

British Elite Athletes Association Annual Review

October 2021 – March 2023



British
Elite
Athletes
Association

Introduction from our CEO

Dear BEAA members and stakeholders,

I hope this message finds you well.

As we move into the new financial year, I wanted to update you on the progress and plans of the British Elite Athletes Association (BEAA).

Firstly, I am proud to report that our team has continued to provide exceptional support to athletes across the UK, and our reputation for independent and expert assistance is growing. We have been able to offer a more proactive service to athletes and their NGBs, and we are dedicated to continually improving our provisions.

We are strongly encouraged by the recent policy responses to the Whyte Review, which aim to increase athlete input and representation in high-performance policy and decision-making. We plan to work closely with our system partners to ensure these policies are implemented effectively and that we make the athlete voice an asset to the system.

In addition, we have several exciting plans for the coming year, including rolling out our alumni community, establishing an athlete forum at the heart of decision-making in sport, improving support for athlete representatives, and creating an online platform for athletes to connect and contribute to discussions.

We are committed to providing the best possible support and representation for our members, and we look forward to a productive year ahead.



Anna Watkins MBE, OLY
BEAA CEO



**I am proud to report that
our team has continued
to provide exceptional
support to athletes
across the UK.**

Operations and impact

This year has seen case numbers begin to stabilise following unprecedented increases in 2020 and 2021, and our reputation grow for independent, expert support delivered with a thorough understanding of the sporting landscape.

Our experienced Athlete Support Team have been called on to share their expertise across the system both formally and informally, and our engaged members continue to recommend us almost without exception.



We have begun to **realise our ambition** to offer a **more proactive service** to athletes and their NGBs. Our service offer includes elements designed to reduce the rate of serious adverse events requiring dispute resolution through measures such as educational workshops and independent observation of selection panels.

Anna Watkins
BEAA CEO



94% 

of athletes who have engaged directly with the BEAA would recommend it to other athletes

 **124**
athletes supported through cases

22 
induction sessions

33 
independent observer sessions

9
workshops reaching
130
athletes

460 
hours of continuous support to the Commonwealth Games

What our athletes think

Our recent survey of British athletes touched upon various aspects of the performance environment, with a focus on support systems and welfare.

A significant **85.9%** of respondents identified as full-time, while **14.2%** reported balancing part-time work or study with their training.

The majority of athletes (**78.5%**) felt they usually or always had the support needed to achieve their goals, while **61.7%** believed they received ample support for their welfare and wellbeing.

In addition, **60.4%** of respondents claimed they usually or always thrive in their high-performance environments, and safety was marked as a priority by a notable **80.4%** of participants.

Respectful and professional communication is prevalent, with almost three-quarters (**73.8%**) of athletes usually or always experiencing it. A majority also have a clear understanding of the selection process (**82.2%**) and felt that selections were conducted professionally (**81.3%**).

Compared to 12 months ago, **71%** of respondents reported a positive shift in attitude towards athlete welfare and wellbeing in Great Britain, which we believe the high profile of the Whyte Review is responsible for.

However, almost half of all respondents (**49.5%**) felt athletes are usually or always listened to. This was the lowest-ranked element of the high-performance system.

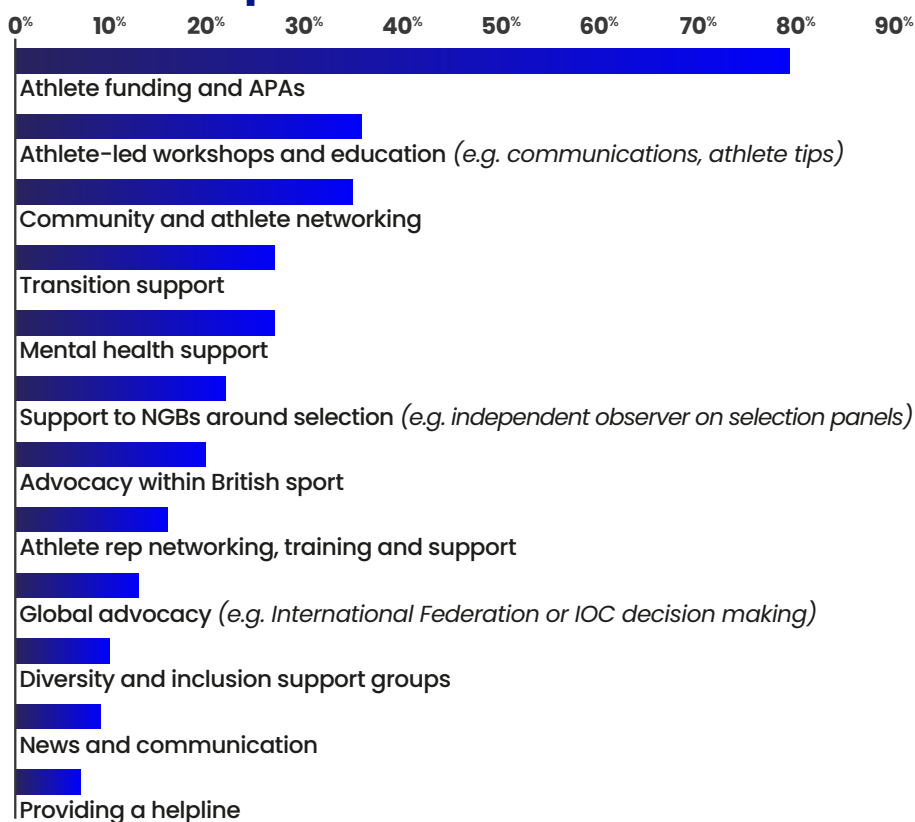
71% of athletes reported a positive shift in attitude towards athlete welfare and wellbeing

Athletes were asked:

Which three things would you like to see the BEAA prioritise over the next year?

The chart shows the percentage of athletes who selected each topic as one of three choices.*

Members' priorities



*Source: Jan 2023 BEAA annual membership survey

Cost of living

The BEAA first began to act on athletes' behalf regarding the current cost of living crisis in April 2022 when, after consulting with UK Sport, we surveyed our members on the issue. Our aim was to provide a clear picture of the cost of living impact on athletes at all levels of the funding scale.

The results were stark: **82.8%** of respondents found themselves in financial difficulty, and **85.3%** of that cohort called this the greatest financial struggle they've faced as a World Class Programme athlete.

Furthermore, **76.9%** of respondents said the cost of living crisis was impacting their ability to focus on sporting performance, and 62.5% envisaged it potentially impacting their continued participation on a World Class Programme.

In October we then shared a second survey that looked more closely at athlete expenditure, and showed that **71.1%** of respondents felt their Athlete Performance Award (APA) did not cover their living costs.

To make up the difference, almost a third (**30.7%**) of respondents held a second job, and over a fifth (**21.3%**) relied upon friends and/or family.

We were able to share the above findings with UK Sport to ensure key stakeholders had the evidence they require to consider further support for athletes.

We continue to engage on this issue with stakeholders. We believe that a thorough review of athlete funding is needed to ensure that the most talented athletes are able to dedicate themselves to training to represent Great Britain, regardless of background.

82.8%
of respondents are in financial difficulty

76.9%
say the cost of living is impacting their performance

71.1%
feel their APA does not cover living costs

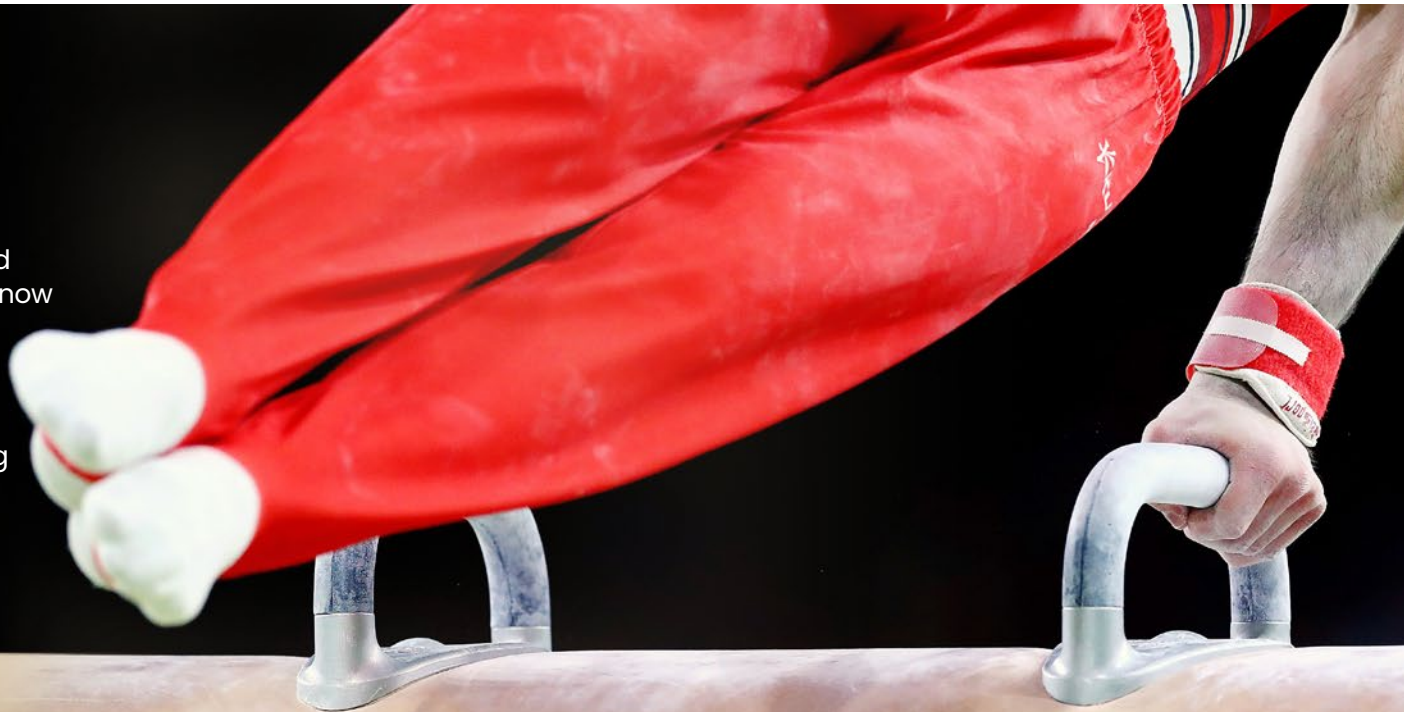


Whyte Review

The BEAA takes professional pride in having supported athletes through the Whyte Review, and in seeing the impact of this work.

We continue to support gymnastics as it now creates and leads the way in many areas of athlete welfare, and we know many other sports are watching and following their lead.

We're proud to be thanked for our work, and also to be a key player in the Sport England and UK Sport policy response to the Whyte Review. We look forward to helping make the recommendations a reality so that athletes everywhere can thrive in safe and positive environments.

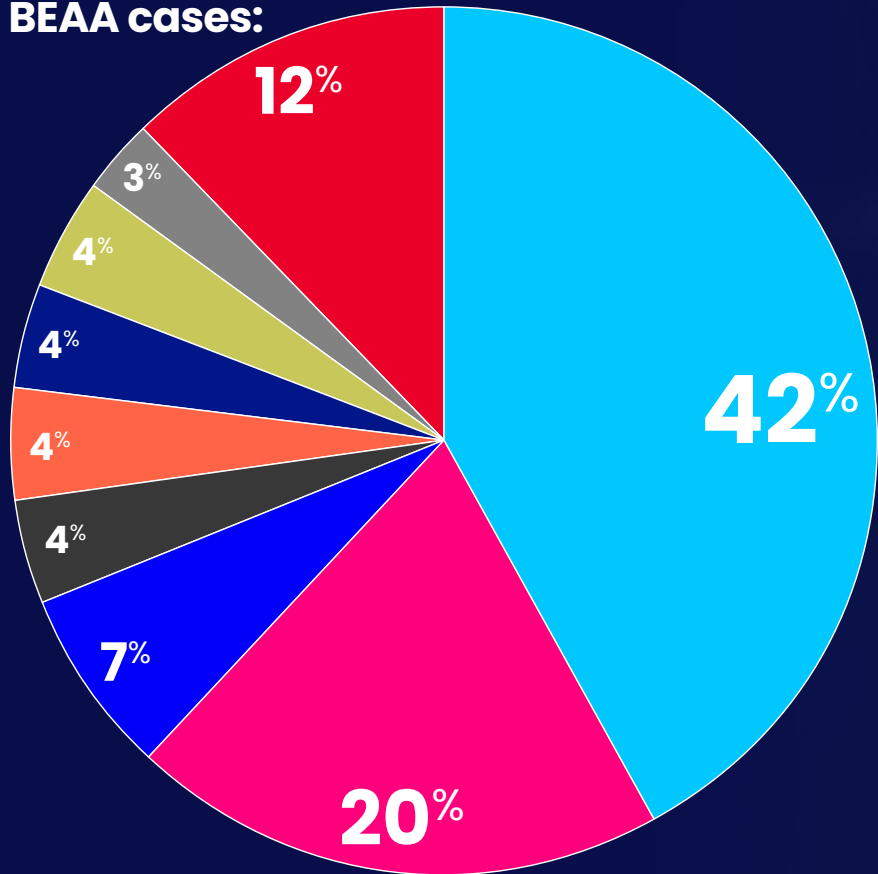


In particular I would like to thank the [BEAA] for its tireless work in supporting the individuals who contacted them in often difficult circumstances to disclose their experiences in gymnastics.

The [BEAA] encouraged and **supported many of these individuals to engage with the Review**, and supported other individuals who reached out to the [BEAA] for support following a referral from the Review.

Anne Whyte
KC

BEAA cases:



- 42% – Transition/retirement
- 20% – Selection
- 7% – Mental health
- 4% – Funding
- 4% – General
- 4% – Legal support
- 4% – Safeguarding adults
- 3% – Financial support
- 12% – Other

Other includes:

- 2% – Classification
- 2% – Disciplinary
- 2% – ED&I
- 2% – Injury
- 1% – Anti-doping
- 1% – Athlete voice
- 1% – Complaint
- 1% – Safeguarding children



The BEAA is someone you know will be there to listen. I know they will support me.

Nekoda Smythe-Davis
Judoka and BEAA Ambassador



A growing BEAA

- › Launch of a wider range of proactive services, including athlete-led workshops
- › Rebrand to communicate our focus on supporting today's elite athletes
- › NGB relationship reset, clarifying offer and inviting feedback
- › BEAA invited to speak at many events, including PD forum, integrity day, PLx and more
- › BEAA on the ground advocating for athletes in a wide range of working groups and strategy sessions



The BEAA is really that support system... they play such an important role in athlete wellbeing and welfare.

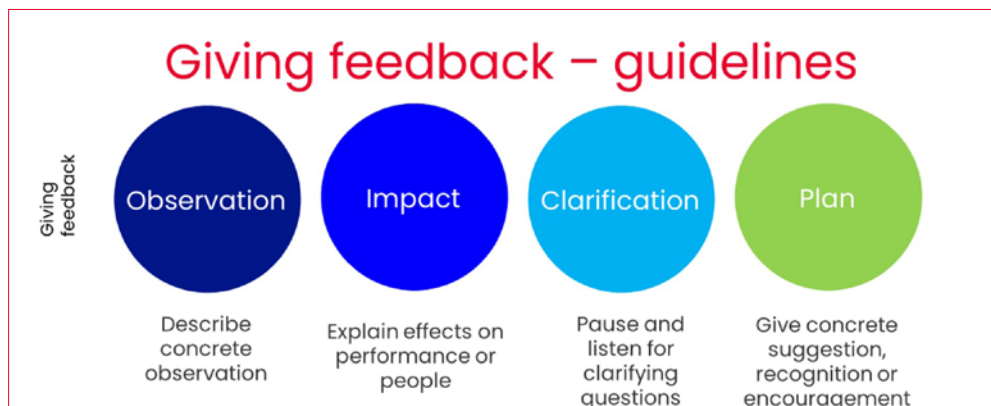
Robyn Love

BEAA LGBTQ+ Ambassador



New activities

New workshops developed by former athletes to help athletes and NGBs:



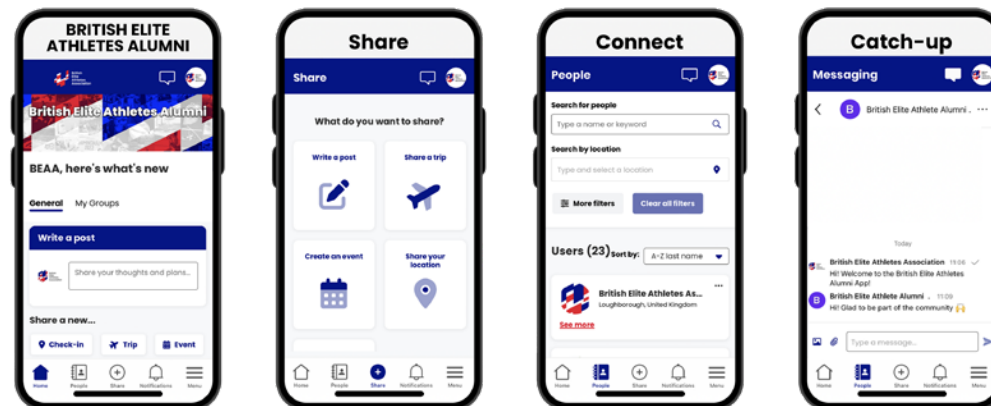
New athlete community leadership through our latest recruit, former skeleton athlete **Milly Kellyman**:

/// I was really **proud** of myself that I was able to compete for Great Britain; doing that was **my childhood dream**. Now having left I've looked at what I'm passionate about and where my values lie.

Milly Kellyman
Athlete Community Manager



Alumni platform completed pilot testing and ready for launch summer 2023:

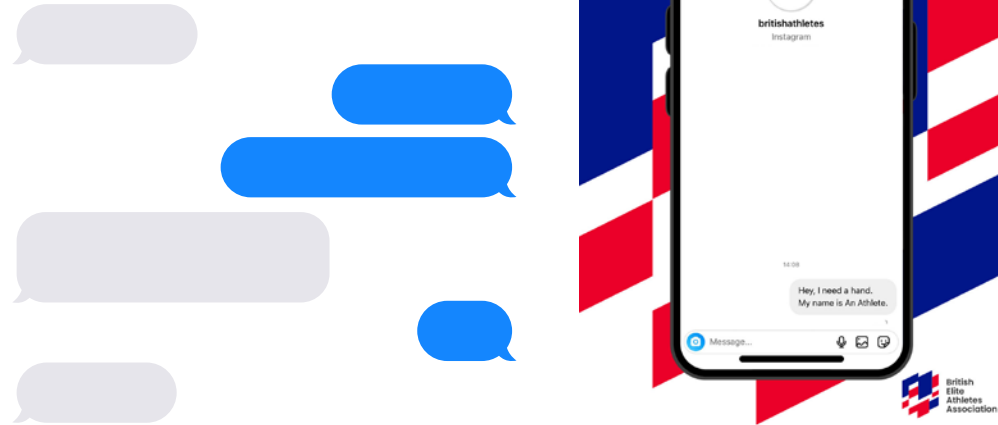


Social and digital channel overhaul, with new look and feel, upbeat tone and creative content:



New activities *continued...*

Our direct messages opened up as an athlete-friendly channel to access support:



Athletes' Athlete of the Month awards launched:



Welcoming **Robyn Love** and **Michael Gunning** as our new Athlete Ambassadors, shaping and leading our efforts in LGBTQ+ and ED&I respectively



/// We have an opportunity with the BEAA to put **athletes at the top**; I want to be part of that.

Michael Gunning
BEAA ED&I Ambassador



In 2023 we have some exciting and bold aims.

Building on our reputation for support, we aim to do more and better in the realms of advocacy, representation and community.

We are strongly encouraged by two key policy responses to the **Whyte Review**, and look forward to working with our system partners to deliver against these:

'Ensure athletes have greater input into high-performance policy development and operation, through the advocacy of the British Elite Athletes Association (BEAA).'

'Ensure that every funded high-performance programme has appropriately integrated athlete voice and representation in its decision-making structures.'

We are looking forward to working with system partners towards our ambitious goals:

- › Maintaining our recognised excellence in one-to-one independent and confidential advice and support for athletes
- › Rolling out the alumni community
- › Establishing an athlete forum at the heart of sport decision making
- › Improving support, structures and opportunities for athlete reps within their sports
- › Creating an online home for current athletes, where they can connect with each other and input into discussions, as well as find relevant advice and services

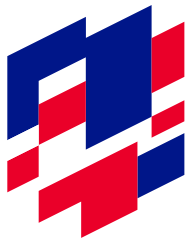
**(Source: UK sport policy response to the Whyte Review)*

Get in touch

 @GBEliteAthletes

 @britishathletes

 The British Elite Athletes Association



British
Elite
Athletes
Association

With you.

www.britisheliteathletes.org