.</p> <p>1.6 Diverse and Inclusive Community: Using data and insight, implement targeted support that ensures the diversity of the officials' community is more representative of the sport and UK society.</p> <p>1.7 Investment in Technology: Investment into technology systems and platforms to support effective planning, communication and competition delivery for officials across the UK.</p> <p>1.8 Rule Changes: Ensure that any rules reviews or important information, such as rules guidance, are produced and circulated to officials (and athletes, coaches and clubs) in a timely and efficient manner.</p>

STRATEGY		TACTICS
OBJECTIVES	<p>2. Officials Recruit and Retention: A clear and effective system of recruitment, support and retention for officials within the UK system.</p>	<p>2.1 Officials' Progression Pathway Review: Review the officials' pathway (off-track endurance + track and field) including; progression, knowledge and skills requirements through the pathway, content, and processes for recording and approving experiences / knowledge from entry through to international levels.</p> <p>2.2 Education Course Delivery: Deliver sufficient education courses to accommodate the requirements of all disciplines across all areas of the UK. As well as being planned within the officials' education calendar, specific courses can be arranged to support local needs, and online technologies utilised to ensure those needs are met, particularly where course numbers are low but skill gap identified.</p> <p>2.3 Role of Clubs: Work with clubs to emphasise the importance of their role within the recruitment, retention and support of officials. Also, ensure all clubs have an appointed/designated role focusing on this specific area of support.</p> <p>2.4 Recognition and Reward: Ensure UKA and the HCAFs provide clear and consistent recognition programmes for officials, such as recognising length of service, outstanding achievements, and dedication to officiating on an annual basis.</p> <p>2.5 Support Networks: Create support networks covering all levels of officials from entry level to international level (more formal at higher levels) where all officials have had the opportunity to have support (whether formal or informal) through their ongoing development journey.</p> <p>2.6 National Recruitment Campaigns: Plan, create and deliver recruitment campaigns targeting future officials that clearly presents the important role that officials play, the social, physical and psychological benefits, as well as role modelling officials and the opportunities across all levels of the pathway.</p> <p>2.7 Listening to Officials: Undertake annual satisfaction surveys and other relevant methods for officials to better understand their experiences, challenges and support requirements.</p>
	<p>3. Officials Learning and Development: Empowered officials engaged in a role-based officials learning system accessing comprehensive, measured and flexible learning and development programme across the UK.</p>	<p>3.1 Officials' Learning Framework (levels): Review the officials' roles and learning pathway (both off-track endurance + track and field) to ensure they are fit for purpose, deliver best practice by each role and level, and provide flexibility for blended (practical, virtual, online) learning opportunities for officials.</p> <p>3.2 Access to Learning: Ensure the progression pathway for officials is well communicated, clear and easy to access. The experience for each official pre-course, during and post-course should be seamless and every official should feel supported and understand the requirements for achieving certification.</p> <p>3.3 Course Conversion Rates: Work with HCAFs, County Officials Secretaries, course tutors and clubs to ensure easily accessible entry level courses with good support at local level and a clear understanding of the course requirements, that increases the course conversion rates from 40% (2018) to 85% by 2027.</p> <p>3.4 Ongoing Learning & Development: Work with the HCAFs to plan and deliver excellent support networks (including mentoring) and CPD programmes for officials at all levels to support the ongoing learning and development journey for every official as appropriate.</p> <p>3.5 Developing Para Expertise: As well as ensuring the knowledge and skills for supporting para-athletes and events is embedded within the existing course roles and levels, provide specialised learning opportunities and accreditation for officials to develop expertise in para event delivery.</p> <p>3.6 Digital Learning Platforms: Continue to review and evolve learning opportunities across a range of formats that supports a range of flexible learning opportunities for officials – formally through accredited courses and informally for wider learning.</p> <p>3.7 Supporting Resources: Ensure widespread availability, and consistency of standard in resources made available to all officials, particularly online. Also regularly review resources to make sure they are up to date and provide guidance on current best practice.</p>

STRATEGY

TACTICS

OBJECTIVES

4. Expert Technical Officials (World-Class): A clear and effective system of recruitment, support and retention for officials within the UK system.

4.1 World Level Officials: As well as ensuring Level 4 and 5 officials maintain and update their learning and development regularly, implement bespoke high-performance officials' development programme for world level officials, as well as those identified on that trajectory.

4.2 Enabling Future Officials Talent: Provide equity of opportunities for shadowing and structured formal mentoring support for officials working towards the highest levels (Level 4/5) and those demonstrating potential to work towards International Technical Official status.

4.3 Level 5 Course Delivery: Deliver a Level 5 course within every 4-year cycle as a minimum, and ensure all potential candidates are supported in preparation prior to the course commencing.

4.4 Global Championships: Ensure that UKA develops a close working relationship with World Athletics, World Para Athletics and European Athletics to ensure that UK officials are recognised, identified and nominated for all major global events as well as for leadership roles within the respective organisation's forums.

4.5 International Development and Exchange Programmes: Create opportunities for UK officials to attend World Athletics, World Para Athletics or European Athletics training and development programmes for international roles. Also, deliver an international 'exchange' programme providing opportunities for identified officials (with equitable opportunities) to work at different levels of competitions and to help prepare for ITO programmes.

4.6 Celebrating & Role Modelling: Celebrate successes of UK officials at world level, showcasing and role modelling officials operating at the highest levels internationally.



ACTION PLAN - 2025

By March 2025 the following will have been delivered:

STRATEGY	TACTICS	WHEN
Supporting an inclusive and valued officials' community at each stage of the competition pathway	Establish and deliver a streamlined and clear communication plan that includes networks that enable officials to better understand what is happening across the UK officials' community as well as feeding back in to UKA and the HCAFs.	2022
	Facilitate annual satisfaction surveys for officials alongside other forms of consultation as appropriate.	2022
	Ensure regular profiling, promotion and role modelling of officials from all backgrounds across the pathway within national level publications and media channels.	2022
	Contribution from the UK Officials' Working into any new UK competition plans, and ensure that the welfare of officials is very much considered at its core alongside athlete development.	2022
	Ensure more effective communication of the officials' progression pathway to all officials as well as the wider sport (particularly clubs), including requirements and support available.	2022
	Use data and insight to better understand challenges facing under-represented groups in officiating and ensure plans are put in place to provide better opportunities into, and within officiating across the UK.	2022
A clear and effective system of recruitment, support and retention for officials within the UK system.	Within the new National Club Development Framework, prioritise the role of clubs in the recruitment and development of officials, as well as promoting good practice (e.g. Officials Coordinator role in clubs).	2022
	A review of the recognition and rewards programmes across UKA and the HCAFs.	2022
	Create support networks covering all levels of officials from entry level to international level (more formal at higher levels) where all officials have the opportunity for support (whether formal or informal) through their ongoing development journey.	2024
	Work with the UKA and HCAFs communication teams to plan, deliver and review national recruitment campaigns targeting new officials.	2022

STRATEGY	TACTICS	WHEN
Officials' Learning and Development	A review of the officials' progression pathway (off-track endurance + track and field) from entry level to international technical official standard to ensure they are fit for purpose and deliver best practice.	2022 and ongoing
	Improve the consistency in experience for each official pre-course, during and post-course. Ensure the experience is seamless and that every official feels supported and understands the requirements for achieving certification.	2022
	Conduct a specific review and redevelopment of current assistant and level 1 courses to ensure they meet the needs of local delivery.	2022
	Create support networks (including mentoring) and CPD programmes for officials at all levels and across all disciplines to support the ongoing learning and development journey for every official as appropriate.	2022 and ongoing
	Work with the para coaches and athletes to develop clear blocks within existing course levels, as well as the opportunity for officials to develop specific para expertise.	2023
	Conduct a review of digital learning platforms to ensure they meet the needs of all levels of the progression pathway and implement changes accordingly.	2023 and ongoing
Expert Technical Officials (World Level)	Develop and deliver a bespoke high-performance officials development programme for world level officials, as well as those identified on that trajectory.	2023
	Design and implement a shadowing and mentoring programme support for officials working towards the highest levels (Level 4/5) and those demonstrating potential to work towards International Technical Official status.	2022 and ongoing
	Plan and deliver an international exchange programme providing opportunities for identified officials (with equitable opportunities) to work at different levels of competitions and to help prepare for ITO programmes.	2023 and ongoing
	Celebrate the successes of UK officials on the global stage and showcase / role model officials operating at the highest levels internationally.	2022





WELSH ATHLETICS
ATHLETAU CYMRU

scottishathletics



ENGLAND ATHLETICS



ATHLETICS
NORTHERN IRELAND



UKA | UNITED
KINGDOM
ATHLETICS