



wesport

INSPIRING ACTIVE LIVES

Governance Statement

2022-23

Wesport Governance Statement April 2022 – March 2023

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This document can be made available in alternative formats upon request

Introduction

Wesport is a Registered Charity (no. 1114495) & Company Limited by Guarantee (no. 05794916) and fulfils the role of the Active Partnership for the West of England, which covers Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. Wesport works with a network of organisations across this area.

Wesport is comprised of & governed by a Memorandum of Understanding and Articles of Association, and the non-executive independent Board of Trustees.

(Where the term “Independent” is used with regard to Wesport Trustees, the definition from Sport England’s Code of Sports Governance applies:

“Independent - a person is independent if they are free from any close connection to the organisation and if, from the perspective of an objective outsider, they would be viewed as independent. A person may still be deemed to be ‘independent’ even if they are a member of the organisation and/or play the sport. Examples of a ‘close connection’ include:

(A) they are or have within the last four years been actively involved in the organisation’s affairs, e.g. as a representative of a specific interest group within the organisation such as a sporting discipline, a region or a home country;

(B) they are or have within the last four years been an employee of the organisation; or

(C) they have close family ties with any of the organisation’s directors or senior employees.”)

Wesport aims to coordinate and support a range of organisations to improve the delivery of sport and physical activity initiatives, in order to have a positive impact on the lives of people and communities of the West of England. Wesport’s role requires significant networking and a collaborative approach linking sporting, cultural and business outcomes.

Wesport Mission, Vision, and Values

Wesport's vision is: Inspire active lives, creating the conditions wherever possible to help everyone to move more.

Wesport will work towards this vision by influencing decision makers at all levels, exploring opportunities for collaboration, working to develop and improve high quality, inclusive opportunities for sport and physical activity.

Wesport's mission is: Establishing the conditions for long-term change, enabling more people to be physically active, inclusive for all.

This describes what Wesport aims to achieve in the long-term and serves as a guide for choosing our current and future courses of action.

Wesport aims to build additional local, regional and national collaborations that will enable more (and better) sport and physical activity.

Wesport delivers national programmes as part of the Active Partnership network and local initiatives.

The Wesport team subscribes to the following organisational **values**:

- We are a team of people with a passion for sport and physical activity, which is at the heart of all we do.
- Collaboration is key; we know when to take the lead and understand when someone else is better placed to do so.
- We are proud to work for Wesport and we place value in the work we do. We are always seeking new ways to make a difference.
- Teamwork is vitally important – we support one another to get the job done, with honesty and commitment.
- We are people-centred; aiming to improve local communities by working with them.

The full strategy can be found at: <https://www.wesport.org.uk/about-us/strategy/>

Board Meetings & Membership

In the financial year 2022-23, four Board meetings were held (one per quarter). These were all held in person (in the previous year, some had been online due to the pandemic).

The Wesport Trust Board determines the strategic direction of the Trust, including setting the 5-year strategy & advising on the annual Operations Plan. They also provide accountability and support across all areas of the Trust, with a particular focus on finance, safeguarding, risk, and governance.

Membership of the Wesport Trust Board was as follows (all roles are non-executive and independent):

Name (role)	Notes
Sue Dors (Vice-Chair / Senior Independent Director, Portfolio Holder for Safeguarding [Safeguarding Champion] & Equality)	Took on temporary Chair role from 26 th January 2021 – November 2022. Reverted back to Vice-Chair at that point.
Paul Harrod (Portfolio Holder for Risk)	
Anna Hall (Portfolio Holder for Internal Controls)	
Tabinda Rashid-Fadel	
Simon Russell	
Guy Buckland (Chair)	Appointed as Chair in November 2022
Will Brown (Portfolio Holder for Finance)	

0 resignations from the Board took place in 2022-23. Recruitment for new Trustees will be looked at in 2023-24.

Committee Meetings

The Audit Committee meeting took place in July 2022. The notes from this meeting were circulated to the full Board, and the final accounts were approved for sign off at the July 2022 Board meeting.

The Nominations Committee did not meet as no recruitment took place, & Board discussions around Trustee recruitment agreed this would fall into next year (2023-24).

The Risk & Internal Controls Committee met in June 2022, August 2022, October 2022, and February 2023.

Trustee Biographies

A list of the current Trustees & their biographies can be found on the Wesport website at: <https://www.wesport.org.uk/about-us/our-board/>

Conflicts of Interest

These are declared by all Trustees as part of the recruitment process and again at every Board meeting as a standing agenda item. It is noted that Trustees are appointed as non-executive individuals rather than representatives of any organisation that they may work for in a professional or voluntary capacity.

The BDO report (see BDO section under Governance Updates later in this document) has highlighted that all interests should be declared, not just those with potential conflicts. This will be reviewed & updated accordingly in 2023-24.

Skills Matrix

As part of an annual review of the Board, the Skills Matrix is also reviewed. This is taken into consideration when any Trustee recruitment is being advertised to ensure that there is a broad range of skills and expertise available on the Wesport Trust Board.

2023-24 will see Trustee recruitment taking place, & the skills matrix & associated Trustee recruitment documentation was reviewed at the Risk & Internal Controls Committee on February 2023.

It is important to ensure there is a balance between seeking specialist knowledge & skills versus a broader range of knowledge & skills.

Wesport Trust Board Equality & Diversity

The Board continues to recognise the importance of diversity in the membership of the Board as well as the Senior Management Team (SMT) of the Trust.

Wesport has always had a strong commitment to equality & diversity, including achieving and maintaining the Equality Standard.

The Wesport Board has adopted Sport England's Code of Sports Governance targets of achieving at least 30% of each gender on its Board, along with a target to increase diversity on the Board (including, but not limited to, Trustees that identify as having a culturally diverse background, & those with a disability).

The recruitment for new Trustees continues to be via open recruitment and shared with all networks with whom Wesport has access. The shortlisting is completed purely on a skills basis, comparing their application against the role description, and all equality & diversity monitoring information is removed from applications prior to shortlisting.

Wesport has a Board Diversity Action Plan which sets out how the Wesport Trust Board will improve the overall diversity of the Board.

This is important for several reasons:

- Many charities risk a disconnect between Board members and the beneficiaries of their services. A more diverse range of Trustees helps to ensure that a charity is fair & open in all its dealings, e.g. delivering services or providing grants
- A more diverse Board can increase public confidence and accountability
- Different types of Trustees with differing backgrounds, life experiences, and skills helps to keep the Board fresh with new ideas & provides a wider range of experience to support the Wesport team in their work
- Having that broader range of skills, knowledge, and experience should give the Board greater flexibility to overcome challenges and adapt to changes

This will be reported against in Trust Board meetings and as part of the discussions regarding additional Trustee recruitment.

In 2022, Sport England commissioned an external consultancy to support all system partners, including Active Partnerships, in creating a full Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan – one of the updated elements of Sport England’s Code for Sports Governance. This builds on the work that Wesport has already done in the existing Diversity Action Plan, and within the dedicated work it has been doing on tackling racial inequalities.

This updated Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan work will be taking place in 2023-24, starting in May 2023.

Risk Management Statement

The Wesport Trust Board continues to review and monitor the risks that Wesport may face. There is a Risk Management Policy in place, as well as a Risk Register that is brought to the Board every 6 months for a full review.

The Board clearly communicates the objectives, priorities, and delegations of the risk management to the Senior Management Team and Finance Team of the Trust.

The Board has appointed a Portfolio Holder for Risk, who sits on the Risk & Internal Controls Committee. The entire Risk Management Policy, procedures, and Risk Register has been reviewed by the Risk & Internal Control Committee, with adjustments being made accordingly. This was reviewed in August 2022.

The Risk & Internal Controls Committee then provides an update to the rest of the Wesport Trust Board accordingly so that all Trustees are aware of any amendments or issues raised.

Financial Management including Annual Audit

In line with the Wesport Financial Policy & Procedures and the Legal & Regulatory Responsibilities Policy, the Wesport accounts continue to be monitored carefully, reconciled monthly, and reviewed with monthly meetings between the Senior Management Team and the Wesport Finance Manager.

Every quarter, the Finance Manager meets with the Trustee that has the Portfolio Holder role for Finance, to review the quarterly management accounts. These include a forecast for the rest of the year as well as a comparison to the budget to date. These reports are then included within the Board papers for each quarter so that all Trustees also receive the quarterly management accounts.

The annual external financial audit took place in July 2022, carried out by Bishop Fleming accountants. This included a meeting of the Audit Committee where the accounts were presented in detail. The notes from that meeting were included in the July Board papers so that all Trustees had sight of them along with the draft audited accounts before their approval for final signature was sought.

No issues were raised, and the final audited accounts for 2021-22 are available on the Wesport website.

Governance Updates

Sport England's Code for Sports Governance

In 2021, an updated version of the Code for Sports Governance was released. There are 7 new requirements, along with amendments to some of the previous requirements. There is also a separate requirement for a Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan, referenced earlier in this document.

Wesport continues to meet the requirements of the original Tier 3 (the highest level) of Sport England's Code of Sports Governance & is working on meeting the updated & new requirements by December 2023 in line with Sport England's requirements.

This Sport England Code has superseded the Voluntary Code of Good Governance for the Sport & Recreation Sector from the Sport & Recreation Alliance that Wesport previously signed up to.

The Code for Sports Governance covers the 5 principle areas of:

1. Structure
2. People
3. Communication
4. Standards & Conduct
5. Policies & Processes

As part of this, there is now a dedicated Governance page on the Wesport website here: <http://www.wesport.org.uk/about-us/our-governance/> where all relevant documentation can be found.

External Board Evaluation

As part of compliance to Tier 3 Governance (above), Campbell Tickell were appointed to carry an external evaluation of Wesport's Trust Board & associated processes. This took place from December 2021 – April 2022 & all Trustees were involved in the process.

In May 2022, Wesport received the final report from the external Board evaluation, and some of the recommended actions from that have taken place in 2022-23, and the remainder will form part of the ongoing Governance actions for 2023-24.

BDO Governance Assurance Review

In April 2022 Sport England advised that an Independent Governance Assurance Review with BDO consultancy firm would take place. This is funded by Sport England so no additional cost to Wesport.

In November 2022, the initial fieldwork took place, including the review of several of Wesport's governance documents and the observation of a Trust Board meeting.

In March 2023 the draft report was provided which rated Wesport as Good, and had no areas of immediate concern. Once the report is finalised in Q1 of 2023-24, the actions will be put into place.

Actions from all 3 governance assessments will continue to take place in 2023-24 to ensure a streamlined approach to any required updates.