



MotherBoard - Pro

Terms of Reference

Version	1.0
Date	May 2026
Approved by	APF Executive Team
Review date	May 2027 (or earlier if required)

These Terms of Reference (ToR) set out the working arrangements between the MotherBoard - Pro and the Active Pregnancy Foundation (APF). They cover the purpose, scope, responsibilities, membership, code of conduct, and operational arrangements of the board.

This document should be read alongside the MotherBoard - Pro Role Description (May 2026), which provides fuller guidance on the day-to-day experience of being a member.

1. Purpose

The Mother Board – Pro (MBP) is APF’s professional advisory board. Its purpose is to ensure that APF’s work is informed by the expertise of practitioners, sector leaders, and professionals from across the fields most relevant to its mission — including healthcare, maternity care, physical activity and fitness, public health, policy, regulation, and the commercial and non-profit sectors.

Members bring insight that is distinct lived experience of pregnancy (which sits with the MotherBoard) and may differ from scientific or academic expertise (which sits with the Scientific Advisory Board). MBP members understand what happens on the ground: what professionals need to support women, what barriers exist within systems and services, what products and messages reach people, and what levers can drive change at scale.

The MBP is particularly interested in professionals who work with groups and communities that are typically underserved, including women from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds, women with disabilities, and women who have experienced mental health challenges.

During the Sport England investment period (2025–27), the MBP has a particular role in contributing to APF’s four programme goals:

- Developing a diverse, high-quality image library that better represents women in all their diversity and across a variety of physical activities
- Updating existing resources (such as the ‘Find Your Active’ guides) to be more inclusive and relevant
- Launching a national health messaging campaign
- Developing a new digital tool to support women to access local physical activity opportunities

Beyond this programme, the MBP contributes to APF's broader strategic ambitions: influencing policy and practice, building the evidence base on perinatal physical activity, and shifting the conditions that make it harder for pregnant and postnatal women to be active.

2. Accountabilities

The MBP is an external advisory board. It reports to the APF Executive Team via the Head of Insights & Impact (Dr Lou Atkinson), who holds the day-to-day relationship with the board.

Members of the MBP are not employed by APF. Advice and feedback provided by members is non-binding. APF will always aim to explain how member input has been used and, where a suggestion has not been acted on, to explain why.

The MBP does not hold governance responsibilities. These sit with APF's Board of Trustees and Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). Where MBP input is relevant to decisions taken at SAB or Trustee level, the Head of Insights & Impact will ensure it is surfaced.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 All members

All MBP members are expected to:

- Provide honest, constructive advice on APF's projects, resources, campaigns, and strategic direction from their professional perspective
- Attend at least two ordinary MBP meetings per year (approximately 90 minutes each, held via Zoom)
- Review materials and respond to requests for input between meetings where reasonable and practical
- Share relevant sector intelligence — emerging policy, changing practice, new evidence, or system pressures — that APF should be aware of
- Promote APF's work and mission within their own professional networks where appropriate
- Declare any conflicts of interest promptly and in accordance with Section 7 of these ToR
- Maintain the confidentiality of MBP discussions in accordance with Section 8 of these ToR
- Adhere to the Member Code of Conduct (Section 6)

Members may also be invited to:

- Join sub-committees or working groups (e.g. a campaign advisory group or policy working group) — always optional and agreed in advance
- Contribute to publications, briefings, or sector reports — with consent and appropriate acknowledgement
- Represent APF's interests in relevant sector forums or events, where agreed in advance

3.2 Chair

In addition to the responsibilities above, the Chair holds the following duties:

- Lead and facilitate meetings, ensuring all members have the opportunity to contribute
- Manage conflicts of interest as they arise
- Act as a point of contact between the Practice Board and the APF Executive Team
- Sign off meeting minutes before circulation
- Support the Secretariat in ensuring the board runs effectively

The Chair for this group is Dr Lou Atkinson, Head of Insights & Impact.

If the Chair is unable to attend a meeting, the meeting will be chaired by another member of the APF Executive Team, agreed in advance.

Dr Lou Atkinson (Head of Insights & Impact, consultancy basis) holds the day-to-day relationship with the MBP and is responsible for:

- Coordinating the MBP's contribution to APF's monitoring, evaluation and learning programme
- Ensuring that MBP insight informs APF's evaluation questions, methods, and interpretation of findings
- Reporting MBP input into Sport England's Story of Change reporting and other funder reporting
- Acting as a named point of contact for members between meetings
- Reporting to the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) on the MBP's contributions and emerging insights

3.4 Secretariat

The Secretariat is responsible for:

- Compiling and distributing the meeting agenda and accompanying papers at least one working week in advance of each meeting
- Taking minutes at each meeting on a non-attributable basis, except where the views of individuals need to be recorded
- Circulating draft minutes to the Chair for approval within one week of the meeting
- Distributing approved minutes to all attendees within two weeks of the meeting
- Providing members with at least six weeks' notice of upcoming meeting dates

The Secretariat role will be confirmed at the inaugural meeting of the MBP and we welcome expressions of interest for this role from MBP members.

4. Membership

4.1 Eligibility

Membership is open to professionals with expertise relevant to APF's mission and goals. APF is particularly interested in professionals from the following sectors: healthcare and maternity care; physical activity and fitness; public health and policy; industry and commerce; the non-profit and third sector; and education and workforce development. This list is not exhaustive.

APF is particularly interested in professionals with experience of working with groups and communities that are typically underserved, including women from Black, Asian or minority ethnic backgrounds, women with disabilities, and women who have experienced mental health challenges.

Members do not need personal experience of pregnancy. Professional expertise and commitment to the mission are the primary criteria for membership.

4.2 Appointment

Members are invited to join the MBP following an expression of interest. Acceptance will be confirmed in writing by the Chair. New members may be appointed on an ongoing basis, with consideration given to continuity, fresh perspectives, and the breadth of professional sectors represented.

The maximum number of members at any one time is 25, excluding the Chair and Secretariat. Membership is currently open to UK-based professionals only.

4.3 Term

Members are invited to serve a minimum term of two years, aligned with APF's current Sport England investment period (2025–27). Membership may be extended by mutual agreement.

Membership will be reviewed annually by the APF Executive Team, in consultation with the Head of Insights & Impact and the Chair.

4.4 Stepping down

Members may step down from the MBP at any time by notifying the Chair in writing (letter or email). APF may also end a membership at any time where a member is in breach of the Code of Conduct or where their continued membership would not be in the best interests of the board or APF.

5. Remuneration and Expenses

APF recognises that professional time has value. The current position is:

- Where in-person activities are necessary, all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in carrying out the role will be reimbursed promptly
- APF is working towards offering an honorarium for members' time and will update members as soon as this is in place
- Where a member's organisation requires a formal agreement or memorandum of understanding to support their participation, APF is happy to put this in place

Commented [LA1]: To be amended, see comment in role description

6. Member Code of Conduct

Members of the MBP are expected to engage professionally, openly, and constructively. The following principles apply to all members and to all MBP activities, including meetings, sub-committee work, and communications.

Be professional and constructive

Engage with APF's work in a spirit of genuine helpfulness. Critical feedback is welcome and expected — it should always be constructive and evidence-informed.

Respect confidentiality

Board discussions, draft materials, and unpublished data shared in the context of the MBP are confidential. Members must not share these outside the board without APF's consent.

Declare interests

Members must declare any professional, commercial or personal interest that could conflict with APF's interests. Declarations should be made proactively and recorded. See Section 7.

No promotions

The MBP is not a forum for promoting personal businesses, products, or services, even where those are relevant to pregnant and postnatal women.

No hate speech or bullying

Bullying of any kind is not acceptable. Degrading comments about race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender, or identity will not be tolerated.

Represent your sector, stay open

Members are valued for their sector expertise. They are also expected to remain open to perspectives from other sectors and from lived experience.

No medical advice

Members should not provide medical advice within the MBP context, even where they are qualified to do so professionally. APF can signpost to appropriate guidance.

Acknowledge the limits of the role

The MBP advises; it does not govern or make binding decisions. Members should be clear about this distinction in any external communications about their involvement.

7. Conflicts of Interest

Given the breadth of professional backgrounds represented on the MBP, conflicts of interest — real or perceived — are expected to arise from time to time. This is not a barrier to membership; it is managed through transparent declaration and proportionate response.

Members must not participate in any discussion or decision in which they have a personal or professional conflict of interest that would compromise their ability to act in the best interests of APF and the communities it serves.

Any potential conflict of interest must be raised with the Chair as soon as it becomes apparent and recorded in the meeting minutes. Where a conflict is identified, the relevant member will be asked to withdraw from the specific discussion or decision in question.

A conflict register will be maintained by the Secretariat and reviewed annually. Members are asked to complete a short declaration of interests at appointment and to update this whenever their circumstances change.

If you are employed by, or have a commercial relationship with, an organisation whose interests might conflict with APF's, you are still welcome to join the MBP. We manage conflicts through declaration and, where necessary, withdrawal from specific discussions — not exclusion from membership.

8. Confidentiality

Members must respect the confidential nature of MBP meetings and communications. This includes:

- Not sharing unpublished documents, draft materials, or meeting discussions outside the MBP without APF's consent
- Not attributing specific comments or views to named individuals in any external communications
- Not using commercially or strategically sensitive information shared by APF for personal or organisational advantage

Meeting minutes are recorded on a non-attributable basis except where the views of specific individuals need to be captured. Members will be notified when attribution is intended.

Confidentiality obligations survive termination of membership.

9. Frequency, Timing and Commitment

Ordinary meetings	Twice per year, approximately 90 minutes each, held via Zoom
Notice of meetings	At least six weeks' notice of meeting dates; agenda and papers at least one week in advance
Quorum	A minimum of five members must be present for any ordinary or extraordinary meeting to proceed
Extraordinary meetings	May be convened at the request of a MBP member, subject to agreement by the Chair
Sub-committees	May meet at other times as agreed in advance. Participation is always voluntary
Between meetings	Occasional email requests for input (e.g. reviewing a document or giving brief feedback on a draft). Always optional and proportionate
Overall time commitment	Approximately 6–8 hours per year including meetings and between-meeting tasks

Term

Minimum two years (2025–27), renewable by mutual agreement

10. Induction and Ongoing Support

APF is committed to ensuring every MBP member feels informed, equipped, and valued in their role. All new members will receive:

- A welcome pack covering APF’s mission, current programme of work, Sport England’s involvement, and how the MBP fits within APF’s advisory structure
- A one-to-one welcome conversation with the Head of Insights & Impact before their first meeting
- Pre-meeting briefing notes for every formal meeting, sent at least one week in advance
- A named APF contact as first point of call for questions or concerns

Throughout their membership, members will receive:

- Regular updates on how the MBP’s input has shaped APF’s work, closing the feedback loop after each meeting and major contribution
- Access to relevant APF publications, research outputs, and sector intelligence as it emerges
- An annual check-in on how the role is working for them and whether anything needs to change

11. Reporting

The Head of Insights & Impact will report on the MBP’s contributions to:

- APF’s Sport England Story of Change reporting (six-monthly)
- The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)
- The APF Executive Team and Board of Trustees, as relevant

APF will produce a brief summary of key themes and learning from each MBP meeting, shared with members within two weeks. This summary will capture how the board’s input is influencing APF’s work and what actions have been agreed as a result.

Where MBP input contributes to publications, briefings, or external reports, members will be acknowledged appropriately and with their consent.

12. APF’s Advisory Structure

The MBP is one of three advisory boards that together provide APF with expertise from different perspectives:

MotherBoard

Lived experience

Pregnant and postnatal women sharing their personal experiences to shape APF’s work.

MotherBoard - Pro

Professional expertise

Practitioners and sector professionals advising on real-world systems, services, and practice.

Scientific Advisory Board

Research & academic expertise

Researchers and academics providing scientific oversight and methodological rigour.

All three boards are distinct in focus and membership. Members of one board may occasionally be invited to joint sessions or shared briefings where cross-cutting perspectives are valuable.

13. Review of These Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed:

- Every two years as a minimum (next review: May 2027)
- At any point where significant changes to APF's programme, funding, or governance require the ToR to be updated

Any proposed amendments will be shared with MBP members for comment before being finalised. The version history will be maintained as a record of changes and the reasons for them.

14. Contacts

General enquiries	motherboard@activepregnancyfoundation.org
Head of Insights & Impact	Dr Lou Atkinson (consultancy basis) lou.atkinson@activepregnancyfoundation.org
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