The British Esports Association

Who we are and what we do

October 2017
We want the UK to become a leader in esports

Welcome to the British Esports Association info pack.

We are passionate about esports and have gathered a dedicated group that want to help the UK become a leading force. There are a number of reasons why the UK is behind other regions, but with a greater understanding and support we can improve quickly.

Our view is that esports is not a rival to traditional sport, but a great activity as part of a balanced lifestyle. It has many positives, including cognitive benefits, it promotes teamwork and communication, develops communities and provides jobs. Playing esports is also a beneficial alternative to watching passive media like TV.

We are working with academic institutions in the UK, as well as games industry body Ukie and more, and will be publishing evidence over the coming months that will help give parents and others an informed view.

Andy Payne OBE, Chair
British Esports Association
A new independent review has quoted a suggestion from the Boston Consulting Group, urging the UK Government to fund esports tournaments, national teams and media coverage to help raise the status of esports here.

The Bazalgette Review quotes the following statement from the Boston Consulting Group:

“**National recognition of esports:** Raise the status of esports with government sponsored competitions, national teams, and media coverage, e.g. esports is now an official part of Asian Games.

“**National teams and junior leagues can be a lever to attract foreign investment to sponsor esports clubs, build gaming stadiums, design high-end or next generation gaming equipment (e.g. virtual reality headsets).”**

The British Esports Association welcomes these calls on UK government to raise the status of esports in Britain.
INTRODUCTION

What is esports?

Esports (electronic sports) is competitive video gaming, where people play against each other online and at spectator events in indoor arenas, usually for cash prizes. Prize pools vary from a few hundred or thousand pounds at the amateur level to $20m+ at the top global tournament.

Esports can be played on PCs, consoles and mobiles. There are currently around 30 different recognised competitive titles, including League of Legends, Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, Dota 2, Call of Duty and more. Depending on the game, the format can be 1v1 or team-based 3v3, 4v4, 5v5 and 6v6.

In the UK esports is classified as a game (like chess and bridge). Some consider esports a sport as you’re competing with other humans and there are similarities i.e. teams, fans, arenas.

Fans predominantly watch esports via online platforms such as Twitch (10m+ viewers a day).

Global esports revenues are set to reach $750 million in 2017, doubling over the last 2 years. Esports revenues are on an upward projection and are expected to reach $1.5 billion by 2020.

35% of British adults (18.3m people) are aware of esports, while 7% (3.6m) have watched it, according to a YouGov report.  

Photo credit: Multiplay/Sammy Lam/iEventMedia  

Info source: Newzoo unless stated otherwise
Who are the British Esports Association?

We are a not-for-profit organisation established in 2016 to support and promote esports in the UK.

As a national body, our aims are to foster future British talent, increase the awareness of esports and provide expertise and advice. We are focused on the grassroots level of esports and are not a governing body.

We hope to help educate the masses – including parents, teachers, media and government – around what esports is and its benefits.

Our three goals are to Promote, Improve and Inspire.

- **Promote** esports in the UK and increase its level of awareness
- **Improve** the standard of UK esports
- **Inspire** future talent

The Association is also a member of UK games industry trade body Ukie and the Sport and Recreation Alliance.
Who’s part of our Association?

Our Chair is games industry expert Andy Payne OBE and our Vice Chair is the Rt. Hon. Ed Vaizey MP (former Minister of Culture).

British Esports was founded by Chester King of the International Group (www.igroup.co.uk).

Esports journalist Dominic Sacco heads up the content side of the group.

Rob Allen and Tom Dore look after projects such as our new school esports league.

We have an Advisory Board which meets each quarter to discuss areas of focus, and we also have a team of volunteers and advisers within each game.
About Us

The British Esports Association has its own advisory board. The board regularly meet to discuss developments and areas of focus. The board currently consists of:

• Andrew Nixon, head of sport at Sheridans
• Ryan Hart, Street Fighter player
• Heather “Naysayerz” Dower, presenter
• Josh Williams, National University Esports League founder
• Craig “Wizzo” Fletcher, Multiplay founder
• Ceirnan “Excoundrel” Lowe, caster
• Chris “MingLee” Mead, Twitch
• Mark “Garvey” Candella, Twitch
• Paul “ReDeYe” Chaloner, host
• Carleigh Morgan, researcher/PHD candidate at King’s College London
• Michael “ODEE” O’Dell, Team Dignitas founder
• Philippa Warr, PC Gamer deputy editor

At our quarterly advisory board meetings we also have observers from Government (the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and the Department for International Trade) as well as Ukie, Facelt and Gfinity.
Esports is now a major global industry, and there is a huge opportunity for the UK to take a leading role in shaping its development.

In 2017, we’ve been working on several projects. In particular, we have:

- Pioneered the first library pilot scheme with Westminster Council to introduce young people to esports
- Started to develop an esports club/league programme for libraries and schools
- Worked with colleges and universities to help shape their esports courses
- Started work on a membership offering
- Planned to promote British talent via an event or Hall of Fame
- Conducted research for government and RCPCH
- Established links with UK games industry body Ukie
- Worked with academics and researchers to list the benefits of esports
- Provided advice and articles to help people learn about esports and how it can offer viable career paths
- Reached out to the industry to understand the various problems and opportunities
AFTER-SCHOOL ESPORTS CLUB PILOT SCHEME
Maida Vale Library, June 2017
LEAGUE OF LEGENDS WORLDS QUARTERS,
Wembley SSE Arena, October 2015
Esports helping the unemployed

A new Enemy of Boredom (EOB) esports initiative has been set up to help long-term unemployed young people learn new skills and access new opportunities.

The pilot ran in partnership with the Prince’s Trust, a youth charity helping people aged 13 to 30 to get into jobs, education and training. It was held over a four-week period and ran five days a week.

Participants had to form temporary esports teams with the aim of learning how to play League of Legends.

We will be working with EOB on future courses and schemes.
Promoting top talent

The problem: There aren’t as many British esports professionals as there could be, especially when compared to the amount of top-tier players from South Korea, the United States and elsewhere.

In addition, there is a low level of funding at the grassroots esports level, and many promising players and other hopefuls leave esports behind to go to university or get ‘a real job’.

The solution: To promote British talent - players, casters and more. It’s a great way to inspire others to as well as highlighting the best the UK has to offer. We propose a British Esports Association Hall of Fame.

- Promote the top British talent
- Improve the status of British esports
- Inspire younger/amateur players

Example:

RYAN HART
British multi-game world champion, host and project manager
UKIE AND BRITISH ESPORTS: HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

- Trade Association (B2B)
  - Paying industry members
  - Objective to grow UK as major esports hub
  - Represent main UK esports stakeholders (developers, publishers, esports event organisers, teams, university leagues)
  - Industry focus
  - Point for Government Policy and regulation (e.g. gambling policy)
  - Developing policy and skills initiatives through esports working and policy groups
  - Digital Schoolhouse childrens' esports tournament

- Consumer facing (B2C)
  - Aiming to become a registered charity with charitable objects
  - Ukie member
  - Focus on grassroots
  - Website - a portal for gamers, children and parents - covering esports developments, advice and news
  - Promoting British talent via a ‘Hall of Fame’ as well as career opportunities
  - Advisory Board (no developers or publishers)
  - Library esports initiative
  - International esports associations and IOC relationships

- Education initiatives
- Public relations
- Building aligned positions and messaging
- Advising the media
- Not for profit
- Pilot studies and research projects
- Producing whitepapers, briefing documents and toolkits to create better understanding of esports
The power of esports

Research shows playing esports can help:

- Increase perceptual and cognitive skills
- With decision making, reaction times and multitasking
- Stimulate brain growth
- Provide positive social and communication benefits
- Promote teamwork and develop communities
- Provide cyber and transferable skills
- Improve dexterity and concentration
- Provide a number of intrinsic emotional rewards – it’s fun!

Esports is very engaging with younger audiences in particular, and esports, when done in moderation, is also a beneficial alternative to watching passive media like television or using social media.

Playing esports requires quick thinking and involves the participant directly, whether they’re playing alone or communicating as part of a team. For spectators there is also a strong sense of community. For example, viewers can chat to others while watching a match on Twitch or on a social platform like Discord.
Esports and education

Schools, colleges and universities are starting to take notice of the needs of this industry. Some have started to introduce esports modules into their courses, including establishments in Canada, Sweden, the US, Denmark and others.

What’s being planned in the UK:

- Staffordshire University has introduced the first full BA (Hons) Esports degree in the UK, starting in September 2018.
- De Montfort and Coventry universities are exploring the idea of esports modules in their courses. The University of York and University of Leicester have also partnered with ESL to add aspects of esports to some of their courses.
- Qualification provider AIM is looking at adding esports to some of its existing Higher Education courses (Level 2/3).
- The British Esports Association and Ukie also sit on the London South East Colleges Digital Skills Advisory Board.
- More than 100 UK universities are part of the National University Esports League, which runs tournaments for students to take part in every week.
- Other organisations have expressed interest in this space including SCL.
CAREERS

Working in esports

Esports is creating thousands of new jobs across the world. This, in turn, is creating a fresh demand for people with specific skills.

Esports job roles: A snapshot

- Professional player
- Coach
- PR/Marketing executive
- Sales/partnerships manager
- Business management
- Production crew
- Shoutcaster/host
- Journalist/content creator
- Product manager
- Admin/referee
- Community/social media manager
- Event manager

Leading global teams and players can earn significantly sums in wages and prize money. More and more pro teams are also employing nutritionists, fitness staff and psychologists.

Britain excels at producing talented shoutcasters and hosts, with many British casters working at some of the top tournaments around the world.

The British Esports Association is working to highlight this and to encourage others to explore esports as a career option.

Photo credit: MCM Esports
What else are we doing?

Our mission has begun. But we need to go further.

Some of our goals, working with a range of stakeholders, are to:

- Promote a thriving grassroots ecology for esports
- Foster the development of more UK-based professional players, teams and talent
- Secure robust funding to carry forward these priorities
- Inspire more females to try esports
- Improve the esports landscape in Britain

Plans for 2018

- Extend our pilot at Maida Vale Library and work with more libraries
- Create an esports schools league
- Develop our membership offering
- Support esports in education e.g. at college/university level
- Continue to showcase the benefits of esports and educate government and the media
www.britishesports.org