Governance Project

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Contents **1**

Charts and figures **2**

1.0 Introduction **3**

2.0 Methodology **4**

3.0 Research findings, discussion and recommendations **8**
3.1 Introduction 8
3.2 Strategic themes 9
3.3 Structure 9
3.4 Democracy & Representation 17
3.5 Trust and Transparency 21
4.0 Operational Focus **26**
4.1 Governance 26
4.2 Communication 29
5.0 Behavioural outcome **34**
5.1 Apathy 34
6.0 Impact **36**
6.1 Effectiveness 36

7.0 Conclusion

8.0 APPENDIX **37**

1. **Recommendations** **38**
2. **Target time line for implanting recommendations** **41**
3. **Model** **42**
4. **Template interview questions** **43**
5. **Survey questions** **45**
6. **Survey results** **50**

Charts and figures

Figures		Page
Fig.1	Mendelow Stakeholder map together with consultation type	6
Fig.2	Governance structure of British Wrestling	10
Fig.3	Mendelow matrix of governance and operational effectiveness of Nations & Regions	13
Fig.4	Process of representation in the current federated structure of British Wrestling	16
Fig 5	Indicative example of Social Network/Capital in British Wrestling	24

Charts		Page
1	Chart from survey: participant's knowledge of key people	17
2	Chart from survey: Understanding how individual can input into running the sport	26
3	Chart from survey: Effectiveness of communication	30
4	Chart from survey: Understanding of why decisions are made	33
5	Chart from survey: perception of care of how the sport is run	34

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report investigates British Wrestling's governance structures through interviewing a range of stakeholders at all levels of the sport. While the scope of the project was to assess the most appropriate governance structure for the sport, the research revealed a range of issues that highlighted how these governance structures intertwine with and affect operational output.

British Wrestling exists within a wider sporting eco-system. Funding for British Wrestling, and many sports, are reliant on Sport England funding. With this comes a range of compliance implications and responsibilities. Sport England and UK Sport published the latest version of the Code for Sports Governance in December 2021.

Currently British Wrestling are compliant in achieving the standard. Continued funding from Sport England is reliant upon maintaining compliance to the Code. In the latest version of the Code, a new clause (4.1) revolves around '*cascading good governance.'* The implications for British Wrestling is that while currently compliant, this change in the code, should be flagged as a risk. The Nations & Regions in the federated governance system that British Wrestling operates in, vary in the strength of their own governance structures.

As British Wrestling moves into the final year of the current strategy and turns its attention to work streams for a new strategy, looking at the effectiveness of the sport's governance structure is a responsible way of preparing for the future.

Increasingly, the experience of national governing bodies of sport, in addition to tightening funding streams are also typified by increased costs, wider remits and decreasing levels of volunteering. It is a complex and difficult environment. With this context, where structures and the effects of them are not optimised, then this impacts upon the effectiveness of the governing body and its ability to not just govern the sport but develop it and improve the experience for its participants.

Through the research phase, many issues from individuals were raised. It is outside the scope of this report to deal with them. This is an operational issue that the sport's executive are responsible for on a day to day basis. However, the report has taken the experiences of stakeholders and deals with the themes rather than the symptoms.

The report, through a sound methodology identifies what the key issues are for the sport and offers a range of recommendations. These have been proposed with ease of delivery and implications of cost in mind. If they are not achievable or affordable they will not be implemented. For change to occur, a key factor is the ease of taking the first steps.

The recommendations are proposed in this spirit, with a range of simple and practical changes that will make a difference, rather than one large one with little evidence that it will solve the sport's issues.

2.0 Research Methodology

Statistical overview

- 29 people invited to 1 to 1 interviews
- 18 interviewed in initial phase
- 13 responded and agreed to an interview on 1st email
- 4 responded and agreed to an interview on the 2nd email
- 1 responded and agreed to an interview on the 3rd email
- 11 were emailed 3 times with no response
- 29 invitations sent to attend focus groups
- 4 positive responses and were invited to one to one interviews
- 1 attended these interviews. 3 failed to show
- 62 completed Questionnaires received
- 2 respondents made contact and asked for anonymity and a chance to be interviewed
- A total of 21 interviews were undertaken.

Introduction

Throughout the project, the research has adhered to Leeds Beckett University's Ethics procedure. This ensures academic rigour and credibility.

In order to ensure the accuracy of the recommendations and conclusions, a comprehensive research process was employed.

The process was comprehensive and there was ample data created from the interviews and survey, which ensured a credible outcome. It became apparent through the research process there was a high level of apathy from the wrestling community to get involved, as borne out by some of the statistics presented.

Step 1 – identification of research process and methodology

In consultation with British Wrestling, it was agreed to pursue a mixed methods research plan using a range of semi-structured interviews and a quantitative survey. The initial themes identified in the qualitative phase was tested to the wider wrestling community through the survey.

The following research process was then utilised;

a. Identify key stakeholder groupings
b. One to One semi structured interviews
c. Focus Groups utilising semi structured interviews
d. Quantitative survey

However, due to the poor response to invitations to attend Focus Groups, this phase of the research was subsequently amended. The geographic spread of those wanting to take part deemed the focus groups unfeasible. The planned focus groups was changed to individual one to one, semi structured interviews for those positively responding.

Step 2 – Identification of key stakeholder groups

A workshop was undertaken with British Wrestling staff and volunteers to identify the most appropriate consultation list for the first phase of the research.

This workshop had 3 phases.

1) Identify key stakeholder groups
2) Identify key individuals within those stakeholder groups
3) Classification of identified individuals in the most engaged stakeholder group to ensure even spread of individuals for interview

Identification of stakeholder groups

Through this exercise the following stakeholder groups were identified;

Coaches - Elite	Volunteers	Tutor Workforce	Clubs - Coach Led
Coaches - Club	Athletes	Lapsed members	Clubs - Committee led
Coaches - Old v new	Parents	Unaffiliated Clubs	
Safeguarding	Regions	Board Members	
Officials	Nations	Committee	

Having identified the different areas above, a comprehensive list of individuals was drawn up within each role. This was then mapped using a standard stakeholder mapping concept (Mendelow Stakeholder Map). Having identified these stakeholders it was then able to map who was invited for one to one interview, focus groups or whose opinions would be included in the survey.

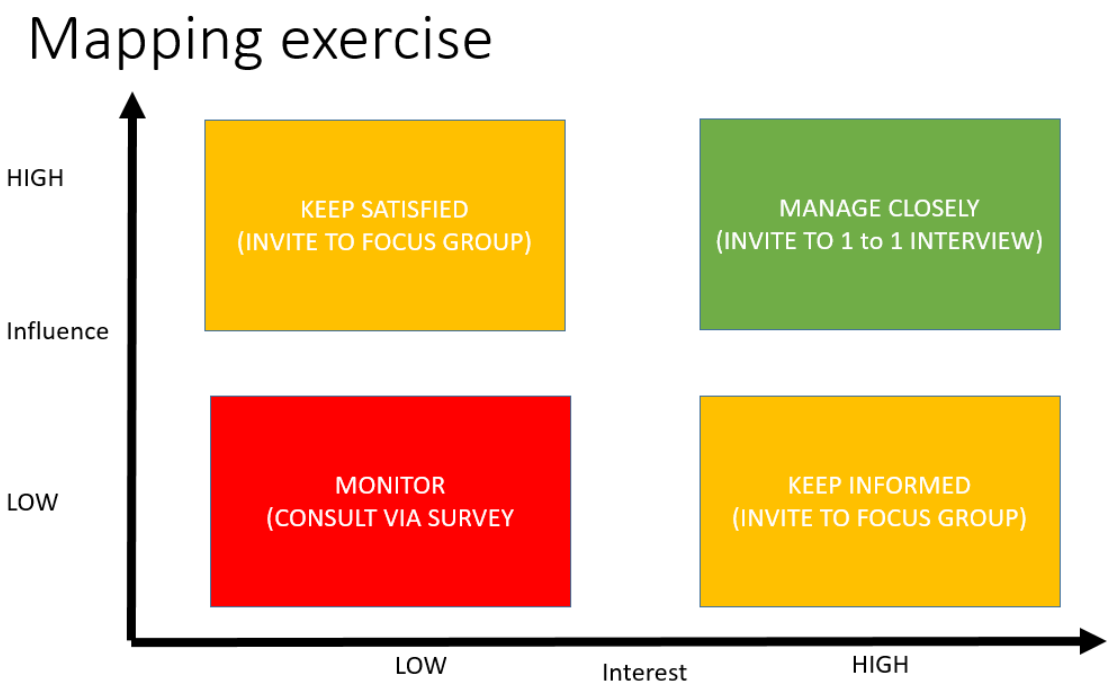


Fig.1: Mendelow Stakeholder map together with consultation type

Step 3 – 1 to 1 interviews

Of the 23 interviews that were undertaken, 18 took place in the initial phase from the original 29 individuals identified in the mapping exercise.

These interviews created 632 pages of data, which were subsequently coded and themed using thematic analysis techniques. This raw data was then synthesised into 48 pages of data that was themed in order to identify key areas and subsequent recommendations.

Interviews took place between 22nd February 2024 and 15th May 2024 and all were recorded using the otter.it app. Interviews were a mix of face to face in person interviews and online, via MS Teams. On average the interviews last 50 minutes, with the shortest being 34 minutes and the longest 61 minutes. In total there was 897 minutes of interviews undertaken.

Step 4a – Focus Groups

Following the completion of the initial phase of one to one interviews. It was identified that for the next two key stakeholder groups, three focus groups would be organised. Using the emerging issues from step 3, it was agreed that two regions and one nation would be focused on for this phase. Subsequently, five individuals were invited in the North and South English regions, and 5 invited to a focus group in Scotland.

Response and interest was low with one positive response in the north, no response at all in the south and two positive responses in Scotland.

Following this a further five invitations were sent out to each of the targeted areas. Response to this second round of invitations was equally as disappointing, with no responses in the north and south regions and one further positive response in Scotland.

Due to the poor levels of interest, it was agreed with British Wrestling that the focus groups would not be undertaken but instead the four individuals who wished to participate were then invited to an online one to one interview.

Of these individuals only one took up the opportunity which created a further 35 pages and 46 minutes of data.

Step 5 – Survey

It was important that everybody in the Wrestling community had the opportunity to input into the research. While time obviously made it impossible to provide one to one interviews for everyone, the mixed methodology allowed everyone to input in some way.

Importantly, the use of a survey allowed the themes that emerged from the qualitative phase to be tested with a wider group of people in a more quantative way.

The survey was open from 14th June 2024 for a period of 10 days. An online package – smartsurvey.co.uk was used to host and collate the survey results. Data was then extracted and MS Excel was used to analyse the data and create graphs.

An email was sent to the British Wrestling member's database. 1,336 people received the email, of which 1.040 opened the email with the link inviting members to participate, an open rate of 78%.

The survey was completed 62 times at a rate of 5% of the total database. From an academic perspective, this is not a statistically significant sample. Usually a minimum of 100 is required, however, there are interesting trends that were analysed from the data, which points at a range of factors relevant to the research.

3.0 Research findings, discussion and recommendations

3.1 Introduction

The creation of over 600 pages and nearly 1000 hours of interviews has delivered a strong dataset in which to extrapolate key insights into issues and opportunities for British Wrestling.

This project started out looking at the efficacy of the governance structures of the sport and whether British Wrestling is structured to allow it to be as effective as possible. British Wrestling has achieved the Sport England/UK Sport Code of Governance, so while it meets its funding obligations, consultation with organisational officials uncovers a view that things aren't working as they should. In particular, clause 4.1 of the Code is critical to this piece of work and to the organisation;

> *4.1 The Board shall set out, promote and support the implementation of minimum good governance standards, including with respect to diversity and inclusion:*
>
> *a. throughout its organisation; and*
>
> *b. within its membership and/or associated organisations*

The research and subsequent recommendations ensure that British Wrestling always maintain their fulfilment of the requirements of the Code of Governance. It is critical to British Wrestling's existence that Sport England funding continues.

Following the various phases of the research, the biggest challenge was making sense of the range of topics and themes, in order to distil the information into discreet areas for British Wrestling. These areas provide the key workstreams for the organisation to tackle.

This report sets out the themes, operational focus and behavioural outcomes. In each section an explanation, a snapshot of evidence of each area and why it has been identified is given and then recommendations pertaining to that area.

For reference, all recommendations will be collated together and placed in appendix 1.

Themes, Operational Focus & Behavioural Outcomes

In making sense of the data, it was clear that the themes that were developing were different in nature. To present all equally would misrepresent the complexity of what the research uncovered. The architecture of the key areas therefore are tiered. Starting with strategic areas;

- Structure
- Democracy & Representation
- Trust & Transparency

Following this, key operational focus was identified. These have operational implications and are intertwined with the overarching key strategic areas. These operational focus are;

- Communication
- Governance

The research has deduced a key behavioural outcome that is the result of strategic areas and operational focus. This identified behaviour is;

- Apathy

Ultimately, the net of the Themes, Operational Focus & Behavioural Outcomes is impact. In considering impact, the key consideration is;

- Dilution of effectiveness**.**

In appendix 3, a pictorial representation of how these factors are interlinked is presented.

3.2 Strategic Themes

Three strategic themes fall out of the research.

3.3 Structure

The start point of this research project was to look at the current structure and assess whether it was fit for purpose. While the research by no means suggests that the structure is perfect and certain aspects can be tweaked, the research doesn't support a complete overhaul.

The current 'federated' system has its issues but moving to a 'unitary' system of governance where the Nations and Regions structure is disbanded, with the NGB being the overarching body governing the sport, seems, following the consultation, like a sledgehammer to crack a nut. The issues it would solve, would be replaced by a range of other issues that would be more problematic than some of the complexities of working with a federated system. The organisation doesn't have the financial clout or the manpower to replace the Regions & Nations, and so alternative action is needed.

The current system of governance looks as follows;

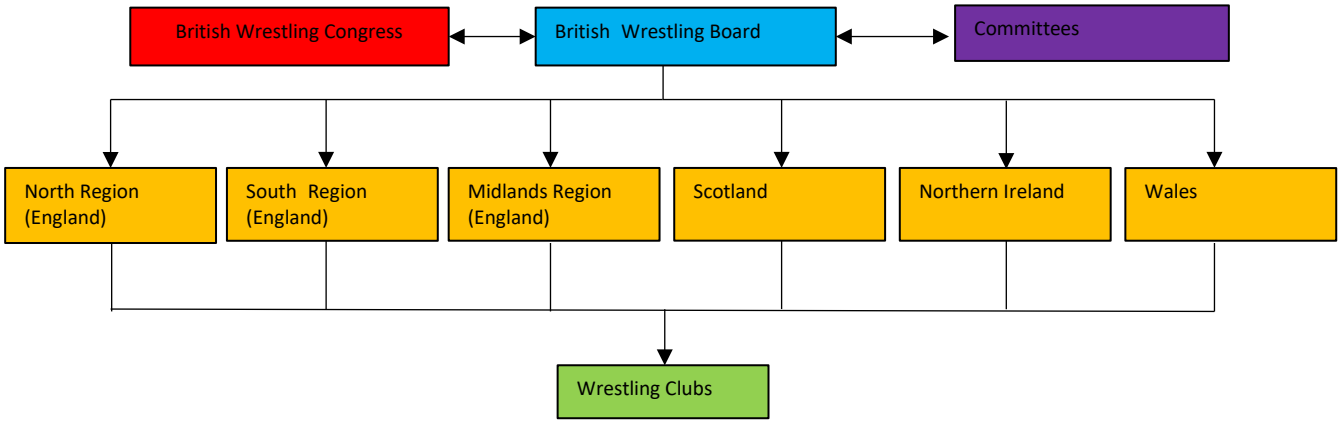


Fig.2: Governance structure of British Wrestling

Various stakeholders report that the structure isn't working as it should. Disbanding the Nations and Regions would create a simpler structure but the evidence doesn't suggest it would be more effective. While the gap between club and NGB would be less complex, without the certainty of implementing a range of strategic, operational changes and investments, there is a danger that the gap between the governing body and the clubs could widen rather than bring the sport closer together.

PS3 said;

"I think given the size of British wrestling, and all that stuff, I think it is really important to have that sort of one person within that nation. Purely because I just think everybody's so short of time and everybody's doing so many different things. If you know you've got that point of contact within that division within, you know, for example, that region, as long as the communication is open, I think it works really, really well."

RECOMMENDATION 1

THE SPORT SHOULD MAINTAIN THE CURRENT STRUCTURE IN RELATION TO NATIONS AND REGIONS

3.3.1 Roles and responsibilities

In discussion with stakeholders who participated in the research, the first area that was apparent was that there is a lack of understanding of what the roles and responsibilities are of the constituent bodies governing the sport. However, there is quite clearly a formalised document, constitution and articles of association setting out what the regions Terms of Reference are. Throughout the research, it was clear and consistent from a range of stakeholders where it was reported that each level didn't know what each other's roles and responsibilities were. This therefore seems to point to a total breakdown of relationship, a perception of lack of knowledge of their scope of responsibility rather than an actual one, and as such, leading to assumptions that there is no governance mechanisms in place. It can be argued that the tools are there but the engagement and implementation with them is lacking.

The gap of understanding between the NGB, Nations & Regions and Clubs needs to be narrowed. Currently as the quotes suggest, each level is looking at the other thinking that they should be doing that specific task. This is borne out by a range of issues covered elsewhere in this document but include trust and transparency and weak communication processes.

RECOMMENDATION 2

THE NGB SHOULD REFRESH ITS STRATEGY WITH A LONG TERM VISION WHICH EVERYONE KNOWS THEIR PART IS IN ACHIEVING SUCCESS

RECOMMENDATION 3

THE NGB SHOULD CONSULT WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO REVIEW AND UPDATE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

RECOMMENDATION 4

THE NATIONS AND REGIONS SHOULD STRIVE TO BE TIER 2 COMPLIANT – TO THE SPORT ENGLAND CODE OF GOVERNANCE.

Furthermore, evidence suggests that there is a 'blame culture' throughout the sport. Evidence shows that confidence in those in official positions is low, such as;

PS3;

"Like, okay, you have a constitution, but there's no kind of instructions around. Okay, this is your position. And this is what you're responsible for. And this is how we expect you to sort of communicate information."

In addition to;

PB2

"But I strongly believe that anyone who's involved needs to have something that they can tell people they do."

And;

PV1

"It's hard to trust people you don't know"

At all levels, the community must move towards a position of taking responsibility, whether individually or collectively. It is up to the NGB to provide the environment to make this happen. It could be induced that the lack of individual and collective responsibility is a result of the **Themes, Operational Focus & Behavioural Outcomes** highlighted within this report. The resulting effect is disillusionment, an acceptance of the status quo and that someone, or some other organisation will do the work.

For the sport, this puts the breaks on its development and diminishes the chances of success and expansion.

RECOMMENDATION 5

THE NGB SHOULD EXPAND ITS COMMUNITY AWARDS TO INCLUDE A NATIONS AND REGIONS CATEGORY, AND REVIEW HOW THE AWARDS, IN CONJUNCTION WITH DELIVERING RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT CAN STIMULATE A CULTURE OF TAKING RESPONSBILITY FOR THE SPORT'S SUCCESS AND DEVELOPMENT.

3.3.2 Ghosts and Zombie organisations

The issues at Nations and Regions level, risking compliancy, are not uniform and don't affect all six. They can be categorised as follows;

Fig.3: Mendelow matrix of governance and operational effectiveness of Nations & Regions

Through the process the term 'ghost organisation' came up. The red quadrant would be a good example as to what was meant by this. ie. A Nation or Region that has no form or presence in terms of notable activity. This would be as opposed to a 'zombie' organisation, that had some form of structure or presence but was ineffective operationally.

If the nations and regions were to be mapped against the matrix they would come out as;

- Well governed / operationally effective – Scotland, midlands
- Well governed / operationally ineffective –
- Weak governance / operationally effective – Wales, Northern Ireland
- Weak governance / operationally ineffective – North, South

Ultimately the target should be that all Nations and Regions should aim to be well governed and operationally effective. This will result in compliance with Sport England/UK Sport and will benefit the sport.

The underpinning evidence that leads to this conclusion is as follows.

> *PB1* *"But in more of the like, higher level governance stuff, yeah, I mean, the thought that a region would be spending its time I mean, there's, you know, some of them are ghost regions, they don't even really exist, let alone the thought that we'd be. It would be worth investing time on compliance with them."*

> *PV4* *"They've all been around the sport for many years and it just feel like it's just wait for the old guard to pass on before we can. Everybody can go in and get some work done."*

PB4 *"but it's come a long way at the top really passionate, really passionate wrestling community at the bottom we run clubs, competitions wrestle themselves, but then in the middle is the is the issue"*

PS2 *"Northern Ireland effectively exist but don't do anything related to any anything that would look like governance really, in many respects."*

PV5 *"You might as well not have a northern region. Okay, it's defunct it doesn't do anything to people on there"*

PNR2 *"Once a year we do that. And then we try and get some other meetings together. One of our big that that should I say within our region is that everybody is not interested in going to a meeting. They're only interested in their own club."*

A concern for the sport is the weak structures that exist in the Nations and Regions. Of the six different constituent bodies, there is a range of factors that are problematic. These weak structures have a direct link to effectiveness and efficiency and create organisational risk for British Wrestling when considering Clause 4.1 of the Code of Governance.

Currently, British Wrestling would struggle to justify complying with this new part of the code, and as a result, it is critical that this is given attention to ensure a) compliancy is met and b) the structure enables the sport to run effectively and efficiently.

This then creates a number of recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION 6

- **AS NGB, BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD ENSURE NATIONS & REGIONS FULLY IMPLEMENT THEIR ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION. FAILURE TO DO SO COULD ENABLE BRITISH WRESTLING TO INVOKE A RANGE OF SANCTIONS, FOR EXAMPLE,**
- **SUSPENSION OF VOTING POWERS,**
- **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES REMOVED,**
- **SUSPENSION OF WRESTLERS FROM NATIONAL COMPETITIONS/SQUADS**
- **AND, THE ABILITY TO RUN THAT NATION OR REGION CENTRALLY FOR A LIMITED PERIOD OF TIME TO INCUBATE IT UNTIL A TIME IT IS READY TO BE RUN INDEPENDENTLY**

3.3.3 Bottleneck

In this section, it has been argued that there is confusion about the roles and responsibilities of different strata of the structure. In addition to this, the varying levels of governance and operational output from the Nations and Regions, are problematic and creates what can be described as a bottleneck of activity and communications. Importantly this creates a bottleneck for highly engaged and enthusiastic volunteers to populate positions of influence Regional level and ultimately as elected officials on the NGB board of directors.

Examples of how this is an issue can be seen by;

RECOMMENDATION 7

THE NGB SHOULD SET OUT CLEARLY, THE STANDARDS OF GOVERNANCE EXPECTED FROM NATIONS AND REGIONS AND A MINIMUM LEVEL OF ACTIVITY BY THOSE BODIES. THESE SHOULD BE PUBLISHED IN A CLEAR SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT.

RECOMMENDATION 8

THE NGB SHOULD INCENTIVISE NATIONS AND REGIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT SET OUT IN RECOMMENDATION 3 BY CREATING A BUDGET FOR FUNDING TO BE ALLOCATED FOR PROJECTS DELIVERED LOCALLY.

PB4 *"we've never cracked that middle section of management that bridges the gap between a really, really good board and that's, you know, always complained that things will be better and all this sort of stuff, but it's good for what we what we need in terms of governance policies, process, the inclusion and the diversity on the board. And then you've got massive, massive, positive. Sometimes the positive turns into a negative and a challenge in terms of the behaviours of the people the tribal bit at the bottom, which also plays out into competition it plays out into passion."*

PV1 *"There is definitely a disconnect within England. The English representative on the board tells nobody else in England what's happening. Okay? So there's definitely a big disconnect there. And he was never voted on. He always calls himself the interim England chair and he's never held a meeting or had any discussion about being replaced."*

PB4 *"think apart from the strong personalities in the nations and regions that tried to do their best, most, most actual decisions are taken at board level, because that's the only time that a group of people come together in a formal minuted environment addressing issues and with an agenda, really, I think the rest of it is a little bit haphazard."*

PV3 "The biggest gaps are always communication, potentially the right middleman to relay information both ways. So it does seem a big gap in the chance of us communicating with board levels and, and vice versa. Up and down. It's not just one way it's a two way street. That's blocked and both more often than it's not."

While there is no separate recommendation, the effect of delivering against recommendation 1-6 will see the 'neck of the bottle' widen, allowing for a freer flow backwards and forwards between national and local.

To conclude, evidence from the research points to the fact that people make structures work. The assumption that the network understands each other's roles and responsibilities needs to be overcome to create a seamless, co-ordinated approach to delivering the sport.

3.4 Democracy & Representation

The second key strategic pillar is around the area of democracy and representation. Currently, the process works as follows;

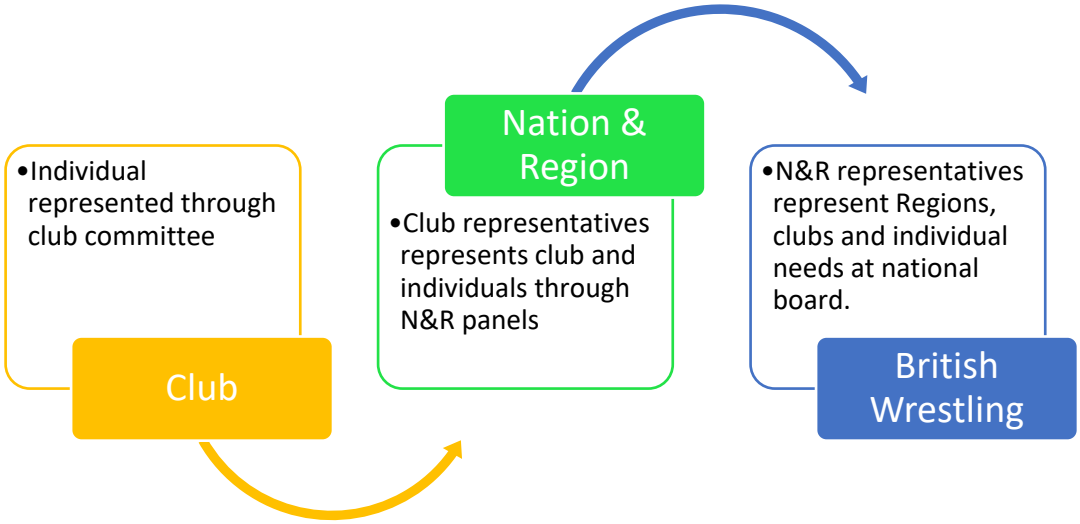


Fig.4: Process of representation in the current federated structure of British Wrestling

3.4.1 Representative of, not represented by

Knowledge of this process is low (covered in Operational Focus section) but there is clear evidence from a range of people of dissatisfaction.

PV1 *"It's about the committee. They'll start by blaming the committee, and then look at who's on the committee. So, it is a committee thing. They have talked previously about manufacturing meetings, those sorts of things. So, that's not good. The south have got a different set of problems, in so much as their memories are too long."*

PV3 *"I'd say not representing the clubs very much at all."*

PS1 *"yeah, that that that would be a huge hindrance to the sport and stop progression because they don't like change. Those happen individuals we've got the same away with. I mean, it's not the same in every school. Yeah. Like the north region at the time had several people who didn't want to change. So the governing body had to leave them behind and they had to catch up with the change. So either they fell off for the past away or what have you, regardless, so the home regions so the North for example, right now is yes, quote unquote, they're in existence, but they don't do anything they don't ask because the historically they've been the biggest region in the UK have always been the most popular so they usually let people get on with doing what they want to do."*

PNR3 *"They're represented by somebody that doesn't represent them. Yeah. So it's just, it's just a mess. I'm not sure they want to have a say."*

PV5 *"but I can't remember the last time they had a meeting. If you've got a title, use it. Do some stuff."*

PS3 *"Yeah, I think it's a people holding on to a position that they've held on for many, many years, whereas I come sort of new into you stay new for years."*

PB3 *"I think that representing the people they know."*

This sample of quotes highlights a feeling of dissatisfaction. From those interviewed, in some instances, elected officials (in some instances not always elected) are *representatives of (a nation or region),* but those nations and regions aren't necessarily *represented by* those officials.

The view from those interviewed is that once a position on a regional or national panel is achieved, then the core thread, linking individual club membership to national representation is lost along the way.

In order to ensure that representatives of an area continue to satisfactorily represent the people who elect them to such positions, enhanced governance measures should be implemented. This perspective is supported by the trends taken from the survey.

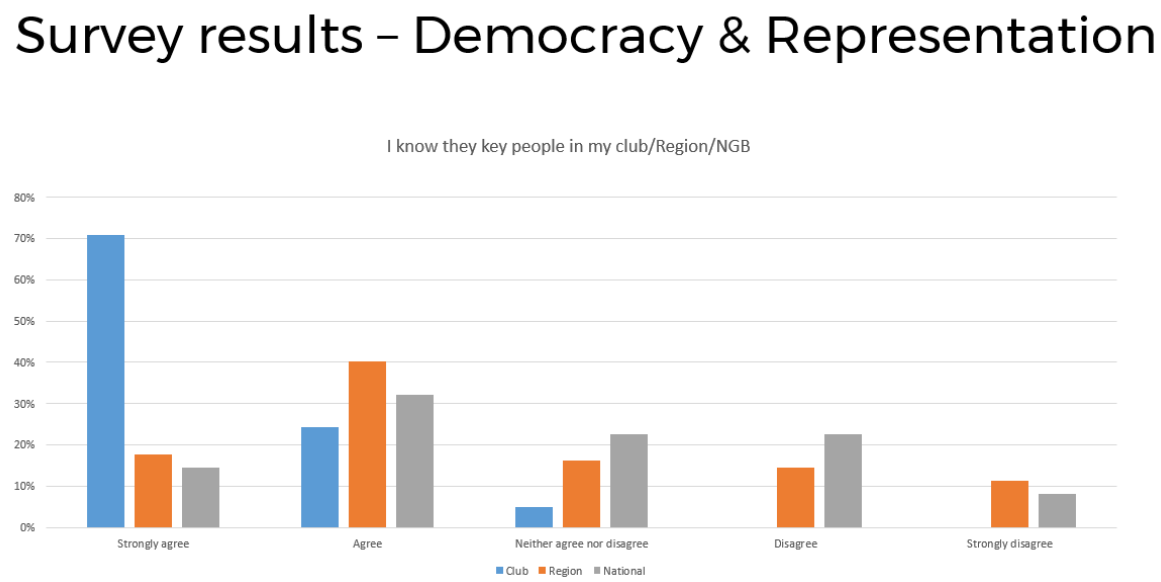


Chart 1: Chart from survey: participant's knowledge of key people.

Previous perspectives from the industry, suggesting that imposing some of the measures set out in the Code of Governance (clause 4.1) will create further work for a diminishing workforce has become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The research suggests that the 'bottleneck' and lack of effective governance structures at local level, stop engaged, enthusiastic and talented volunteers coming to the fore – it feels like a closed shop - The gatekeepers to the system stack the system to ensure the status quo is maintained.

It is recommended that;

RECOMMENDATION 9

AS PART OF RECOMMENDATION 6 & 7 – CONSISTENCY OF TIME SERVED LIMITS AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL REGARDLESS OF NOMINATED POSITION – SHOULD BE INCLUDED

It should be made clear though that there is a lot of expertise within the wrestling community and it is vital that this base of knowledge is not lost. It is important to strike a balance between creating an environment for new blood and new ideas but not throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

RECOMMENDATION 10

THE NGB SHOULD MONITOR AND PUBLICISE THE PROCESS AND RESULTS OF ELECTIONS OF NATIONS AND REGIONS, LINKED TO RECOMMENDATION 7.

RECOMMENDATION 11

THE NGB SHOULD MAKE PUBLIC ALL POSITIONS AVAILABLE AT ALL NATIONS AND REGIONS, AND, IN ADDITION, SHOULD MAKE A REGISTER OF POST HOLDERS AND WHEN THEIR TERM IS UP FOR RE-ELECTION/ENDS

RECOMMENDATION 12

THE NGB SHOULD ENSURE THAT WRESTLING EXPERIENCE IS NOT LOST BY INTRODUCING A SYSTEM OF LIFE VICE-PRESIDENTS, WHO CAN STAY INVOLVED IN ADVISORY, HONOURARY AND CONSULTATIVE WAY.

3.4.2 The Responsibility of Democracy

There is a responsibility for those holding positions into which they are democratically elected. This is not always evident, particularly in some regions. It is important that the democratic process serves the sport not the individual. It has been identified that in certain areas protection of position through manipulation of articles is in operation. This brings the system into disrepute. It creates an environment already highlighted of a bottleneck, and ultimately leads to the final strategic pillar where trust and transparency is compromised.

This was raised by a variety of the subjects interviewed;

> *PB2* *"But the long and short is why do we have a southern region if we're not able to accommodate those athletes in any way, shape or form? So there's no reason for those athletes to engage because actually we're not doing for them. And end so the other athletes, it doesn't make sense. But again, you start to fight up against historical issues, historical challenges, what is the value in having the natures and regions if they're not connected to those wrestlers then what's the point of is feeding information through to them for them?"*

> *PNR2* *"We swapped roles in the end. I mean, AGM Yeah, and we swap the roles, so we're still involved together. So I've been up in the lead pair for about 40 years in that in that I gave seminars and, and things and bring the people involved within the wrestling."*

> *PNR3* *"They're represented by somebody that doesn't represent them. Yeah. So it's just, it's just a mess."*

This leads to the following recommendation being identified.

RECOMMENDATION 13

THE NGB SHOULD IMPLEMENT A CODE OF CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR THOSE ELECTED TO NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POSITIONS. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN RECOMMENDATION 6

3.5 Trust and Transparency

The final key pillar surrounds trust and transparency issues, of which there is overlap with other areas covered. There is a clear the lack of effective governance structures at Nation & Region level, and an inability to break through the system for example, causes a range of issues surrounding this area.

3.5.1 Distrust is a given

Distrust is evident at almost every level of the sport.

While there seems a high level of trust at NGB board level,

> *PNR3* *"I think the board the board has been working well together and has a high level of trust in general."*

this is not replicated between NGB and Nations & Regions.

> *PB4* *"And where the relationships are broken. There is no trust and that and that isn't just open down between the board but that's within nation and regions and from one nation and region to another and this comes back to the tribal element and it comes back to the big characters."*

Furthermore, there is little trust evident between Nations & Regions and their member clubs

> *PV3* *"I'd say not representing the clubs very much at all. We have very little to none realistically don't think that a club should have a massive say in a lot of aspects of it such as governance and things like that because again, you've got internal club then debtors, you've got all that kind of thing. It's just going to cause animosity. I do feel that club representation at a higher level would be important."*

Finally, it is reported consistently of the mistrust between clubs.

> *PV4* *"In the south but everybody seems to hate each other."*

This cannot be good for the sport's development and success.

3.5.2 Visibility

On many occasions it was highlighted that many people do not know the board members (elected and INED), know what they do and are not visible enough;

> *PV3* *"I can't remember ever meeting anyone from the board. I've heard about and personally not had any overly direct experience, I might get one or two of them over the over the period of time. But as regards the board as a whole I've never had anything to do with any board and that that to dot the i's and cross the T's with regards to policies and if there's any particular issues, I suppose, like employment and things for the BW a staff roles and I'd say personally I've not really had a great deal of dealings with them in any way shape or form."*

> *PNR3* *"I've not seen him at many competitions. One member has been I think we're board members need to have competition. So they're talking about in abstract terms, they don't know what the sport is."*

> *PV5* *"Directors and I couldn't tell you what the directors are. I mean, we've had British championships, and I've never seen any of the directors at any of the competitions. Honestly, I couldn't tell you."*

> *PB2* *"But in an organisation where trust is needed. I do think showing your face is needed."*

Attending events does not impact or inhibit an individual's ability to undertake their role on the board. The lack of visibility of board members to key members of the wrestling community interviewed in the research, and the wider wrestling population does set the tone for trust and transparency issues. While there is no evidence of anything remotely untoward, perception is reality and the board needs to lead on creating a change of culture regarding trust and transparency.

While volunteer time is limited, and for example INED's are recruited based upon technical competence rather than a wrestling background, a level of visibility would enhance trust and transparency, aid a culture change, which could lead to greater levels of engagement.

RECOMMENDATION 14

BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD IMPLEMENT A ROTA WHERE BOARD REPRESENTATIVES ARE PRESENT AT EVENTS.

3.5.3 Collaboration

Following on from the section on roles and responsibility, and also recommendation 1, there is a clear lack of collaboration between different tiers of the sport and across the tiers such as Nations & Regions and to some extent – clubs.

British Wrestling needs to work with the Nations & Regions to 'close the gap' from the reported experience.

> *PV3* *"I think, personally, it's really, really important that all the home counties or the Home Nations do work together."*

> *PV2* *"It's a difficult task for breakfast dressing to keep everyone happy, but there's certainly things that can be worked and the current structure is not great. I can tell you that. How to make it better. I think by speaking working together, listening to each other considering everyone's interests. And helping being open to proposals."*

> *PNR1* *"They have to trust all nations as well. And they don't."*

Nations & Regions should collaborate closely to ensure that the experience of competitors is enhanced, as at the moment participants in the research report;

> *PV1* *"There's a disconnect between regional talent and national talent. It's just happened again and again. They've invited people from regional squads and not told the regional members or the regional managers. Now they've told the athletes from our squad not to contact me about anything to do with national talent. Our squad members trust us and they know if they ask us, whereas if they..."*

> *PNR4* *"ultimately, over that time as the control the North regional squad has gone away from the region's central to the leader we were having. So it becomes increasingly people ask you what's going on at the squad you have no idea because it's all central ignore communications from the central banks."*

Finally, on 23 occasions during the interviews it was identified that there were deep-seated historical mistrust within the system. Clubs should be competitive on the mat, but this competition seems to spread to the organisation of the sport as explained;

> *PV3* *"I think it's just how the sport has gone with different things that have happened but I do think that there could be an element of trust building between board BWI stuff and club level."*

> *PS1* *"I laughed at this when I first joined I said it's the south region let's get regional committee together and they just laughed at me and when try and get them together in the same room without killing each other will...People still get to go each other's throats unless British wrestling is in the room."*

> *PV4* *"at war with each other for years….. a lot of historical hatred between certain clubs and certain members."*

> *PS3* *"I'm talking about well, but I think if you have a long history with certain clubs, then it can make the job very, very difficult to try and get to a stage where you want to help each other."*

In order to alleviate these issues, the following is recommended;

RECOMMENDATION 15

BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD MEET ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO AGREE AND ORGANISE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDISED CALENDAR OF EVENTS.

3.5.4 Compliancy Work

An example of an area where British Wrestling and the Nations could work together is to explore opportunities to collaborate on compliance responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION 16

BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD ENSURE NATIONS & REGIONS, AND CLUBS, ARE INTEGRAL TO THE CREATION OF A NEW STRATEGY TO CREATE A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP OF THE ACTIONS THAT EMANATE FROM IT, AND EMBRACE A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION THAT WILL ALLOW THE SPORT TO ACHIEVE ITS AIMS.

In order to ensure continued funding from the individual countries' sport councils, the organisation must adhere to standards in safeguarding, anti-doping, race equality and code of governance. There is a lot of work required by all bodies to ensure these standards are met.

The research showed that there is a high level of duplication in all this work. There does exist slight variations from nation to nation depending on certain laws, regulations and definitions (particularly around safeguarding). Reflections from the research show that there is a focus on the slight differences as a reason not to work together, rather than end duplication of work on the 90% that is similar. The size of the task does not equate to the resource available in the individual nations. It is

difficult enough for British Wrestling to keep on top of this area of work with paid staff. For the nations, having to do this on volunteer time, takes these volunteers away from developmental activities.

It may be the lack of trust that exists within the sport, together with nations looking to ensure that they retain independence and control, but a greater collaboration in sharing resource would benefit everyone. In an increasingly difficult environment where funding is tighter and work programmes continue to expand, this is an area where the sport can create more capacity by working more collaboratively.

RECOMMENDATION 17

BRITISH WRESTLING TOGETHER WITH THE NATIONS, SHOULD LOBBY NATIONAL SPORTS COUNCILS, TO LEAD ON ALL COMPLIANCE WORK, WITH THE INTENTION TO ALLOW THE VOLUNTEERS IN THE NATIONS TO INVEST MORE TIME IN DEVELOPING WRESTLING.

3.5.5. Social capital

People create distrust rather than structures and therefore those involved must focus on how they can achieve this. Returning to the initial recommendation, if one of the key issues for the sport is a lack of trust, changing the structure will not remove this, if anything it could exacerbate this as the vacuum created in the area left by the removal of the Nations & Regions could increase the amount of mistrust there is. Hence, the recommendation is to keep the current structure but work to improve the issues that exist within the current system.

The NGB sits at the apex of a structure that should create social capital. In essence this means the creation of strong social bonds and a network of relationships. The tighter the relationships within this network, the greater the network can mobilise and achieve its aims.

Unfortunately, the issues that are a golden thread through the experience of those in the sport, can be evidenced as mistrust at best;

> *PB4* *"It is volunteer driven. And it is it is incredibly driven by the behaviours and the relationships of a small number of people in each of those regions."*

And outright hate at worst

> *PV4* *"But you couldn't even have a roundtable in the south they hate each other that much."*

This would suggest that a well-established theory of social capital, when applied to British Wrestling shows that key aspects such as bridges to other networks (elected representatives of Nations & Regions) due to the lack of trust that exists between them is in reality affecting the sport in creating really strong bonds. This again suggests that it is not the structure that is the issue but the key people who are the 'bridges' – the individuals that co-ordinate, mobilise, communicate and make things happen, are not in the right places to influence resulting in stunted development of the sport.

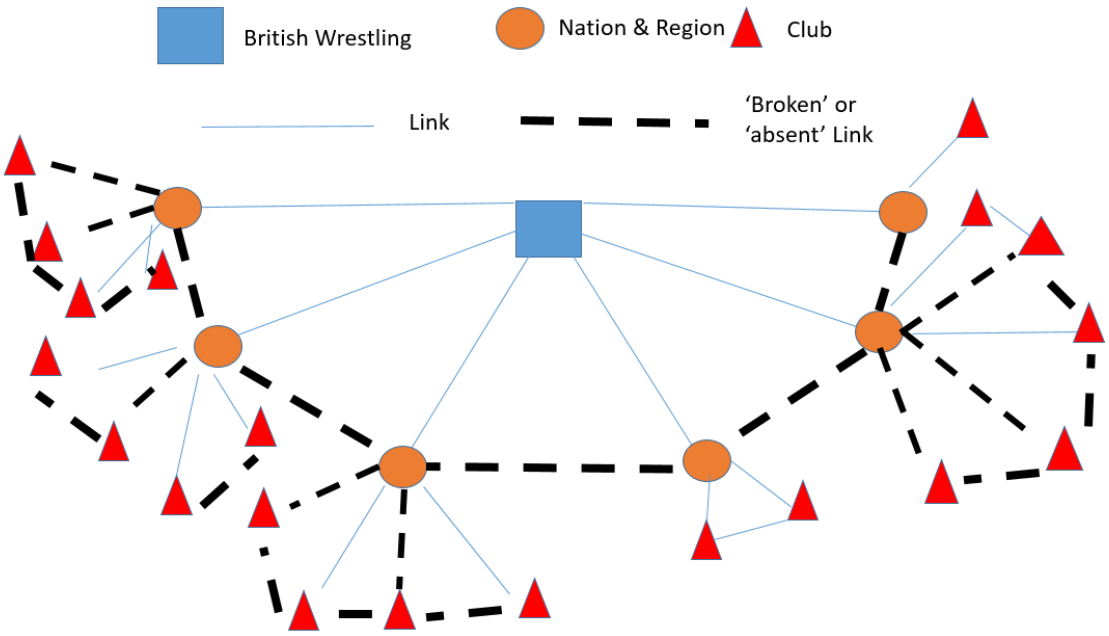


Fig.5: Indicative example of Social Network/Capital in British Wrestling

The diagram above shows that there are relationships between British Wrestling and the Nations & Regions and between Nations and Regions and clubs, although this is sporadic, however, it is clear from the research that there are strained or no relations between Nations & Regions, and between clubs.

For a healthy and vibrant sport, the role of British Wrestling is to invest in these relationships as stronger bonds creates a healthier sport. A key factor in this is ensuring that the right people in the Nations & Regions are in position to build these bridges across and within their regions.

RECOMMENDATION 18

BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD IMPLEMENT A VOLUNTEER STRATEGY THAT INCLUDES SUCCESSION PLANNING, RETENTION AND TRANSFER OF EXPERTISE AND IDENTIFIES ENTHUSIASTIC AND EFFECTIVE FUTURE LEADERS OF THE SPORT

4.0 Operational Focus

As can be garnered from the section on strategic themes, there is a great deal of overlap when considering the issues related to Structure, Democracy & Representation and Trust & Transparency. Where these factors do overlap, there are clear factors that are evident that are both the cause and solution to the strategic issues.

4.1 Governance

The concept of good governance is clearly embraced by British Wrestling and the achievement of fulfilling the Code of Governance is evidence of this. However there are tweaks that can be made to ensure that the organisation goes beyond compliance to implementing effective policies and procedures that work for the sport's needs not just fulfilling funding requirements.

Where Structure and Democracy & Representation issues overlap, Governance comes into the spotlight as the cause and solution. While some areas have been addressed earlier, there other factors to be looked at.

4.1.1 Knowledge of the system

The research shows that there is a high level of misunderstanding/ lack of knowledge around how the system works. On many occasions, those interviewed when asked if clubs had a say in the running of the sport said that they didn't. Comments such as;

> *PV5* *"They should for me there should be an annual general meeting with the clubs like a second service permit club with the board to speak through any problems."*
>
> *PNR4* *"To know, the region should be responsible within each region, responsible for members within the region."*
>
> *PS3* *"So that's why I think it's so important to have the right sort of representation within the regions and the nations because sometimes they'll feel comfortable talking to people who are probably from similar communities, similar backgrounds. And then it is then up to that representation to kind of communicate that back to the NGB without maybe being sort of too disheartening for saying we have hope so, you know, it's really it's a really important role. I think, that middle person, because it's that constant communication between the NGB and then the grassroot clubs, but then it's the information that you're feeding back to the board which is important in how you communicate that as well. And the point I was gonna make was that in in some areas, we might feel like, we're not getting that engagement from them."*
>
> *PV3* *"I'd say not representing the clubs very much at all. We have very little to none realistically don't think that a club should have a massive say in a lot of aspects of it such as governance and things like that because again, you've got internal club then debtors, you've got all that kind of thing. It's just going to cause animosity. I do feel that club representation at a higher level would be important."*

Perhaps more tellingly, when asked how much say clubs have in the running of the sport

> *PV5* *"Zip zero, nothing."*

This showed lack of understanding as to how the democratic process worked. This is problematic for the sport as if the most engaged stakeholders who were interviewed, do not understand this democratic process (set out in 'Figure 3') then it is highly unlikely that the wider wrestling community will understand it. They perhaps would feel that the running of the sport is a closed shop and undertaken in secrecy.

There are reputational and operational risks with this. If enthusiastic individuals at the grassroots of the sport do not understand or realise that they can represent regionally and ultimately, nationally, then the status quo will be maintained and the self-fulfilling prophecy continues to happen. British Wrestling must break this cycle.

Results of the survey show

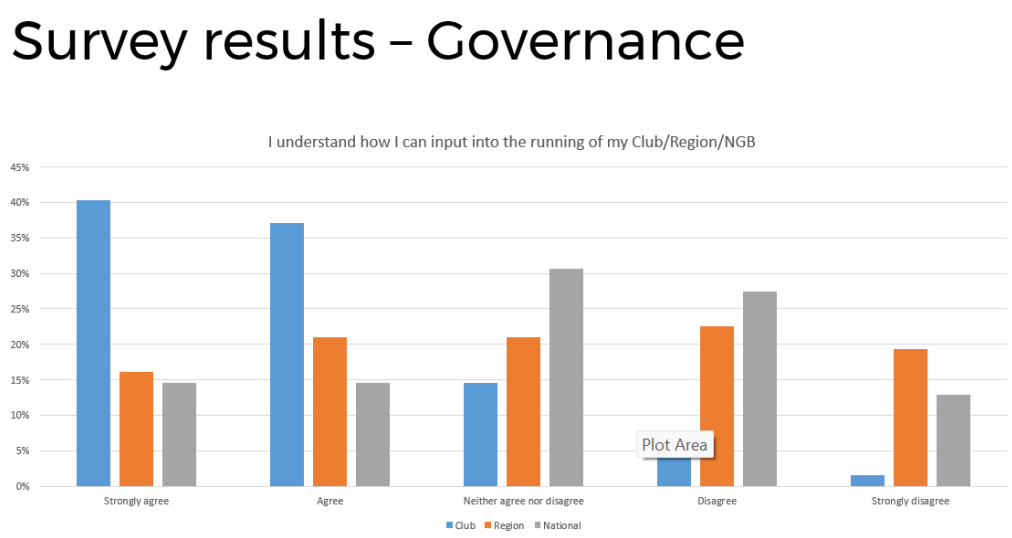


Chart 2: Chart from survey: Understanding how individual can input into running the sport

An intervention to alleviate this perspective will have a positive effect. It will;

- Improve democratic link between the grassroots and national board
- Aid transparency of the way the sport is governed
- Therefore, providing a better chance of attracting new, enthusiastic volunteers to progress through the system.

RECOMMENDATION 19

BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD USE ITS MEMBERSHIP SYSTEM TO ENSURE ALL INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS ARE AWARE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND PROMOTE UPCOMING 'ELECTIONS' TO REPRESENT AT LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL

4.1.2 Dormant Democracy

> *PNR2* *"Well, you've got, I mean, because of how many years I've been in it, I know people from each region, right. So we may have a chat together."*

Very closely aligned to *knowledge of the system* is observation of a dormant democracy. This is important in context of the overall purpose of the research relating to structure (and Recommendation 1).

Some of the issues that the sport faces – where governance issues lead to operational inertia in some Nations & Regions, could be due to 'dormant democracy'. The research clearly uncovered that there are numerous well connected, enthusiastic people that are currently disenfranchised and disillusioned, that if they knew how the process worked, might be more inclined to move outside of their club to take on a more regional role. This would benefit the sport, as these key local activators would be working across regions, bringing the sport together, creating activity, and nationally this would lead to a more vibrant sport, where activity was more consistent rather than the patchy footprint it has at the moment.

Currently, representative roles and national and regional level are populated by 'the same faces' giving the impression of a closed shop. Changing structure will not necessarily change the people involved, it would most likely lead to the same people operating in a different structure.

British Wrestling rather than reduce the level of democracy through moving from a federated system to a unitary one, should promote the democratic process in order to attract new people to breathe fresh life into the sport.

RECOMMENDATION 20

BRITISH WRESTLING, AS PART OF ITS VOLUNTEER STRATEGY SHOULD BE PROACTIVE IN ENCOURAGING NEW VOLUNTEERS TO STAND AS REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

4.1.3 Complexity

As can be seen in Figure 2, the governance structure of British Wrestling is not overly complicated.

Congress

However, the research does suggest that it could be simplified further. It is clear that there is confusion as to what Congress is and what its purpose is.

> *PS1* *"So when you say Congress, what do you mean."*
>
> *PS2* *"There is very little that they officially do. In fact, they don't really do anything except meet on an annual basis at the AGM and review any resolutions. That's entirely voluntary. There is effectively being volunteer resource within that and nothing more."*
>
> *PV4* *"Congress not sure what that is to be quite honest. nations and regions have their place and should have a voice and do have a voice. To what degree sometimes I'm unsure. Things seem to change it's quite I say it's very political. The Congress, the only Congress I'm aware of is the European Congress stuff with not within obviously, the British wrestling aspect."*

This leaves the obvious question that if people don't know what it is or does, why complicate governance structures with such a body.

The purpose of this body is to provide a level of representation to all Nations & Regions, however there seems to be no evidence to suggest that it provides neither an effective level of scrutiny and a check and balance to work of the board, nor does it add value to the development of the sport.

Sometimes a measure of the value of something can be seen in what would happen if that function was removed. In this instance, should Congress be removed, there would be no discernible difference to the governance and development of the sport. It's only function seems to be that they are the voting members of the association in its AGM.

A body such as this is a drain on volunteer time that could be better served developing the sport or redirecting time towards a stronger committee structure.

Committees

Through the research, it has been discovered that while a committee system does exist, it could be considered to be dormant. While existing, meetings do not seem to take place, there doesn't seem to be a work programme and as such there is no reporting of committees to British Wrestling Board as part of board minutes.

This is another example of where a structure and process exists but isn't implemented effectively. These committees should have the option to co-opt people from outside of the board. Often, most decisions are made in these committees and better governance and clearer accountability could be beneficial. This will give opportunities for British Wrestling to include new people, who could be board members of the future. Undertaking a relaunch of the committees could aid transparency and display an immediate intervention and response to this report.

RECOMMENDATION 21

BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD RELAUNCH THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE, ENABLING IT TO CO-OPT PEOPLE ONTO COMMITTEES THAT CURRENTLY SIT OUTSIDE THE BOARD AND NATIONS & REGIONS STRUCTURE.

4.2 Communication

Communication was unanimously the one area that was consistent from every interview and as a result overlaps every strategic area. In every instance, whether relating to Structure, Democracy & Representation or Trust & Transparency, issues relating to communication, was an ever present factor. Any of the 49 comments about communication could have been included and the following is a flavour of thoughts and views from the research;

PB1 *"Right now, the way is working, it just doesn't work."*

PB2 *"No, we don't do it properly. So at the moment, it's not working. So communication is probably single handedly our biggest challenge if I'm honest."*

PV3 *"It was the biggest problem in wrestling is getting 99% of the people saying communication. "*

PV4 *"And there isn't. The last communication I got from the northern region was about the last northern region we in which was in September on August 2021. I received no communication from them since."*

4.2.1 Communications strategy

It is clear that communication throughout the system is sporadic. A focused strategy could be transformative for the NGB and the sport in general. It would enhance the experience of all stakeholders, build trust and transparency, aid the implementation of some of the governance recommendations and ultimately assist in the development of the sport.

RECOMMENDATION 22

BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD PRIORITISE THE CREATION OF A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY.

4.2.2 Perception v Reality

While it is irrefutable that communication is an issue for the sport, it would be disingenuous to say and suggest that British Wrestling does not communicate at all.

Several participants suggest that there has been increased communications,

PV5 *"Lot of courses which have good it filters down that shows that we've got governance of they've said now they've gotten posters, hopefully call them member posters, bullying, posters, concussion, so it helps the people."*

PV3 *"vastly improved since COVID."*

PNR4 *"Because there's no communication? Effectively, I don't believe anything I read. I think most of regions are doing okay."*

In making sense of the wide variety of comments around communication, it feels that perception is slightly different from reality but people's perception is their reality. While British Wrestling does communicate, it perhaps doesn't engage successfully leading to the sense that there is little or no communication.

Furthermore, when looking at the trends from the survey, we can see that there is work to do.

Survey results - Communications

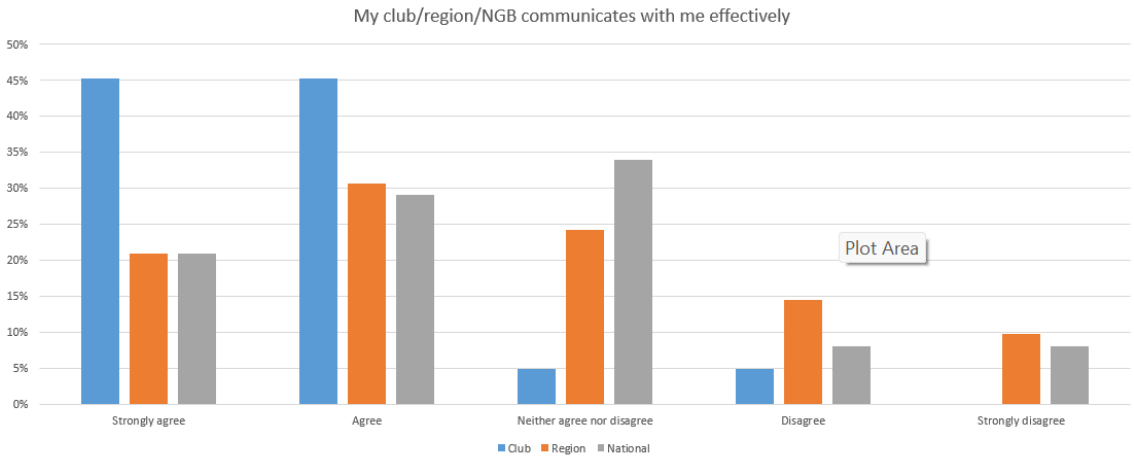


Chart 3: Chart from survey: Effectiveness of communication

There seems to be an expectation, sometimes an unrealistic expectation, from some stakeholders that individuals should be provided with a tailored individual communication directly from the top of the organisation about every issue. Furthermore, the research uncovered that some stakeholders claimed not to be communicated to, while being involved in the decision making of the very issue they then wished to be communicated about.

This perhaps highlights 'point scoring' and 'petty politics', which is not unexpected given the previously mentioned poor levels of trust. All stakeholders need to meet in the middle, undoubtedly British Wrestling needs to improve the effectiveness of its communications, but also stakeholders need to be more realistic with their expectations of what the organisation has the resource to do.

4.2.3 Communications not landing

Following on from *perception vs reality,* British Wrestling should not mistake 'communication to' with 'communicating with.' The NGB cannot assume that communication sent equates to communication received, and it has been opened and engaged with. As such, the NGB needs to ensure that communication is effective and take responsibility for increasing engagement with recipients of messaging sent.

The research uncovered sketchy and vague evidence gained from some interviews. The already negative view of the NGB was exacerbated by ineffective communications, which therefore created a subjective view that communications is awful.

The truth is somewhere in the middle. It is probably not as good as the NGB wishes it was, and not as bad as stakeholders think it is.

Taking this into account;

RECOMMENDATION 23

AS PART OF AN OVERARCHING COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY; BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD USE DATA AND TECHNOLOGY TO TRACK THE DELIVERY AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMUNICATION; AND ON AN ANNUAL BASIS PUBLISH RESULTS TO DEMONSTRATE IMPROVEMENT IN COMMUNICATING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

4.2.4 Lateral and Vertical communications

Closely aligned to the *social capital* section*,* the research highlights a deficiency in effective communication throughout the structure.

Issues from NGB to Nation & Regions have already been expressed, but it shouldn't be missed that the very accusations regarding the NGBs poor communications, is replicated in the way Nations & Regions also communicate with their clubs. Evidence that adds weight to this perspective can be seen through the results of the survey in Chart 3.

It is clear, individuals with responsibility in certain Nations & Regions should take responsibility for communicating with the stakeholders they are representing. To quote Ghandi, "Be the change they wish to see in the world."

When considering NGB to Nations and Regions communications people say

PB2 *"No, we don't do it properly. So at the moment, it's not working."*

PNR4 *"There's very little communication from the top."*

PV5 *"So it should come from British Wrestling to regions."*

Similarly, club's view of their national and regional representatives say

PS2 *"It's more complex from England because we are wanting England board member for three English regions. And I don't think there's a huge amount of communication goes on between those."*

PS3 *"Let's talk about how we would want to see things I do believe they need that one constant person showing up and being that communicator between but I have no idea who that person would be. It's the responsibility of the board or maybe the staff to communicate that to the regions. But there's a lack of that there's no communication."*

PV4 *"And there isn't. The last communication I got from the northern region was about the last northern region we in which was in September on August 2021. I received no communication from them since ."*

PV5 *"Nothing from the bottom seems to go up to the top and the do anything. the club's not listened to at all…. I was saying everything and the communication is absolutely horrendous …..So it should come from British Wrestling to regions… Nothing from the bottom seems to go up to the top and they do anything."*

And, furthermore, regional and club representatives say of each other;

> *PV3* *"Up and down. It's not just one way it's a two way street. That's blocked and both more often than it's not. So it's finding a way to communicate up and down and to build an element of trust again, I don't think and it's no one's fault."*

The conclusion is that the lack effective communication creates a culture of blame and mistrust, which is counter-productive to the aims of the sport and NGB.

RECOMMENDATION 24

BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD UNDERTAKE A REVIEW OF THE SPORT'S VALUES

5.0 Behavioural outcome

5.1 *Apathy*

Through all aspects of the research programme a sense of apathy has been experienced. Evidence for this can be seen from the statistical overview in the Research Methodology section. However, this doesn't just cover an apathy to get involved in this research project.

Apathy doesn't just happen and is caused by a range of issues covered throughout the document. Additionally this can be demonstrated in a couple of ways why there is a general apathy to get involved and take responsibility for a range of developmental and governance tasks

5.1.1 Lack of Fairness

On a variety occasions, comments like;

> *PV5* *"I got absolutely stitched up."*
>
> *PNR1* *"Yeah. No, but they can hand them out to whoever they see fit. You know, it doesn't just doesn't all line up, doesn't add up. Doesn't make sense."*
>
> *PNR3* *"And that got dumped a few years ago again with no consultation, okay, he's just decided he was going to do it and we've gone back to a narrow group of individuals selecting the squad and coaching the squad."*

Allude to the fact that there is an underlying perspective that there is a lack of fairness in appointments to coaching positions and squad selection.

5.1.2 Who and How are decisions made

Similarly, stakeholders across the sport are not always aware of who makes decisions and how they are made. This is explained by participants in the research;

> *PV5* *"I don't know who the board members are, who makes them decisions."*

And through statistics identified through the survey

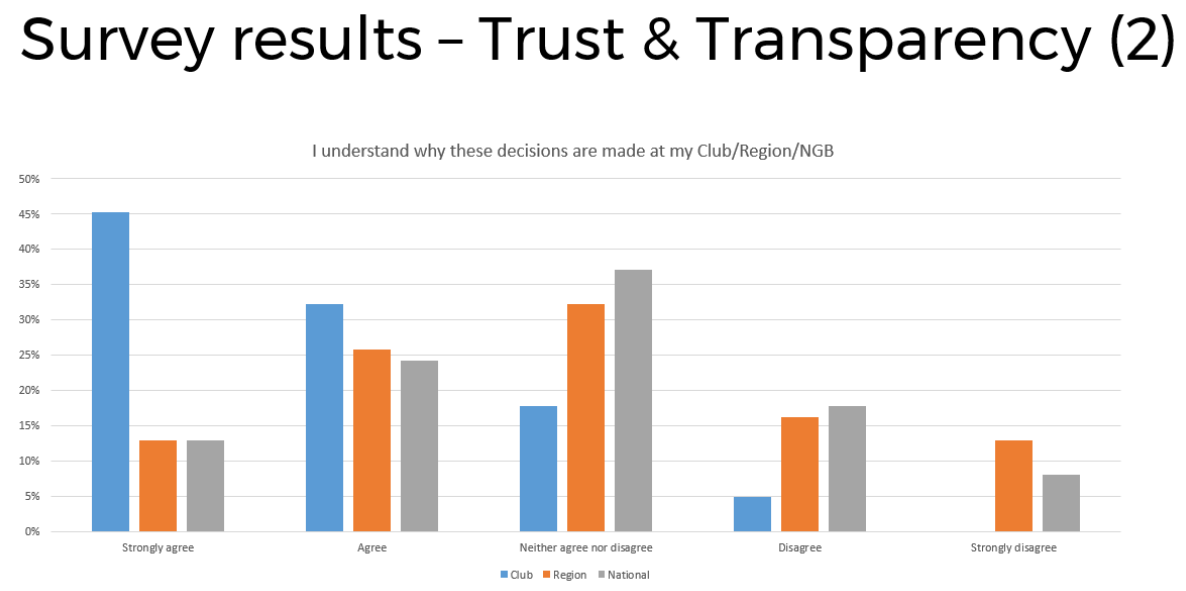


Chart 4: Chart from survey: Understanding of why decisions are made

The effect of examples like this is an environment of apathy, where many members of the wrestling community become disillusioned and rather than get involved, retreat to a part of the sport that they can most control and input which is their own participation or club. This is borne out in the survey as follows.

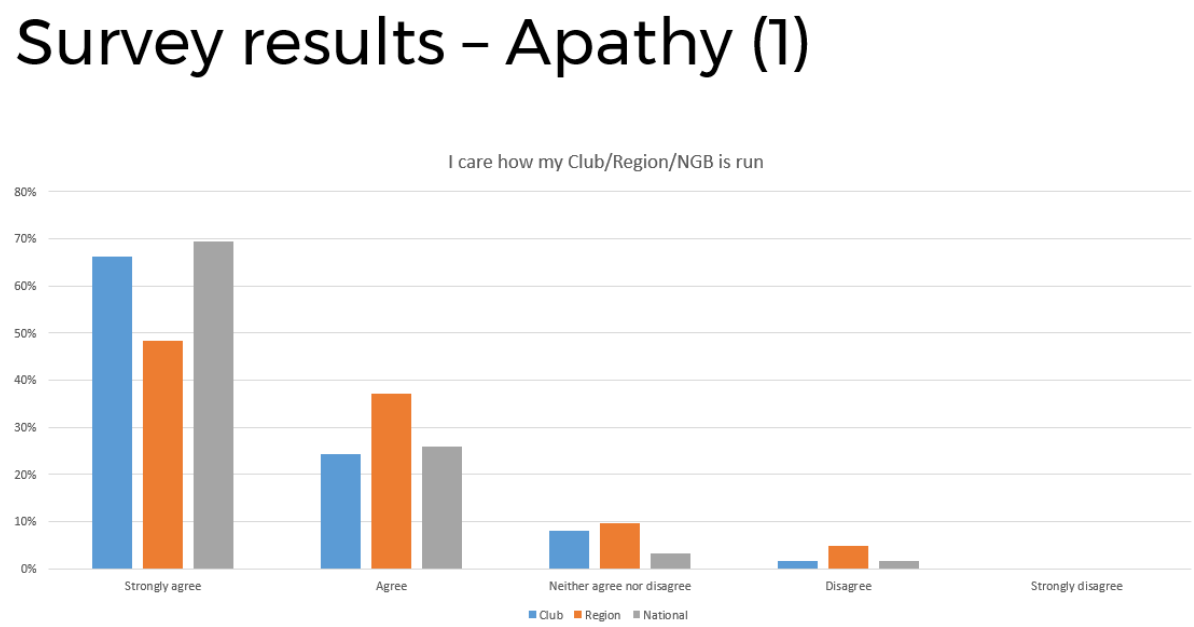


Chart 5: Chart from survey: perception of care of how the sport is run

6.0 Impact

It was Aristotle that said, “We are the sum of our actions and therefore our habits make all the difference.”

With this in mind, when we add up the implications of 1) Structure, 2) Democracy & Representation and 3) Trust & Transparency, and furthermore consider the issues around 4)Communication and 5)Governance and how this creates a baseline attitude of 6)Apathy, the sum of these actions is therefore a **dilution of effectiveness.**

Furthermore, while considering effectiveness, it is clear that different stakeholder groups have different expectations, definitions and measures of what it is to be ‘effective.’

Many NGBs whose reliance on Sport England funding for their continued viability are under pressure to deliver against funding objectives. This is understood and expected. The research has shown that the expectations of Sport England is at times not the same as the expectations and determinants of what is effective for the sport’s participants. British Wrestling should be mindful of serving the needs of both internal and external stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 25

BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD ADOPT AND NATIONS & REGIONS SHOULD CONTRIBUTE, TO A BALANCED SCORECARD APPROACH TO REPORTING ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

7.0 Conclusion

This review started by analysing the effectiveness of the structure of governance that operates within British Wrestling. Very quickly throughout the interview phase of the research, it was clear that there was a complexity to the project that went far beyond looking at structures.

The research showed that people make structures work and also it is the actions of individuals, not structures that lead to issues of trust and transparency and ultimately a dilution of effectiveness. This covers a range of aspects for the sport, which if the recommendations of this report are adopted will see benefits in the following areas;

- Strongly governed Nations & Regions, incentivised to deliver developmental objectives for the sport
- Greater clarity around who does what
- Highly engaged board members from all Nations & Regions
- Better representation at every level of the sport
- Increased collaboration leading to great Trust
- Effective communication leading to a highly informed and engaged stakeholders

A focus on improving communication, building trust and a more strongly defined set of roles and responsibilities across the sport, led by British Wrestling, will lead to more individuals taking responsibility for development activities and lead to stronger governance at Nations & Regional level.

Ultimately, this will lead to not just effectiveness in the eyes of funders such as Sport England but also from the perspective of the sport's participants at every level.

8.0 APPENDICES

1. **Recommendations**
2. **Action Plan**
3. **Model**
4. **Template interview questions**
5. **Survey questions**
6. **Survey results**

APPENDICES

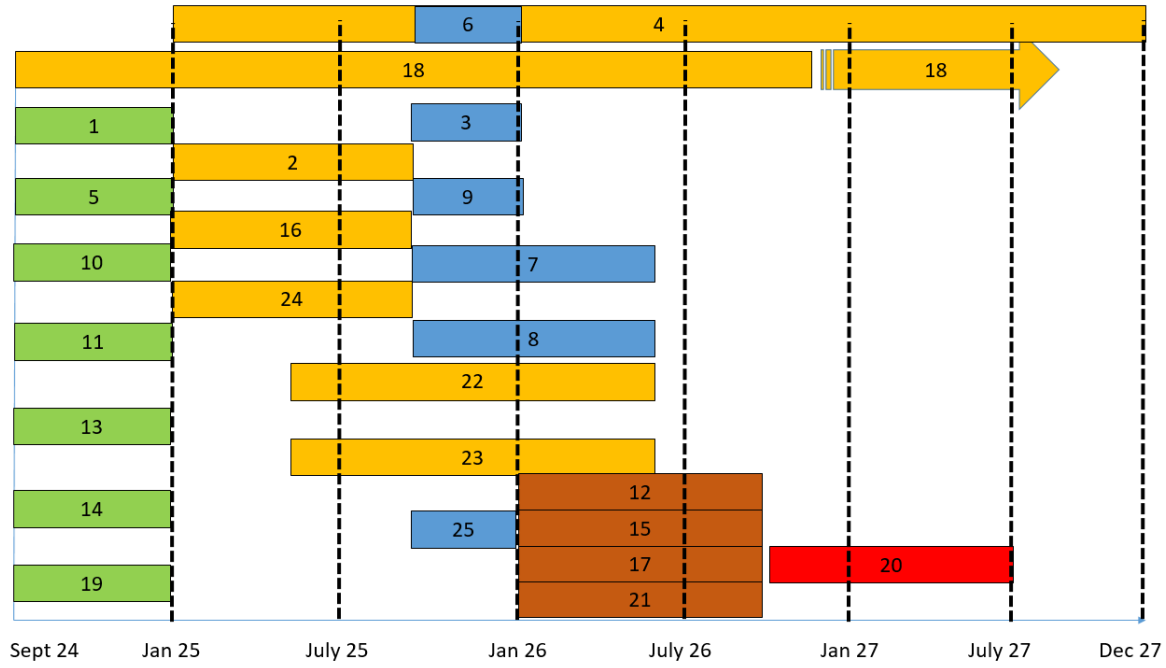
1. **Recommendations**

1	THE SPORT SHOULD MAINTAIN THE CURRENT STRUCTURE IN RELATION TO NATIONS AND REGIONS
2	THE NGB SHOULD REFRESH ITS STRATEGY WITH A LONG TERM VISION WHICH EVERYONE KNOWS THEIR PART IS IN ACHIEVING SUCCESS
3	THE NGB SHOULD CONSULT WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO REVIEW AND UPDATE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS
4	THE NATIONS AND REGIONS SHOULD STRIVE TO BE TIER 2 COMPLIANT – TO THE SPORT ENGLAND CODE OF GOVERNANCE.
5	THE NGB SHOULD EXPAND ITS COMMUNITY AWARDS TO INCLUDE A NATIONS AND REGIONS CATEGORY, AND REVIEW HOW THE AWARDS, IN CONJUNCTION WITH DELIVERING RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT CAN STIMULATE A CULTURE OF TAKING RESPONSBILITY FOR THE SPORT'S SUCCESS AND DEVELOPMENT
6	AS NGB, BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD ENSURE NATIONS & REGIONS FULLY IMPLEMENT THEIR ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION. FAILURE TO DO SO COULD ENABLE BRITISH WRESTLING TO INVOKE A RANGE OF SANCTIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, SUSPENSION OF VOTING POWERS, FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES REMOVED, SUSPENSION OF WRESTLERS FROM NATIONAL COMPETITIONS
7	THE NGB SHOULD SET OUT CLEARLY, THE STANDARDS OF GOVERNANCE EXPECTED FROM NATIONS AND REGIONS AND A MINIMUM LEVEL OF ACTIVITY BY THOSE BODIES. THESE SHOULD BE PUBLISHED IN A CLEAR SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT
8	THE NGB SHOULD INCENTIVISE NATIONS AND REGIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT SET OUT IN RECOMMENDATION 3 BY CREATING A BUDGET FOR FUNDING TO BE ALLOCATED FOR PROJECTS DELIVERED LOCALLY
9	AS PART OF RECOMMENDATION 6 & 7 – CONSISTENCY OF TIME SERVED LIMITS AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL REGARDLESS OF NOMINATED POSITION – SHOULD BE INCLUDED
10	THE NGB SHOULD MONITOR AND PUBLICISE THE PROCESS AND RESULTS OF ELECTIONS OF NATIONS AND REGIONS, LINKED TO RECOMMENDATION 7**.**
11	THE NGB SHOULD MAKE PUBLIC ALL POSITIONS AVAILABLE AT ALL NATIONS AND REGIONS, AND, IN ADDITION, SHOULD MAKE A REGISTER OF POST HOLDERS AND WHEN THEIR TERM IS UP FOR RE-ELECTION/ENDS
12	THE NGB SHOULD ENSURE THAT WRESTLING EXPERIENCE IS NOT LOST BY INTRODUCING A SYSTEM OF LIFE VICE-PRESIDENTS, WHO CAN STAY INVOLVED IN ADVISORY, HONOURARY AND CONSULTATIVE WAY
13	THE NGB SHOULD IMPLEMENT A CODE OF CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR THOSE ELECTED TO NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POSITIONS. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN RECOMMENDATION 6
14	BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD IMPLEMENT A ROTA WHERE BOARD REPRESENTATIVES ARE PRESENT AT EVENTS
15	BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD MEET ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO AGREE AND ORGANISE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDISED CALENDAR OF EVENTS.
16	BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD ENSURE NATIONS & REGIONS, AND CLUBS, ARE INTEGRAL TO THE CREATION OF A NEW STRATEGY TO CREATE A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP OF THE ACTIONS THAT EMANATE FROM IT, AND EMBRACE A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION THAT WILL ALLOW THE SPORT TO ACHIEVE ITS AIMS

17	BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD IMPLEMENT A VOLUNTEER STRATEGY THAT INCLUDES SUCCESSION PLANNING, RETENTION AND TRANSFER OF EXPERTISE AND IDENTIFIES ENTHUSIASTIC AND EFFECTIVE FUTURE LEADERS OF THE SPORT
18	BRITISH WRESTLING TOGETHER WITH THE NATIONS, SHOULD LOBBY NATIONAL SPORTS COUNCILS, TO LEAD ON ALL COMPLIANCE WORK, WITH THE INTENTION TO ALLOW THE VOLUNTEERS IN THE NATIONS TO INVEST MORE TIME IN DEVELOPING WRESTLING
19	BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD USE ITS MEMBERSHIP SYSTEM TO ENSURE ALL INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS ARE AWARE OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND PROMOTE UPCOMING 'ELECTIONS' TO REPRESENT AT LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL
20	BRITISH WRESTLING, AS PART OF ITS VOLUNTEER STRATEGY SHOULD BE PROACTIVE IN ENCOURAGING NEW VOLUNTEERS TO STAND AS REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES
21	BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD RELAUNCH THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE, ENABLING IT TO CO-OPT PEOPLE ONTO COMMITTEES THAT CURRENTLY SIT OUTSIDE THE BOARD AND NATIONS & REGIONS STRUCTURE
22	BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD PRIORITISE THE CREATION OF A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY
23	AS PART OF AN OVERARCHING COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY; BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD USE DATA AND TECHNOLOGY TO TRACK THE DELIVERY AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMUNICATION; AND ON AN ANNUAL BASIS PUBLISH RESULTS TO DEMONSTRATE IMPROVEMENT IN COMMUNICATING WITH STAKEHOLDERS
24	BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD UNDERTAKE A REVIEW OF THE SPORT'S VALUES
25	BRITISH WRESTLING SHOULD ADOPT AND NATIONS & REGIONS SHOULD CONTRIBUTE, TO A BALANCED SCORECARD APPROACH TO REPORTING ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

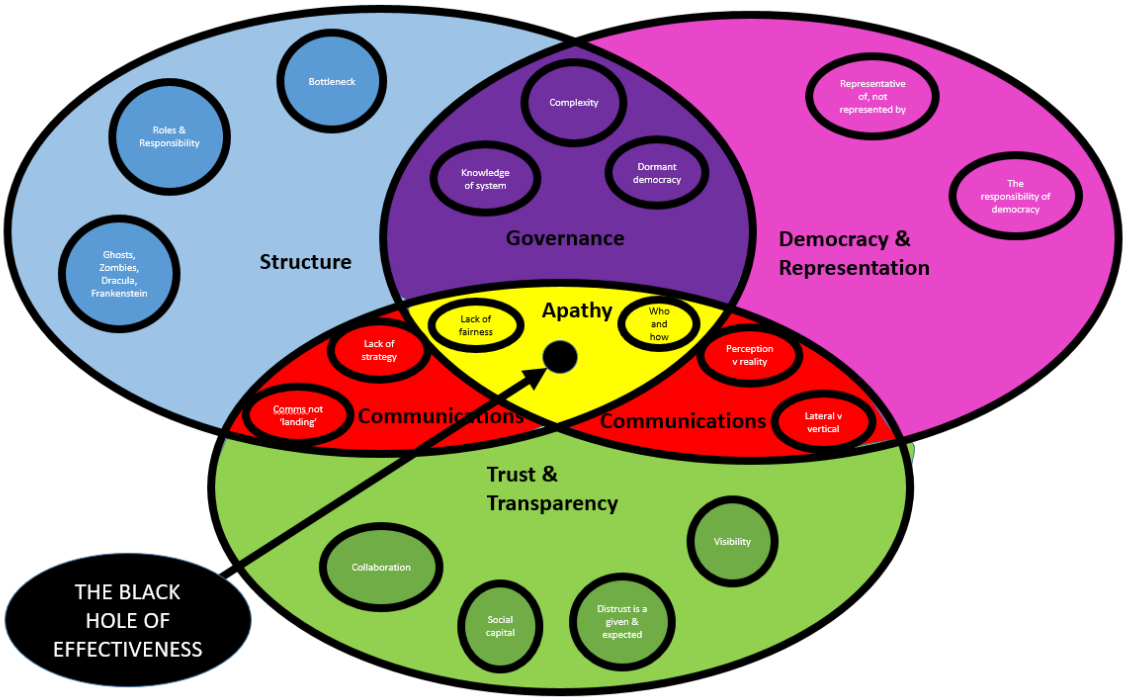
APPENDICES

2. Action Plan



APPENDICES

3. **Model**



APPENDICES

4. Template interview questions

Introduction
Tell me your Wrestling journey?
What are your roles within wrestling, past and present?
What are your experiences working with the NGB? What works, what doesn't? where can improvements be made?
Structure
What is your understanding of the role of a) board b) congress c) Nations and Regions? *What are the strengths and weaknesses of this structure?*
To what extent is the workload of these governing groups proportionate to a) resource b) responsibility and c) adding value to the sports governing structures?
How well do they fulfil their Terms of reference?
Are there any gaps, or replication of duties? Do too few people do too many things?
Compliance and Workload
• A key workstream of the NGB is ensuring that it fulfils requirements from bodies such as Sport England and other home nations. What level of knowledge do you have about the following; *Code of Governance, Safeguarding standard, Race Equality code* • How do you think these impact the day to day operations of the NGB executive? • Is the balance right between the NGB managing its compliance responsibilities against supporting clubs to develop the sport?
As a British NGB, there are a range of National funding bodies to service. How does this affect you in the role that you undertake?
Democracy and Representation?
Linked to the above, how is the need for national representation balanced with practical, achievable and the implementation of governance responsibilities to funders.
What would your thoughts be around a form of devolved national sporting representation but collective governance delivery?
How much say do Clubs have in the governance and running of the sport? Is this not enough, right amount or too much? Is it direct or indirect?
What is your understanding of how decisions are made? Do the structures accelerate or slow down decisions and communication?
Does your average wrestler care about any of this? to what extent does the complexity of governance stop them getting involved?
Trust and Transparency

Going back to a) board b) congress c) Nations and Regions, in your opinion what level of transparency and trust is there between the different groups? Is this replicated at club level?
What could improve this?

APPENDICES

5. **Survey questions**

Demographic Questions

How old are you?

- *0-18*
- *18-24*
- *25-34*
- *35-44*
- *45-54*
- *55-64*
- *65+*

Are you?

- *Male*
- *Female*
- *Non-Binary*
- *Prefer not to say*

Education

- *Completed education to 16*
- *Completed education to 18*
- *Undergraduate degree*
- *Post graduate*

What is your current role(s) within the sport (tick as many as appropriate)

- *Active wrestler*
- *Coach*
- *Referee*
- *Club volunteer*
- *Regional Volunteer*
- *Parent/fan*

What is role(s) within the sport have you previously undertaken (tick as many as appropriate)

- *Active wrestler*
- *Coach*
- *Referee*
- *Club volunteer*
- *Regional Volunteer*
- *Parent/fan*

How long have you been involved with wrestling?

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-10 years

- +10 years

What is your ethnic group?
(Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background)

White

1. English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
2. Irish
3. Gypsy or Irish Traveller
4. Any other White background, please describe

Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups

1. White and Black Caribbean
2. White and Black African
3. White and Asian
4. Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background, please describe

Asian / Asian British

1. Indian
2. Pakistani
3. Bangladeshi
4. Chinese
5. Any other Asian background, please describe

Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

1. African
2. Caribbean
3. Any other Black / African / Caribbean background, please describe

Other ethnic group

Nationality

British

Other

Where do you take part/volunteer in Wrestling?

Northern Region – England

Midlands Region – England

Southern Region – England

Scotland

Wales

Northern Ireland

Experience of Club

Statement	*Strongly agree*	*Agree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly Disagree*
When considering the club I mainly participate in the sport at;					
I see my club as a strong community					
I know lots of people well					
I see other club members outside of participating in wrestling					
I feel safe at the club					
The club communicates with me effectively					
I know who the key people at my club are					
My club is run well and serves my needs					
I understand the purpose of my club					
I trust my club to deliver the sport for me					
My club is transparent in the way it makes decisions					
I understand who makes decisions at my club					
I understand why these are made at my club					
I understand how I can input into the running of my club					
I care how my club is run					
I am keen to get more involved in the running of my club					

Experience of Region/National Association

Statement	*Strongly agree*	*Agree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly Disagree*
When considering the region (of England) /Nation (Northern Ireland/Scotland/Wales) where I mainly participate in the sport ;					
I see all the clubs in my region/nation as a strong community					
All clubs in my region/nation have the same goal in mind.					
I understand the purpose of my regional/national Wrestling Association.					
I believe that my regional/national Wrestling Association are doing a good job					
My regional/national Wrestling Association communicate with me effectively					
I know who the key people running my regional/national Wrestling Association are					
The region is run well and serves my needs					
I trust the Regional/National Wrestling Association to run the sport for my needs					
I understand who makes decisions at my regional/national Wrestling Association					
I understand why these are made at my regional/national Wrestling Association					
I understand how I can input into the running of my regional/national Wrestling Association					
I care how my regional/national Wrestling Association is run					
I am keen to get more involved in the running of my regional/national Wrestling Association					

Experience of British Wrestling Association

Statement	*Strongly agree*	*Agree*	*Neither agree nor disagree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly Disagree*
When considering the British Wrestling Association;					
I understand what the British Wrestling Association does?					
I believe that the British Wrestling Association are doing a good job					
The British Wrestling Association communicate with me effectively					
I know who the key personnel of the British Wrestling Association are					
The British Wrestling Association provides the structure to keep everyone safe when participating in Wrestling.					
I trust the British Wrestling Association to run the sport for my needs					
I understand who makes decisions at the British Wrestling Association					
I understand why the British Wrestling Association make these decisions					
I understand how I can input into the running of the British Wrestling Association					
I care how British Wrestling is run					
I am keen to get more involved in the running of the British Wrestling Association					

If you wish to be entered into a prize draw for a £50 amazon voucher please leave your name and email address in the box below.

APPENDICES

6. Survey results – demographic information

1. How old are you?

Answer Choices	Response Percent
17 or younger	5%
18-20	6%
21-29	23%
30-39	11%
40-49	37%
50-59	5%
60 or older	13%

2. Are you?

Answer Choices	Response Percent
Male	76%
Female	19%
Non-Binary	2%
Prefer not to say	3%

3. what is the highest level of education qualification you have reached?

Answer Choices	Response Percent
Completed education to 16	19%
Completed Education to 18	32%
Undergraduate degree	32%
Postgraduate degree	16%

4. What is your current role(s) within the sport (tick as many as appropriate)

Answer Choices	Response Percent
Active wrestler	45%
Club volunteer	19%
Coach	31%
Parent/fan	29%
Referee	15%
Regional Volunteer	11%

5. How long have you been involved with wrestling?

Answer Choices	Response Percent
0-2 years	27%
3-5 years	16%
5-10 years	6%

6. What is your ethnic group?(Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background)

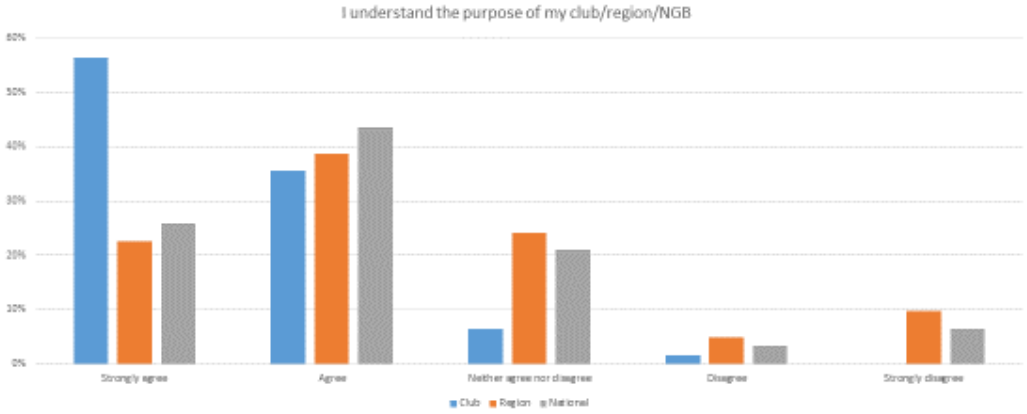
Answer Choices	
White	
British	47%
Irish	3%
Other	13%
Asian or Asian British	
Indian	10%
Pakistani	6%
Bangladeshi	2%
Any other Asian background	6%
Mixed	
White and Black Caribbean	0%
White and black African	0%
White and Asian	2%

Any other mixed background	3%
Black or Black British	
Caribbean	0%
African	0%
Any other black background	0%
Other Ethnic Group	
Chinese	0%
Any other Ethnic Group	3%
I do not wish to disclose my ethnic origin	5%

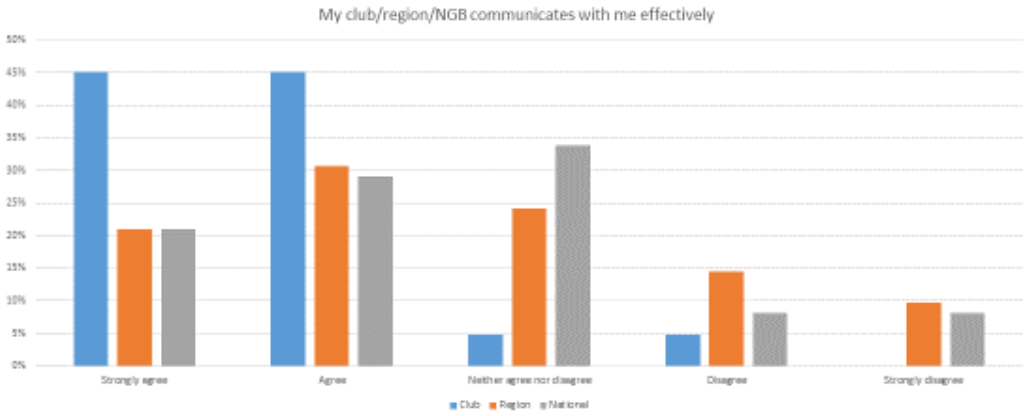
7. Where do you take part/volunteer in Wrestling?

Answer Choices	Response Percent
Northern Region – England	29%
Midlands Region – England	27%
Southern Region – England	18%
Scotland	13%
Wales	6%
Northern Ireland	6%

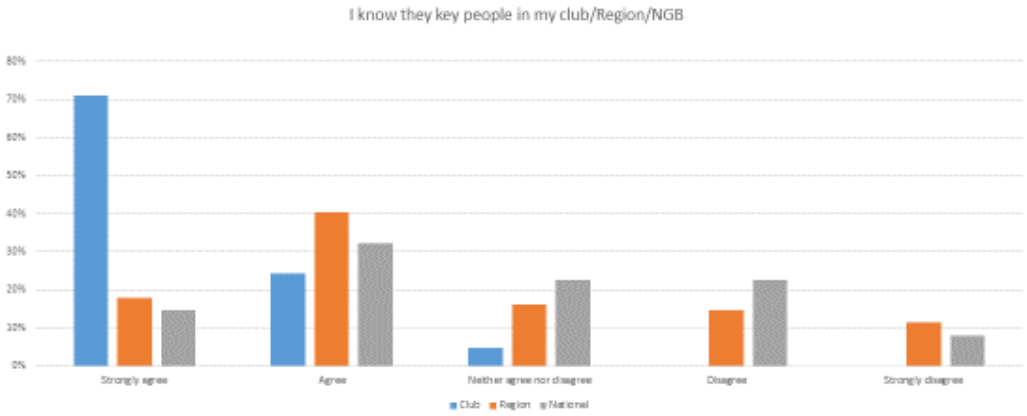
Survey results - Structure



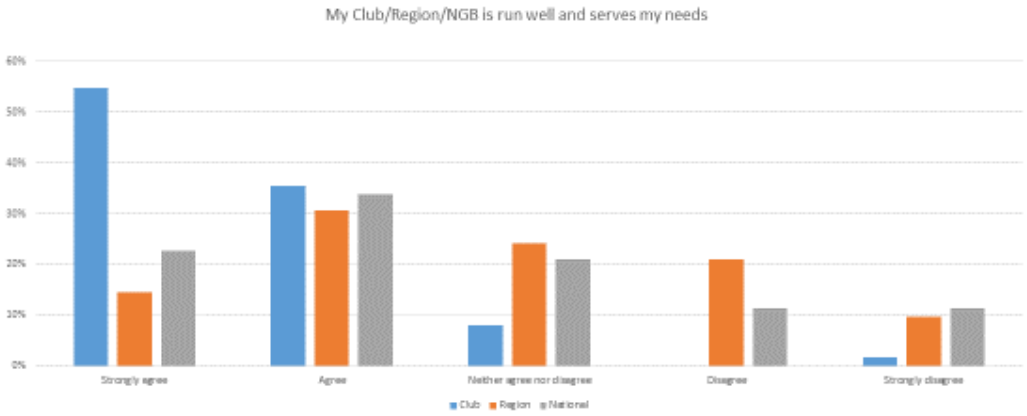
Survey results - Communications



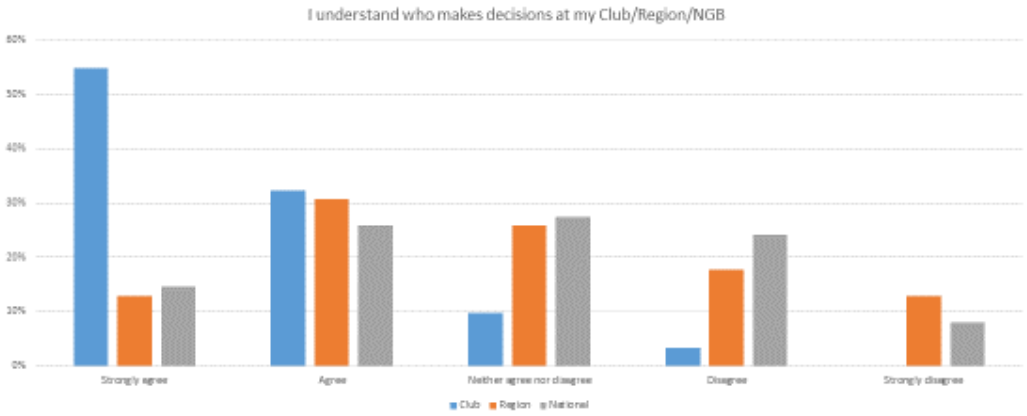
Survey results – Democracy & Representation



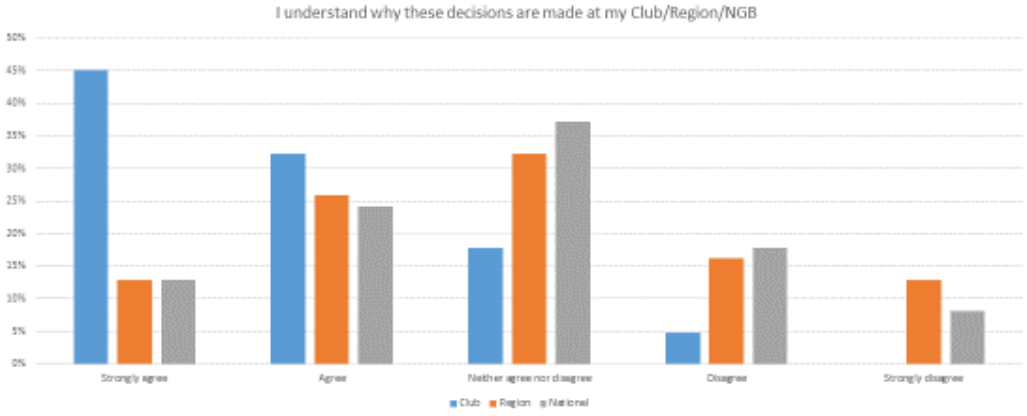
Survey results – Effectiveness



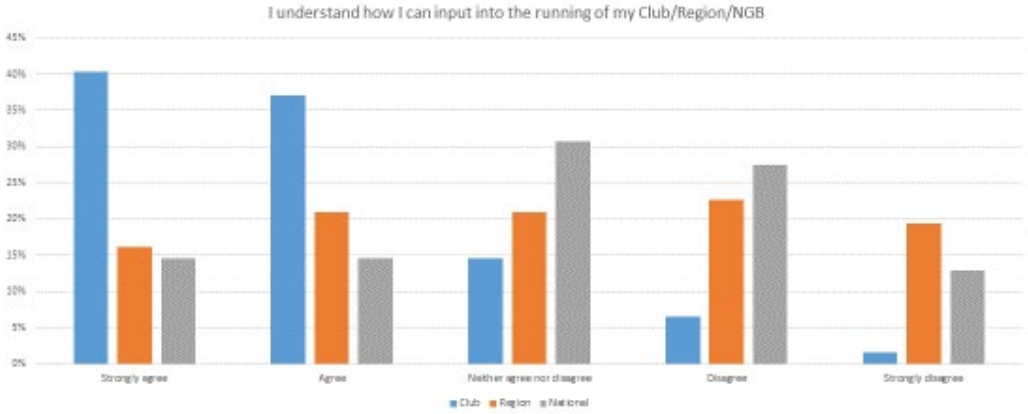
Survey results – Trust & Transparency (1)



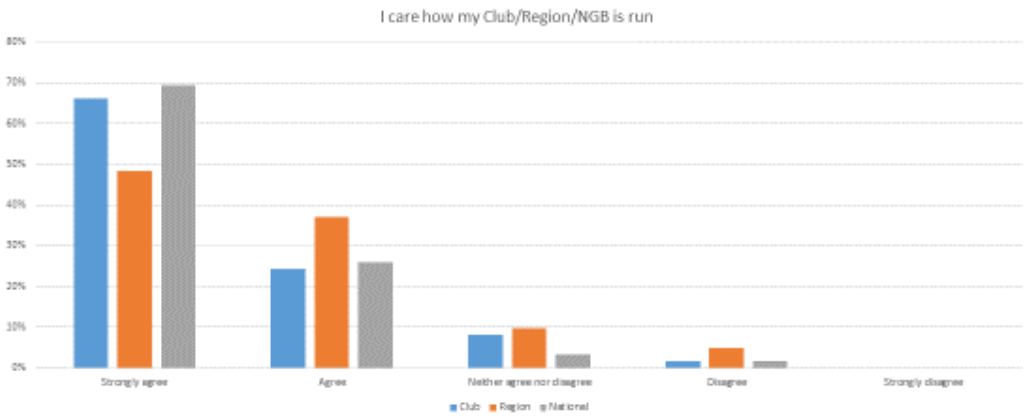
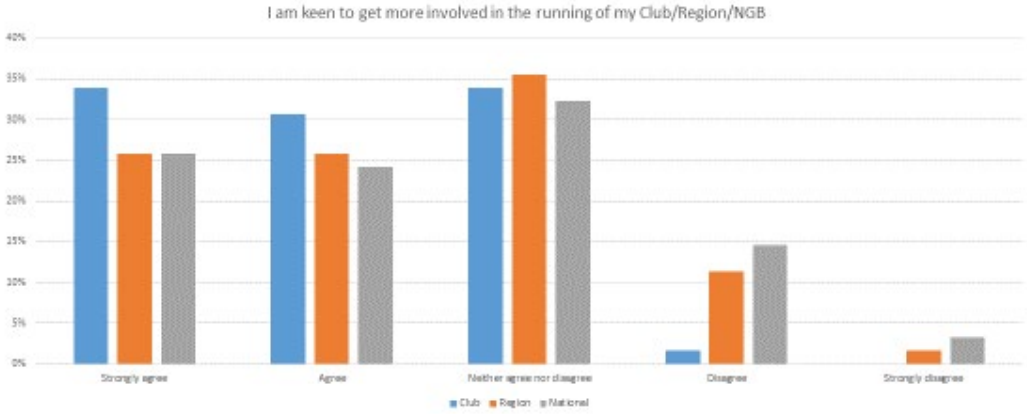
Survey results – Trust & Transparency (2)



Survey results – Governance



Survey results – Apathy (1)



Survey results – Apathy (2)