



# **ENGLAND BOXING**

## **DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND RACE REVIEW (FULL VERSION)**

**Bevis Allen (on behalf of England Boxing)**



# 1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Diversity, Equality and Race report compiles the findings of the England Boxing Review during the period beginning 29<sup>th</sup> July (initial kick-off meeting), through to the end of the review, November 2021.

It should be pointed out from the outset that race was the focal point of this review, not other protected characteristics (for example, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation etc).

The review was initiated on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (Black Out Tuesday on Social Media Channels). A working group was subsequently formed, consisting of nine individuals from within the England Boxing organisation. The members of the working group were not finalised until towards the end of July 2020, with the first working group meeting taking place on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

**Please note:** the images used in this document are for illustrative purposes only and do not relate directly to the information contained within the report.

## The Terms of Reference for the review were as follows:

- To lead (and document) a review to learn, develop and improve England Boxing's performance in combating racism and increasing diversity and inclusivity in all functions of the National Governing Body
- To complete the documented review and submit, with key recommendations and actions, to the England Boxing Board of Directors
- To identify any 'shorter-term' actions which could be implemented in a timely and cost-effective way
- To create new educational and promotional materials to help promote equality and diversity within all areas of the sport, including 'appropriate' messaging
- To benchmark the levels of diversity for signposting progress
- To review the Governance code commitments.



# 1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

England Boxing is made up of an un-paid **Board of Directors, paid staff** (23 at the time of writing), **sub-committees** (made up of volunteers and overseen by a Board Director), **regional committees** (who govern geographical areas around the country. Two of these regions are set up as separate companies, limited by guarantee. All regions manage the day-to-day running of boxing activities within their areas, such as affiliations, coach/official training, shows and regional tournaments, other administrative duties), **clubs with committees, coaches, boxers, officials** and **recreational** (keep-fit) members.

Members from within England Boxing (boxers, coaches, officials, educators, staff members), were involved in the content in this report. The report also includes comments made during interviews regarding their experiences of England Boxing. Every effort has been made not to identify the individuals who these comments are attributed to.

Some key facts and figures have been included in the report to be able to benchmark future progress in these areas, particularly around diversity. Five shorter-terms actions were identified by the working group as actions which could be put in place and implemented, without the need to wait for the conclusion of the review. The five shorter-term actions already implemented were:

1. **Sign up to the Sporting Equals Charter**
2. **Provide Diversity and Inclusion Training for all England Talent Pathway coaches and support staff**
3. **Update the Child Safeguarding Course to include a section on anti-racism**
4. **Deliver monthly Knockout Racism online workshops to the membership**
5. **Retire the use of the phrase BAME.**



# 1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A further set of recommendations have been made, seven in total, not least the first one, where the recommendation is to set up an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee to oversee the work from this review and implement any further actions to be taken. The recommendations made to the England Boxing Board of Directors are:

1. Set up a new Sub-Committee, led by either a Board member or senior staff member at England Boxing to oversee the implementation of the recommendations from this report
2. Work alongside other Sports Governing Bodies to learn, and share best practice
3. Continually promote the existing diversity within the sport of amateur boxing, and improve its messaging and communications
4. Ensure that all Board members, Staff, Regions, Sub-committees and members receive Diversity and Inclusion training
5. Address the lack of diversity within England Boxing staff member
6. Recruit more coaches, officials, coach and official educators, plus panel review members, from ethnically diverse backgrounds
7. Adopt a zero-tolerance approach to racism.



## 2) CONTEXT AND SCOPE

The murder of George Floyd (on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020) at the hands of police officers, plus the shocking footage of his death circulated around the world, the global protests that have followed and the powerful message of the Black Lives Matter movement made every section of society take notice and confront an ugly truth (being that all lives do not matter equally).

It has further been acknowledged by almost all sports governing bodies that up to this point, not enough has been done to tackle racial inequality at all levels of the talent pathway (athletes, coaches, and officials) and in their administration and management functions.

On 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020, a statement was issued from CEO Gethin Jenkins reiterating England Boxing's stand against racism:

“Whilst we pride ourselves on our diversity, we recognise we can and must do more. We have an obligation to use the power of the sport of boxing to promote togetherness and in doing so coming together to be more inclusive for all.

**“We stand for diversity and against racism.”**



## 2) CONTEXT AND SCOPE

### The objectives of the review were as follows:

1. To lead (and document) a review to learn, develop and improve England Boxing's performance, to combat racism and increase diversity and inclusivity in all functions of the National Governing Body.
2. To complete the documented review and submit, with key recommendations and actions to the England Boxing Board of Directors
3. To identify any 'shorter-term' actions which can be implemented in a timely and cost-effective way.
4. To create new educational and promotional materials to help promote equality and diversity within all areas of the sport, including 'appropriate' messaging
5. To benchmark the levels of diversity for signposting progress
6. To review the Governance code commitments.

**Benefits** - Achieving the above objectives will improve the trust of the existing England Boxing membership, particularly those from an ethnically diverse background, plus demonstrate that England Boxing truly is a diverse and inclusive organisation. The current situation as it stands may mean that England Boxing are missing out on immense talent, passion skills and expertise, as well as opportunities to connect, learn, grow, and expand. If any recommendations that arise from the review are implemented, it will see a much stronger sport. It can also serve as a 'blueprint' to tackle other areas such as increasing female participation and other under-represented group at all levels, model 'best practice' to other National Governing Bodies and, overall, improve the impact sport can have in tackling inequality.



## 2) CONTEXT AND SCOPE

Extensive conversations amongst other publicly-funded NGBs and the Sport and Recreational Alliance have since taken place, resulting in England Boxing signing up to the 'Sport and Recreation Sector Commitment to Tackling Inequality.'

The Sport and Recreation Alliance stated the following:

"Sport and recreation has had an influential role to bring about meaningful change and this period has rightly led the sector to reflect, listen, question, learn and openly discuss how to take positive action. It is also acknowledged that up to this point, we have not done enough. It is time to confront racism and inequality that exist across sport, from grassroots participation through to the boardroom."

Research by the Sport and Recreation Alliance (2018) showed that four in 10 **(40%)** of ethnically diverse participants have endured a negative experience in sport or physical activity settings, more than double that of white participants.

The Diversity in Sport Governance report (2018/19) identified that there is only **5%** Ethnically Diverse board representation across Sport England and UK Sport-funded organisations.

Sport England also issued its own statement, which you can read by [\*\*clicking here\*\*](#).



## 2) CONTEXT AND SCOPE

It was also acknowledged by the CEO of England Boxing that 25% of members of the England Boxing boardroom are from an Ethnically Diverse background (three out of 12 board members). However, the reality is that across all other areas, such as coaches, coach educators, officials, official educators, talent pathway and staff members, as well as those that sit on England Boxing's disciplinary panel, the sport of amateur boxing is not diverse, inclusive, or representative of the communities it serves.

It was therefore agreed to form a working group to conduct a review of the functional areas within England Boxing regarding the treatment of members/staff from ethnically diverse communities, to ascertain what policies and procedures are in place. The Working Group would make recommendations where required for new policies and processes, to ensure greater diversity, equality, and inclusivity across the whole of the organisation.

The review looked at areas such as (but not limited to), coaching and officiating recruitment; how complaints of racism are being handled; equality and Diversity training for all those responsible for educating others in the sport (coaches, coach educators, officials, official deucators); decision making - conscious and unconscious bias; social media; and benchmarking and setting targets across the relevant representative groups of boxers, coaches, officials and volunteers.



## 2) CONTEXT AND SCOPE

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## 2) CONTEXT AND SCOPE

### The areas 'in Scope' of the review were:

1. Creation of a Working Group
2. Club Members, DiSE Academy, England Talent Pathway, Officials, Official Educators, Coaches at all levels (1 – 4), Coach Educators, Education Content, Supervisors, Club Support Officers, Recruitment Policy, Sub-committees, National Compliance
3. England Boxing communications and messaging
4. Board of England Boxing
5. EB Sub-committees and Regional Committees
6. England Boxing staff recruitment process and policies.

### The areas 'out of scope' were:

1. GB Boxing.



## 2) CONTEXT AND SCOPE

### The deliverables were:

1. **Formation of a working group**
2. **Documented review highlighting areas which need to be addressed and meaningful actions to be undertaken**
3. **List of shorter-term actions to be implemented and timescales for implementation with associated cost/budget**
4. **Documented interviews with England Boxing Members across all areas**
5. **KO Racism workshops – delivered as an online resource (similar to the Box In Mind Bitesize)**
6. **Benchmark figures.**

Looking retrospectively, and during this review, England Boxing acknowledges that a greater effort could have been made in the past from an equality, diversity and inclusion perspective. This is acknowledged due to the low numbers of ethnically diverse coaches, officials, educators within the sport, plus the findings from other reviews (Sporting Equals, Sport and Recreation Alliance, Active Partnerships), which all highlight a very similar trend.

Sport is a microcosm of society and whereas many positives have been achieved, it hasn't been enough to tackle deep rooted societal issues and challenges. England Boxing is committed to working towards a brighter future and to eradicate the issues from the past.



### 3) KEY FACTS AND FIGURES – ENGLAND BOXING’S ETHNIC DIVERSITY STATISTICS

#### England Boxing Diversity Stats (from The Vault for 2019-20 season\*)

**17%** Competitive Boxers **(2,760 of 16,204)**

**10%** Qualified Coaches **(428 of 4,276)**

**8%** Qualified Officials **(31 of 373)**

\*(500 members did not specify ethnicity)

\*\* (Due to Coronavirus Pandemic, 2020-21 figures from The Vault are not available).

#### Coach Education

**10%** Level 1 Coach Educators **(3 out of 32)**

**0%** Level 2 Assessors **(active only)**

**0%** Internal Verifiers **(active only)**

**12%** Regional Developers **(3 out of 25, includes one from travelling community)**

**7%** Level 2 Coach Educators

#### Talent Pathway Coaches

**11%** Talent Pathway Coaches **(5 out of 44)**

**0%** Talent Pathway Support Lead Coaches, Team Managers etc.)

**NB.** For the purpose of this report, the definition of ‘ethnic diversity’ means ‘non-white’. There is also no category on the vault to specify those from a travelling community, which should also form part of these ethnic diversity stats.



### 3) KEY FACTS AND FIGURES – ENGLAND BOXING’S ETHNIC DIVERSITY STATISTICS

#### Sub-Committees

- 14%** Medical (1 out of 7)
- 33%** Audit (1 out of 3)
- 29%** Technical Rules & Officials (1 out of 6)
- 30%** Coaching (3 out of 10)
- 0%** Club Membership
- 14%** Compliance/Legal/HR (1 out of 7)
- 33%** Communications (1 out of 3)
- 30%** Championships (incl. Title belts)  
(3 out of 10)
- 20%** Talent (1 out of 5).

#### England Boxing Board:

**25%** (3 out of 12).

#### England Boxing Staff:

**14%** (includes one staff member on contract basis).

**NB.** Within the last 14 years, there has been only one Black full-time employee within England Boxing.

#### UK Sport funding is based on medal haul at Olympic Games:

- 75%** of Olympic medals in 2012 won by black and Asian boxers
- 100%** of Olympic medals in 2016 won by Black Boxers
- 50%** of Olympic medals in 2020 won by black and Asian boxers.



### 3) KEY FACTS AND FIGURES – ENGLAND BOXING’S ETHNIC DIVERSITY STATISTICS

#### England Boxing BAME membership

BAME membership info is detailed below for certain membership types. The ones highlighted in yellow are probably the most accurate. There's also a trend graph below that which shows BAME growth from 2017-2020, which overall increased by 102% in that time period:

BAME was a term used at the start of the review and so also appears in this report. As per one of the shorter-term actions, the use of the term ‘BAME’ has since been retired by England Boxing.

#### BAME Membership 2020

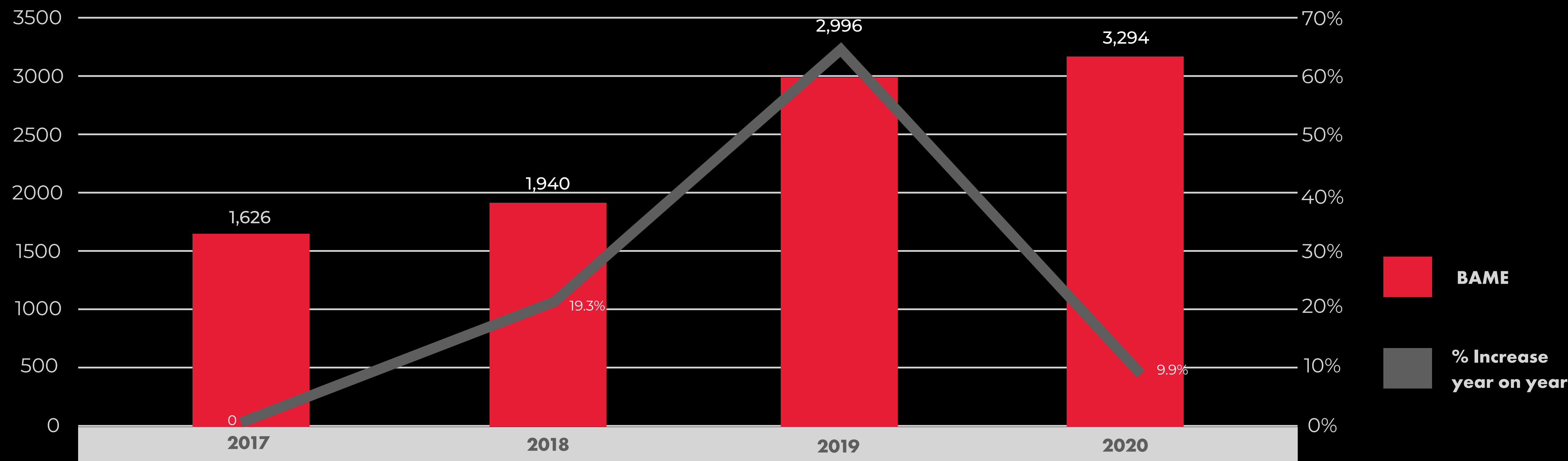
MEMBERSHIP TYPE	BAME No'	MEMBERSHIP No'	% OF MEMBERSHIP
Coaches (exc. Sub-categories)	345	3460	10%
Coaches (inc. sub-categories)	428	4276	10%
Boxers (exc. sub-categories)	2654	15,476	17%
Boxers (inc. sub-categories)	2760	16,204	17%
Officials (exc. sub-categories)	28	352	8%
Officials ((inc. sub-categories)	31	373	8.3%
Total (exc. sub categories) Coaches, Boxers & Officials	3027	19,288	15.7%
Total (inc. sub-categories) Coaches, Boxers & Officials	3219	20,853	15.4%
Total (all membership types inc. non-responses)	3294	21,462	15.3%
Total (all membership types exc. non-responses)	-	17538	18.8%





### 3) KEY FACTS AND FIGURES – ENGLAND BOXING’S ETHNIC DIVERSITY STATISTICS

BAME 2017 - 2020



**NB.** Sub-categories means those who have selected any of the following categories on the Vault: boxer/official; boxer/coach.

A large part of the 102% increase is due to returning London clubs, quite a few of whom have a large diverse membership (a result of boxers affiliated to clubs in urban areas with a high ethnic diverse population), plus newly-affiliated clubs mainly in London, Birmingham/Midlands, where the Lead Coach is from an ethnically diverse background, leading to a majority of coaches and boxers from these clubs also coming from similar ethnic backgrounds.

Above figures were correct as of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020.





## 4) REVIEW METHODOLOGY

The review was conducted by members of the working group, some of whom, interviewed members of England Boxing. In total, 45 members from across a wide range of the membership were interviewed and/or contributed. Those who contributed, came from the following categories:

- Junior boxers
- Senior boxers
- Club coaches
- Talent Pathway coach(es)
- Referees
- Judges
- Official educators
- Sub-committee members
- Staff members



## 4) REVIEW METHODOLOGY

As the review took place during the Coronavirus Pandemic, and largely whilst the country was in lockdown, almost none of the interviews with members took place face-to-face. The vast majority of interviews were conducted either online (Zoom or Microsoft Teams), or by telephone, with only a couple of interviews having taken place in person, once Covid restrictions had been eased. In the main, the interviews were on a one-to-one basis, although three focus groups (via Zoom) were conducted.

In addition to the 45 members of England Boxing being interviewed, further information was provided by those who attended some of the KO Racism online workshops, which took place at the same time, via 75-minute zoom sessions. At the end of each KO Racism workshop, Question and Answer sessions (Q&As), took place. These Q&A sessions provided a good insight into the experiences of some of the members, particularly around the issue of online racism and complaints that had been previously raised. Some comments made are from historical instances that took place. However, some refer to more recent instances.

15 non-members of England Boxing also took part in the review in terms of providing advice and guidance. The non-England Boxing members came from other sports' National Governing Bodies, corporate organisations, government organisations, individuals who specialise in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and local authority sport development leads.

Towards the end of the report, there are some quotes which have been taken from interviews, comments made for the purpose of the review and comments sent in by email or from the online interviews. For the sake of confidentiality, the quotes have been broadly credited, and attributed to the membership position of the individuals who made the said quotes.

Below are an example of the review interview questions. However, in some of the interviews which took place, structured questions were not asked, but, instead, the conversation was allowed to flow organically.



## 4) REVIEW METHODOLOGY

### Example interview questions

- How did you get involved in boxing?
- How long have you been involved in the sport?
- What has been some of your most positive experiences in the sport?
- What has been some of your negative experiences in the sport?
- How much of a role does race play in boxing?
- Do you think racism exists in boxing?
- Have you ever personally witnessed racism or bias
- Do you believe that England Boxing takes racism seriously?
- As someone from an ethnically diverse background (the term BAME was used in some of the interviews), do you feel that you can achieve whatever you want to in the sport?
- What do you feel are some of the barriers (if any) you face?

Overleaf are detailed a number of comments made from coaches, boxers, officials who were interviewed, specifically for the purpose of this review

**Please note:** All the comments below the statements included below are meant to show the depth of feeling amongst the boxing community. It also demonstrates England Boxing's commitment to tackle this important issue..



## 4) REVIEW METHODOLOGY

### Comments made during the interviews

“If you are ‘unapologetically’ black you don’t make the team”

**"Most of the boxers on Team GB are light-skinned. To get picked as a dark-skinned boxer, you have to be exceptional."**

“You have to be a clean cut, ‘Uncle Tom’ type of character.”

**“There are no black coaches, oh wait, I have only ever seen one – ‘XXX’ and that was at England level.”**

“No black coaches at National (GB or England) level!”

**“When I have been to camps, I feel I am on the back foot from the get-go! I have to work twice as hard!”**

“At a camp in Sheffield, the coach (had) given other fighter advice in sparring. I never got advice. So, I asked: ‘What should I work on? Anything I can improve upon?’ He said: ‘Nah, you’re ok’. I wasn’t even offered a sip of water!”

**“Just get a gut feeling when you go to places that people are racist. It’s the passive aggressive ‘jokes’.”**

“I have been coaching over 30 years and ‘they’ won’t ‘Let me in!’ Why are there so few POC (people of colour) at the top tiers of coaching?”

**“It’s hard to watch coaches, who have never had a champion or achieved anything in the sport away with England. It’s about ‘who’ you know!”**

“I have literally been bullied by other coaches throughout my coaching career!”

**“I’ve seen racism in my 30 plus years in the sport, but as a top-level official of Asian background, I have to say that I have only ever felt supported, and have never felt discriminated against.”**

“There’s a lack of diversity at the top level. When you go to competitions, especially ‘up north’ there is an ‘air’ of unwelcome. When you look at Facebook, you can see how deeply-rooted the racism is in the sport.”



## 4) REVIEW METHODOLOGY

### Comments made during the interviews

**“Many coaches have sabotaged my progression in the sport.”**

“Yes, literally all the black competitive boxers left and went to another gym! They got sick of being treated differently to their white counterparts.”

**“I remember I was supposed to do an AIBA course. It was confirmed and then a week before the course, I was told there were no places left.”**

“There are ‘jokes’ that you have with your friends... then there are ‘jokes’ that are racist. About being muslim, or a terrorist. They only started ‘kissing my arse’ when I won titles.”

**“You rarely see anything on social media from England Boxing about black or Asian coaches. Why?”**

“It’s a joke! Noticed all of a sudden they (England Boxing) have started using black people in their pictures.”

**“I’ve noticed as soon as a black boxer is doing well in the pros they are all over them. Saying they are ‘one of ours’.”**

“Why are there no Asian elite level coaches? There are loads at grassroots level.”

**“We get more racism than everyone (the travelling community). We are always discriminated against.”**

“As a boxer of mixed heritage, I can honestly say that I have never experienced racism in boxing. That’s not to say it doesn’t exist, but that’s not been my experience.”



## 5) SHORTER-TERM ACTION

At the start of the review, it was agreed (by the working group) that several 'shorter-term' actions could and should be implemented, where possible, even as the review was still taking place. These 'shorter-term' actions were those that did not need to wait until the review was complete, as these actions could be implemented either straight away, or within a relatively short timeframe.

Below are the 'shorter-term' actions which have already been implemented as part of this review:

### 1) Signed up to Sporting Equals Charter

England Boxing signed up to the Sporting Equals Charter Entry Level Subscription (£350 per year).

Sporting Equals are an organisation working in the Sport and Physical Activity sector, whose aim is to increase ethnic diversity at all levels. By signing up, England Boxing have signified a collaboration with Sporting Equal.

The introductory package of support provides the following services:

- Access to the Sporting Equals Newsletter providing content to their audience of approximately 60,000 ethnically diverse individuals and organisations
- 3 x digital resources, for Capture, Commit and Celebrate:
  - Capture – Data Collection form
  - Commit – Trustee recruitment checklist
  - Celebrate – Inclusive marketing and communication top tips
- Support with vacancy posting:
  - England Boxing vacancies posted on their website
  - Vacancies featured in Sporting Equals weekly vacancy newsletter, plus weekly tweets (audience of 10,000), posts on LinkedIn
- England Boxing featured on Sporting Equals website to recognise commitment to Ethnic Diversity.



## 5) SHORTER-TERM ACTION

### 2) Diversity and Inclusion Training for England Talent Pathway Coaches

England Boxing invested in upskilling its Talent Pathway Coaches and Team Managers via an Equality and Diversity in Sport course.

A total of 50 people took part in the free course that is endorsed by Inclusion in Sport.

Among the topics included were prejudice, stereotypes, unconscious bias, unfair discrimination, the Equality Act 2010 and how to take action against inappropriate language and behaviours.

This is just the first step to strengthen understanding of diversity and inclusion across the organisation. There is a need for the wider organisation, and indeed also the voluntary membership, to be able to undertake anti-racism and discrimination training.

### 3) Updating Safeguarding Course to include a section on Anti-racism

As part of the review, it was felt that a section on racism needed to be included in the roll-out of the new England Boxing Safeguarding Course (May 2021). This was to be a short-term measure until a new anti-discrimination workshop is set up in quarter one of 2022.

One of the members of the working group (a qualified School Safeguarding Lead, who has previously written safeguarding content in an education setting), put together content which highlighted the following areas:

- Stereotypes and prejudices
- What it means to be an Anti-racist
- Question and Answer session.



## 5) SHORTER-TERM ACTION

### 4) Delivery of monthly KO Racism online course

This course was originally designed back in April 2018, by two England Boxing Talent Pathway coaches in response to some disturbing racist remarks made on social media by members of England Boxing (boxers, coaches and officials). The course was updated in July 2020 with a view to roll out to the wider England Boxing membership. To date, approximately 200 England Boxing members have enrolled on the course, including the RAF Boxing team and other members of the Combined Services.

The delivery of this course has subsequently led to several members of England Boxing (coaches, boxers and officials) to come forward and share their experiences of online racism and discrimination that they have witnessed.

### 5) Retirement of the term 'BAME'

Following an extensive research study, Sporting Equals, as part of its research findings, issued the following statement late in November 2020.

“There has been a growing concern and appetite for change when looking at terminology and language surrounding how communities impacted by racial discrimination are described.”

“Sporting Equals has since retired the use of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and has since encouraged all its partners to do the same.

“The term BAME is unhelpful in its description. It blends ethnicity, geography and nationality, and in doing so, erases key identity reducing it to ‘an other.’”

One immediate action taken following this new partnership with Sporting Equals is for England Boxing to follow recent advice regarding terminology and language used.

As an organisation, England Boxing has also agreed to refrain from using the term BAME.

Instead, it will endeavour, where possible, to be specific and detailed in describing the communities it engages with and serves, such as African, South Asian, Chinese, Jamaican, Nigerian, Romany, Somali and Irish Traveller communities.

In those few circumstances where this might not be possible, it is advised the terms ‘Diverse Ethnic Communities’ or ‘Ethnically Diverse Communities’ should be used.



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the review, the following recommendations have been made:

### Rationale for Recommendation 1

For Equality, Diversity and Racial equality to be taken seriously within England Boxing, there needs to be accountability. As mentioned earlier, all sports organisations, Active Partnerships and National Governing Bodies, are now having to look closely at this area. To ensure that Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion is 'front and centre' of all that England Boxing as the National Governing Body for the sport seeks to achieve, there needs to be clear accountability to the Board of Directors.

The reason for the recommendation to set up a sub-committee for the purpose of advising on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion sub-committee is to ensure that any the recommendations arising from this review **and** passed by the England Boxing Board, are implemented. As important, this sub-committee will be able to monitor progress within the organisation and its members to ensure that England Boxing becomes more diverse, equal and inclusive, particularly around matters relating to race.

From the outset of the review, one of the concerns from the membership was 'how seriously' will the issue of Diversity, Equality and Racism be taken within England Boxing, particularly around racism. The issue of whether it would be 'best practice' to have a review by an 'external body' had also been raised at the outset.

Due to past failings (outside of England Boxing), from other sports, there is scepticism about whether England Boxing are serious about doing more and ensuring that the organisation becomes fully inclusive and equal, or merely paying 'lip service' and 'ticking a box.' From looking at the track record of most other organisations, there is justification for those thoughts and feelings.

As the England Boxing membership is made up almost exclusively of volunteers, on the whole, the organisation is perhaps less concerned with the diversity of the England Boxing staff (although that has also been mentioned), but the main concerns are around progression in the sport; coaching and officials' development/progression; being able to access the opportunities on the Coaching and Boxing Talent Pathway Programme; and ethnically diverse coaches being able to progress as they wish on a level playing field, without fear of discrimination.

The only real way to ensure that these real concerns are listened to and acted upon, for the betterment of the sport, is to ensure that accountability begins from the very top of the organisation.



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that for the Diversity, Equality and Race agenda to remain a key focus within the organisation, there needs to be members from within the organisation whose responsibility it is to 'champion' Diversity, Equality, Inclusion as well as ensuring instances of racism are properly dealt with.

This can be dealt with by a) having a diversity champion within each of the England Boxing Sub-committees. However, this is not the preferred option. The preferred option would be b) A central point, perhaps two to three individuals within England Boxing, with the mandatory requirement that the 'Lead' is a Senior Manager or Board Director (the same as all other sub-committees) to enable oversight and clear accountability for the implementation of any recommendations. This recommendation was made by the England Boxing Board.

### Recommendation 1

The set-up of a sub-committee, headed up by a senior manager or board member to ensure implementation of any recommendations from this review are passed.



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Rationale for Recommendation 2

At the very start of the review, Basketball England was consulted, which had already begun a similar review process and were further along than most other sporting National Governing Bodies. Having met (via Zoom) with the COO of Basketball England, it was clear that both NGBs were experiencing similar challenges. For example, a sport such as basketball has similar challenges to boxing; ethnically diverse athletes are over-represented, yet in all other areas of their sport (staff, coaching, officials, talent pathway, coaching etc), there is under-representation from ethnically diverse communities. Also basketball and other sports are experiencing a similar problem with online racists posts from athletes, but particularly coaches and officials.

At a number of England Boxing KO Racism online workshops, there were attendees from other sporting National Governing Bodies. At one of the KO Racism workshops, there were representatives from three NGBs in attendance, seeking to learn and understand what they could do better in their respective organisations.

Other NGB's reached out to England Boxing to seek to understand what they could do to improve their diversity across all areas.

It was clear that, moving forward, collaborating with other Governing Bodies would benefit England Boxing, in terms of what could be learnt from an NGB such as Basketball England, who were further ahead in the same process, and act as a model of 'good practice' to other NGBs who are further behind in terms of Equality, Diversity and Race/Inclusion.

Whereas it is beneficial to work with and learn alongside a wide range of partners, the greatest learning is always taken from those who share an understanding and operate in similar environments, rely on a similar infrastructure/resource base and who have similar strengths and have identified the same challenges to overcome.

Boxing and basketball are two sports that operate within some of the most deprived communities in the country. 62% of boxing clubs and 52% of basketball clubs operate within IMD levels 1-4 (Indices of Multiple Deprivation). They have an affinity within their communities as they are run by people who live within and who understand the challenges faced by the participants that they serve.

From a participation perspective, both sports have a diverse base from an ethnicity perspective.

However, when it comes to workforce (coaches, officials), those in positions of power and influence at all levels, there are significant issues to address from an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion perspective.



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that as well as partnering with Sporting Equals, England Boxing should partner with other organisations such as SPORTED (who in October 2020 conducted a racism in sport report). Additionally, it is recommended that England Boxing should seek to collaborate with other National Governing Bodies who have Diversity, Equality and Race high on their agenda. This will enable England Boxing (and the National Governing Bodies that we decide to work with), to share best practice, and resources and learn valuable lessons.

### Recommendation 2

England Boxing to seek to work with other organisations and National Governing Bodies to promote Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, and share learnings and best practice.



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Rationale for Recommendation 3

Several members of England Boxing, coaches, club secretary and volunteers mentioned during interviews that a lot of times the images chosen on social media were usually only of white boxers. One coach commented: “Why are there hardly any boxers of colour on England Boxing’s Instagram feed?”

In October 2020, to celebrate ‘Black History Month’ two articles were featured on the England Boxing website highlighting the contribution of Black men and women in boxing. The articles were well received and should serve as a blueprint for delivering similar articles on different ethnicities (Asian, Travelling Community, for example).

Marketing and Communication is a key tool to being able to portray Diversity, especially when it comes to race, which is something boxing is well known for, and bring a positive message. Therefore, it is vital that words, content, and imagery accurately reflects the true diverse nature of the sport. Given the diversity statistics, on England Boxing social media platforms you would expect to see at least one in five or one in six images which represents a boxer from an ethnically diverse background. England Boxing has already begun to hit this target and recognises the importance of continuing to do so.

It is acknowledged by those inside and outside that boxing (both on a competitive and recreational level) that boxing is an inclusive sport, certainly from the ‘participation’ side. Much more needs to be made from this and there is the need to champion the diversity within. This includes the setting up of a dedicated ‘Diversity’ section on the England Boxing website, which will include regular features, not only about competitive boxers, but also recognise the great work being done by clubs in their community to promote Diversity, Equality and the bringing together of local communities. As an example, with approximately 20% of all junior boxers from the travelling community, this needs to be promoted much more than at present, with features on past and present boxers from travelling communities.

The new web page should also include anti-discrimination and anti-racism resources, plus how and where to report a concern.

### Recommendation 3

**England Boxing to continually promote the diverse backgrounds of England Boxing members in its messaging and communications, including its website and Social Media feeds.**



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Rationale for Recommendation 4

One of the key areas which needs to be addressed (from speaking to England Boxing members as part of this review) is greater education around Diversity, Equality and Race. Race is often the most difficult topic to bring up and discuss, and the conversation, particularly in the light of recent events on social media, including the treatment of black football players and Black Lives Matter movement, the conversation needs to be normalised.

In October 2020, for Black History Month, a number of articles were produced for the England Boxing website, including an article on 'Champions Down the Years' which featured a number of trailblazing black boxers (male and female), who have had such a huge impact on the sport. The article was well received by the wider membership.

From delivering the KO Racism workshops online during the pandemic, many long-standing members of England Boxing have recommended that the KO Racism Course (created by two England Boxing Talent Pathway Coaches), is rolled out to every club in the country. While the workshop was originally created to help tackle online racist comments/memes, it also serves as a reminder that all members of England Boxing have a responsibility to promote the 'togetherness' of the sport. As we are now coming out of lockdown, this could be delivered as an online course, or, as is the case with Box In Mind, both as online resource and delivered face-to-face.

As part of the Sporting Equals three Cs package, Diversity and Inclusion training should be provided to all England Boxing staff members.

### Recommendation 4

**All staff within England Boxing should receive Diversity and Inclusion training, as well as the roll-out nationally of a newly-created anti-discrimination course.**



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Rationale for Recommendation 5

While 18% of the England Boxing Membership (those who have identified themselves as such on The Vault) are from a diverse ethnic background, only 14% of the staff members employed by the organisation are ethnically diverse, of which includes one staff member on a contract basis (so 8% full-time staff from an ethnically diverse background). While these figures are hardly surprising when you compare against other sports' National Governing Bodies, for a sport such as boxing it is a bit of an eye-opener, particularly considering the high percentage of ethnically diverse boxers who represent on the International stage and public perception of the sport being fully inclusive. At board level, England Boxing fair better than most; at the time of this report, 25% of the England Boxing Board are from an ethnically diverse background. This compares against the national average of only 5% across all other National Governing Bodies' Boardrooms, which includes 64% of National Governing Bodies which have zero members from an ethnically diverse background. However, while the England Boxing Boardroom stands up well from a diversity point of view, when you look at the next level down and the level below that, then an all-too-familiar picture is seen.

While target-setting is not always ideal, depending on the situation, unless some form of diversity target is aimed for, then nothing meaningful will happen. More importantly, without any form of target with which to benchmark against, tracking progress becomes very difficult, if not impossible. In this case, a reasonable target to set is around 20% ethnically diverse staff members. This target is based around the percentage of competitive boxers (18%), meaning the staff members represent a similar percentage of those who compete at competition level. This has an obvious caveat; that being job vacancies, suitable applicants etc.

With England Boxing having signed up to the Sporting Equals Charter, this provides the opportunity to advertise England Boxing jobs via Sporting Equals channels and reach out to a more ethnically diverse group of potential employees.

Organisations such as Sporting Equals are able to assist in this area by advertising job vacancies via their network of 10,000-plus contacts. Other organisations such as Peret Laver (which has been used by England Boxing in the past) should be used for wider recruitment.

A good approach will be to have various members of the organisation sit in on the interview panels to observe.

### Recommendation 5:

**Address the lack of ethnically diverse staff members within England Boxing with targeted recruitment.**



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Rationale for Recommendation 6

Another area of concern is the lack of senior and advanced coaches, plus coach and official educators. This review found one of the keys reasons for this being the fact in over 90% of cases, those educating entry level coaches/officials were not from ethnically diverse backgrounds. This can give the impression that coaching/officiating/educating at a higher level 'is not for me' as there is a distinct lack of available role models.

A second reason quoted is that even when coaches from diverse communities apply for senior coaching roles, for example, they may not be selected, citing the already lack of diversity as a key reason.

Thirdly, the lived experiences of ethnically diverse coaches who have been able to be a part of the national set-up, have quoted that they did not always feel particularly welcome or accepted. The majority could be put down to either to do directly with race, or 'not fitting in', whereby existing coaches in the set up will only accept other coaches who they can get along with.

It is recommended to target specific individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds with the profile and skillset to move into coaching/officiating, whilst they are still competing.

It is also a recommendation to work with regional committees to identify and develop more ethnically diverse officials, target coaches from a diverse ethnic background and invite them to coaching clinics/talent pathways.

At the higher end, there are very few Grade A officials from diverse backgrounds. This can be clearly seen particularly at National Championship Finals.

The recent creation of the Ethnically Diverse Coaching Group, initially as a community of practice, should be one way of doing this.



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition, more work needs to be done to ensure that **all** the membership are made aware when there is targeted recruitment drives for more Talent Pathway coaches and officials' recruitment. The ethnically diverse membership will need particular encouragement to apply for these positions if there is to be change over a given period of time.

When recruiting for initiatives such as regional developers or all-female coaching groups, for example, set targets should include those from a diverse ethnic background.

**NB.** More diverse representation also needs to be seen in areas such as DBS review panels and England Boxing disciplinary panels, where there is also a lack of diversity. There needs to be a more diverse group on these review panels in terms of race, but also gender, age and lived experiences.

### Recommendation 6:

**Recruitment of more coaches/officials/course educators from diverse ethnic backgrounds to better represent the membership.**



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Rationale for Recommendation 7

Perhaps without doubt, this is the most contentious area within the review, and, in fairness, underpins all the other recommendations and actions taken to date. If a 'zero tolerance' approach to racism is not implemented and adhered to, everything else recommended in this review becomes meaningless, and confidence in England Boxing's integrity as a National Governing Body seriously harmed.

While almost every sports organisation and national governing body have had to look again at their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), it is vitally important that EDI does not become a safe hiding place that deals with issues of racism. Racism needs to be called out. Masking this as another EDI initiative can excuse all concerned from doing the hard work needed. Seriously having the 'inclination' to want to tackle incidences of racism can become diluted and put commitment to change at risk.

As well as having a diverse membership (boxers, coaches, volunteers, officials, coach and official educators, talent pathway coaches, national team managers etc.), paid staff and board members, as important must be the actual experiences of ethnically diverse members/staff/board of England Boxing.

Incidences of racism within the sport of boxing also damages the great work that is being done by community boxing clubs up and down the country, at a time when perhaps the 'stock' of boxing as a sport and a means to improve some of societies social outcomes have never been higher. It also calls into question the integrity of the sport when these incidences are not dealt with appropriately, not to mention the impact on the victims of racism and racist comments. Even though racism is deemed to be a serious offence within England Boxing, there have been known instances of (mainly) online racism or via messaging apps such as WhatsApp being reported and inappropriate action being taken to what is, in effect, serious safeguarding issues.

There have been instances where emailed complaints to National Compliance have not been responded to in a timely manner, plus instances where complaint letters have not been acknowledged at all, leaving the complainant and wider membership to believe that complaints of racism are not being taken seriously, even when reported.

There were also two notable instances of online racism during the course of this review; one a post on a regional matchmaking WhatsApp group, where an offensive image was posted (the perpetrator immediately left the group after posting). No action was subsequent action was taken after the post had been reported.



## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The second, where an offensive and racist post on Facebook was shared. The post was later taken down by Facebook, but again no action taken with the reason given that the post had been taken down.

In both the above instances, more should have been done. At the very least, the perpetrator should have been spoken to, or a suspension imposed for a set period. Neither happened, which again, can leave the impression 'how seriously' are these instances being taken?

There needs to be greater transparency regarding how complaints and concerns are handled from start to finish. At the very least, the complainant needs to be kept informed of progress and what is likely to happen next.

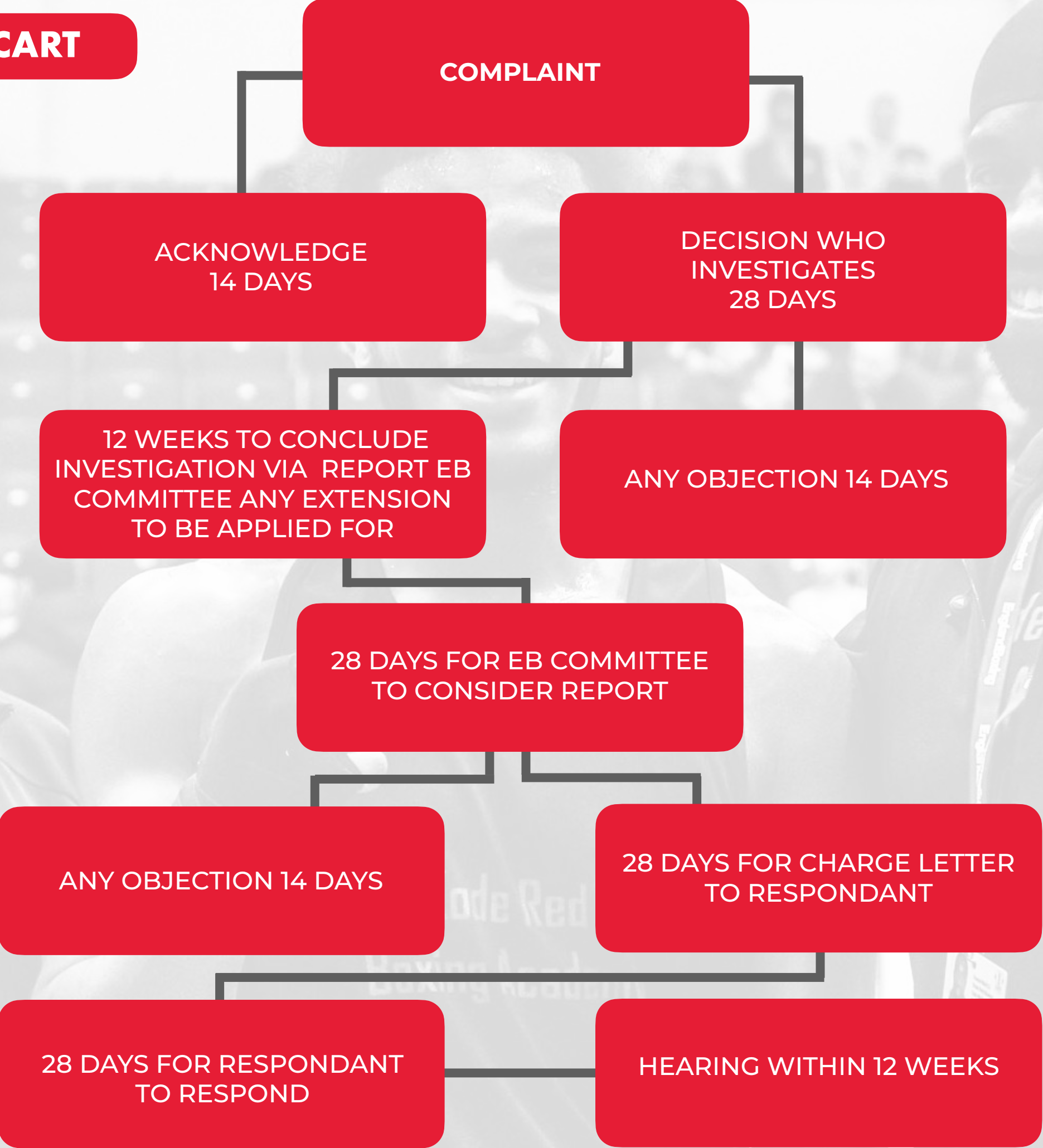
Another option would be to increase the staffing levels, committing more resource within National Compliance, so there can be a dedicated member of staff to deal with these issues in a timely fashion.

**Below is the England Boxing Disciplinary Flowchart, showing the overall process and estimated time it can take from once a complaint is made (in writing to National Compliance), through to final conclusion / resolution.**



# 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

## ENGLAND BOXING DISCIPLINARY FLOWCART





## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Where the original complaint is one of racism, it is clear to see why the ‘complainant’ having to wait up to circa nine months may feel either insufficient action is being taken, or progress is not happening quickly enough, which can cause frustration and anxiety. This may be particularly true if the complainant is not being kept up to date in each step of the process. Moreover, if the perpetrator has not been put on suspension while an investigation is ongoing, it can further erode trust in the compliance process.

It does have to be said, given the size of the organisation, the very small Compliance team having to deal with all manner of complaints, this issue can only be resolved by increasing the number of staff members in the Compliance Team, better communication once a complaint has been made and logged, plus ensuring that no formal complaints get lost in the system/process.

During the review, it also became clear that due to past reservations from the membership as to how complaints and concerns would be reported, and in particular whether there would be anonymity once instances were reported, it is difficult to quantify the true extent of racist instances. It is clear, however, that this is an area that is vastly under-reported. Coaches spoken to during the review spoke about not wanting to report racist instances, especially if there were made by officials, for fear of their boxers not receiving fair decisions in contests going forward.

**The recommendation is that a ‘zero tolerance’ stance is taken, to which end a Zero Tolerance Policy will be drafted and submitted for the England Boxing Board to consider.**

### **Recommendation 7:**

**England Boxing must adopt a ‘zero tolerance’ approach to racism.**