

2021  
2026

# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY



**#LevelTheTable**



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# FOREWORD

**#LevelTheTable is Table Tennis England's new 5-year Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, supporting our commitment to tackle inequalities and ensuring that everyone involved in our sport is treated fairly, equitably, with dignity and respect.**



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by Sandra Deaton and Adrian Christy

Whilst we often celebrate the inclusive nature of the sport and previous plans have addressed the diversity of particular aspects of the sport or diversity and inclusion, this is the first time it has been put together in an aligned strategy.

We want to take this opportunity to thank all of those who played a part in formulating the strategy. Much of the work has been undertaken by a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy group established in November 2020 which included representation from the Board, staff, Members' Advisory Group (MAG) and British Para TT. There have been subgroups meeting regularly to share their knowledge, experiences and values, these focus groups included Women and Girls, Ethnically Diverse Communities and Disabled People.

We will continue to reach out to the table tennis community and beyond to listen, engage and have conversations to put in place the right type of support to see long term change and achieve the strategic goals set out, alongside the long term vision of gender parity. Table Tennis England recognise that some parts of the sport are more diverse than others and there are many examples of clubs and organisations doing some fantastic work to broaden the sports participant, volunteering, coaching and officiating base and we need to learn from these and share them across the table tennis community.

We should celebrate the positive difference table tennis can and does make across different communities and cultures. However, we must not take the 'potential' of the sport to be diverse and inclusive for granted. We must be pro-active in our approach, diversity and inclusion does not and will not happen by accident and we encourage our clubs, leagues, counties and regions to join us on this journey.

The role of clubs, leagues, counties and regions in the delivery of this strategy will be crucial, as well as the ability to work closely and connect with external partners. We are committed to supporting the education of coaches, technical officials and volunteers and recognise that everyone will have a different interpretation and understanding of gender parity and diversity and inclusion. Different parts of the sport and areas of the country will need to approach diversity and inclusion in different ways.

**Working together we will Level the Table and make table tennis a sport for all, for life.**

# INTRODUCTION

**Table Tennis England is the National Governing body for the sport of table tennis in England. We aspire to be recognised as a world leading National Governing Body, delivering a diverse and dynamic sport that transforms lives, connects communities, and achieves excellence. We work hard to provide opportunities for people to achieve and enjoy our sport. However, we recognise we have some improvements to make to ensure we are fully reflective of the people who live in England.**



Our Board has a fair representation of the communities we serve. Out of 12 members: 33% of our board are women and 25% are from Ethnically Diverse Communities, yet as we look across the spectrum of our members and organisation, we know that there are not enough Women and Girls, Disabled People and Ethnically Diverse Communities in our sport. We recognise that we need to improve on our person-centred approach and do more to build connections, understanding that intersectional diversity and spectrums exists.

People are not defined by a uniform characteristic; people are different and there is real value and beauty in that.

Everyone should consider themselves included and a part of this journey: younger and older, people with visible or hidden Disabilities, people who are Black, Asian, White from diverse ethnicities. Heterosexual women and men, LGBTQ+ people, trans people, travellers, people of different faiths, people of different health or socio-economic status, and people who think differently.

Creating safe and secure environments are the bedrock in which we will build success and wellbeing for all. This strategy recognises that there's life enhancing power in genuine equality, greater diversity and inclusion for all. We will be focusing our efforts to engage those

from all backgrounds and communities but we will have a really sharp focus on involving more women and girls in the game.

Women make up 51%\* of the population in England but only 12% of TTE members, 17% of coaches and just 3% of club or league chairs are female. Therefore, we will unapologetically focus on increasing women and girls' involvement in our sport and making table tennis a space where women and girls feel welcomed, valued, visible and have the opportunity to progress.

Through surveys and direct contact with our female members and women involved in the sport, we have a clear understanding that, for many people, table tennis looks and feels like a space designed and dominated by and for men. This doesn't negate that there are women and girls having fantastic experiences in the sport and that there are clubs, leagues, coaches and volunteers doing some great work to create inclusive spaces but, we cannot ignore that there are also women and girls having very bad experiences and who are being put off playing and participating. Our insight shows that females would like to engage more in our sport and when provided with the right opportunities, they do! So gender parity is not only important for our inclusivity agenda, but for the growth, development and future of our sport too.



Our commitment to women and girls does not mean that male participation becomes less important - we will continue to work hard to develop opportunities for men and boys too, but we must acknowledge the disparity that exists. We are therefore wholeheartedly committed to #LevelTheTable for women and girls and, going forwards, a much higher percentage of our time, funding and energy will be directed towards increasing opportunities for women and girls in our sport.

Whilst Women and Girls are one part of the Level the Table strategy; there is so much diversity and segmentation within this group which we will explore and address as part of working towards our long term vision of gender parity.

By intentionally removing barriers and providing more opportunities for women and girls, this will be a catalyst for growth and a much wider beneficial impact will be felt in all areas of the sport, contributing to the strategic goals set out in the Level the Table strategy.

# OUR EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION JOURNEY

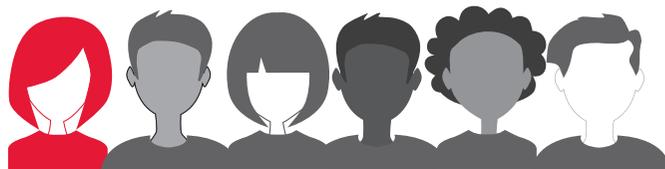
2016

- Para categories re-introduced at Senior National Championships



APR 2017

- Staff Inclusivity group established
- TTE Diversity action plan released



MAR 2019

- W&G action plan launched at the National Conference
- W&G ambassador and coach scholarships launched
- Covid put a temporary stop on all further developments

MAR 2021

- New online disability awareness training module launched



JAN 2021

- Focus groups established – W&G, Ethnically Diverse Communities, Disability



NOV 2020

- Diversity strategy group established



JUL 2021

- New Diversity, Inclusion and Volunteer Lead appointed
- The option to use pronouns in email signatures and virtual screen names launched

AUG 2021

- Approval for the modification of kit regulations to become more inclusive



SEPT 2021

- Membership survey with focus on diversity and inclusion
- 27th Sept - launch of Diversity and Inclusion strategy

OCT 2021

- Celebrating Black History Month



# CASE STUDY 1

## Increasing physical activity amongst stroke survivors with table tennis.



**“** I hadn't played table tennis for years and I wasn't sure if I could handle a bat and balls since my brain injury. I was really surprised that after a little practice I could play really quite well! It has helped with my hand eye coordination and it's a lot of fun

Headway Client

Regular physical activity can reduce the risk of stroke by 27%, whilst also contributing to lowering blood pressure and improving overall wellbeing. Table tennis is a low intensity, adaptable activity, which has been shown to improve mental wellbeing, cognitive function and build self-esteem. The social nature of the activity also helps to create friendships, and therefore reduce social isolation and loneliness.

Towards the end of 2018, Table Tennis England provided Preston's Heartbeat Cardiac Clinic with a Ping in the Community table tennis package, which provided them with everything needed to introduce social table tennis to service users.

Laura Coleman, Volunteering and Community

Officer at Stroke Association, hoped that introducing table tennis would:

- Improve physical activity
- Provide an opportunity to do something new
- Bring people together

Since having table tennis available at Heartbeat Cardiac Clinic, regular sessions are held at the end of communication groups, giving people a chance to wind down after an intense session. Table tennis has also been used by trainers within the specialist cardiac gym on a 1-to-1 basis with their service users, as well as staff enjoying the activity as part of their own wellbeing.



Case study download

**“** People have often thought they couldn't do certain things due to the effects of their stroke... the sheer joy and pleasure it has given them to realise that they can has been a real motivator for people to get involved.

Laura Coleman  
Stroke Association



# CASE STUDY 2



How the satellite clubs programme can provide new opportunities for young people who are often under-represented in sport to get active.



Providing relevant and inspiring opportunities for young people to participate in sport and be active is key in building physically active behaviours. The satellite club programme aims to provide new opportunities for young people to get active, by bridging the gap between school, college and community sport.

The satellite club programme seeks to develop new long term opportunities for young people aged 11-25 to be involved in sport and physical activity. Clubs and community organisations are

able to apply for funding to start new satellite sessions in order to target young people into regular physical activity.

Projects are funded to engage young people who are often under-represented in sport, including Women and Girls, Ethnically Diverse Communities and young people in areas of deprivation.

With the support of satellite club funding, Corby Town Table Tennis Club created a new session at Kingswood Secondary Academy. The session attracted around 40 young people, including 12-year old Mia who had not played table tennis before. Since joining the sessions Mia's involvement and commitment to table tennis has continued to grow.



“I like table tennis because it has improved my health both mentally and physically. But most of all, I like table tennis because it has boosted my confidence so much and it makes me proud of being part of the table tennis community.  
Mia - Corby Town Table Tennis Club

## Key Learnings

1. Satellite clubs provide an opportunity for young people to experience a new activity
2. Exit routes can allow participants to continue their player journey and further develop skills and regular playing habits
3. Transitioning into a club provides many more opportunities than just playing, including coaching and committee roles

Case study download



# #LevelTheTable

#LevelTheTable is our new 5-year Diversity and Inclusion Strategy supporting our commitment to tackle inequalities, ensuring that everyone involved in our sport are treated fairly, equitably, with dignity and respect.



We are using an evidence based approach to planning, implementing and evaluating outcomes.

Data will be collected so that we understand lived experiences within our sport. We will examine the rates of participation, enrolment, retention, progression, achievement and employability across, our immediate priority areas.

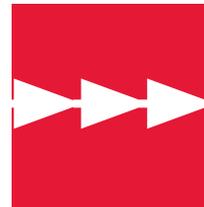
We have ambitions of learning and connecting with communities we do not currently serve and will implement initiatives to improve our current provisions.

A commitment to collaboration, continuous improvement and sharing best practice will be built into the governance arrangements.

We have five strategic goal and five phases which has a strong focus on Women and girls.



- Strategy will be delivered over 5 years



- Implemented via a phase system



- Phase system interlinks

# CONSULTATION

Who did we speak to when developing the plan?

Consultation in the development of this strategy was carried out with the following groups:

- Board strategy group
- MAG
- National Council
- British Para TT
- Staff members
- Membership survey and verbal consultation
- Ethnically Diverse Communities focus group
- Women and Girls focus group
- Disability focus group
- TASS Female Engagement Project
- Two club and coach engagement sessions



# MEASURING IMPACT

Our strategy is a commitment to a five-year journey to improve diversity and inclusion across our sport.

We will measure:



- Improved access of the sport



- The diversity of our communities



- Training attendance data



- Survey responses and engagement

The effectiveness and achievement of our goals for diversity and inclusion will be reviewed and reported on. The report will be provided to the Board, CEO and SLT. The review will focus on the implementation of the actions, the progress made and successes. It will also identify any adjustments required to improve effectiveness.



- A qualitative assessment of progress or achievement of the actions

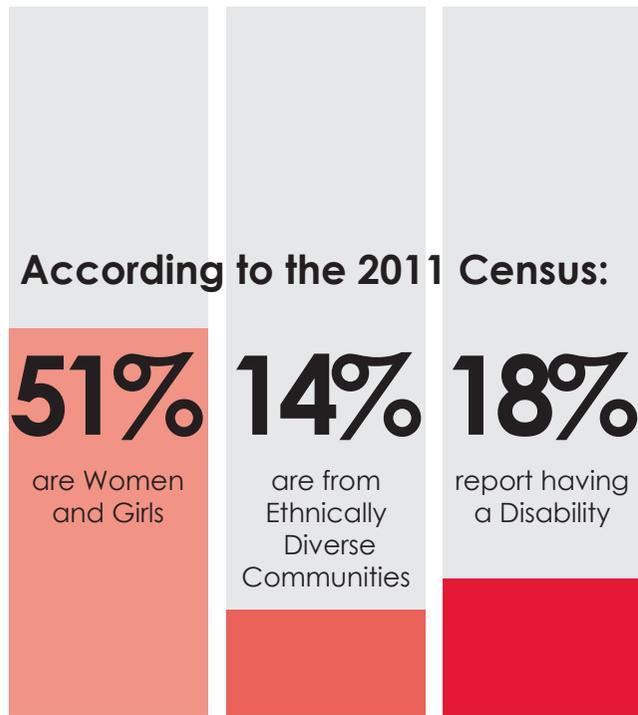


- A quantitative assessment of the impact of the strategy on employee perceptions and experience of the culture of the organisation

The outcome of the evaluation and review will guide the development of further action plans.

# REPORTING PROGRESS

To ensure we are meeting the goals of our strategy, it is important to benchmark our current position. Looking at priority areas – Women & Girls, Ethnically Diverse Communities and Disabled People – the following insight provides an indication of the diversity and inclusion among key groups at the time of launching #LevelTheTable.



The metrics displayed below were calculated using business data. The methods used for workings will be repeated on a bi-annual basis to measure impact and progress of the strategy. We have used a Red-Amber-Green (RAG) system to determine how the table tennis community compares with the national population based on statistics from the 2011 Census.

A reassessment of the RAG system will take place following the publication of findings from the 2021 Census. Metric updates will be used to support narrative progress reporting.

Moving forwards, we are keen to improve on the data capture in place to be able to report against fields where data is currently unknown and additional protected characteristics.



# REPORTING PROGRESS

	Women & Girls	Ethnically Diverse Communities	Disabled People
<b>Board</b> 12 people	33% (amber)	25% (green)	0% (red)
<b>National Council</b> 36 people	11% (red)	6% (red)	3% (red)
<b>Members Advisory Group</b> 16 people	19% (red)	19% (green)	0% (red)
<b>Other National Committees</b> 106 people	22% (red)	5% (red)	No current data
<b>Senior Leadership Team</b> 9 people	44% (green)	0% (red)	0% (red)
<b>Staff</b> 45 people	47% (green)	7% (red)	0% (red)
<b>Officials</b> 449 people	18% (red)	6% (red)	5% (red)
<b>Coaches</b> 2440 people	16% (red)	6% (red)	4% (red)
<b>Licensed Coaches</b> 445 people	16% (red)	9% (amber)	5% (red)
<b>Volunteers</b> 1259 people	13% (red)	2% (red)	4% (red)
<b>Members - Compete Plus</b> 2258 people	18% (red)	22% (green)	4% (red)
<b>Members - Compete</b> 18227 people	8% (red)	11% (amber)	3% (red)
<b>Members - Club Play</b> 3484 people	26% (red)	15% (green)	4% (red)
<b>Members - Supporter</b> 1220 people	27% (red)	9% (amber)	4% (red)
<b>Ping! players</b> 1674 people*	49% (green)	16% (green)	18% (green)
<b>Players - Talent &amp; Performance Pathway</b> 84 people	31% (amber)	14% (green)	4% (red)

## RAG system:

### Women and Girls 51% of the national population\*

- Green: 40% or more than (within 11% of the national population)
- Amber: from 30 to 39% (from 12 to 21% under the national population)
- Red: 29% or less than (more than 22% under the national population)

### Ethnically Diverse Communities 14% of the national population\*

- Green: 13% or more than (within 1% of the national population)
- Amber: from 9 to 12% (from 2 to 5% under the national population)
- Red: 8% or less than (more than 6% under the national population)

### Disabled People 18% of the national population\*

- Green: 13% or more than (within 5% of the national population)
- Amber: from 6 to 12% (from 6 to 12% under the national population)
- Red: 5% or less than (more than 13% under the national population)

\*according to the 2011 Census

NB: This table contains self-reported data, given in response to questions with an answer option of 'prefer not to say, which may lead to under-reporting. It is also important to note, in some cases, people will crossover between groups.

\*Based on a survey sample of all Ping! players.

# STRATEGIC GOAL 1

**We will continue to listen to, connect with and develop a deeper understanding of the experiences of different communities in our sport.**

To make improvements around diversity and to affect change, we need to understand the lived experiences of those in the sport or who we would like to engage in the future, to learn from and generate best practice and guidance for key stakeholders to implement in their own communities.

## **We will do this by:**

- Providing regular opportunities to continue the dialogue around sharing experiences. Being committed to listening to the thoughts, emotions and experiences of our communities.
- Developing a better understanding of members' views and attitudes towards diversity and inclusion.
- Developing a better understanding of communities, we don't currently support to learn how to improve our services.
- Reviewing and Implementing feedback and recommendations collected from TASS research.

## **Success will look like:**

- We will have digital platforms with adaptive services, where people can communicate and share information.
- We will have annual membership surveys, volunteer surveys and club audits.
- We will have partnered with organisations whose strategy aligns to our own - in tackling inequalities and getting people more active.
- Focus groups will support on future initiatives.
- We will have learned by experience and apply best practice and considerations to new and existing methods.
- We will have implemented findings from TASS research which includes female players in the performance pathway having their own camp.

# STRATEGIC GOAL 2

**We will educate and support staff, volunteers, coaches, officials, players, spectators, and the wider table tennis community about what diversity and inclusion means and how inclusive environments can be created.**

Many coaches or volunteers express the need to be more confident and knowledgeable in this area and focus groups with people from different communities have also raised that more education will help different communities feel more included in the sport.

## **We will do this by:**

- Supporting the education of volunteers, coaches, officials and staff, through resources and courses to better understand and improve knowledge and confidence around equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Creating more inclusive and welcoming environments to work, play, coach, volunteer and officiate in table tennis.
- Ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion is a part of everything we do, and it remains a critical area of work to be discussed and progressed across the sport.
- Working with the table tennis community to ensure that there is suitable kit/uniform in place and equipment for players, coaches, volunteers, officials and clubs.

## **Success will look like:**

- We will have new learning modules and dedicated learning zone space with supporting resources.
- We will meet the requirements of the new code for sports governance.
- We will have kit options to meet the needs of all genders and faiths.
- We will use equality impact assessment on all policies, procedures, products and programmes by 2025.
- We will ensure 100% of existing and new National Council, National Committee, and staff members have had training towards equality, diversity and inclusion.
- We will acknowledge key awareness days, including Black History Month, International Women's Day and work hard to showcase and celebrate stories all year round.

# STRATEGIC GOAL 3

**We will increase the diversity of volunteers, coaches, officials and staff across all levels to be more reflective of the sports participants and the population in England.**

The diversity of volunteers, coaches and officials involved in the sport at all levels is currently not representative of people playing table tennis or the wider population. There will need to be pro-active action to enable this change.

## **We will do this by:**

- Providing opportunities to increase the diversity of those in leadership roles at local and national level.
- Improving the diversity of the officiating and coaching workforce to better reflect the participants that play the sport and the wider England population through targeted initiatives and partnerships.
- Increasing the visibility of different communities within table tennis so there is a less intimidating first step on the ladder to become involved in table tennis.
- Reviewing our recruitment methods and improving the diversity of Table Tennis England to be reflective of the population we serve.

## **Success will look like:**

- We will have improved our visibility score across disabilities, Ethnically Diverse Communities and Women and Girls will improve from an average score of 38% in moderate visibility.
- We will increase our female tutors nationally, from 32% to 50%.
- We will have improved representation of Women and Girls, people from Ethnically Diverse Communities and Disabled People within national committee and network roles.
- We will have improved diversity within tutors, umpires, coaches and technical officials that is more reflective of society based on ONS data.
- We will have employees that are reflective of society based on ONS data, by 2032.

# STRATEGIC GOAL 4

**We will continue to grow participation in the sport to be more reflective of the different backgrounds and communities in England.**

Participation in the sport is somewhat diverse, but better diversity exists at a social and recreational level. We want to increase and improve opportunities for a diverse range of participants to participate in table tennis. It is vitally important as a sport we adapt to the individuals to be part of the table tennis community and not expect individuals to adapt for the sport, so it is more representative of the general population.

## **We will do this by:**

- Supporting the table tennis community to grow the number of people playing table tennis.
- Improving the diversity of the officiating and coaching workforce to better reflect the participants that play the sport and the wider England population through targeted initiatives and partnerships.
- Working to ensure that opportunities to play, coach or officiate in the sport are economically efficient to ensure that cost is not a barrier to participation.
- Working across the sport to ensure that playing kit is made available at all levels of the game that is suitable for people from all backgrounds and communities.

## **Success will look like:**

- We will have 200 Essential Schools Members by 2026.
- We will have 100% of current English Para players profiles on the Table Tennis England website.
- Table tennis will reach communities the sport typically hasn't connected with.
- We will have improved diversity of members and people who participate in our programmes that is reflective of the population in England.

# STRATEGIC GOAL 5

**We will establish clear processes and support mechanisms to act and challenge discriminatory behaviour.**

The Table Tennis England membership surveys and focus groups evidence that a significant proportion of the table tennis community face challenges taking part in the sport because of their protected characteristics. It is vital that people know where to go to report and access support when this happens.

## **We will do this by:**

- Implementing and promoting a systemic zero tolerance approach to discriminatory behaviour with a clear process for reporting, sanctioning and education.
- Providing support for people who are affected by discriminatory behaviour.
- Updating our current provisions ensuring this is communicated widely.

## **Success will look like:**

- Reporting channels will have been reviewed ready for conversations around adapting them, so they continue to be fit for purpose.
- We will have an accessible resource that can be shared after each report.
- We will have internal staff members and external members trained as mental health first aiders in partnership with MHFA.
- We will host one annual campaign that helps promote our zero-tolerance approach.
- We will have clear sanctions for anyone who displays discriminatory behaviour.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To create sustainable change, we will need to continue our journey of transforming table tennis into an accessible and inclusive sport for all.



Our guiding principles are:

- 1.** Be pro-active in our approach and directly support to enable programmes, clubs, leagues, volunteer opportunities, schools' engagement, competitive and talent & performance pathways to be truly inclusive. Supporting the local delivery structures to embed diversity and inclusion through research and insight.
- 2.** Engage with communities to understand their lived experiences in table tennis, recognising inequality gaps that exist and which, in some cases, have been widened by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3.** Lobby nationally and internationally to ensure that the sport is fully inclusive and that the equipment, kit and materials required is accessible and fits the needs of what is required for the sport.
- 4.** Expose, challenge and take action across all aspects of discrimination and unfair practice.
- 5.** Ensure that we recognise the contribution to the sport from all communities, whilst raising the profile of underrepresented communities in the sport to be reflective of the population.

## Why are you focusing on Women and Girls, Disabled people and Ethnically Diverse Communities?

Our data tells us we have some gaps in these areas, so we will be working intersectional across these immediate areas to help tackle inequalities.

## What are the benefits of supporting the D&I strategy and how much additional work is this going to be?

There are many benefits such as reaching wider audiences and creating inclusive environments that people will want to be a part of. Diversity and inclusion should form part of solutions, rather than an 'add on'.

## What about those current members who have been affected by Covid?

We appreciate that Covid-19 has affected our members and the communities they serve. Data suggests that there are certain parts of the community that has been disproportionately affected.

For more information on the data collected [Sport England : The impact of coronavirus on activity levels revealed](#)

For grant support – [Our funds | Sport England](#)

If you can't accept National Lottery funding for religious reasons, Sport England do have limited scope to fund smaller projects through community asset funds or their small grants programme from other sources. A supporting letter will need to go alongside an application.

[Active Partnerships](#) have a funding pot of money where people in the community can access support to help launch projects etc. Each Active partnership runs slightly different so we would encourage looking on your local active partnership website.

## How can I get involved?

This strategy is for and about our community and we are encouraging ideas and engagement at all levels. Please email:

[diversity@tabletennisengland.co.uk](mailto:diversity@tabletennisengland.co.uk)

or telephone 01908 206680 where you can find out more about our forums and share any ideas you may have about how we improve experiences for our communities.

We will also be sending out updates, so please look out for ongoing communications.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1

### Terminology

#### DIVERSITY

Diversity is the mix of people

#### EQUALITY

The fair treatment of everyone and is often linked to the legislative framework in the UK, The equality act 2010

#### INCLUSION

The culture in which a mix of people feel comfortable and confident to be themselves. With barriers removed.

#### EQUITY

Making sure people have access to get the same opportunity

