



WHEELCHAIR RUGBY RECRUITMENT STRATEGY 2026/29



CONTENTS

3	Executive summary	8	Strategic objectives
4	Our priority pillars	9	Strategic themes
5	Strategy on a page	12	Strategic enablers
6	Definitions	18	Roadmap
7	Our vision	19	Thank you
		20	Contact us

> EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This strategy sets out how wheelchair rugby's domestic game will grow with greater diversity, reach, and long-term sustainability. Guided by our ambition to shape the future of wheelchair rugby for generations to come, it builds on the strong foundations already in place while focusing activity where it will have the greatest long-term impact.

Insight from our research and engagement shows that recruitment to date has been supported by meaningful first experiences, committed club volunteers, and valued partnerships across healthcare, education and disability sport. It also highlights clear opportunities to sharpen our focus which involves moving to a more targeted, audience-led approach that strengthens pathways into clubs and supports sustained participation.

Aligned to GBWR's organisational strategy Forward Together, this three-year recruitment strategy focuses on four priority audiences that represent the greatest potential for generational growth and increased diversity within the sport. Each priority pillar is supported by tailored pathways and actions designed to meet people where they are, reduce barriers to entry and progression, and support confident, positive first experiences.

Across all activity, we are committed to:

- Delivering welcoming and confidence-building first experiences
- Supporting clubs to confidently welcome and retain new players
- Reducing practical barriers such as access to equipment, travel and cost
- Expanding coaching, officiating and wider workforce opportunities
- Strengthening local partnerships and referral pathways
- Using insight, learning and data to focus on what works best

Together, these actions will help us connect with more people, broaden who participates in wheelchair rugby, and ensure that everyone who enters the sport can discover, enjoy and progress in ways that suit them. This strategy places people at the centre of growth and lays the foundations for a more inclusive, sustainable wheelchair rugby community.

> **OUR PRIORITY PILLARS**

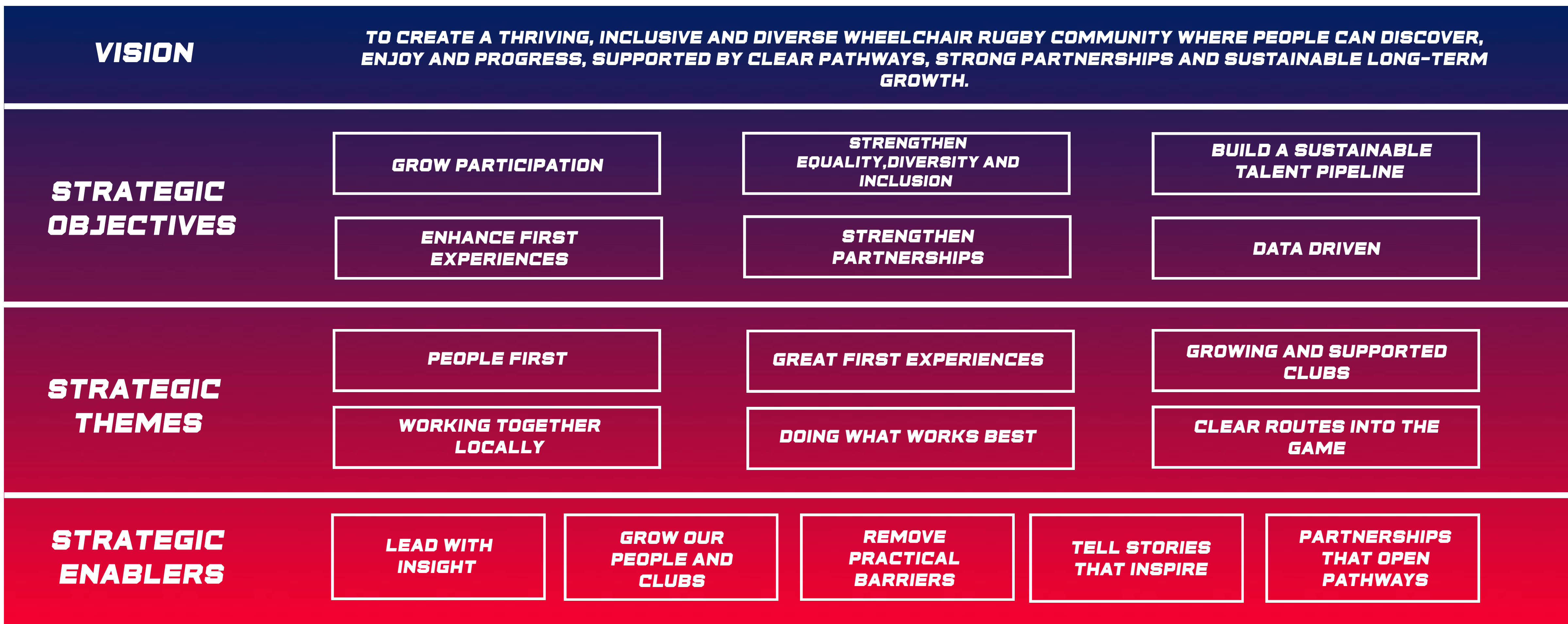
To deliver sustainable and inclusive growth, this strategy takes a targeted, audience-led approach, focusing on four priority pillars. These audiences represent the greatest opportunity to grow participation, strengthen pathways and widen who sees themselves reflected in wheelchair rugby.

Each pillar shapes how we design recruitment activity, partnerships and support, ensuring that people can access the sport in ways that meet their needs, confidence and aspirations.

1. **Classifiable players:** We will strengthen recruitment, progression and retention of classifiable players by improving clarity around classification, strengthening talent transfer pathways, and supporting consistent communication of eligibility and progression across clubs and coaches.
2. **Juniors:** We will grow junior participation through age-appropriate formats, visible safeguarding and clear information for families. Working closely with schools, colleges and universities, we will expand education-based pathways, support local connections, and strengthen transitions from junior to adult play.
3. **Underserved groups:** We will widen access to wheelchair rugby by reducing barriers linked to transport, cost, equipment and inclusive engagement. Community-based, trust-building partnerships will be central to reaching people who may not yet see the sport as accessible or relevant to them, helping to create welcoming entry points that reflect local needs and experiences.
4. **Women and girls:** We will increase participation among women and girls through a coordinated programme of activity that strengthens visibility, leadership and belonging within the sport. This includes women-led first experiences, targeted workforce and leadership development, and the delivery of high-quality women-only competitions and festivals that provide meaningful, aspirational and enjoyable opportunities to play, develop and progress.

Together, these priority pillars ensure our recruitment approach is focused, inclusive and rooted in long-term impact- supporting clubs, partners and communities to grow wheelchair rugby for the future.

> STRATEGY ON A PAGE



> **DEFINITIONS**

Our vision: The strategic vision sets out our long-term ambition for wheelchair rugby growth and recruitment. It describes the future we are working towards and provides a clear, shared direction to guide decision-making, priorities and investment across the organisation.

Our strategic objectives: The strategic objectives define what we aim to achieve over the life of the strategy. They translate our vision into clear, measurable areas of focus, guiding delivery, prioritisation and evaluation across recruitment activity.

Our strategic themes: Our recruitment approach is guided by six clear, people-centred strategic themes. These themes describe the principles and priorities that shape how we design, deliver and evaluate our work, ensuring a consistent approach across all areas of recruitment activity.

Our strategic enablers: Strategic enablers describe the core capabilities, systems and ways of working that underpin delivery of the strategy. Sitting beneath the strategic themes, they support coordinated action and decision-making across all four priority pillars.

> **OUR VISION**

"To create a thriving, inclusive and diverse wheelchair rugby community where people can discover, enjoy and progress, supported by clear pathways, strong partnerships and sustainable long-term growth"



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



Grow participation

across our four priority audiences through targeted, pillar-led recruitment activity that increases awareness, access and engagement.



Strengthen equality, diversity and inclusion

across the sport by widening access, reducing structural barriers and ensuring opportunities are inclusive and representative.



Build a sustainable talent pipeline

by increasing recruitment, progression and retention of classifiable players, and by strengthening transitions from junior to adult participation.



Enhance first experiences

onboarding and conversion through a consistent national 'first experience' approach.



Strengthen partnerships

and local recruitment pathways across healthcare, education, community and disability sport networks to create meaningful entry points into wheelchair rugby.



Data driven

build a measurable, data-driven recruitment system that supports insight, learning and continuous improvement.

STRATEGIC THEMES

- PEOPLE FIRST
- GREAT FIRST EXPERIENCES
- GROWING AND SUPPORTED CLUBS
- WORKING TOGETHER LOCALLY
- DOING WHAT WORKS BEST
- CLEAR ROUTES INTO THE GAME



➤ **STRATEGIC THEMES**

Our recruitment approach will be guided by six clear, people-centred themes that shape everything we do.



➤ **1: PEOPLE FIRST**

We will design our recruitment around the motivations, needs and ambitions of the people we want to welcome into wheelchair rugby. Recruitment will ensure flexible, welcoming entry routes are clearly visible, particularly for families, juniors and those new to sport.

➤ **2: GREAT FIRST EXPERIENCES**

We will ensure that first experiences of wheelchair rugby are positive, safe and supportive, helping people feel comfortable and confident from the outset. Clubs will be supported to help parents feel confident and well-informed through clear information, visible safeguarding and flexible, enjoyment-led participation routes.

➤ **3: GROWING AND SUPPORTED CLUBS**

We will work alongside clubs to strengthen welcoming and inclusive environments, building on existing good practice. Clubs will be supported to continue developing confidence, capability and consistency, with the skills, structures and support needed to engage new players and deliver positive first experiences.

➤ **STRATEGIC THEMES**



➤ **4: WORKING TOGETHER LOCALLY**

We will build trusted, local partnerships across healthcare, education, disability sport and community networks to create meaningful and relevant entry points into wheelchair rugby. By working alongside community and disability-specific partners, we will connect with people who may not yet be engaged with the sport.

➤ **5: DOING WHAT WORKS BEST**

We will focus our investment on activity that delivers the greatest impact, using insight, evidence and learning to inform decisions, refine our approach and continuously improve recruitment outcomes.

➤ **6: CLEAR ROUTES INTO THE GAME**

We will provide simple, visible and confidence-building routes into wheelchair rugby, helping people understand how they can take part, develop and progress in ways that suit them.

STRATEGIC ENABLERS

- LEAD WITH INSIGHT
- GROW OUR PEOPLE AND OUR CLUBS
- REMOVE PRACTICAL BARRIERS
- TELL STORIES THAT INSPIRE
- PARTNERSHIPS THAT CREATE PATHWAYS



➤ **LEAD WITH INSIGHT**

WE WILL:

- Strengthen leadership and coordination of recruitment activity by planning for dedicated recruitment infrastructure as the sport grows.
- Embed a people-first approach to enquiries and referrals by reviewing internal processes and developing clear recruitment operating procedures.
- Continually gather meaningful national insight and data to understand how people enter, experience and progress through wheelchair rugby.
- Introduce revised systems to track the player journey to support informed decision-making.
- Improve our understanding of diversity within recruitment by strengthening data collection and identifying where further outreach is needed.



➤ **GROW OUR PEOPLE AND OUR CLUBS**

WE WILL:

- Create clear development pathways for coaches and officials including targeted pathways for women and girls.
- Deliver a consistent club support framework and accessible resources for safe, confident delivery and positive first experiences.
- Strengthen engagement with clubs to build confidence, alignment with recruitment priorities and a welcoming experience for new participants.
- Grow an ambassador network to support onboarding, tasters and local recruitment activity.
- Work with local partners to explore the development of new clubs in geographically underserved areas.
- Strengthen referral routes into clubs via healthcare pathways to improve access and continuity into community provision.
- Develop an inclusive workforce through targeted training, inclusive coaching, effective communication and meaningful engagement with diverse communities.



➤ **REMOVE PRACTICAL BARRIERS**

WE WILL:

- Explore regional equipment hubs and chair pools to support tasters, education and rehabilitation settings.
- Reduce travel and geographic barriers by supporting locally led solutions, signposting transport options and aligning outreach with where people already are.
- Support clubs to access appropriate facilities by building local relationships and providing practical booking guidance, templates and advice on accessibility and floor types.
- Provide clear, regularly updated guidance on chair fitting, safety and maintenance to support safe, confident delivery.
- Develop and promote entry-level and recreational opportunities that offer safe, inclusive ways to try and play wheelchair rugby.



➤ **TELL STORIES THAT INSPIRE**

WE WILL:

- Work with partners to deliver content that brings wheelchair rugby to life for new and existing audiences.
- Showcase stories and imagery from across our community that reflect the diversity we want to see in the sport.
- Strengthen visibility and connection through targeted, audience-specific storytelling.
- Use digital storytelling to clearly explain the different pathways into the sport.
- Enable players, families and clubs to share their stories using clear, accessible templates and guidance.



➤ ***PARTNERSHIPS THAT CREATE PATHWAYS***

WE WILL:

- Build meaningful relationships with healthcare, education, disability-sport, community, and rehabilitation partners.
- Strengthen and simplify referral routes so partners can direct people into the sport with confidence.
- Work with clubs to align partnership activity with local capacity and regional need.
- Support clubs to build community connections that strengthen local recruitment pathways.
- Share insight, resources, and good practice to make collaboration easier and more impactful.
- Develop clear, locally relevant entry points into wheelchair rugby through partnership-led activity.
- Prioritise partnerships that reach communities and regions with limited existing provision to ensure wheelchair rugby is accessible across Great Britain.



> 3 YEAR ROADMAP



2026-27

- > RECRUITMENT SYSTEM ESTABLISHED
- > PLAYER JOURNEY TRACKING SYSTEM REFINED
- > GREAT FIRST EXPERIENCE FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTED
- > WORKFORCE AND CLUB CAPACITY STRENGTHENED
- > PARTNERSHIP PATHWAYS ESTABLISHED

2027-28

- > TARGETED RECRUITMENT DELIVERED
- > CLUB CONVERSION ENHANCED
- > WORKFORCE CAPACITY EXPANDED
- > EQUIPMENT HUBS IMPLEMENTED
- > PARTNERSHIP LED RECRUITMENT ACTIVATED

2028-29

- > RECRUITMENT SYSTEM EMBEDDED NATIONWIDE
- > LOCAL RECRUITMENT ROUTES EMBEDDED
- > PARTICIPTION AND DIVERSITY GROWTH ACHIEVED
- > STRATEGY IMPACT EVALUATION



➤ **THANK YOU**

To all our members, players, officials, referees, coaches and volunteers, including those who support GBWR governance through formal and informal member committees and our Board of Trustees.





➤ CONTACT US

Rugby House
Twickenham Stadium
200 Whitton Road
Twickenham, Middlesex, TW2 7BA

 gbwr.org.uk

 Iwanttoplay@gbwr.org.uk

