



Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)

October 2025

About British Orienteering

At British Orienteering, we believe orienteering is one of the most rewarding adventure sports¹. It is a unique combination of physical challenge and mental strategy, taking participants into beautiful and varied landscapes while developing resilience, decision making, and confidence. Above all, orienteering is a sport for everyone, it can be enjoyed by people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

British Orienteering is the national governing body responsible for the development, promotion, and administration of the sport throughout the United Kingdom and the Isle of Man. We work with approximately 100 affiliated clubs and a community of more than 8,500 members, supporting participation of over 150,000 runs at registered events, per year.

Our Strategic Vision – *Thriving Clubs for a New Generation*

Our strategic plan, **Thriving Clubs for a New Generation**, sets out a bold vision for the future of orienteering. Developed through extensive collaboration with members, athletes, volunteers, staff, and key stakeholders, it outlines how we will grow the sport, make it more accessible and inclusive, and ensure its relevance for future generations.

We aim to engage with wider and more diverse communities, removing barriers to participation and providing lifelong pathways for involvement — from grassroots entry points through to elite performance. Our ambition is to ensure that orienteering is not only sustainable, but thriving: a sport that inspires, includes, and welcomes all.

Vision

Thriving Clubs for a New Generation

Mission

Clubs are the heart and soul of our sport. We will ensure they have the support, resources, and knowledge to maintain, develop and grow. By empowering clubs to welcome a new generation of participants, we will ensure that British Orienteering remains an inclusive, modern adventure sport delivered in remarkable venues and settings.

We recognise that this is a journey for our sport and in this Policy has focussed on being inclusive and accessible which will achieve better engagement from our membership and in the long term provide better opportunities from those sectors not previously engaged.

Our Strategic Approach

Drawing on the experience of our members and volunteers, external research, and Board leadership, British Orienteering has identified four strategic priorities to guide our work:

- Changing perceptions of orienteering and increasing its visibility and appeal,
- Creating engaging, inclusive experiences that attract and retain participants,
- Building lifelong pathways for competition, coaching, volunteering, and performance,

¹ Sports Structures Survey 2021

We found that approximately 92% of survey respondents would like to participate in orienteering.

Sport England's Active Lives surveys.

Survey results (Nov 2020-21), 174,200 people participated in orienteering in the last year

- Strengthening the governance, culture, and foundations of the sport.

We recognise the challenges we face — including demographic shifts, competition from other outdoor activities, and evolving participant expectations. However, recent changes in leadership and a rapidly changing social landscape present a unique opportunity to redefine and reposition orienteering as a forward-looking, inclusive sport that embraces technology and celebrates the outdoors.

Our Commitment to Accessibility and Inclusion

Central to our strategy is the belief that orienteering should reflect the communities it serves. This means:

1. Clubs that mirror the diversity of their local areas
2. Clubs equipped with the knowledge, resources, and confidence to engage and support new community groups
3. A more positive and accurate perception of the sport among the public
4. A governing body that leads by example as an inclusive and equitable organisation

We are grateful for the support of partners such as Sport England and Sport Northern Ireland. While additional resources will be needed to fully deliver our ambitions, we are committed to prioritising investment where it will have the greatest impact.

Message from the Board

“Orienteering is a sport for everyone — and it is our responsibility to ensure that everyone feels welcome. We are proud of the progress we have made in embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion across our governance, projects, and programmes. Yet we also recognise that there is more to do.”

British Orienteering is committed to creating an environment that celebrates diversity, champions equality, and actively challenges discrimination in all its forms. We understand that barriers to participation are often linked to background, identity, and personal circumstances. Breaking down these barriers requires systemic change — across leadership, decision-making, delivery, and culture.

This Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan builds on the progress we have already made and sets out the next phase of our journey. Aligned with the Code for Sports Governance the requirements for Tier 3 funded organisations, it provides a roadmap for how we will embed inclusion into everything we do.

Our ambition is simple: for orienteering to be recognised — nationally and internationally — as a truly accessible, inclusive, and welcoming adventure sport. We are excited to continue this journey together, with our clubs, members, partners, and the next generation of orienteers.

Rob Woods
Chair

Executive Summary

British Orienteering's strategic focus is to support clubs in becoming thriving, inclusive, and accessible communities. This will be achieved by empowering clubs to take ownership of their development, underpinned by strong governance and evidence-based decision-making.

We remain committed to fostering diversity across both participation and the workforce, ensuring our sport is welcoming to all.

Recognising the limitations of available resources, British Orienteering will prioritise support for clubs and projects that demonstrate potential for meaningful impact. These efforts will be amplified through the sharing of best practices via webinars and other resources, enabling broader influence across the sport.

We acknowledge that the successful implementation of this Action Plan will require substantial physical and financial investment. In particular, programmes such as the performance pathway will need additional funding and support to become truly inclusive and accessible, as they are currently reliant on self-funding.

Current Position – Diversity and Inclusion within British Orienteering

British Orienteering is committed to promoting diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity across all aspects of the organisation. This commitment is demonstrated through both internal practices and external communications, ensuring that our leadership, membership, and activities reflect the communities we serve and foster an inclusive culture throughout the sport.

At Board level, British Orienteering continues to prioritise greater diversity and gender balance through transparent and inclusive recruitment processes. When appointing new Board members, the organisation engages with external recruitment agencies such as Sporting Equals and Perrett Laver to help attract a wide range of applicants with diverse skills, experiences, and backgrounds. This approach supports our ongoing aim of building a leadership team that is both representative and forward-looking.

Across the wider membership, the most recent figures show:

- **Male membership:** 61% (56% among juniors)
- **Female membership:** 39% (44% among juniors)
- **Average member age:** 47

Our current Board is made up of 11 members:

- **Male membership:** 73% (8)
- **Female membership:** 27% (3)

These figures provide useful context for ongoing efforts to improve representation and participation across all demographics.

To strengthen this work, British Orienteering has implemented clear recruitment and selection policies that emphasise equality, diversity, and inclusion. These policies ensure that opportunities are openly advertised through appropriate platforms such as Sporting Equals and mainstream job sites including Indeed, helping the organisation reach and attract individuals from a broader pool of candidates.

Transparency and accountability are key principles in our approach. Information on British Orienteering's activities to foster diversity and inclusion, including updates on progress made against identified actions, is published annually within the British Orienteering Annual Report, available publicly on our website.

Looking ahead, British Orienteering remains dedicated to building a leadership and membership profile that better reflects the diversity of both the national and local orienteering communities. This ambition extends beyond the Board, embedding diversity and inclusion as a core value throughout all levels of the organisation, from governance and staffing to volunteer engagement and event participation.

Strategic Themes

1. Changing the Perception

British Orienteering believes that if we change perceptions about orienteering, increase accessibility and deliver engaging experiences, more people from wider communities will have the opportunity to participate and be hooked on the sport.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurement	Outcome / Success Indicators
1.1	Understand the needs of diverse community groups, families, and young adults to shape inclusive messaging.	Partnerships Manager	Y1 & ongoing	Annual engagement survey; number of focus groups held; demographic data collected.	At least 3 new target-group insights collected annually, informing campaigns and programmes.
1.2	Improve insight and engagement with current membership (socioeconomic, health, ethnicity, age).	Club Support Manager	Y1 & ongoing	Annual member demographic report published; % increase in data completion.	80% of member records include diversity data by 2026.
1.3	Capture insights into audience segments most likely to engage with orienteering and monitor future engagement success.	Partnerships Manager	Y1 & ongoing	Quarterly insight reports; tracking engagement levels.	20% increase in participation from two priority segments by 2028.
1.4	Support clubs to create inclusive marketing collateral that reflects community diversity.	Club Support Manager	Y1 & ongoing	Number of clubs supported; number of inclusive campaigns run.	50% of clubs adopt updated inclusive marketing materials by 2026.
1.5	Centrally commission inclusive marketing resources targeting new community groups.	Communications Officer	Y1 & ongoing	Number of campaigns delivered; reach metrics.	25% increase in engagement from underrepresented communities by 2027.
1.6	Refresh brand visuals, language, and values to reflect diversity and inclusion.	Communications Officer	Y2 & ongoing	Completion of brand review; new brand guidelines implemented.	New brand positively rated as “inclusive” by 80% of surveyed members.
1.7	Use projects like Find Your Way and Derby Asylum Seekers to target specific communities with clear pathways into the sport.	Development Officer	Y1–Y4	Participation numbers;	300+ new participants from priority groups annually.
1.8	Share best practice and deliver club EDI marketing training through webinars and toolkits.	Partnerships & Club Support Managers	Y1 & ongoing	Number of resources shared; webinar attendance.	75% of clubs report improved confidence in inclusive outreach.

2. Create Engaging Experiences

Sport needs to continually evolve to stay relevant to people's lives. They tap into their desire for excitement whilst offering personal growth and a sense of community.

We believe orienteering has a lot of potential. It must continue to listen to communities, participants and embrace new formats, making the offer more attractive, accessible and inclusive.

Once engaged, clear pathways to progress in competition or volunteering will enable people to enjoy the sport for life, whilst stronger foundations and club support will secure orienteering's future.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurement	Outcome / Success Indicators
2.1	Pilot new competition and delivery formats for new audiences (e.g. urban sprints, family formats).	Events Development Officer	Y2 & ongoing	Number of pilots; participant feedback.	At least 2 new formats piloted annually with 70% positive feedback.
2.2	Promote MapRun as accessible entry points for underrepresented groups.	Development Officer	Y1 & ongoing	Number of participants;	20% increase in MapRun usage among non-members by 2027.
2.3	Build partnerships with community groups and other sports.	Partnerships Manager & Development Officer	Y3	Number of formal partnerships.	2+ partnership agreements leading to co-delivered events.
2.4	Develop targeted offers for priority groups with tailored marketing.	Development Officers	Y3–4	Number of offers launched; participant demographics.	At least 2 new tailored offers per year.
2.5	Advocate for outdoor access rights for community groups.	Development Officer	Y2	Number of partner activities; policy development.	Increased access permissions in at least two regions.
2.6	Improve newcomer experience at club level.	Development Officer	Y1 & ongoing	Newcomer satisfaction survey results; retention rate.	20% improvement in first-year retention by 2027.
2.7	Implement appropriate Trans policy in line with legislation and Trans accessibility.	Board	Y1	Policy adoption and communication.	100% of events compliant by 2026.
2.8	Use technology (apps, digital mapping) to enhance participation.	Development Officer	Y1 & ongoing	Tech adoption rate; participant satisfaction.	40% of clubs using regular feedback surveys by 2026.
2.9	Support clubs to enhance training and social offers.	Club Support Team	Y2–3	Number of clubs supported; satisfaction scores.	70% of clubs report improved newcomer integration.

3. Strengthen Lifelong Pathways

Orienteering provides lifelong enjoyment through competition, self-improvement, health, community and volunteering.

However, not everybody is always motivated to stay in the sport, so strong alternative pathways are required to keep people enjoying orienteering for life.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurement	Outcome / Success Indicators
3.1	Create interlinked pathways for competitors, coaches, officials, and volunteers.	Competitions Committee	Y3	Pathway framework published; participation data.	15% increase in pathway retention by 2027.
3.2	Deliver comprehensive volunteer training for clubs.	Club Support Team	Y2	Number of volunteers trained.	Create a volunteer recording function on the database.
3.3	Review coaching and officials' pathways for inclusivity and accessibility.	Club Support Team	Y3	Pathways updated; participant demographics.	10% increase in underrepresented groups accessing pathways.
3.4	Share best practice via webinars on community engagement.	Club Support Team	Y1 & ongoing	Number of webinars; attendance and feedback.	80% satisfaction rate and increased replication of good practice.
3.5	Build school and junior links to grow youth participation.	BSOA & Club Support Team	Y3	Number of schools engaged; junior membership growth.	15% increase in junior members by 2027.
3.6	Provide hardship fund support for talented athletes.	Performance Manager	Y1 & ongoing	Fund allocation and usage data.	100% of eligible athletes supported.
3.7	Create volunteer recognition and inclusion awards.	Club Support Team	Y3	Number of nominations; event attendance.	30+ annual nominations and strong media coverage.
3.8	To share inclusion & best practice resources to clubs.	Communications Officer	Ongoing	Resource usage metrics; feedback surveys.	70% of clubs report improved inclusion knowledge.

4. Provide Foundations for Success

British Orienteering is committed to fostering a culture of inclusion, respect, and equity across all levels of the organisation. This action plan outlines the key steps the organisation will take to strengthen diversity and inclusion within its Board, senior management, and wider workforce. The focus is on embedding inclusive leadership behaviours, broadening representation in decision-making, and ensuring governance structures reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

The actions below are designed to move beyond compliance and towards sustained cultural change, building an organisation where diversity is not only represented but actively valued, and where inclusion informs every aspect of governance, recruitment, and development. Progress will be monitored annually, with clear accountability at Board and senior leadership levels.

	Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Measurement	Outcome / Success Indicators
4.1	Embed strong governance practices that promote accountability, transparency, and inclusion within Board and senior leadership processes.	CEO / Board	Y1 & ongoing	Annual governance reviews and internal audits.	Annual governance reviews and internal audits.
4.2	Undertake a comprehensive EDI audit to establish a baseline of diversity across the Board, senior management, and staff, using results to inform targeted improvement actions.	CEO	Y1 & ongoing	Annual EDI data collected and analysed.	Annual EDI data collected and analysed.
4.3	Integrate EDI into the regular rhythm of governance by making it a standing item at all Board and senior leadership meetings to ensure continuous focus and accountability.	CEO / Chair	Y1 & ongoing	Board and committee minutes reviewed annually.	Board and committee minutes reviewed annually.
4.4	Develop and implement an EDI learning and development plan for all staff, Board, and senior leaders, including inclusive leadership, allyship, and lived experience training.	CEO	Y1 & ongoing	Training completion records and feedback surveys.	Training completion records and feedback surveys.
4.5	Share annual progress and learning through an internal and external EDI impact report, highlighting achievements, challenges, and next steps.	CEO / Chair	Y1 & ongoing	Annual report publication and engagement metrics.	Annual report publication and engagement metrics.
4.6	Adopt inclusive recruitment practices for Board, senior management, and staff positions by widening candidate sourcing, using diverse panels, and reviewing role profiles for accessibility and appeal.	CEO	Y1 & ongoing	Recruitment diversity statistics and feedback.	Recruitment diversity statistics and feedback.

4.7	Conduct an annual review of Board subcommittees and volunteer structures to identify and address barriers to participation, ensuring diverse voices are represented in decision-making.	CEO / Board	Y1	Committee membership data and qualitative feedback.	Committee membership data and qualitative feedback.
4.8	Monitor and analyse participation and diversity trends across all programmes, using insights to guide Board priorities and inclusive engagement strategies.	Development Officer	Y1 & ongoing	Annual diversity and participation reports.	Annual diversity and participation reports.

Appendix- Overview of Find Your Way Project & Big League

COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in technological developments in the sport. One of these was the use of GPS technology and MapRun App to create orienteering events which can be set up and used with limited infrastructure. This presents an opportunity to bring orienteering to local communities.

In 2020, a pilot project by Pendle Forest Orienteers delivered in 4 parks, reached 24 schools, and engaged 180 new participants.

The funding will support the development of this project in areas where traditional orienteering has not taken place and provide a low-cost opportunity for all and accessible for those from socio-economically deprived communities.

Why is it important to act now and what are the consequences of not doing so?

Last year 92% of clubs attended training on these technological developments and 2,091 virtual orienteering courses have been mapped. Map downloads/Participation in 2020 was 27,018.

Without this project the reach of these resources is limited. Countless opportunities to be active locally will be missed.

Acting now allows us to capitalise on technical expertise and up-to-date mapped courses, reach new communities and establish this form of orienteering as an accessible and inclusive option for being physically active.

It allows us to engage with less active groups in a way that can inform wider development and measurement of impact within the sport.

How does this work?

Once MapRun courses are set up, activity can be done in the individual's own/families time, it fits around different lifestyle constraints than traditional orienteering events.

A reward system based on the number of courses pupils completing the courses, puts the focus on active involvement rather than speed. This ensures participants accrue points for their school while taking the course at a pace which suits them.

The project will provide an additional trained resource of teachers in the local community.

Those that do not have access to smartphones, schools and clubs can offer the same opportunity by downloading a printed map.

The impact the project could have on under representative groups.

The British Orienteering project will focus in previously under-representative area and in areas of high deprivation to try orienteering and join their local club.

The project aims to challenge existing perceptions of the sport, positioning orienteering as a sport/activity for anyone regardless of background, ability or gender, reduce social isolation, increase activity and improve levels of social engagement in the outdoors.

The project supports and provides "door-step" provision of the sport and involves young people positively engaging the green spaces of their local community and providing a positive, memorable experience.

It will provide a model for future development for clubs.

Outline the expected social and financial return of this project.

Outputs

- Number/gender of individuals and engagement
- Volunteering hours
- Schools and teachers engaged

Within this working with ECORYS or other agency we will develop a methodology to measure social impact on the following areas:

Qualitative Outputs

Individual Development

- Lifetime physical activity during project and future intentions
- Improved confidence
- Improved Personal Development

Mental Wellbeing

- Feeling of wellbeing or happiness

Social Development

- People exploring their local areas/community/green spaces

Post Project benefits

- Increased door-step provision, locally trained teachers, understanding of how to communicate and work with under-represented groups.
- Potential for permanent courses in local parks
- Development of Social Impact investment model



Case Study:

Orienteering in schools hits new audience and new areas

Springwell school took the top spot at the Big League but the sport of orienteering wins the hearts and minds of over 1000 children

The Big League

The Outdoor Classroom app uses the foundation of orienteering to create educational courses for pupils with courses that are designed by teachers who include their lesson plan within, combining physical activity with the school curriculum.

The Big League was a free to access, national virtual orienteering competition to encourage schools to increase pupils' physical activity and promote positive health and well-being, through the curriculum.

1328 unique pupils participating

1284 km completed

Reaching new communities with the top five schools:

- 2 schools have over 90% of their pupils from an Ethnically Diverse Community with an average of 60.5%.
- 3 schools were above the UK average for Free School Meals (23.8%)
- 4 schools are above the UK Average (20.2 %) for First Language Other Than English, with 2 schools having over 80% of pupils.
- 2 schools were above the UK average for SEN Pupils (13%) .



	EDC	FLTE	SEN	FSM	PLTE	SEN
1 SPRINGWELL SCHOOL	5	94.4	80.5	80.8	8	%
2 WALLSLEY SCHOOL	1	80.5	28.8	80.8	8	%
3 HOLY TRINITY C of E	2	57.2	22.8	28.4	15.2	%
4 EMLEWOOD JUNIORS	5	8	31.4	33.4	11	%
5 HAYFIELD COURT PRIMARY	6	44.8	14.7	28.4	5	%

EDC - Ethnically Diverse Communities FLTE - First Language Other Than English SEN - Special Educational Needs FSM - Free School Meals



Case Study: Introducing orienteering to asylum seeker and refugee communities

Derwent Valley Orienteers (DVO) found success in a community new to orienteering and the impact has seen our wonderfully accessible sport being truly inclusive.

Derbyshire Refugee Solidarity (DRS):

DVO registered for Beat the Streets (BTS) as a club and a volunteer within the club registered the DRS as an organisation. The event took place over a 6 week block and the club lead a group of asylum seekers (approx. 4-10 each week), visiting local parks and urban neighbourhoods to locate some of the 261 'beatboxes' around the city of Derby. Outside of the organised event the individuals were able to access the event in their own time and many chose to do this. Building on this Derwent Valley orienteers (DVO) also:

- Placed 6-control route around the building where DRS meet that can be used with pin punch controls.
- Have taken the group on a permanent course that they can now access themselves.
- Given free run vouchers to all participants and their family for the DVO park

SUCCESS

Derbyshire Refugee Solidarity (DRS) placed 2nd in the Community Groups category and someone from DRS won the individual category (there were 28,000 entries in this category). With the prize vouchers DRS purchased some recreation activities for the nearby asylum seekers hostel.

Upbeat Communities:

DVO also worked with Upbeat Communities, a Derby-based charity that welcomes refugees and asylum seekers, empowering them to thrive as they rebuild their lives. They delivered a 2 hour Easter holiday activity for 20 children, aged 7-11 from Syria, Afghanistan, El Salvador, Congo, Sudan and Iran. There was a great cross over focus on finding places on an ordinance survey map, an ordinance survey jigsaw puzzle before a small 5x5 maze and dibber relay.





Case Study:

Including accessible
courses in urban events

Claro orienteering club produced a fantastic urban weekend with a difference which introduced a path through for all.

The City Race Euro Tour came to Yorkshire with over 750 participants tackling the courses set at the backdrop of Knaresborough Castle on day 1 and amongst Harrogate's attractions on day 2.

Claro orienteering club organised this fantastic event and stepped up to the mark to make their event an amazingly accessible one. Together with short and long courses from juniors to an 85+ category they also organised a route that was accessible to those with limited mobility and wheelchair users.

The accessible course was part of the urban event on day 2 and proved a fantastic course, whatever your age and experience, with many interesting control sites, thanks to kind permissions from council offices, many hotels, churches and even Claro's friends and families' own back gardens!!

The accessible course was free to access for all participants thanks to the kind support of North Yorkshire Council.

Sponsorship from HMCA, Altra, Up & Running, Harrogate Chocolate Factory, Slingsby, Yorkshire Tea and Cold Bath Brewing made the event into a spectacle and a great template for other clubs to replicate!

What a great advertisement for the sport.

The competitors certainly appreciated the accessible course



"Thank you very much for providing both the facilities and course at the Harrogate weekend. I think it was a great step forward."



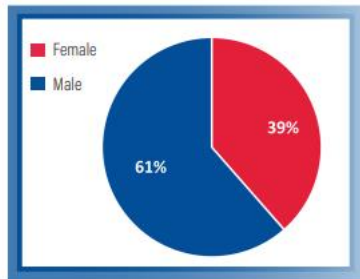
"I would like to thank you, and everyone involved in today's event. We really enjoyed the accessible course, and we are over the moon with the certificate and goodie bag."



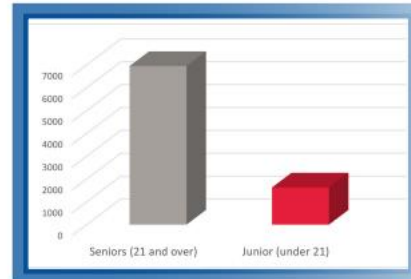
"Well that was fantastic – an event that my family could all take part in."

Membership Data

Male and Female Orienteers



Seniors and Juniors



Age breakdown of membership

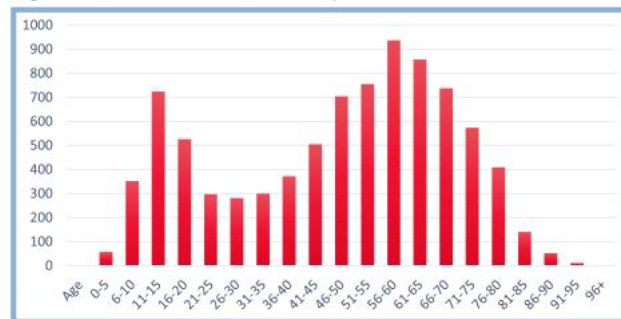
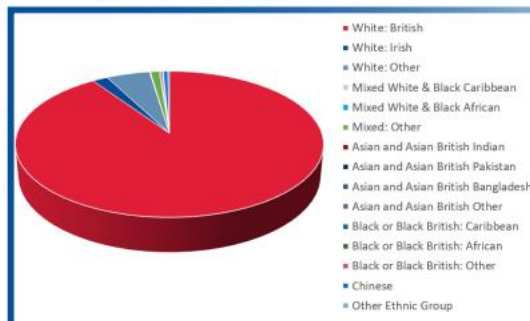


Image: An orienteer at the British Relay Championships 2022. Image credit: Robert Lines.

Ethnicity of membership



10.14% of members have a declared health condition.

