
ANNUAL REPORT



2021-22

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CHAIR'S FOREWORD



“ I am pleased to report that our commitments to taking action on the climate and ecological crisis, improving inclusion and diversity and to innovation have remained as strong as ever. ”

The past year has been defined by a strong and positive recovery as we moved past the worst of the pandemic towards a new future for the sport. Launching our new and aptly titled strategy, Squash in a Changing World, was a significant milestone for the organisation and it charts the direction England Squash will take over the next five years to support and grow the game.

The vision of the strategy is to create a thriving, diverse and growing community, and I am pleased to report that work on delivering against the key objectives of the strategy began immediately with a renewed focus on creating opportunities for people from all walks of life to engage with, play and enjoy squash. The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games presents a wonderful focal point and a unique opportunity to share all that is good about our sport, to create new interest and maximise the opportunities that only a home Games can offer.

The strategy also highlights the opportunity for England Squash to provide leadership in a number of crucial areas and I am pleased to report that our commitments to taking action on the climate and ecological crisis, improving inclusion and diversity and to innovation have remained as strong as ever. If the squash community can come together to tackle these issues, squash has the opportunity to be seen as a forward-thinking and future focused sport for all and can position itself as a thought leader within the wider sporting landscape.

As a governing body, England Squash, and indeed squash itself, cannot exist in isolation from the external world. The pandemic, war in Ukraine, climate change and domestic issues such as rising

costs, safeguarding and inclusion remind us of this fact as they impact our daily lives. We must strive to understand such challenges in a squash context and work together to respond in a way that protects the future of the game we all love. I am pleased to share my view that the England Squash team have navigated these challenges, and many more, with distinction during the past 12 months and I believe we are well placed to respond to whatever challenges the future holds.

I would like to thank England Squash's CEO and the whole staff team for their hard work and leadership of the game during such a tumultuous period of challenge and change. I must also pay tribute to my colleagues on the England Squash Board, whose skills, expertise and wise counsel continue to guide the organisation towards a positive future for squash in England.

Finally, I would like to thank the squash community; including the county associations, our clubs and individuals across the game, including our President and Vice Presidents, for their continued dedication to our sport. Only by working together can our shared vision for squash be realised.

Joy Carter
CHAIR

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S INTRODUCTION



“
Our attention could shift towards engaging new audiences and focusing on the priorities outlined in our new strategy: enhancing diversity, increasing participation and nurturing talent.
”

The past year has seen England Squash transition its focus from helping the squash community navigate the challenges of a global pandemic, to embracing the start of a new period of recovery. With the worst of this great challenge now behind us, our sights are once again set on driving the growth and prosperity of the sport.

This feeling of a 'new start' has been underlined by the launch of our new strategy, Squash in a Changing World, the confirmation of a new 5-year funding partnership with Sport England and the excitement of building towards a home Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

As soon as restrictions were lifted, our courts reopened, competitions and squads were re-scheduled and campaigns were designed to reignite activity at every level of the game. It was enormously encouraging to see existing players return swiftly and in large numbers, ensuring that clubs and facilities could start to recoup some of the losses incurred during the pandemic. After this positive start, our attention then could shift towards engaging new audiences and focussing on the priorities outlined in our new strategy: enhancing diversity, increasing participation and nurturing talent.

Campaigns including Rally Together, new ways to play including the new portable Mini Squash courts and new partnerships with the Muslim Sports Foundation and International Mixed Ability Sport are examples of how our new strategy is already having a positive impact on attracting new players from different backgrounds to our fantastic sport.

The timing of Birmingham 2022 enables it to play a leading role in helping the sport bounce back and provides a fantastic platform to build the profile of the sport and fast-track the delivery of our strategy. A home Games shines a light on the sport, enables

us to celebrate new and existing heroes and provides the opportunity to connect people with ways to play squash. The Games also provide the impetus to get more, and increasingly diverse, audiences interested in squash and to create new opportunities for them to take part.

Whilst it has been another year of disruption and difficulty, the determination and passion for the sport seen across the squash community has shone through. We have seen the community pull together for the good of the game and, as we move forwards, it is worth remembering that the togetherness the squash community showed during the past couple of years demonstrates that we have the values and the people needed to overcome any challenge. This will be crucial if we are to drive the sport forwards and overcome long standing issues that the sport faces, including a long term decline in regular participation, the loss of facilities and the lack of widespread awareness of the sport.

I am grateful to all of the volunteers, coaches, clubs and county associations who continue to make squash happen across the country and for their ongoing support for England Squash and for the sport.

I must also express my thanks to our Board and to the whole England Squash staff team for their support and incredible hard work during the past 12 months. This year has seen us put in place some of the key building blocks for England Squash to achieve success in the years to come.

Mark Williams
CEO

PARTICIPATION & SUPPORTING CLUBS



To re-engage squash players and support clubs and venues after the pandemic subsided, the Bounce Back campaign was launched with videos and social media content designed to remind players why they love squash and encourage them back on court.

Using **#CourtComeback** on social media, players were encouraged to share their return to play photos with a racket and ball giveaway. Hundreds of people took part in the campaign which helped to kick start the game's recovery.

With the planned delivery of our participation programmes not possible, our focus turned to supporting clubs and coaches.

Supporting facilities during the pandemic was crucial and we held regular webinars for clubs to connect, featuring speakers on key topics such as re-establishing programmes, marketing and promotion and delivering COVID-secure competitions.

There was an increased focus on enhancing diversity and new partnerships were established with the Muslim Sports Foundation and International Mixed Ability Sport to help us understand how we can provide squash activities that engage people from ethnically diverse communities and people with a disability.

In March 2022 the Rally Together campaign was launched as a call to action for the squash community to become an ally for women and girls within the sport. 300 people signed the Rally Together pledge which identified actions to create inclusive environments where females can thrive.

BUILDING TOWARDS BIRMINGHAM 2022

To ensure the best possible impact from the Commonwealth Games in 2022, work started in the summer of 2021 to engage local communities across Birmingham and the West Midlands in squash. A collaborative group called Squash United was established, bringing together partners from across the sport, with a shared passion to use Birmingham 2022 to inspire a new generation to play the game.

The group were involved in numerous roadshows and promotional events using new and innovative perspex Mini Squash courts to take squash out into local communities and give people from different backgrounds the chance to play.

The country's first permanent outdoor playground court was built at King Solomon School in Birmingham, giving the pupils and staff there the chance to play squash on a daily basis.

Training programmes, to teach young leaders and volunteers how to deliver squash activities in the build up to, and beyond, the Games were also run to ensure that the local communities we worked with were Games ready.

THE SQUASH WORKFORCE

England Squash recognises the importance of the people that deliver our sport and supported them via online learning and virtual and face to face engagement opportunities. The introduction of a new-look Level 2 - Club Coach Award began in June 2021. The newly updated course included both online and face to face modules.

PARTICIPATION & SUPPORTING CLUBS

In its first season, 10 Level 2 - Club Coach courses were delivered, with 90 coaches up-skilled to this level. The Level 1 - Participation Coach Award, which is now solely online, continued to gain traction and saw a further 330 new coaches become part of our community of coaches.

At the top end of the coach pathway, we ran a full and uninterrupted Level 3 - Performance Coach Award for the first time since September 2019. The course started in January 2022 and saw 16 candidates begin their journey as performance coaches. The course used online technology to provide regular monthly webinars and also included six face to face days.

We have worked alongside referees and the Referee Support Network to improve processes and procedures that will enhance the quality of experience for those involved in this crucial area of the sport. The transition to online learning, via World Squash Officiating, has also enabled the standardisation of referee training and education and formed a valuable training and support platform for those that want to officiate in our sport.

As the Mission 2022 referee development programme draws to a close, we were delighted that seven referees involved in the programme, including three that joined the programme as brand new referees, were selected to referee at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

We continued working alongside the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) to deliver training and support across the sport. New webinar-based training for our Club Welfare Officers was introduced in March 2022 and involved 30 Welfare Officers. The session focused on improving club engagement with members around safeguarding and provided a platform for attendees to share best practice across our club network.

DEVELOPING
TALENT &
IMPROVING
PERFORMANCE



**DEVELOPING
TALENT &
IMPROVING
PERFORMANCE**

The 2021-22 season was again impacted by the cancellation and rescheduling of many major events for both junior and senior players.

There were some outstanding performances on the PSA World Tour and at home, and the platform upon which future success can be built is now in place.

DEVELOPING TALENT & IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

Despite the challenges and disruption they have faced, there have been some encouraging improvements from several Team England players throughout the 2021-22 season.

PERFORMANCE & TALENT HUBS

Once COVID-19 restrictions eased in May 2021, England Squash senior players were able to move back from our temporary training bases in Manchester and Hatfield to our four primary Performance Hubs in Berkhamsted, West Warwickshire, Pontefract and Hallamshire.

This allowed funded players to regain access to these training environments and receive support from the expert coaches at each venue, including Rob Owen, Nick Matthew and Adam Fuller. This was crucial in the build up to the 2021-22 squash season, which was disrupted by changes in the scheduling and timing of events across the world, caused by the pandemic.

The Performance and Talent Hubs remained in place for the remainder of the 2021-22 season, providing a regular platform for junior and senior players to benefit from, in addition to the regular national squads delivered by the England Squash coaching team.

TEAM ENGLAND

Unfortunately, the Senior European Championships and Men's World Team Championships were cancelled due to ongoing travel restrictions and uncertainty across the world. It was a huge blow for the players, however such cancellations allowed the Team England players to solely focus on their individual PSA events. The PSA tour was operating throughout the 2021/22 season, although some COVID-19 protocols had to be navigated by the players for the duration of the season.

Despite all these challenges the players responded brilliantly and contributed some notable achievements across the season:

- Sarah Jane Perry was a quarter-finalist in the World Championships in July 2021 and was runner-up in the San Francisco Open in August.
- James Willstrop reached the quarter-finals of the US Open in October 2021.
- Gina Kennedy reached the semi-final of the Black Ball Open in December 2021 and won the Cleveland Open in January 2022.

On a very sad note, Malcolm Willstrop passed away in May 2021. Malcolm was a unique character and much loved across the sport. He was one of the most influential and respected coaches in the world and will be deeply missed. We were pleased to note that James Willstrop and Vanessa Atkinson have committed to taking over Malcolm's wonderful work at Pontefract, which is a great step forward in continuing Malcolm's legacy.

DEVELOPING TALENT & IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

WORLD RANKINGS

Despite the challenges and disruption they have faced, there have been some encouraging improvements from several Team England players' throughout the 2021-22 season:

- Georgina Kennedy - no.179 to no.11 (one of the fastest rises in PSA history)
- Nick Wall - no.133 to no.67
- Pat Rooney - no.49 to no.25
- Jazz Hutton - no.43 to no.30
- George Parker - no.43 to no.30
- Lucy Turmel - no.37 to no.26

Notable highest player rankings for the season include the following:

- Sarah Jane Perry - no.5
- Georgina Kennedy - no.11
- James Willstrop - no.18
- Adrian Waller - no.19

COMMONWEALTH GAMES PREPARATION

To help prepare the players for Birmingham 2022, monthly two-day doubles squads were held in Manchester as well as various test matches with Wales and Scotland to provide match play experience. Referees attended every squad to simulate match conditions and we are indebted to them for helping us create the right competitive environment.

The players committed fully to the process, including a number of players who were challenging for a place in the team.

After an extensive selection process across the season, pairs were selected for the World Doubles Championships in Glasgow, ready for the event in April 2022. The goal when selecting for the World Doubles was to choose pairs we believed would do well in Glasgow and in doing so, achieve a good seeding for the Commonwealth Games.

DEVELOPING TALENT & IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT & ENGLAND POTENTIAL PROGRAMMES

Once the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, England Squash was quick to re-engage with our junior players who had been forced to miss their usual squash activities for much of the pandemic. To support our young players, a number of summer squads were organised to fast-track their return.

We delivered 14 one-day squads, starting in June 2021 and running up until the start of the season in September. These squads were supplemented with regular Zoom calls which covered nutrition, strength and conditioning, video analysis and solo practice.

All activities were extremely well attended demonstrating a real desire from our young players to restart their junior squash careers. Our leading coaches were present at all squads and this provided much needed contact between junior players and the England Squash coaching team after a difficult period.

These summer squads fed nicely into the commencement of the national junior programmes which started in September 2021.

All squads were delivered with a clear vision for the technical, tactical, physical and mental aspects of the sport that England Squash wished to develop in the next generation of players.

Further down the talent pathway, the Aspire programme continued to engage with over 250 young players that feed into the England Potential programme. The team of Aspire coaches met

regularly with the England Squash coaches and were supported by the Talent Pathway Manager and other staff.

JUNIOR INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE

As with the senior international programme, all junior international competitions were cancelled for the 2021-22 season. This was very disappointing for the players in contention to represent England and in particular, those players who were in their last year of junior squash

We anticipate that a full junior international competition programme will be back in operation from September 2022.

SUPPORTING TALENT PATHWAY COACHES

As restrictions were lifted, the emphasis was to get our coaches back working with the players as much as possible through our squad programme. However, some of the more positive experiences from the pandemic experience were retained, including maintaining the regular virtual meetings with our Aspire and National squad coaches to continue to develop their awareness and knowledge of the latest coaching developments and reinforce the England Squash coaching framework messages.

Additional feedback sessions were added after each squad to allow coaches to reflect on the successes and lessons learned from their squads sessions. This regular interaction, brought about through necessity during the pandemic, has added to the education and mentoring of coaches across the talent and performance programmes.

COMMUNICATIONS & PROMOTING THE SPORT



We initially focused on providing resources, guidance and campaigns to help the squash community bounce back from the pandemic.

We wanted to ensure clubs and facilities had all the tools they needed to help remind their players of their love for the game and support them with their return to court.

Over the course of the season the nature of our communications shifted to attracting new participants through campaigns and initiatives.

The Rally Together pledge calls on everyone in the squash community to 'break the bias' and support more women and girls to reach their full potential in squash.

COMMUNICATIONS & CONTENT

As soon as restrictions were lifted and courts could reopen, our focus was on helping clubs to welcome back players and coaches by engaging them with effective content, communications and campaigns.

Insight conducted in early 2021 showed that 67% of regular players were keen to get back to playing as soon as courts reopened but that some were concerned they weren't fit enough. In response, we launched SQUASHfit in April to get players excited, motivated and 'squash-ready' for their return to play, and to support clubs/venues in re-engaging players. Content included:

- 10 x squash-specific 45-minute online workouts / on-court sessions delivered by the national coaching team and England players available live and on demand.
- Recipes and nutritional advice to optimise on-court performance.

SQUASHfit live sessions had up to 2,438 views per session with the SQUASHfit microsite receiving 11,439 unique visitors since its launch on 1 April 2021.

In September, our Squash Girls Can programme was given a makeover ahead of Women's Squash Week to inspire more women to get on court. As part of a drive to increase gender diversity in the sport and engage more women from ethnically-

diverse communities, we produced a new toolkit of downloadable content including a video, graphics and a poster which showed women of all ages and ethnicities playing squash to highlight the fitness and social benefits to new players.

The new promotional content was informed by an evaluation of the Squash Girls Can programme carried out by insight charity Women in Sport, which explored the reasons why women play squash and what images and messages appeal to women's values, including feeling good, having fun and developing skills.

Following our Back to Squash survey, conducted in July 2021, which told us that only 61% players had returned since restrictions were lifted in May, we launched a player campaign 'The Big Squash Reunion' for World Squash Day in October. This campaign aimed to re-inspire casual and lapsed players, and highlight the fun, social aspects of the game. To support clubs and venues with re-engaging players, we produced a campaign toolkit featuring content downloads and messaging.

As part of a drive to increase Instagram followers, we experimented with Reels in January, producing short engaging clips - from Squash Girls Can Coach stories to interactive squash to elite player trickshots and rallies. This new approach was a great success and we acquired 1,546 new followers organically - an increase of 17%.

With only one in five qualified coaches being female, we launched a new Squash Girls Can Coach Level 1 development programme in January.

Following research conducted by England Squash, which revealed that female players and coaches still experience sexist comments and suffer discrimination due to unconscious bias, we launched the Rally Together pledge. The pledge calls on everyone in the squash community to 'break the bias' and support more women and girls to reach their full potential in squash. The Rally Together pledge received more than 300 signatures on International Women's Day - many of whom were elite players, coaches, and influential journalists, with the campaign shared widely across the community.

MEMBERSHIP & AFFILIATION

Due to the pandemic, membership for individual members and affiliated clubs was suspended from March 2020 for a period of 18 months. England Squash ensured that member and club benefits continued to be available free of charge during this period in order to support the squash community.

Fees were reintroduced from September 2021, although clubs were given the option of deferring payment of the portion of their affiliation fee related to individual members until December 2021.

Before the reintroduction of fees, the number of member and club renewals was unpredictable and internal targets were modelled on 75% of pre-pandemic levels. However by the end of the financial year the numbers were encouraging, with the number of affiliated clubs and members at 91% and 85% of pre-pandemic levels respectively. Membership income was therefore higher than had been anticipated.

The aim now is to build on this encouraging recovery by reaching players and squash venues that have not previously engaged with England Squash, including recreational players and public facilities.

COMMERCIAL

The pandemic had a significant impact across all commercial aspects of the organisation, including a major reduction in income from sponsors and partners, whose engagement is dependent upon the level and profile of activity within the sport. Alternative sources of income and cost savings were sought, to help establish the best possible position from a commercial perspective.

Agreements and revised payment schedules were negotiated with existing sponsors, partners and approved contractors and every effort was made to support these partner organisations as much as possible so that effective relationships could be maintained for the future.

- A 'Principal Partner' agreement was reached with AJ Bell.
- The 'Official Ball and Racket' agreement with Dunlop was renegotiated with 'Official Clothing' replacing 'Official Racket' status after the previous Official Clothing agreement with KUKRI ended on 31st December 2020.
- All 10 companies were retained within our Approved Contractor Scheme.
- A new Competitions and Commercial Manager was recruited.
- An official Event Merchandising agreement with iPROSPORTS was agreed and negotiations are ongoing regarding an extension.
- A long-term licensing agreement with the PSA was agreed which secured the future of the British Open and the British National Championships.
- Negotiations are ongoing with several partners to replace the previous Dunlop sponsorship of the England Squash Junior Circuit which ended in September 2020 - all competitions within the Dunlop England Squash Junior Circuit experienced significant growth during the previous agreement period.
- A 'How to Attract Sponsors' video was produced as part of the club toolkit to help increase revenue opportunities at grassroots level.
- Website banner advertising was explored for the first time and additional sponsors / advertisers will be sought maximising the visibility of existing partners.

COMPETITIONS: THE HEART OF THE SPORT



COMPETITIONS: THE HEART OF THE SPORT

The impact of the pandemic was particularly severe across our sanctioned competitions, during which time, competitions were cancelled or had to be remodelled to address the unique challenges.

Since restrictions were lifted, England Squash has continued to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all players, officials and spectators, whilst finding a way to bring competitions back and support our tournament organisers and delivery partners.

COMPETITIONS: THE HEART OF THE SPORT

A record 324 juniors competed in the English Junior Championships in Nottingham following last year's cancelled competition.

MAJOR JUNIOR COMPETITIONS

In the previous season, all three major competitions - British Junior Open (BJO), British Junior Championships (BJC) and English Junior Championships (EJC) - were cancelled. Due to the scale of the event and the ongoing challenges with international travel, the decision was taken to cancel the 2021 BJO as well.

The EJC and BJC did go ahead and were held in Nottingham and Birmingham respectively. Both events were a huge success and featured a record 324 juniors at the EJC and 350 players at the BJC.

MAJOR EVENTS

PSA have taken on the licensing of the British Open and British National Championships, both of which took place in the 2021-22 season.

COMPETITIONS WORKING GROUP

A new Competitions Working Group was created to address the challenges faced in the competitions landscape as well as to engage the squash community in helping to shape the future direction of the current and future competitions portfolio.

The Competitions Working Group meet quarterly and aim to create safe, inclusive environments for young people to have positive experiences in competitive squash.

FINANCIAL REVIEW



DEPARTMENTAL INCOME & EXPENDITURE £'000

	2021/22	2020/21
1. MEMBERSHIP		
INCOME		
Membership fees	315	0
Total income	315	0
EXPENDITURE		
County Rebates	61	4
Membership Services	97	71
Staff	0	0
Total Expenditure	158	74
2. COMPETITIONS & EVENTS		
INCOME		
British Open	12	0
Entry fees	220	5
Other	0	0
Total income	231	5
EXPENDITURE		
British Open Costs	87	11
Event Costs	309	67
Staff	22	0
Total Expenditure	418	77
3. PARTICIPATION		
INCOME		
Miscellaneous Grants	38	0
Total income	38	0
EXPENDITURE		
Development Budgets (Schools, Youth, Leisure Centres etc)	286	122
Staff	124	132
Total Expenditure	409	254

DEPARTMENTAL INCOME & EXPENDITURE £'000

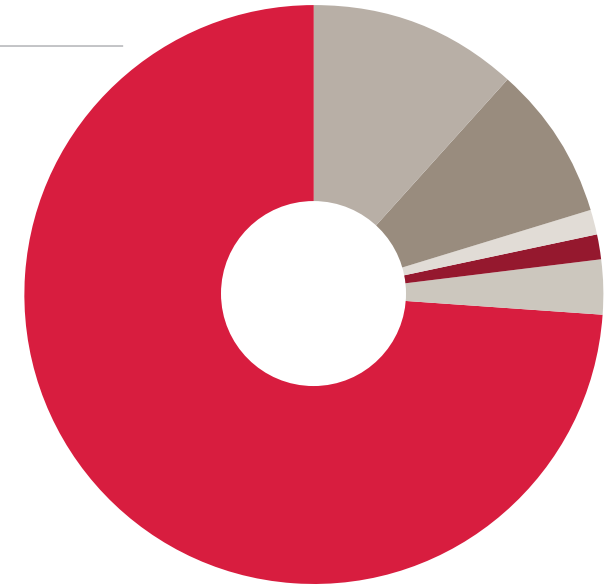
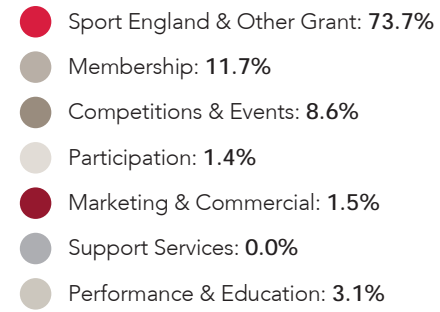
4. MARKETING & COMMERCIAL	2021/22	2020/21
INCOME		
Commercial & Marketing	42	17
Total income	42	17
EXPENDITURE		
Branding Materials/Collateral	1	10
Strategy Development	0	0
Other	19	0
PR Costs	0	0
Staff	76	112
Insight	0	0
Website/CRM Development	0	0
Total Expenditure	96	122
5. SUPPORT SERVICES	2021/22	2020/21
INCOME		
Approval fees	0	0
Legacy	0	2
Interest	0	0
Total income	0	2
EXPENDITURE		
Depreciation	1	1
Insurance	32	23
Irrecoverable VAT	83	74
Office Costs	9	18
Strategy Development	0	11
IT maintenance and infrastructure	24	3
Other	98	87
Legacy	0	0
Printing	2	0
Professional Fees	87	93
Rent	6	11
Staff	136	231
Total Expenditure	479	552

DEPARTMENTAL INCOME & EXPENDITURE £'000

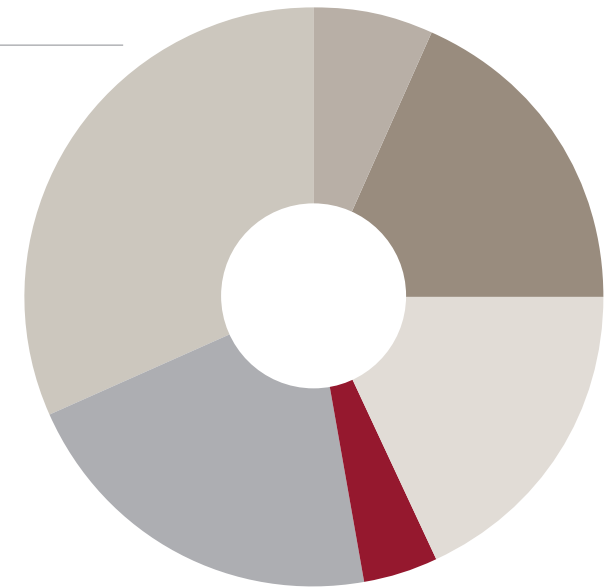
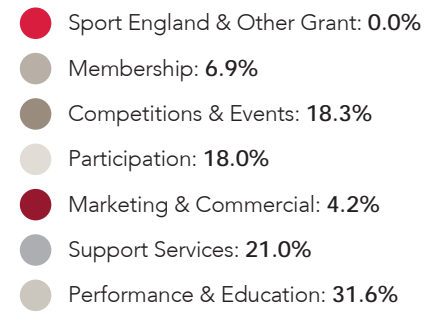
6. PERFORMANCE & EDUCATION	2021/22	2020/21
INCOME		
EDP	1	0
Coaching Courses	80	34
Talent Pathway	3	2
Total income	84	36
EXPENDITURE		
Competition Programme Support	11	18
Personal Awards	99	81
Training and Preparation (Squads, Coaching)	199	126
Technology and Equipment	65	52
Coach and Tutor Development	28	2
Science and Medicine Support	91	73
Other	0	0
Staff	228	258
Total Expenditure	720	611
7. SPORT ENGLAND & OTHER GRANT INCOME		
INCOME		
Other Grant income	0	0
Revenue Grant	1,987	1,723
Total income	1,987	1,723
EXPENDITURE		
Capital Investment	0	30
Total Expenditure	0	30

FINANCIAL REVIEW

INCOME 2021/22



EXPENDITURE 2021/22







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