

Active Black Country Limited

Company Number – 14537800

Registered Charity Number – 1210894

Board Recruitment & Selection Policy

Version1 November 2024

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Introduction

Active Black Country Limited (ABC Ltd) is the Active Partnership (AP) for the Black Country region, providing the strategic leadership for physical activity, sport and movement across the areas of the Metropolitan Boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, and Walsall, the City of Wolverhampton, and surrounding areas.

ABC Ltd is registered with Companies House as a company limited by guarantee under company number; 14537800 and a registered charity with the Charity Commission under charity number; 1210894.

All individuals appointed onto the ABC Ltd Board of Trustees are simultaneously:

- a. the Trustees of the Charity under charity law and registration with Companies House;
- b. the Trustees under charitable law and regulation by the Charity Commission for England & Wales.

The ABC Ltd Board of Trustees have established the strategic plan – ‘Creating an Active Black Country’ – that provides the direction for the business.

Our Board has the important responsibility of directing and controlling Active Black Country. It is vital that we have people with the right skills and experience to carry out this role. We will, therefore:

1. Be clear about the mix of skills and experience necessary for our Board to operate effectively and re-assess these annually.
2. Annually assess the skills and experience which Board Members currently hold and match these against the skills and experience we need (skills audit).
3. Identify gaps between the skills and experience required and those currently held.

Take steps to fill those gaps by a mix of:

1. Structured training and development programmes for the Board as a whole and/or for individual Board Members.
2. Recruitment (through an election at the AGM and by co-option during the year) of additional members on an open and transparent basis.
3. Ensure a process of succession planning is in place, to protect and enhance the skills and experience held by individuals in the event of their departure from the Board.

Overview

This Policy sets out the steps we will take to secure additional skills through recruitment, but as indicated above it forms part of a range of governance measures designed to increase the capacity of the Board.

- Working with like-minded team players they are motivated by a passion for the Black Country and improving the lives of those who work, play, learn and live in it.
- All appointments to the Board are expected to meet an agreed standard of behaviour known as the Code of Conduct which is drawn from the 7 Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles) which ensures members declare any conflicts of interest and act with honesty and transparency at all times.
- Recruitment to the Board and any stated committees will therefore:-
 - be open and transparent
 - be based on the Board's considered view of the skills and attributes required to carry out the role ensuring any appointments enhance the overall profile composition of the Board.
 - Ensure all members are selected and appointed fairly and objectively based on merit.

The accountability and structure of the board

- The Active Black Country Ltd Board (ABC Board) is the Government and Sport England recognised Active Partnership (AP) for the Black Country region providing the strategic leadership for sport and physical activity across the areas of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton.
- All individuals appointed onto the ABC Ltd Board of Directors are simultaneously; the Directors of the Company under company law and registration with Companies House; and the Trustees under charitable law and regulation by the Charity Commission for England & Wales.
- As set out in Article 27.1 of the Articles of Association of Active Black Country Limited (ABC Ltd, or the Company, or the Charity) dated [date], the Board of Directors:
 - is to manage the business of the Charity; and

- may exercise all the powers of the Charity, unless the Directors are subject to any restrictions imposed by the Companies Acts, the Articles, or any Special Resolution passed by the Members of the Company.
- Since Members are also appointed as Directors under Article 23.3 the Directors must ensure that when admitting Members it takes into account the need for Members who become Directors to contribute to the skills mix and balance of the Directors as a whole.
- The Board has responsibility for the governance and strategic direction of the Active Black Country Ltd. Day to day activities are delegated to the Chief Executive Officer and the supporting team.
- The Board is governed by its articles of association which evidences its compliance with the Sport England Code of Sports Governance.
- ABC Ltd Board comprises of upto 12 Independent Non-Executive Directors.

Board member skills mix

- The following broad criteria have been agreed for appointing Board Members to the Active Black Country Ltd Board. At the point of given recruitment & selection the specific criterion will be informed by skills matrix & succession planning:
 - Local knowledge: for example, awareness of the needs in the areas we work in, knowledge of local issues across Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton, and awareness of the concerns, hopes and aspirations of people who live in the Black Country.
 - Business skills and knowledge: for example, strategic and business planning, personnel or Human Resource issues, financial planning and control, monitoring and control of performance, corporate management/administration,
 - regulatory and legal experience.
 - Specialist sector knowledge: for example, knowledge of sport & physical activity development, health & wellbeing, wider determinants of health, community development, education, regeneration, transport & planning.

Board member competencies

- The following competencies have been identified and agreed as necessary for the effective execution of a Board member role:-

- Performance and Result Focus – Focuses energy and commitment on achieving results that are critical to the success of the Active Black Country, stakeholders and partners and the Black Country.
- Innovation and Continuous Improvement – Demonstrates an open mind to challenge traditional approaches. Approach taken is always improvement orientated.
- Leadership – Creates and communicates a shared vision which inspires enthusiasm and commitment to achieve the Active Black Country goals.
- Strategic Thinking – Sets, pursues with vigour, and regularly reviews a clear strategic course aimed at enabling long-term growth and success.
- Advocacy – Promotes the Black Country and our Vision to stakeholders and others in a professional and credible way, bringing them on board.

Recruitment of board members

In addition to developing the skills and knowledge of existing Board Members, we will seek to recruit to fill gaps identified through the skills audit and annual Board review processes, or the filling of casual vacancies left by the retirement of existing Board Members.

Annually, we identify the skills, experience, and expertise required to direct ABC Ltd's affairs. Through recruitment, we will attempt to fill any gaps which have been identified.

We will also seek to identify any current groups which are underrepresented on our Board, with reference in particular to age, gender, ethnic origin, and disability, in pursuit of our commitment to equal opportunities.

The advertisement will highlight the particular skills and areas of experience where gaps have been identified and will invite applications from underrepresented groups.

Those enquiring will be issued with a recruitment pack, consisting of the following:

- Information on ABC Ltd role, purpose, vision and mission;
- Explanatory information on the process of becoming a Board Member;
- Board Members Role Description;
- Itemised checklist of the skills, knowledge, and other qualities sought ;
- Application form, which asks for information on the areas of skills, knowledge, and experience which the applicant can offer, and for personal information to allow equal opportunities monitoring.

- ABC Ltd will promote the opportunity to become a member of the Board through the use of;
 - organisations, other stakeholders and community groups;
 - National member organisations and recruitment agencies
 - Social media, including; LinkedIn, company website and other online platforms.
 - local business interests and their representatives;
 - other voluntary organisations and social enterprises.

Shortlisting and appointment process

- Short-listing of candidates for interviews will be carried out by ABC Ltd Executive and agreed with a nominated representatives of the ABC Ltd Nominations & Governance Committee and, where required, agreed external representatives.
- In order to short-list candidates for interviews consideration will be given to:-
 - the match of candidate's skills against the competencies identified as required and desirable for the role.
 - the match of candidate's skills against the overall skills profile composition of the Board.
 - the ability of the candidate to meet the terms of appointment for the role.
 - stated Conflicts of Interest for the candidate.
- An interview panel comprising of nominated ABC Ltd Nominations & Governance Committee members and, where required, agreed third party representatives, will be established ensuring the process is objective, impartial and fairly applied to all candidates.
- The ABC Ltd Chief Executive Officer will support the interview panel as an observer.
- Recommendations for appointment of Board members will be made by the Nominations & Governance Committee to the ABC Ltd Board who are the final appointing authority.
- The Board requires compliance with eligibility criteria therefore all appointments and reappointments will be made in compliance with agreed stipulations regarding eligibility, which includes DBS checks. All members are required to declare and keep their eligibility under review.
- The Board will consider the suitability of candidates to hold office as a member, taking full consideration of any and all relevant statutory stipulations and regulations relating to financial and criminal matters.

Term of appointment

- All appointments and re-appointments will be made in compliance with agreed stipulations regarding terms of office.
- New member appointments are usually made for a three-year term of office in the first instance. At the expiry of the period of office they shall be eligible for re-appointment, subject to approval by the Board, for two further terms of 3 years each.
- The overall skills composition of the Board is critical to its effectiveness and therefore we seek to balance the benefits of continuity and tenure against the energy and new ideas that new members bring to the board. A rotational system directing appointment terms of office may therefore be put in place at relevant times to enable this approach as per the Board's assurance framework.

Remuneration

- Roles are not remunerated. Provision is made for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses in line with the ABC Ltd Board Expenses Policy.

Equality and diversity

- The Board values diversity and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for our members and role applicants.
- We monitor our recruitment and selection practices to fulfil our statutory duty relevant to equality in employment and to ensure our practices are fair, equitable and consistent with the aim of appointing the best person for any role. Recruitment monitoring enables us to take active steps to promote better policy and organisational practice.
- We believe that by understanding and responding to the diverse needs of its potential and existing board members, providing an environment which eliminates discrimination in all its forms as well as positively promoting equality, it will attract and retain a motivated and multi-skilled board to provide a good quality service.

- Our aim is to promote and achieve a board that reflects the Black Country. We encourage applications from under-represented groups and we will pursue a policy of 'positive action' in an attempt to achieve this.
- 'Positive Action' refers to measures and initiatives that can be taken to actively encourage individuals from under-represented groups to apply. The selection procedure itself is no different, and is based solely on merit. 'Positive Action' does not seek to remove competition and the Board will recruit and select the best applicants for the role.

Appraisal process

- The Board will undertake regular appraisals of its performance, its members and of the effectiveness of the skills and experience therein. Appropriate training and development will be reviewed and delivered to ensure Board members remain able to effectively carry out their responsibilities.
- Any questions or queries relating to our recruitment and selection of Board members should be made directly to the Nominations & Governance Chair or the ABC Ltd Chief Executive Officer.

Policy review

- This policy is reviewed by the Nominations & Governance Committee on an annual basis.