

Blog: Players of all levels at the heart of our strategy

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Sara Sutcliffe, Chief Executive of Table Tennis England (photo by John Upham)

Table Tennis England Chief Executive Sara Sutcliffe outlines a busy and exciting time ahead for the sport.

It is a little bit over a year since I started as Chief Executive. In that period you will have seen some obvious changes including a rebrand to Table Tennis England and the relocation of our Head Office from Hastings to Milton Keynes.

We have also refreshed the Board as well as the network of committees and advisers that we value so much in delivering table tennis throughout England.

And whilst we said goodbye to about 50% of our staff when we relocated I am very proud of all the new staff who have brought renewed energy and in several cases relevant experience from other sports into Table Tennis England.

At the European Table Tennis Union annual congress recently, I was invited to be Deputy Chair of the re-formed Women's Working Group. All European countries are facing a challenge in recruiting and retaining females to table tennis, whether as players, coaches, officials or administrators.

In a show of hands around the room, the question was asked which National Federations had introduced equal prize money for men and women. This is seen as one way to break the vicious circle, certainly for players. I was of course proud to be able to raise my hand following the Board's decision to introduce equal prize money for the Grand Prix series this season.

However, that is just the tip of the iceberg. We need to make the sport more attractive to girls and women and we need to truly value their participation and performances.

Away from the table, the Board recently approved a set of corporate objectives which deal with the immediate six-month period to the end of the financial year. A review of the strategic priorities is under way and will be shared publicly once it is finalised early in 2015. That will inform the corporate objectives for the next year and beyond. I am not giving too much away when I say that we will be putting the players and all those who partake in our sport in whatever function at the heart of our strategy.

We will continue to use this [blog series](#) not only to introduce you to members of the team at Table Tennis England but to highlight what we are focusing on both on a day-to-day basis and also on a longer-term strategic basis.

We know there are improvements still to be made as to how we work to engage our members, our regions, club and leagues, our partners and the wider population who just enjoy table tennis. There are exciting times ahead.

As Chief Executive, my immediate priorities are to secure the last two years of our Sport England funding for this four-year cycle, to complete the strategic review and set the operational plan for next year and to continue to communicate and embed changes to how we govern the sport.

There are challenges to be faced as public funding for sport in general is likely to start to decrease in the not too distant future. We will need to secure other sources of revenue and we are currently reviewing our commercial programme hopefully to attract more sponsors.

Please take some time to read the blogs and if you have any questions feel free to contact Table Tennis England on help@tabletennisengland.co.uk and your query will be directed to the appropriate member of the team for an answer.

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