
ANNUAL REPORT

2022-23



CONTENTS

Chair's Foreword	3
Chief Executive's Introduction	4
Participation & Supporting Clubs	6
Developing Talent & Improving Performance	9
Communications & Promoting the Sport	14
Competitions: The Heart of the Sport	20
Financial Review	22

CHAIR'S FOREWORD



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The centrepiece for the year was the fabulous Commonwealth Games, which provided a unique opportunity for the whole community to come together and celebrate all that is great about our sport.

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The past year has been one of recovery and resurgence, with the stark contrast of emerging from the challenges of a pandemic, to hosting a successful Commonwealth Games, the timing of which could not have been better for a sport looking to bounce back.

Birmingham 2022 was a wonderful experience for players, squash fans and the general public alike, and I have no doubt that everyone that came to watch the squash at the University of Birmingham would have left having enjoyed some incredible sporting action and been endlessly impressed with the arena and atmosphere that squash delivered. I am very proud of the hard work the England Squash team put into creating a participation legacy from the Games too, and there has been some tremendous progress made to introduce our fantastic sport to new communities as a direct result of the excitement and investment in the Games.

The delivery of our strategy, Squash in a Changing World, has accelerated in the past 12 months and I am delighted with the progress made towards our three priorities of increasing participation, enhancing diversity and nurturing talent. Participation and diversity have been boosted by the piloting of new programmes for underserved communities. I am particularly pleased with the creation of Squash Stars, which opens our sport up to more young people, an absolute necessity if squash is to thrive in the years to come.

On the subject of the future, and in line with the theme of adapting to change outlined in our strategy, I am very pleased that England Squash has led the way in taking positive action to help the environment. We have achieved carbon-neutral accreditation for the fourth year in a row and underlined our commitment to the environment and sustainability by signing both the UN Sports for Climate Action framework and the Sports for Nature framework.

Other steps have included planting trees for each of the 700 participants in the British Junior Open, piloting recycling schemes and engaging with key partners to support them in reducing their impact. I look forward to England Squash and the wider squash community making more progress in this space in the future.

In closing, I would like to thank my colleagues on the England Squash Board and the staff team who, through incredible hard work and dedication, have achieved a huge amount of success in the past year to support and lead the sport through such a vital period.

Joy Carter
CHAIR

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S INTRODUCTION



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A home Commonwealth Games presented a once in a generation opportunity that we sought to capitalise on for the benefit of the whole squash community.

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Birmingham 2022 was the major highlight of the year, both for the fantastic achievements of English players on court and as a catalyst for some fantastic work at the grassroots of the sport. Gina Kennedy's gold medal will live long in the memory, as will the all-England final in the men's doubles. England won 6 medals in total, enough to take us to the top of the all-time Commonwealth Games medal table for squash and to ensure that the squash team was one of the most successful England teams at the Games; a fantastic achievement by the players and staff that supported them.

Away from the outstanding atmosphere of the glass-court arena, thousands of people were introduced to squash before, during and after the Games using the portable courts, mini walls and through new programmes. A huge amount of work has gone into using the Games as a launchpad for new activity and for bringing squash to new communities, including piloting new programmes such as Squash Stars, Mixed Ability Squash and Squash from the Mosque. This initial progress will be cemented further through new partnerships and programmes designed to help people discover and access squash all over the country.

Fundamental to the squash community, and indeed any sport, is the role of competitive opportunities at every level and, given the challenges of the past couple of years it has been wonderful to see the resurgence of the calendar of squash competitions and events. Competitions bring the community together, give purpose to all the training and hard work done elsewhere and provide an opportunity for players of all levels to test themselves and get

the most from their squash experience. It was particularly good to see the junior circuit back up and running, giving young squash players the chance to get back on court with friends and rivals from all over the country. The British Junior Open, one of the biggest and most prestigious junior events in the world, was delivered at its full scale after a pandemic-impacted smaller-scale event was achieved in 2022. Finnlay Withington was the stand-out English performer, winning the U19 boy's event.

Away from competitive squash, we have seen a steady return to participation across the sport and initial indicators suggest that the sport has bounced back well from two years of unprecedented disruption. There remains much to do to ensure squash's full recovery and subsequently, for squash to grow beyond pre-pandemic levels. This is a challenge that we must all strive to overcome by working together.

England Squash has made good progress through programmes and campaigns to support clubs and grow the game and there are plans in place to do more, including developing a new membership scheme to help better connect and engage the squash community and provide a more compelling and relevant benefits package. Locally, many county associations and clubs have reported an injection of enthusiasm from players, coaches and members alike. This gives me confidence that the sport can continue to emerge from the pandemic into a bright future. We know that, where there are good people prepared to help the sport, it can and will thrive and grow.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S INTRODUCTION

The passion people have for squash continues to inspire us and having navigated the most challenging period in the sport's history, we should all look forward to, and plan to contribute to, a positive future. We have seen the community pull together for the good of the game and that togetherness should be used as the foundation for all that we do in the future, put simply, we are stronger together.

I must express my sincere thanks to our Board and to the whole England Squash staff team for their fantastic support and hard work during the past year. I am also hugely grateful to the countless 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.

Mark Williams
CEO

PARTICIPATION & SUPPORTING CLUBS



PARTICIPATION & SUPPORTING CLUBS

In July 2022 the Squash Stars programme was launched and in the first year over 1,000 young people took part across 127 delivery sites.

The programme is the first player-facing programme delivered by England Squash where clubs can add their sessions and parents can book places on the same bespoke digital platform.

Over 300 people signed the Rally Together pledge committed to calling out bias and supporting more females to thrive in squash.

Squash Stars is promoted primarily through digital marketing targeted at parents.

For just £42 the child receives a kit bag with a racket, Squash Stars T-Shirt, ball, goggles, bag and six sessions at their chosen venue.

Two other new programmes, aimed at reaching new audiences and tackling inequalities, were also piloted this year through new partnerships with Calder Community Squash and International Mixed Ability Sport (IMAS). Squash from the Mosque was delivered in 15 venues in Yorkshire and Greater Manchester. The programme takes squash into the community where clubs collaborate with local mosques to develop squash activity for new players.

Mixed Ability Squash was developed to introduce people with a disability or impairment to squash and Squash 57. This programme was piloted in 10 clubs that helped new players take part in the sport in an inclusive and accessible environment.

Ahead of the Commonwealth Games, the Squash United group worked on a number of awareness-raising events, a glass squash court was placed in Birmingham New Street railway station with a week full of activities, the portable mini squash court was taken to roadshows and events across the West Midlands ahead of the Games and the activation zone saw spectators having a hit on the court.

England Squash secured £200,000 from Sport England to drive the Birmingham 2022 legacy programme. A focus of the funding was to tackle inequalities and reach diverse audiences. A Community Engagement Manager was appointed who worked with local communities to drive the awareness of squash through use of the portable mini courts at events across Birmingham and the West Midlands and established regular playing opportunities.

Over 300 people signed the Rally Together pledge committed to calling out bias and supporting more females to thrive in squash. Support and resources provided to those who made the pledge gave them the tools and knowledge they need.

BIRMINGHAM
2022

DEVELOPING
TALENT &
IMPROVING
PERFORMANCE



DEVELOPING TALENT & IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

The 2022/23 season witnessed a successful year in terms of team results at both junior and senior levels.

Furthermore, post-Covid, this season has fully reconnected the junior and senior programmes with the consistency and quality needed to ensure that talent will develop and performance can be achieved.

The CWG in July was what Team England had been diligently preparing 18 months for. Hopes were high and the team produced.

TEAM ENGLAND

It has been an impressive and busy year for the senior teams. Both the men and women captured the 2022 European Team titles in April.

The men defeated France 3/0, while the women came from behind to defeat Wales 2/1.

Later that month, the World Doubles in Glasgow acted as the ultimate preparation for the Commonwealth Games (CWG) for Team England. The performances were outstanding with James Willstrop / Declan James winning the men's doubles title, Sarah-Jane Perry / Alison Waters finishing runners-up in the women's doubles and Adrian Waller / Alison Waters finishing second in the mixed doubles. All these results ensured high seeding for the July CWG doubles programme.

The CWG in July was what Team England had been diligently preparing 18 months for. Hopes were high and the team produced. Gina Kennedy was the surprise package as she surpassed higher seeds to win the women's title and gold medal. Sarah-Jane Perry collected the bronze medal to complete a wonderful women's singles event.

In the doubles, James Willstrop / Declan James showed their World Doubles success was the ideal preparation as they won the men's doubles gold medal. In doing so, they defeated fellow Team England teammates Daryl Selby / Adrian Waller in a very close and tense final. It was shame someone had to lose as was the quality and efforts of both teams.

For the women, Alison Waters / Sarah-Jane Perry collected the silver medal in the women's doubles, while Alison Waters/Adrian Waller also collected the silver medal in the mixed doubles.

For Team England to feature in all three doubles finals is a clear testament to the National Coach and players in their preparation, attitude and ability to perform under the ultimate pressure. It was fitting Team England topped the medal table with six medals.

In December 2022, the women's team collected a bronze medal at the World Team Championships in Cairo. Significantly, this was achieved without Gina Kennedy as she was injured for the event.

Individually, it has been a positive 2022/23 season in terms of performances and inclusions. Notably, Sarah-Jane Perry won the Black Ball Open and reached the quarter-finals of El Gouna, the British, Hong Kong and the World Championships. Gina Kennedy reached the semi-finals of the Tournament of Champions. Mohammed ElShorbagy, former World number one and World Champion chose to represent England in June 2022 and from that period on he won the Qatar Open and reached the semi-finals of the US and Hong Kong Opens.

DEVELOPING TALENT & IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

WORLD RANKINGS

Some excellent ranking progressions have been made by several players this season.

- Gina Kennedy - no. 11 to no. 8
- Jazz Hutton - no. 30 to no. 22
- Katie Maliff - no. 77 to no. 52
- Pat Rooney - no. 26 to no. 18
- Nick Wall - no. 68 to no. 45
- Charlie Lee - no. 87 to no. 46

Notable highest World rankings for the season include the following:

- Mohammed ElShorbagy - no. 3
- Sarah-Jane Perry - no. 5
- Gina Kennedy - no. 8
- Patrick Rooney - no. 18

ENGLAND DEVELOPMENT & ENGLAND POTENTIAL PROGRAMMES

This past year the England Development & Potential programmes have performed strongly. From September 2022 to March 2023, both programmes each held five national squads that were all well attended. The coaches were diligent in delivering a clear vision for the technical, tactical, physical and mental aspects that can produce the next generation for England Squash. All squads were supplemented by support in strength & conditioning and psychology sessions.

Special emphasis was made on reinforcing the culture of being a national squad junior and what that means in terms of the appropriate behaviours and standards to reach.

It will take some time to fully re-emerge from the Covid period with the same levels of commitment and professionalism, but this past season has seen a rapid rise regarding that expectation.

Further down the pathway, the performance team introduced a new tier to the pathway. Sitting just below England Potential, the Super Regional programme was launched. It involved the most talented 10-12-year-olds in the country. The squads were regionalised with north and south holding five one-day squads, culminating in a 'battle of the border', which finishes the programme in May 2023.

This new programme has been a resounding success and will continue to be pivotal in nurturing quality young players capable of thriving in the England Potential programme.

DEVELOPING TALENT & IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

Regionally, the Aspire squad programmes continue to engage over 250 young players via the eight regions this season. Each squad appropriately feeds into our national programmes with the eight Aspire coaches working hard to spread the national coaching messages through their squad sessions and local individual work.

JUNIOR INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE

The clear highlight and performance of the season was the U19 England Boys team winning the World Junior Team title in August 2022. The victory on French soil was England's first such title since the glory days of 2002 when James Willstrop and Peter Barker led England to victory in Italy. The team of Finnlay Withington, Sam Osborne-Wylde, Jonah Byrant and Franklyn Smith performed magnificently to defeat Egypt in the final and win this coveted trophy.

Finnlay's runner-up performance in the Individual event was also an outstanding result that was slightly over-shadowed by the team success but should be rightly applauded.

Earlier in the season, the U19 England team won the individual boys and girls titles, as well as the team title at the European Championships. This was a dominant performance.

At the lower age groups, the U17 European team won the European team title, while the U15 team was surprisingly beaten by Belgium in the final to remind us that the winning of titles is and never will be easy.

SUPPORTING TALENT PATHWAY COACHES

In September the employment of a new Talent Pathway Manager (TPM) has seen a big push towards recruiting, utilising, and mentoring new and existing coaches in our pathway.

It was recognised that the performance department needed to provide more coaches with the opportunity for experience and exposure to coaching in our squad programmes.

Therefore, the TPM has been outstanding in growing this network and building the relationships between potential coaches and the head coaches. Additionally, a mentoring programme was introduced to assist these new coaches in understanding the finer nuances of the England programme and what are the challenges and foundations of developing talent.

As the number of coaches has grown in our talent pathway so has the ability of the performance department to feel confident the key messages will reach further and wider than ever before. This can only support the pivotal work done at the national level.

COMMUNICATIONS & PROMOTING THE SPORT



COMMUNICATIONS & PROMOTING THE SPORT

During this 12-month period, our priority has been to provide distinctive campaigns and communications to drive awareness of squash and engage new and existing audiences aligned to our strategic priorities.

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games presented a unique opportunity to raise the profile of squash.

COMMUNICATIONS & CONTENT

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games presented a unique opportunity to raise the profile of squash on a national level and significantly drive awareness and engagement of squash among new and existing audiences. Key highlights included:

Get Games Ready: In the run-up to the Games, we launched Get Games Ready, a ten-part online toolkit to support clubs and venues on how to successfully engage new and diverse audiences with group activity ideas and tips on increasing website visibility on Google. Clubs were sent ten weekly emails with open rates as high as 47%.

Get Your Game On: This six-week national campaign - targeted at new and existing players - aimed to drive awareness of squash during the Games and challenge perceptions. The campaign showcased the breadth of playing opportunities available to existing and new players, inspiring them to play squash on their terms, no matter their playing style or background. Predominantly targeting Birmingham and the West Midlands as well as selected geographical areas with the highest proportion of the target audiences, the campaign generated over 850,000 impressions and saw a 254% increase in users to the 'Squash Finder' compared to the previous period.

Team England coverage: During the Games, our internal marketing and communications team delivered comprehensive coverage of Team England's singles and doubles progress across social media and the dedicated microsite. The team had access to exclusive behind-the-scenes

photos of the players and coaches which were shared on Instagram, providing an exclusive glimpse into life at the Games, as well as exclusive post-match player and coach interviews.

Across social media, Facebook saw the biggest impact from this activity, resulting in a 65% increase in reach compared to the previous two-week period. Throughout the Games, website traffic increased by 60% compared to the same period in the previous year, with nearly 50% of users visiting the Commonwealth Games microsite.

Extended Team England coverage: In addition to our team's Team England coverage, we appointed a PR agency to generate national and regional TV, radio, print and digital coverage for players. The agency generated unprecedented coverage for squash in recent years, resulting in a combined reach of 47 million between May and August.

BBC streaming/broadcast: The BBC streamed Round 3 of the squash singles onwards and the doubles Quarter Finals onwards across BBC iPlayer and occasionally the Red Button, as well as broadcasting Gina Kennedy's gold medal match live on BBC Two and the men's gold medal match (Joel Makin v Paul Coll) live on BBC Three. This level of coverage was significant, given there were only 11 dedicated iPlayer streams for the 20 sports featured in the Games. Over the 11 days of action, our communications team sent seven streaming notification emails to the database (c.21k) which saw open rates as high as 39% (industry average is 25%), and saw good engagement with announcements across social media, demonstrating a real appetite for live squash.

SQUASH STARS

Since Squash Stars launched in June 2022, we delivered three national marketing campaigns with this period. Each campaign aimed to drive awareness of Squash Stars and increase bookings at squashstars.co.uk, with a focus on:

- Paid digital advertising on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and Google which accounted for 83% of all traffic to squashstars.co.uk. Ads targeted parents of 5-9 year olds within a 10km radius of participating clubs. Advertising during this period resulted in a combined reach of 1.5 million people and 5.6 million impressions.
- PR – we proactively engaged national and regional TV and radio, as well as print and online media. During this period, this resulted in 160 pieces of coverage and a combined reach of 38.8 million people.
- Organic (unpaid) promotion was drip-fed across our own website, email and social media in order to inspire the community to become Squash Stars ambassadors and spread the word.

RALLY TOGETHER

With just 21% of all regular players being female, we partnered with 58 clubs to deliver Rally Together events on International Women's Day 2023 which resulted in hundreds of women hitting the court. This campaign further built on the Rally Together Pledge campaign in March 2022 which encouraged the community to support more women to play, coach and referee.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Given that younger players (age 16-34) represent c.50% of all squash players in England, and aligned with our desire to engage more young people, we have made a number of adjustments to our communications to appeal to a younger audience.

This work included setting up a TikTok account and testing different types of content such as increasing the number of Instagram Reels and young athlete takeovers, both of which have been successful at engaging younger audiences. We also reappointed our PR agency to maximise interest in elite players, particularly at the junior level. This included expanded coverage of the 2023 British Junior Open and 2023 Women's World Team Championships, which had a combined reach of over 35 million.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Following the appointment of our Content Officer in January 2022, we saw a 23% growth in followers on Facebook and Instagram and built a following of over 3,000 followers on TikTok since it launched in April 2022. Posting on-trend short video content consistently across Instagram and TikTok has been instrumental in driving follower growth and boosting engagement. Our ongoing social media collaboration with the PSA around elite England player content on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, has seen consistently high post reach and engagement.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Following nearly two years of minimal membership and affiliation income due to the pandemic - during which time the organisation remained financially stable - the Board gave approval in March 2022 to review the current membership and affiliation framework and propose a new model. The objective was to develop a new, financially sustainable scheme that works for England Squash, counties, clubs and members, and which enables direct relationships across stakeholder groups.

Following an initial review by a third-party consultant in May 2022, the key recommendations are summarised as follows:

- To separate club /venue affiliation and direct individual membership.
- To introduce 3-5 tiers of individual membership that appeal to different 'types' of player, each with different levels of benefits and associated costs.
- To maintain a similar model for club affiliation based on the number of courts, with revised benefits and costings.
- To maintain a 'county rebate' model to incentivise counties to drive membership.
- To introduce a revised approach to marketing, which highlights how England Squash membership enables individuals to feel part of the squash community and give back to their sport.

Throughout the review process, the risks were discussed and considered with detailed financial modelling highlighted as a requirement to fully understand the potential financial impact of different membership pricing models.

In addition, we have spent this time scoping out the value proposition for each proposed membership type; undertaking further consultation with key stakeholders; developing policies and procedures; assessing delivery partners and developing a roll-out plan.

COMMERCIAL

A key priority during this period has been to develop a commercial strategy in order to maximise sustainable revenue from a wide range of income streams and develop a range of partnerships which support the organisation's strategic objectives.

Key to the new strategy's success was to embed a commercial mindset throughout the organisation and align the efforts and activities of each department by commercialising England Squash 'owned' assets.

Securing sponsorship/revenue remains the biggest challenge for the organisation in the current economic climate and for a relatively low-profile sport, significant sponsorship sums are unrealistic according to independent specialist sponsorship agencies. We therefore sought to identify and focus on building a wider range of revenue streams from properties which England Squash can influence.

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

COMPETITIONS:
THE HEART
OF THE SPORT



COMPETITIONS: THE HEART OF THE SPORT

The 2022/23 season saw the first full year of competition since Covid.

COMPETITIONS CALENDAR

A successful British Junior Open was held in Nottingham in July 2022, despite a much-reduced entry size for the U19s. The new tournament software, Sport Manager, was successfully trialled at the event.

The 2023 British Junior Open was back to its former glory, with 370 entries, and was held at Edgbaston Priory. 2023 also saw a very successful British Junior Closed, along with a whole host of Gold and Silver events covering the length of the country. A full calendar of junior events took place at numerous clubs around the country, including satellite and challenger events, as well as the National Schools competition.

LEVELS OF COMPETITION

There were some name changes, with Copper and Bronze competitions becoming Satellite and Challenger competitions respectively to align with the PSA. The Satellite events were retained to provide an entry-level competition pathway for new and returning players. The major Silver and Gold competitions continue to be the main attraction for players.

TOURNAMENT SOFTWARE

Sport Manager provided us with the capacity to specifically develop a system that provides a framework for our competition types and player management.

COMPETITIONS TEAM

An all-new Competitions team was recruited by England Squash during the year. The team includes a Competitions Manager and Officer, with external support from tournament organisers to aid the delivery of major sanctioned events.

JUNIOR RANKINGS

A new ranking system based on finishing positions has been successfully implemented and is used for the seeding process.

FINANCIAL REVIEW



DEPARTMENTAL INCOME & EXPENDITURE £'000

	2022/23	2021/22
1. MEMBERSHIP		
INCOME		
Membership fees	494	315
Total income	494	315
EXPENDITURE		
County Rebates	137	61
Membership Services	53	97
Staff	0	0
Total Expenditure	190	158
2. COMPETITIONS & EVENTS		
INCOME		
British Open	0	12
Entry fees	260	220
Other	0	0
Total income	260	231
EXPENDITURE		
British Open Costs	32	87
Event Costs	323	309
Staff	53	22
Total Expenditure	408	418
3. PARTICIPATION		
INCOME		
Miscellaneous Grants	0	38
Other	45	0
Total income	45	38
EXPENDITURE		
Development Budgets (Schools, Youth, Leisure Centres etc)	279	286
Staff	121	124
Total Expenditure	400	409

DEPARTMENTAL INCOME & EXPENDITURE £'000

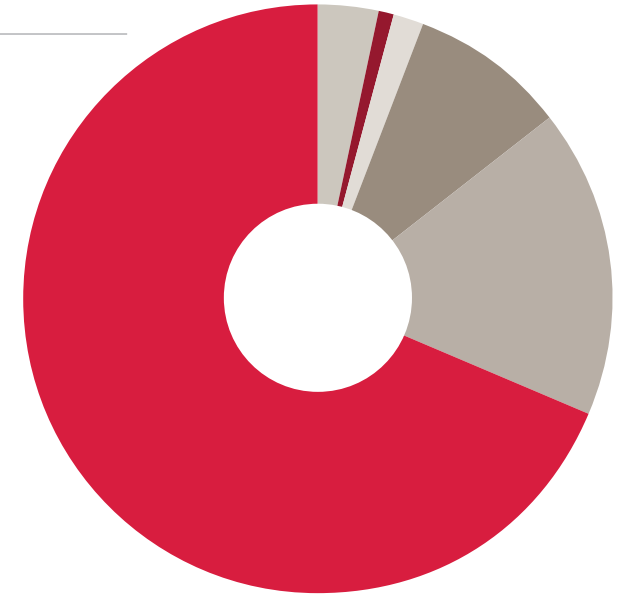
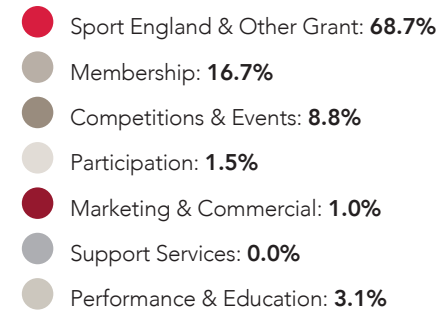
	2022/23	2021/22
4. MARKETING & COMMERCIAL		
INCOME		
Commercial & Marketing	31	42
Total income	31	42
EXPENDITURE		
Branding Materials/Collateral	68	1
Strategy Development	0	0
Other	20	19
PR Costs	36	0
Staff	156	76
Insight	0	0
Website/CRM Development	74	0
Total Expenditure	353	96
5. SUPPORT SERVICES		
INCOME		
Approval fees	0	0
Legacy	0	0
Interest	1	0
Total income	1	0
EXPENDITURE		
Depreciation	30	1
Insurance	38	32
Irrecoverable VAT	141	83
Office Costs	13	9
Strategy Development	0	0
IT maintenance and infrastructure	26	24
Other	72	98
Legacy	0	0
Printing	2	2
Professional Fees	71	87
Rent	11	6
Staff	129	136
Total Expenditure	534	479

DEPARTMENTAL INCOME & EXPENDITURE £'000

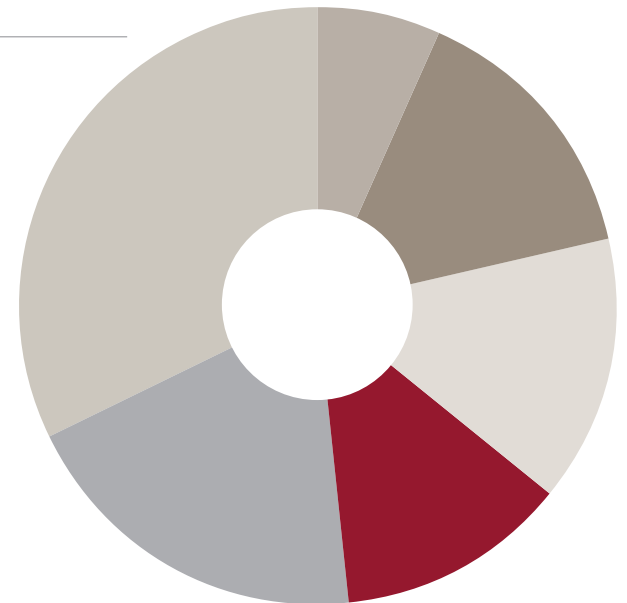
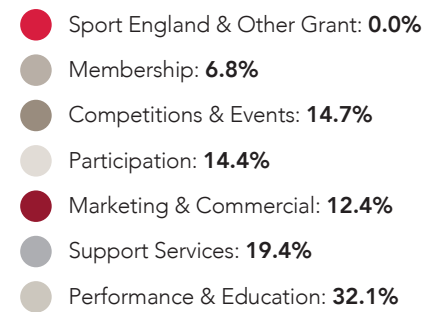
	2022/23	2021/22
6. PERFORMANCE & EDUCATION		
INCOME		
EDP	18	1
Coaching Courses	74	80
Talent Pathway	0	3
Total income	93	84
EXPENDITURE		
Competition Programme Support	21	11
Personal Awards	105	99
Training and Preparation (Squads, Coaching)	318	199
Technology and Equipment	9	65
Coach and Tutor Development	40	28
Science and Medicine Support	114	91
Other	-	0
Staff	284	228
Total Expenditure	892	720
7. SPORT ENGLAND & OTHER GRANT INCOME		
INCOME		
Other Grant income	0	0
Revenue Grant	2,029	1,987
Total income	2,029	1,987
EXPENDITURE		
Capital Investment	0	0
Total Expenditure	0	0

FINANCIAL REVIEW

INCOME 2022/23



EXPENDITURE 2022/23







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