



Archery GB Board response to the Sport Resolutions report into the culture of the High Performance Unit

29 January 2018

In May 2017, Archery GB launched a wide-ranging Investigation into the culture of its High Performance Unit. It commissioned a report via Sport Resolutions, with interviews conducted by former Detective Superintendents Martyn Dew and Peter Keen. The final report was written by Thomas Linden QC.

The Board is today publishing in full the 11 recommendations made in the report, as well as the first 26 paragraphs of the report, which lay out the report's Terms of Reference, its scope, and details of how the investigation was carried out.

Archery GB's Board considered the 11 recommendations at its meeting of 13 January 2018. It accepts all of them without reservation and understands that there is room for improvement in the culture of the sport, which needs to be led from the top.

As such, the Board undertakes over the coming months to address each recommendation. It believes progress had already been made in some cases prior to the investigation's conclusion, with changes introduced over recent months and weeks. But going forward, the Board will assess whether, and to what extent, the steps that it has taken and will take in the coming weeks are beneficial to achieving the goal of making the experience of all those involved with the sport's High Performance Unit – athletes, coaches, volunteers and staff – a positive one.

To that end, at its January meeting, the Board appointed Pippa Britton (herself a two-time Paralympian who spent more than a decade on the high performance programme and additionally Chair of Disability Sport Wales) to work with the Director of Sport, David Tillotson, on what metrics the Board wishes to see that allow it to assess the impact of changes going forward. Those metrics will form part of the wider Key Performance Indicators that the Board will agree at its next meeting in March.

The Board commits to publishing details of changes to date and of measures that it takes going forward, and to keeping the sport's membership informed as to progress against each of them.

Appendix

Report on the investigation into the High Performance Unit at Archery GB conducted by Mr Martyn Dew, Mr Peter Keen and Mr Thomas Linden QC

Introduction

1. Archery GB (“AGB”) is the national governing body for archery in the United Kingdom. It is responsible for all levels of archery from elite to development level. As such AGB is the umbrella organisation for English Archery Association, Archery Northern Ireland, Scottish Archery and Welsh Archery Association. AGB provides infrastructure for the sport, including membership services, a website and a magazine. It also has a performance unit which delivers services to development and elite squads and teams for junior, senior and disabled archers, and it is supported by national agencies such as UK Sport.
2. In May 2017, AGB announced an investigation into the culture of its High Performance Unit. This decision was prompted by recent allegations of bullying, harassment and issues with culture in other sports in the UK. The aim was to consider whether the culture within AGB’s own High Performance Unit is conducive to producing the best results, taking into account the fact that athletes and teams perform at their best when motivated. All those who had been involved in AGB’s World Class Programme at any time in the preceding two years were invited to contribute.
3. This Report is structured under the following headings:
 - a. Our terms of reference and the scope of our Report;
 - b. How we carried out our investigation;
 - c. The evidence which we received;
 - i. Our focus in reporting on themes which emerged in our investigation
 - ii. Able-bodied archery;
 - iii. Disabled archery;
 - d. Scrutiny and support;
 - e. Our recommendations.

Our Terms of Reference and the scope of our report

4. Our terms of reference are set out in full at Appendix 1. It is important to note four things about them.
5. First, there was a guarantee of confidentiality given to those who contributed evidence. The terms of reference said that the investigation:

6. Potential contributors were also told of this guarantee in the initial invitation to provide evidence, which is at Appendix 2 (“the Invitation”). In the Invitation Mr Mark Davies, Chairman of AGB, said:
“Must offer everyone involved in the High Performance Unit (both past and present, and including not just athletes but coaches, performance staff, and sports scientists) the chance to input their views on a confidential basis”.

“It is very important to stress that no investigation can be effective unless the complete anonymity of anyone who contacts the investigating team is assured. I therefore want to make it absolutely clear that the identity of anyone who makes contact with Mr. Dew or with Sport Resolutions, will be known to them alone. Identities of contributors will not be shared with Archery GB Board or staff, and your pro-forma, along with any information submitted via email or at interview will be treated with confidentiality”.
7. The guarantee of confidentiality was reiterated in a preparatory note, at Appendix 3, which was sent to contributors in advance of their interviews (“the Preparatory Note”) as follows:
“The AGB Investigation and SRUK take the confidentiality of all evidence provided to it extremely seriously. Contributors to the Investigation will remain anonymous and their identities will not be shared with the AGB Board or staff. Neither the full report, or key findings and recommendations (which are to be published by AGB) will identify any individual contributor by name.”
8. This approach had the advantage of encouraging people to come forward and to be candid. In principle, it meant that they could speak out without fear of adverse consequences. But fairness obviously requires that a person who is criticised, particularly where the criticism may have consequences for them or be made public, should have an opportunity to respond to the criticism. A fair opportunity to respond also requires, at the very least, that specific details be put to a person so that they can respond specifically. The guarantee of anonymity meant that often Mr Dew and Mr Keen could not do this without disclosing the identity of the respondent and it was therefore difficult to test what was said by any given contributor and/or to put it in context. This, in turn, gave rise to a real risk of unfairness if we were simply to take everything which was said to us at face value or to make findings in relation to a particular individual or individuals. So we have only done so to a limited extent and on a qualified basis as is explained further below. This is a point which the Board of AGB will also need to bear in mind in considering and responding to our Report and in relation to any publication of any of its contents.

9. Second, we were specifically required not to adjudicate any specific complaints or grievances or to decide what actually happened in relation to a given alleged incident or event. Our terms of reference stated that:
“This Investigation:
.....
Does not include specific individual complaints around a single incident (which should be dealt with through AGBs complaints policy) unless that incident is seen to be an example of a wider culture that has been observed, or supports an allegation in relation to such.”
10. This was reiterated in the Preparatory Note:
“The Terms of Reference does not cover individual, specific complaints that relate to a single incident. These complaints should be dealt with via Archery GB’s complaints policy.”
11. This point was also made clearly by Mr Dew, Mr Keen and Sport Resolutions in answer to inquiries, and where contributors or their companions raised issues which were potentially appropriate subject matter for the complaints procedure or another of AGB’s procedures. In the light of the guarantee of anonymity, it seems to us that this was the only approach which would be consistent with fairness for the reasons given above: where there was a complaint about a specific incident or person it would be impossible to get to the bottom of it fairly without disclosing the identity of the person who made the complaint. Where there was evidence provided by a respondent which was capable of providing the basis for a grievance, complaint or appeal under AGB’s procedures, it was therefore made clear to the respondent that Mr Dew and Mr Keen would not be investigating that issue but that the respondent could, if they wished, follow the relevant procedures for raising such issues. Contributors were also pointed to the relevant procedure to assist them in raising the matter if they wished to.
12. Having said that this was the fair approach given the guarantee of anonymity, however, the fact that we were specifically not tasked with adjudicating individual complaints or issues further limited the scope of our Investigation and caused us to proceed with caution in terms of what we are able to say in our Report. Again, this is a point which the Board of AGB will need to consider carefully in considering how to respond to what we say.
13. The third point which we would make about our terms of reference is that they worked on the basis that responders would come forward and that it would be for them to decide whichever issues about the culture of the High Performance Unit they wished to raise. Thus, our terms of reference said:
“This Investigation
.....
Can include any aspect of performance that anyone involved in the High Performance Unit, whether athletes, coaches, administrators or otherwise closely associated considers it appropriate to raise

Covers anything that is connected with the High Performance Unit for example the training, mentoring, development and preparation of AGB's senior and junior elite squads but nothing that is not."

14. Similarly the initial Invitation to provide evidence stated that:
"The objective of this investigation is to allow anyone connected with the High Performance Unit on any side and at whatever level to comment on the culture within it, without fear or favour."
15. The pro forma at Appendix 4, which was enclosed with this invitation said:
"Please set out below any information that you would like the Archery GB Investigator to consider. You may refer to previously submitted documentation."
16. This approach had the merit of encouraging disclosure. But we have borne in mind the risk that it would result in contributions that were not fairly representative of the actual set up at the High Performance Unit. This is an inherent risk in a process which is similar to a customer satisfaction survey based on voluntary and unchallenged responses. There is also a risk that, all things being equal, people who are unhappy or who have an 'axe to grind' may be more likely to respond. Moreover, that unhappiness might be for reasons which were not related to culture, e.g. disappointment with selection or funding decisions, or it might be unreasonable. We have taken into account that elite sport is competitive and that athletes and their parents may be disappointed and feel that they wish to blame others. We have also taken account of the possibility that those who are content with the culture would not feel that they needed to come forward although some people, including apparently disinterested people, have come forward with positive things to say. The Board will need to bear these considerations in mind too.
17. These considerations have meant that our Report has been limited to an approach which seeks to identify themes which emerged on the basis of the frequency with which a given point was made. We report what was reported to us, but we cannot go much further than this given the constraints identified above: we were generally not in a position to make findings one way or the other in relation to the criticisms and counter criticisms which were raised. As we see it, our Report therefore highlights concerns where they were expressed with sufficient frequency, could not be dismissed as lacking in any credibility and might be said to relate to the culture of the High Performance Unit in a broad sense. But further investigation will be required if the Board is to conclude that any criticisms reported by us are well founded and particularly if the Board is to act on those concerns in a way which is adverse to the reputation or interests of any individual: in short, it is likely to be necessary to seek permission from given contributors to disclose their identities and then to put the allegation to the person criticised so that they have a fair opportunity to respond to it before any conclusion is reached.

18. We would add that there were various cases of 'one off' complaints or criticisms about specific incidents or people. Matters were also raised which, in our judgement, did not go to the culture of the High Performance Unit. We do not cover these below. This is not because we have not listened or taken on board what Mr Dew and Mr Keen were told: it is either because they were matters for the formal procedures of AGB or because they were not examples of wider culture related issues which we identified, or both.
19. Similarly, there were also some reports about events which were said to have happened many years ago but which we have not covered in our Report. This is because we have concentrated on matters which we consider to be relevant to the question whether the Board should take steps in relation to the culture as it is or has been in recent times.
20. Finally, our terms of reference say:
"The Board will consider the whole report, and publish alongside the Key Findings and Recommendations its own response and next steps."
21. However, the Invitation states:
"At the conclusion of the investigation, an anonymised report will be submitted to Archery GB's Board, and under the Terms of Reference that report will contain a series of recommendations. Archery GB will consider the full report at the first Board meeting available to it after the report's conclusion, and commits to publishing to all those who contribute, the key recommendations from the report (at the same time as it both publishes its response to the same people and initiates whatever actions it takes as a result of the recommendations). To be clear, in order to allow confidentiality where it is required, Archery GB does not commit to publishing the full report."
22. For reasons which will become apparent, we would not recommend that our Report is published in full. In particular, there is a good deal of express and implied criticism of individuals to which they have not had a proper opportunity to respond for the reasons explained above. The fact of an allegation can be as damaging as the upholding of an allegation and there is also the risk that accounts of our Report will not draw this distinction clearly in any event. We would also recommend that members of the Board are reminded of their duties of confidentiality and the risk of defamation, and that precautions, such as provision in hard copy with watermarked pages, be taken so as to minimise the risk of leaks.

[How we carried out our investigation](#)

23. The Invitation to participate went out on 02 May 2017 with an initial deadline for responses of 17 May 2017. It was sent to 438 people.
24. Around 90 responses were received, which was a substantially higher number than anticipated when the timetable for completion of July 2017 was originally envisaged. As a result of this Mr Keen was appointed to assist with the

interviewing process and Mr Linden was appointed to assist with the drafting of the Report. The contributors included 17 current staff members, 12 former staff members, and 60 people involved in competitive sport as Paralympic archers, able bodied archers, young people, parents or volunteers.

25. All contributors were then invited for interview and all but 6 were interviewed by either Mr Dew, Mr Keen or both. Where a contributor was not interviewed this was because they chose not to be. The interviews took place in person or by telephone according to the circumstances, including the wishes of the contributor. Contributors aged under 18 were permitted to have a companion present, typically one or both parents. Even with Mr Keen's involvement, the interviews took a substantial time to arrange, carry out and write up.
26. This Report was then written on the basis of the written evidence, and the observations of Mr Dew and Mr Keen about the evidence which they had received.

Our recommendations

63. In the light of the evidence we have received and bearing in mind our point that, for the reasons we have explained, this evidence may or may not paint an accurate or fair picture of the set-up, we would recommend that AGB should consider the following:
- a) How, if at all, it is able to improve communication with athletes and parents consistently with the demands on its resources;
 - b) How, if at all, it is able to involve parents to a greater extent in planning and dialogue in relation to young athletes consistently with the demands on its resources;
 - c) Whether there should be any changes in its coaching set up in terms of personnel, their roles and the arrangements for scrutinising and supporting their activities, for disabled athletes in particular but also more generally;
 - d) Greater training of coaching and other staff, and provision of information to them in relation to the particular needs of disabled athletes;
 - e) Whether there is scope for further modification of the centralised coaching regime to accommodate the needs of disabled athletes consistently with maintaining training programmes and a high performance culture;
 - f) As part of induction of new athletes, increasing awareness of, and access to, appropriate procedures for raising issues;
 - g) How it can reinforce the importance of respect for diversity as part of the culture of AGB, reinforce the message that a lack of respect for diversity will not be tolerated and ensure that such behaviour is challenged when it occurs;
 - h) How, if at all, it can increase the visibility of Board members and ensure that they are more available to athletes and staff;
 - i) Whether procedures for planning trips for disabled athletes require further improvement;
 - j) Means by which relations within the disabled archery team may be improved and outstanding issues may be resolved. We can see that a mediator may have a useful role to play here;
 - k) Exit interviews for departing athletes, staff or volunteers who have spent any significant time with AGB in which they are asked, specifically, whether there are any issues which they wish to raise and how AGB can improve and their views are recorded in writing.