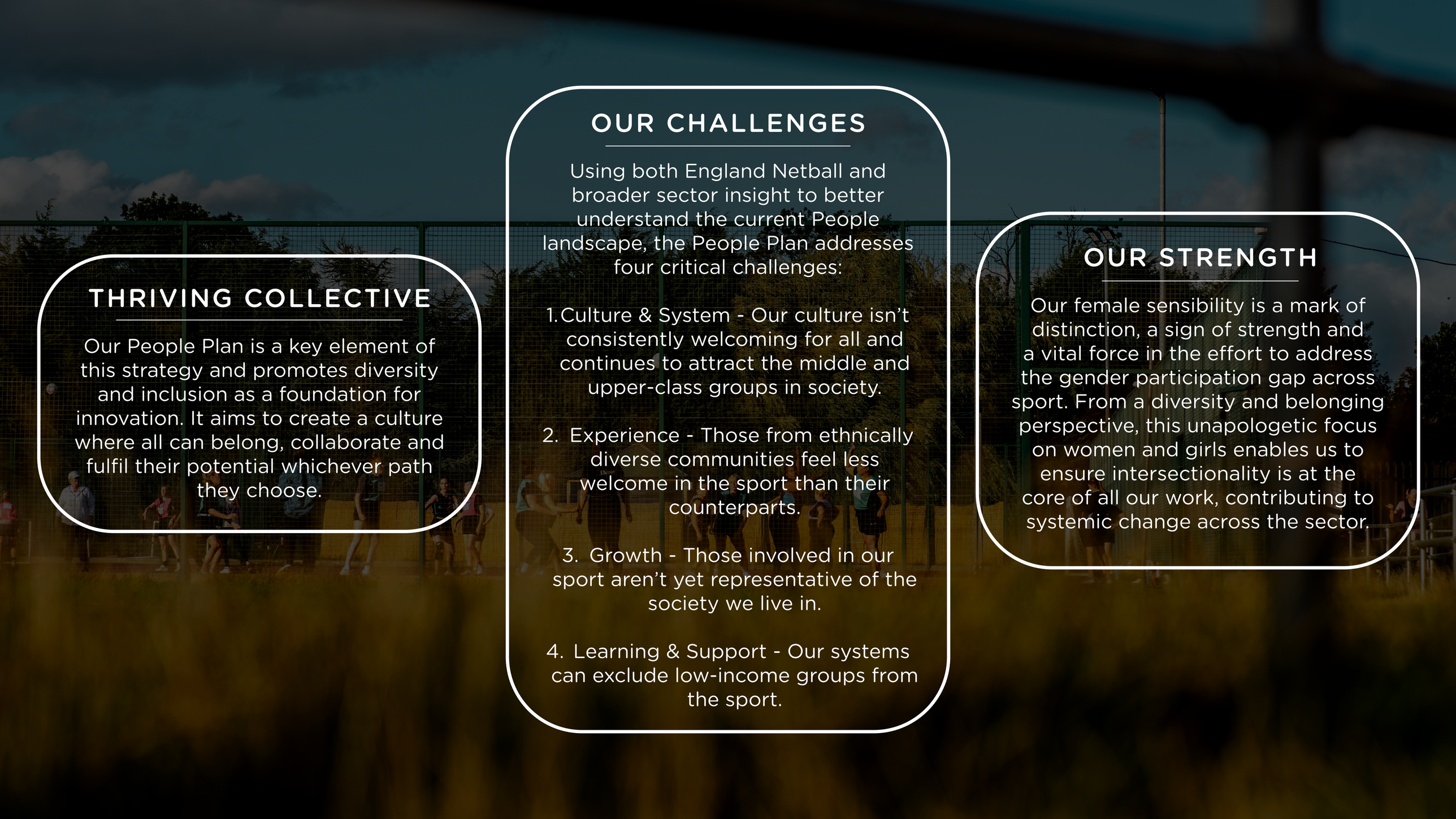
ENGLAND NETBALL

DEDICATED TO DIFFERENCE ACTION PLAN

APRIL 2026





THRIVING COLLECTIVE

Our People Plan is a key element of this strategy and promotes diversity and inclusion as a foundation for innovation. It aims to create a culture where all can belong, collaborate and fulfil their potential whichever path they choose.

OUR CHALLENGES

Using both England Netball and broader sector insight to better understand the current People landscape, the People Plan addresses four critical challenges:

1. Culture & System - Our culture isn't consistently welcoming for all and continues to attract the middle and upper-class groups in society.

2. Experience - Those from ethnically diverse communities feel less welcome in the sport than their counterparts.

3. Growth - Those involved in our sport aren't yet representative of the society we live in.

4. Learning & Support - Our systems can exclude low-income groups from the sport.

OUR STRENGTH

Our female sensibility is a mark of distinction, a sign of strength and a vital force in the effort to address the gender participation gap across sport. From a diversity and belonging perspective, this unapologetic focus on women and girls enables us to ensure intersectionality is at the core of all our work, contributing to systemic change across the sector.

In 2021 we published our 10-year Adventure Strategy with a clear focus to lead a movement on and beyond the court and to uphold an unapologetic focus on women and girls whilst opening the game to new audiences to belong, flourish and soar.

Our adventure is driven by a Moral Compass which is our framework of beliefs, values and ideals. ‘Dedicated to Difference’ is one of its driving pillars, where we pledge to promote and celebrate difference, embracing the opportunity to make our sport a possibility within everyone’s reach, ensuring netball is open to new audiences, beyond our current following, to discover the joy of belonging in netball.

Our dedication to this is outlined in our Belonging Commitment Statement which can be read in full within the **Adventure Strategy.**



WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS PLAN AT ENGLAND NETBALL?

Whilst the implementation of Dedicated to Difference remains the responsibility of everyone across England Netball, we recognise that ownership and accountability are required to maintain progress.

The following individuals hold responsibility:



EDI BOARD CHAMPION JENNIFER THOMAS	Jennifer has sat on the Board since January 2021 and ensures that Dedicated to Difference remains a consideration across all items discussed. Outside of England Netball, she is Global Head of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) at London Stock Exchange Group. Jennifer is not required to formally report.
EDI EXECUTIVE SPONSOR FRAN CONNOLLY (CEO)	Fran has been with England Netball since 2001. Through her leadership and influence, netball has supported the overall growth of women's sport, helping to address the gender inequality gap and inactivity levels in underrepresented groups. Fran does not formally report on our Dedicated to Difference progress, but will share this as part of many forums and groups when representing England Netball.
ENGLAND NETBALL EXECUTIVE	The Executive is made up of England Netball's most senior employees. Lead by Fran, they set direction for the organisation and ensure we adhere to our strategic objectives whilst maintaining the highest standards of governance. Actions listed in Dedicated to Difference are completed by employees from within the teams that these individuals manage. The Executive hold overall responsibility for reporting, including to core funders such as Sport England.
DIVERSITY AND BELONGING BUSINESS PARTNER (DBBP) MIKE HAWKES-WADE	Based within the People team, Mike works to ensure that the obligations within our Belonging Commitment Statement are embedded across the organisation and our sport. He is responsible for supporting England Netball and our stakeholders, as well as monitoring and updating the Dedicated to Difference Plan and Diversity and Belonging reports each year. Alongside these published updates, Mike also contributes to formal reporting to funders and partners.
REGIONAL EDI LEADS	Based within Regions, the EDI Leads are volunteers who are passionate advocates of diversity and belonging. Where relevant, they will signpost members to supporting resources whilst some will also lead projects within their Regions. EDI Leads are not required to formally report but work closely with the DBBP.

Our Actions

To ensure Dedicated to Difference is embedded across the organisation, the objectives and actions have been categorised to align with the People Plan's four ambitions. All objectives are for completion by March 2027 unless otherwise specified.

Our Ambitions

Culture & Systems

1. Strategy and Leadership

The leaders of our sport will role model a proactive fully inclusive culture, be accountable for upholding anti-racist and anti-discriminatory principles in our policies, practices, and decision-making. Our leaders will live, champion, and communicate these consistently throughout the organisation.

What are we doing and how are we doing it?

Drive leadership accountability

- EDI Board Champion to work with DBBP to ensure all board meetings consider EDI.
- Board to carry out annual formal review of the plan against agreed success measures.

Fearless People Leaders who create psychologically safe environments

- England Netball Executive Team to deliver at external conferences (other NGB's and system partners) to lead a movement for women and girls.
- Include reference to anti-discriminatory practices and belonging within our staff survey.

Integrate EDI into the way we work

- Diversity and Belonging Business Partner to review all operational plans to ensure EDI work is integrated across planned activities.
- Deliver place-based interventions that tackle underrepresentation at a local level.
- Deliver best in sector major events for women and girls.
- Upgrade website to enable easier communication with EN and better reflect the preferred mediums of Gen Z and Gen Alpha e.g. WhatsApp.
- Identify and begin to systematically remove barriers across the Roses Pathway.
- Support Netball Players Association to continue delivery of Female Athlete Health Programme across performance and NSL environments.

Drive systemic change

- Recruit 400 NETBALLHer Champions.
- Co create and advocate for a national puberty toolkit for clubs. Contribute to a cross sport/sector partner toolkit developed with the national Puberty Group.
- Create and launch a new membership offer.
- Consider female health and wellbeing across all learning offers and learner's support.
- Create a Coach membership to grow community and ensure our coaches feel supported and that they belong.

Culture & Systems

2. Data and Reporting

To have a comprehensive and consistent data collection system to better understand the diversity of our staff, members, athletes, and stakeholders, to report transparently on our progress towards overcoming barriers and improving experiences of underserved communities.

Create effective data gathering process to benchmark against industry standards and track progress of diverse representation

- Utilise ENgage (our membership system) to improve data collection across entire pathway (from grassroots to Roses).

Drive and communicate the importance of data collection

- Increase demographic data collection across the talent pathway (including NSL and Roses).

Be targeted and purposeful with research

- Carry out spectator survey analysis of all major events to continuously improve and provide experiences tailored to the needs of women and girls.
- Implement learnings of Women in Sport's 'Black Girls and Sport: A Breakup Story' and 'Reimagining Sports Coaching' across our activities.

Culture & Systems

3. Governance

To have a clear governance framework, ensuring that our Dedicated to Difference ambitions are embedded in every aspect of ENs governance structure, policies and practices.

Be transparent by publishing annual updates

- Publish Diversity and Belonging Report and updated Dedicated to Difference action plan annually.

Clearly defined governance framework

- Publish Diversity and Belonging Report and updated Dedicated to Difference action plan annually.
- Recruit Regional EDI Leads and relaunch EDI Lead Network.
- Strengthen our governance structures to ensure greater visibility and oversight of who our coaches are and where they coach.
- Establish a central database of coaches, with an accompanying action plan to be shared with Sport England.

Inclusive Policies

- Support NSL clubs to implement a DIAP for their own activities in line with the Sports Governance Code.
- Ensure compliance with Ann Craft Trust Safeguarding Adults in Sport Framework by July 2027.
- Create a women and girls-centric safeguarding offer that addresses the lived experience of our members, volunteers and stakeholders.

Leadership Diversity

- Recruitment for member-nominated Board position following completion of existing director's term.

Establish and engage stakeholder network in policy development

- Review internal and external policies in line with the EN policy register- ensuring that relevant stakeholder groups are consulted as part review of the process, and we are learning from feedback we have received.



Experience

4. Celebrate, Communicate and Empower (Stakeholder Engagement)

We empower underrepresented groups including those who may have been marginalised or discriminated against within our sport and actively support and promote their voices.

Celebrate the netball family for EDI work

- Capitalise on England Netball's Centenary to celebrate and recognise those across the game.
- Ensure recognition for EDI work is included within Regional and National ONE Awards.

Actively share our ambitions and learnings

- Include learnings within annual Diversity and Belonging Report.

Deliver biannual EDI Events

- Host 2 learning opportunities at NSL or England Netball fixtures
- Updates to be published on website in April and October annually.

Increase audience engagement

- Ensure a diverse range of events are recognised across our channels e.g. faith celebrations, awareness days etc.
- Gift 5% of forecasted NSL Grand Final ticket sales to lower socio-economic groups (LSEG).

Growth

5. Representation

EN and the netball family will represent the diversity of our society and continue to grow our membership and adapt to our changing nation.

Diversify our recruitment

- Review recruitment practices to ensure a consistent and equitable approach to candidate attraction and assessment.

Support career advancement for underrepresented communities

- Consider within our workforce planning how we can create more career opportunities for underrepresented groups in our sport.

Elevate the visibility of role models

- Work with NSL clubs to collect appropriate video and written

content for distribution throughout 2026/27.
- Continue to develop a world leading professional women's sporting competition.

Grow and celebrate the contributions of partners who expand the reach of netball to new audiences e.g. England Men's and Mixed Netball Association (EMMNA)

- Continue to support EMMNA with upscaling and event delivery e.g. deploying officials and growing men and mixed leagues.

Increase the size and diversity of our participant base (including membership and schools)

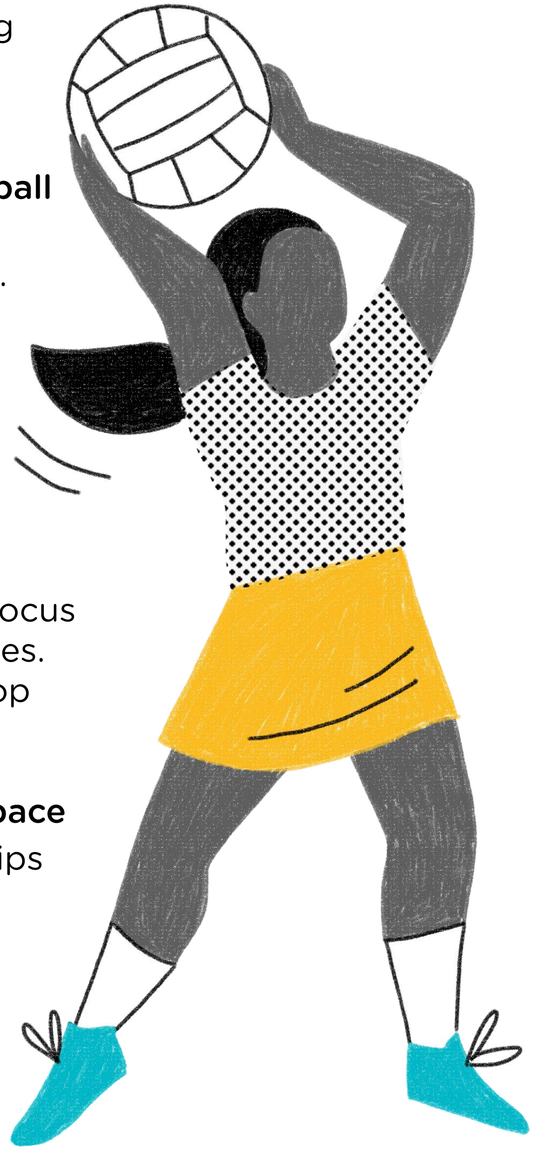
- Carry out Walking Netball Rule Review.
- Carry out ParaNetball Review.
- Pilot a County Masters Tournament (participants aged 35+).
- Grow Bee Netball to increase overall participation with additional focus on SEND participants and those from ethnically diverse communities.
- Work with East Midlands Deaf Netball and other partners to develop our Deaf Netball offer.

Seek out commercial partners who can enhance our impact in this space

- Create new commercial partnerships and renew existing partnerships that align with our Dedicated to Difference ambitions.

Our Player Pathway will focus on the development of the athletes involved both on and off the court

- Work closely with Loughborough College to deliver the Diploma in Sport Excellence (DiSE) programme.
- Develop pathway with a focus on development-led selection, not performance-led whilst addressing over-reliance on trials and single selection moments.



Learning and Support

6. Continuous Education

To have a Thriving Collective that is genuinely curious to continually grow their knowledge and confidence bringing to life our ambitions around diversity and inclusion.

Support leadership development and deliver educational workshops

- Strengthen succession planning across performance and pathway coaching.
- Create meaningful connections through support networks and mentoring.

Engage in external learning opportunities and share learning materials

- Engage with Sport England ‘Leading the Movement’ sessions throughout the year.
- DBBP to attend a minimum of 5 conferences/ events and share learning with relevant colleagues.

Modernise our learning to make it more accessible

- Create and implement new Learning Management System to simplify learner journey and remove barriers to access.
- Create flexible, innovative learning opportunities.
- Pilot adapted Coaching courses to meet the specific needs of disabled people.
- Update Diversity and Belonging Knowledge Centre.

Embed EDI education in all our new CPD and thread through existing plans e.g. Coaching Plan

- Create Coaching Plan with focus on needs of W&G as identified by Women in Sport research including the Black Girls in Sport Research report.

England Netball welcomes scrutiny, feedback and suggestions of the actions above. They are not intended to be exhaustive but provide an accurate representation of the steps we will be taking from April 2026 – March 2027 to open the game to new audiences to belong, flourish and soar. Should you have any questions or feedback, please contact belonging@englandnetball.co.uk.



ENGLAND NETBALL
DEDICATED TO DIFFERENCE
ACTION PLAN
APRIL 2026