



Assurance Framework

Progress Report

Version 1.0

Foreword from the Chief Executive

UK Anti-Doping (UKAD)'s mission is to ensure doping-free sport, promoting and protecting clean sport through education, testing and enforcement. We believe that all athletes have the right to compete in sport knowing that they, and their competitors, are clean. However, we cannot do this alone. We rely on the support and commitment of all those involved in sport.

UKAD launched the Assurance Framework in 2021 as a means through which we would work more effectively with sports across the UK to help keep sport clean. The purpose of the Assurance Framework is twofold, first to help National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport mitigate the risk of doping in their sports, and second to assist UKAD in carrying out an effective anti-doping programme across the UK.

All of the 24 Assurance Framework requirements that NGBs are required to evidence to UKAD were created following extensive consultation and designed to contribute to these aims. Some of the requirements take considerable effort to action, and we value the time and commitment that NGBs have put towards gaining compliance with the Assurance Framework in the interest of clean sport.

This report outlines the extensive progress made across the UK, highlighting some of the successes and challenges of the Assurance Framework implementation in its inaugural year.

As we move into the ongoing implementation of the Assurance Framework, our focus is on supporting NGBs to now seek ways of embedding those requirements into their day-to-day operations and, where possible, continuing to develop their programmes beyond the mandatory standards. We look forward to working in partnership with the NGBs to collectively drive towards ensuring a culture of clean sport in the UK.



Jane Rumble

Chief Executive, UK Anti-Doping

Background

The UK Government and Devolved Administrations published a new version of the UK National Anti-Doping Policy (the Policy) in April 2021. The Policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of UKAD, the Sports Councils, and National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport.

UKAD, as the UK’s National Anti-Doping Organisation, consulted extensively with sports and launched the Assurance Framework alongside the publication of the new Policy. The Assurance Framework outlines 24 requirements that NGBs have to meet, acting as the first step an NGB must take towards meeting its obligations set out in the UK National Anti-Doping Policy. The Framework also sets out ways in which NGBs can go beyond the minimum standards and further highlight their commitment to clean sport.

The principal aim of the Assurance Framework is to raise the standard of anti-doping practices in sports across the UK, helping NGBs to mitigate the risk of doping in their sports. In so doing, the UK will be setting the standard globally for clean sport. UKAD’s mission is to protect sport from doping cheats and our vision for clean sport can only be met by working in close partnership with NGBs to enhance clean sport activities.

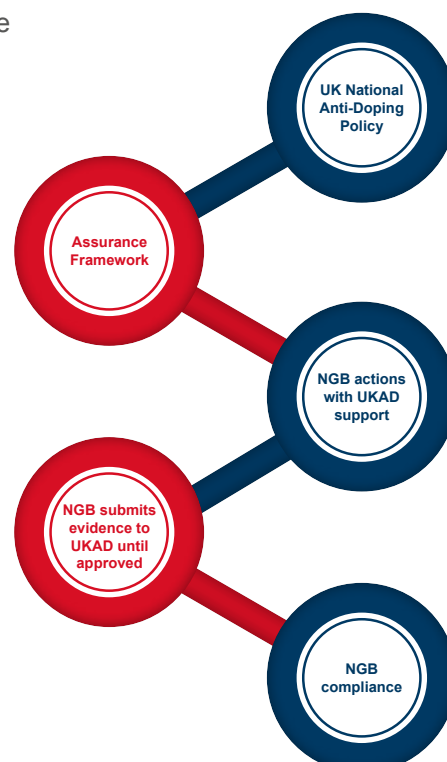
Process of gaining compliance

Since April 2021 UKAD has supported the following groups of NGBs which are required to meet the Assurance Framework:

- An NGB with anti-doping compliance as a condition of the public funding and/or publicly funded benefits received from a Sports Council in the UK
- An NGB that wishes to nominate athletes to compete in the Olympic, Paralympic or Commonwealth Games
- An NGB wishing to utilise UKAD services or resources (including UKAD acting as the Sample Collection Agency and/or Results Management Authority for drug testing)
- In addition, UKAD also welcomes the fact that other NGBs have also been working towards the Assurance Framework on a voluntary basis, displaying their commitment to clean sport.

UKAD has provided a range of support mechanisms to NGBs, including:

- Supporting resources including, for example, template documents and precedents
- Individual, tailored support from UKAD staff (including a newly formed Assurance team)
- Workshops and webinars
- Bespoke eLearning programmes



In order to implement the Assurance Framework, each NGB was required to submit evidence to UKAD against each of the 24 requirements, outlined [here](#). This evidence has been assessed by UKAD against the mandatory standards, with support and guidance provided to individual NGBs until the evidence submitted met the standard required.

Scale of work (as of 1 May 2023)



158

NGBs to successfully evidence all 24 Assurance Framework requirements



3800+

Individual requirements evidenced



330+

Individual support calls held between UKAD and NGBs



258

NGB attendees to Board/Strategy Workshops run by UKAD



138

Clean Sport Education Strategies created



289

Individuals acting as NGB anti-doping lead/Board lead

Outcomes

The initial implementation of the Assurance Framework presented a number of (mostly predictable) challenges, which UKAD and the NGBs have taken great care to resolve. For example, there have been sport-specific challenges, resulting from the varied structures in place across the different NGBs and sports. Specifically, NGBs have a variety of different means through which participants are bound to their rules and regulations, which has implications for the way in which participants are then educated and communicated with.

There have also been significant resource challenges for some NGBs. The NGBs that have gone through this process either act as the governing body for a Home Nation (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales) or all of the UK. As a result, they vary significantly in size, resource and structure, from small, volunteer-led organisations to large organisations that receive millions of pounds in funding. Implementing the Assurance Framework has undoubtedly been a big challenge for smaller NGBs in particular. UKAD anticipates that the resource implications for an NGB will be significantly reduced in future years once the 24 requirements have been met.

Despite these challenges, implementing the Assurance Framework has already resulted in a number of positive outcomes, details of which are set out below. UKAD will continue to collaborate closely with NGBs to develop these further over the coming years.

Increased engagement and support to smaller NGBs from across the UK

The Assurance Framework has helped to facilitate a significant increase in the number of NGBs across the UK engaging with clean sport. This process has formalised the anti-doping responsibilities of around 100 more NGBs than before the Assurance Framework was launched, providing these NGBs with access to resources and support from UKAD that they may not previously have been aware existed.

Creation of a network of anti-doping leads across the UK

All NGBs have now nominated an anti-doping lead within their organisation and on their Board, each completing a UKAD eLearning programme to support them in their role. Whilst responsibility for anti-doping sits across a whole NGB, the intention is that the individuals fulfilling these roles will help to drive forward the NGB's anti-doping programme. In October and November 2022, UKAD ran a series of sessions for the Board leads at NGBs. This enabled discussion and sharing of best practice amongst Board members, an activity we will be looking to develop further. We believe that these Board members can play a vital role in ensuring that their NGB is sufficiently mitigating the risk that doping poses to their sport.



Increased clean sport activities across the UK

Since its launch, UKAD has noted an increase in clean sport activities from NGBs of all sizes. This is particularly evident at a Home Nation NGB level (anti-doping activity was predominantly the remit of the UK NGB in certain sports before the Assurance Framework was launched). By extending clean sport activities to Home Nation NGBs, all organisations now take on an increased responsibility for anti-doping, with the aim that clean sport education and information will filter down through the Athlete Pathway. This should help to influence an Athlete's behaviours and values towards clean sport earlier in their career, giving them a base knowledge before they reach the elite end of their sport. We have also seen improved NGB engagement with UKAD's Clean Sport Week; and it is reassuring to see anti-doping being discussed at NGB Board level more than ever before.

Improved ability for UKAD and NGBs to enforce anti-doping and disciplinary rules

By putting in place a series of legal mechanisms, including making changes to disciplinary or membership regulations, UKAD and NGBs have now enhanced their ability to take decisive action against potential dopers in sport. This includes ensuring that participants are formally governed under the NGB's jurisdiction (and therefore anti-doping rules) if they wish to participate in the sport. In many cases, NGBs have also revised their disciplinary regulations to ensure that action can be taken against individuals for anti-doping misconduct that sits outside of the anti-doping rules. UKAD has already seen this implemented by some NGBs, highlighting a reassuring commitment to investigate and remove dopers from sport.

NGBs conducting wider governance reviews

Driving the improvement of anti-doping practices in an NGB has shone a spotlight on other areas of potential improvement in the governance of NGBs, specifically in relation to other areas of integrity, including safeguarding and misconduct. Whilst the Assurance Framework is focused on anti-doping, there are lots of principles within it which translate to other areas of an NGB's governance, including the importance of an NGB being able to take disciplinary action against an individual for a breach of its rules and regulations.

Creating a proportionate education and information programme

A cornerstone of the Assurance Framework is the need for NGBs to educate and inform its participants about clean sport. Given the value of education to the fight against doping, all NGBs have been required to create a bespoke Clean Sport Education Strategy and Implementation Plan, tailored to the NGB. The creation of this Strategy includes a risk analysis, identifying the different target audiences for education and information within the NGB's sport, before outlining what each group needs to know and how they will be educated and informed. Once implemented, this should lead to a greater awareness and understanding of anti-doping across all levels in sport, including the preventative actions that an Athlete and Athlete Support Person should take, such as checking medication and supplements before use.



Feedback

“Meeting the current requirements has been very positive for the NGB, the process highlighted many areas of good work and other areas where further development was required. Working through the Framework has enhanced Welsh Weightlifting’s anti-doping activities, benefiting from a clear vision and plan with greater engagement from the membership, athletes, support staff and directors of the organisation.”

Weightlifting Wales

“The Assurance Framework is an excellent introduction to helping NGBs govern anti-doping. Whilst everyone within aquatic sports agrees that our sport should always advocate clean sport, it did force us to reflect deeper and allow a frequent conversation that purely through the lack of time, can get lost and forgotten about.”

Swim England

“The evidence required to meet each section of the framework was appropriate and the process of successfully completing it, allowed those within our organisation tasked with delivery of the strategy, to gain a clear vision of what we need to do and a better understanding of what our sport looks like.”

Scottish Football Association



Next steps

A process has been put in place to provide ongoing and comprehensive support to NGBs with their anti-doping programmes, once they have successfully evidenced that they are meeting all 24 requirements of the Assurance Framework. This will allow UKAD to assist NGBs in maintaining their compliance and, where possible, developing beyond the mandatory anti-doping standards. Going forward, an NGB's ongoing implementation of the Assurance Framework will be assessed via an annual submission of evidence, alongside more comprehensive and targeted reviews where appropriate.



Long term aims

As the Assurance Framework created a new set of anti-doping actions for NGBs across the UK, there has been a necessity to not only support NGBs in meeting the requirements, but also to assess compliance. For NGBs that have met all 24 requirements of the Assurance Framework, we believe that the requirements will start to become embedded in the day-to-day activities of the NGB. For example, we hope that discussing anti-doping at Board level and reviewing the effectiveness of anti-doping activities being conducted at an NGB becomes the norm, with doping reviewed alongside other risks that an NGB has to manage.

We would like to see anti-doping education and information being implemented in sports from a young age and early in the pathway of an athlete's career, using a variety of delivery methods and educational tools. We hope that this will then influence behaviours and actions towards clean sport across all participants, so that everyone is aware of their own individual roles and responsibilities. Although it will take time, we hope this will then begin to create a culture of clean sport at all levels. This will ensure that the UK is setting the standard internationally for anti-doping and that participants and the wider public can be confident in the integrity of sport in the UK.

The UKAD logo consists of the letters 'UKAD' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letters are closely spaced and have a slight shadow effect, making them stand out against the dark red background.

Protecting Sport

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