

BOARD BASKETBALL ENGLAND



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date: 16th July 2025

**Location: Sport and
Recreation Alliance
Office, London**

Present:

Paul Blanchard (PB)
Born Barikor (BB)
Chris Walsh (CW) – dial in until 11.45
Mat Newby (MNY)
Sadie Mason (SM)
Egemen Onen (EO)
Joel Baynes (JB)
Sandy Gill (SG)

Executives:

Nigel Walker (NW)
Helen Penn (HP)
Marc Dring (MD) – Dial in Item Nos. 5, 6, 15
Rob Fairley (RF) – Dial in Item No. 6
Adi Fawcett (AF) – Dial in Item No. 8
Bud Johnston (BJ) – Dial in Item No. 8
Sam Messam (SMe) – Dial in Item No. 9
Steve Bucknall (SB) – Dial in Item No. 9
Brian Aldred (BA) – Dial in Item No. 10

Apologies:

Katie Simmonds (KS)
Paul Mundy-Castle (PMC)
Brandie Deignan (BD)

Note Taker: Karen Bailey (KB)

Item No. 1 – Apologies for Absence

The apologies were noted for PMC, BD and KS.

Item No. 2- Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest that had not been previously disclosed.

Item No. 3 – Minutes & Action Tracker

The Board approved the minutes from the BE Board meeting held on 3rd June 2025.

The Board reviewed the Action Tracker.

Item No. 4 Chair Update

CEO Transition – PB provided an overview of the recent departure of the CEO in June 2025 and the appointment of NW as Interim CEO. He noted that initial engagement with both stakeholders and staff has been positive.

Item No. 5 CEO Update

Organisational Update – NW provided an overview of the Executive submission report and short term goals. By mid-September, all staff will have fully aligned objectives tied to the overarching strategy.

EMT Collaboration and Values – Following last week's EMT meeting, NW advised that a set of agreed values were established: Respect, Collaboration, Honesty, Shared Values and Objectives, Support, Communication, Strengths and Weaknesses. These will serve as guiding principles across the leadership team.

Financial Awareness within EMT – NW reported that financial literacy and involvement are ongoing within EMT.

Regional Engagement – NW participated in the regional call and has engaged with Board Chairs Patricia Fairclough and Howard Leighton to foster closer collaboration.

Stakeholder Engagement – NW advised that engagement efforts are ongoing, particularly in relation to DiSE, to ensure effective communication and alignment.

Sub-Committee Governance – Board Chairs were requested to review the governance structure of sub-committees. A formal meeting schedule will be established. EMT will adhere to a structured paper submission process to enable comprehensive oversight.

Staff Engagement – NW is increasing face-to-face interactions with staff, focusing on active engagement and issue resolution. Over the next 2-4 weeks, he advised that he will be immersing himself in various departments to identify challenges and opportunities.

Commercial Development – There is significant potential to commercialise the organisation. The potential appointment of a new Commercial lead will be discussed at the upcoming People Committee meeting.

Item No. 6 Season Start – Rob Fairley (RF) joined the call

Season Start

RF provided an update on preparations for the upcoming season, highlighting a positive start with the implementation of the PlayHQ system.

At the close of entries, a total of 1,092 team entries had been received, representing 238 clubs.

The transition to the new Play HQ payment system has been smooth and effective. Clubs have benefited from a revised invoicing process via the shop, which allows for payments to be made in three instalments—a feature that has been well received.

MNy highlighted that, despite the improved systems, the organisation has experienced 100% growth, and in any other sector this would prompt an immediate review of capacity. MNy expressed concern for staff wellbeing and the sustainability of cross-departmental support during peak times. In response, RF confirmed that a detailed plan is in place for season start (during September–October), including:

- Temporary reassignment of named staff from other departments, with defined roles and early onboarding for training.
- Restriction of annual leave during peak period (1st September – 17th October) to ensure 90% staffing capacity across the organisation.
- Temporary increase in hours for part-time staff.
- Allocation of 50% of the department's resources directly to the season start process.
- Deprioritisation of lower-priority projects during this period.

MD addressed the meeting, successful roll out of PlayHQ has been positive, change management with different challenges. Once embedded it will not be such a challenge. It is more change management rather than digital issues.

CW provided an update through the Regions Lens reporting that there were no fundamental issues. MD advised that during weekly calls with the Regions discussion on PlayHQ takes place which allows for feedback to the regions on matters of importance

Item No. 7 Safeguarding Status Report, developments of importance – LH joined the call

LH provided an overview of the work currently undertaken by the Safeguarding Team, namely;

CPSU Submission

Safeguarding and PlayHQ Integration

Website and Policy Updates

Education and Training Initiatives

Service Standards and Case Management

Safeguarding for Children and Young People

Course Access and Bulk Licensing

Sexual Harassment Policy Development

Item No. 8 EDI Status Report and developments of importance – BJ & AF joined the meeting

AF and BJ recommended the following

1. The Board familiarise themselves with the DIAP content and requirements.

2. The Board to provide oversight and approval of the communications plan to support the Supreme Court Ruling Statement and Gender Policy.

DIAP Submission and Feedback from Sport England

BJ informed the Board that a formal letter had been received from Sport England acknowledging and accepting the submission of Basketball England's DIAP.

Data Collection and Management

SM queried how data on protected characteristics would be collected. It was noted that initial work has already been completed—drawing on BambooHR data and integrating it with PlayHQ.

Gender Policy

BJ advised that a draft Gender Policy, reviewed by Brabners, has been updated to strengthen its legal robustness.

Item No. 9 DiSE Update – Sam Messam (SMe) and Steve Bucknall (SB) joined the call

PB provided a brief overview, noting that after the June 2025 Board meeting, the submitted paper presented several valid options but lacked a clear recommendation. This lack of clarity caused the discussions to lose focus. Since then, feedback from the DiSE academies raised further concerns, which have shaped the team's thinking. As a result, SM and SB are attending today's meeting to update the Board on developments since June.

SMe advised that the timeline outlined the procurement journey and key milestones, but following feedback from the DiSE academies who raised concerns about the tender process and proposed five recommendations, including a pause a reassessment of the program has been undertaken. Some of the points such as limited academy visits, are valid and have been acknowledged.

PB requested that the outcomes of the proposed 23rd July meeting be shared with the Board, recommending delaying the opening of the entry window until after that meeting.

Item No. 10 Anti-Doping – BA joined the meeting

BA advised that the purpose of the report is to inform the Board of Basketball England's (BE) anti-doping activity, as required to maintain compliance with the UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) Rules, noting the content of the report reiterating their strong support for the principles of "Clean Sport." BA requested that the Board reinforce their commitment to enforcing the UK Anti-Doping Rules and upholding the highest standards of integrity, fairness, and athlete welfare across all levels of the game.

The Board reviewed the AD Report 2024, noting the contents reiterating their support and approving the policy, advising that the Executive Board of BE remains fully committed to the principles of "Clean Sport" and enforcing the UK Antidoping Rules.

Item No. 11 Budget, Finance & Risk

CW gave an overview. The 2024/2025 budget was noted, and the 2025/2026 break-even budget was approved by the Board. AFR will now meet monthly, and new financial controls will be rolled out.

Item No. 12 EDI Committee

Discussed under item no. 8.

Item No. 13 People Committee

SM provide an overview of the People Committee activities.

Staffing Budget Update

SM advised the work has been undertaken on the staffing budget with a focus on strategic roles.

Exit Information Review

The People Committee will conduct a review of exit information to inform future processes.

Committee Support

NW will attend the People Committee and other committees, including policy review activities.

Committee Membership Updates

PB advised that JB will join the AFR Committee, which was approved by the Board. MNy will replace Russell Bell (Ex BE Board Member) on the BBF Board.

Item No. 14 Commercial Committee – MD joined the meeting

MD summarised the opportunities, noting that the retail operation is active but has room for increased productivity. The Board expressed its support for expanding the e-commerce component and recommended exploring alternative partners.

Item No. 15 AFR Committee

Discussed at item 11.

Item No. 16 Notes and Actions from Advisory Groups

The Board noted that the committees had not met since the last meeting.

Item No. 17 Any Other Business

There were no further items for discussion.

Item No. 18 Date of Next Meeting

15th / 16th October 2025.

END OF MEETING AT 14:10