

Please find the following list of candidates for the 2021 UK Athletics Athlete Commission with statements:

Jacob Adkin

Hetty Bartlett

Columba Blango

Gemma Bridge

Ashley Bryant

Joe Fuggle

Joe Harris

Dominic King

Lizzy Korczak

Maria Lyle

Mhairi MacLennan

Chris McAlister

Holly Mills

Shelayna Oskan-Clarke

Jacob Adkin

From grassroots sport to international competition, athletics has a profound and varied role in people's lives. My own journey from club to world-level competition, complimented by academic sports science research and work in independent sports retail, has allowed me to develop an in-depth understanding of our sport's multi-faceted nature. Whether through physical health, mental wellbeing, community or performance, athletics has substantial influence on the lives of so many. I strongly believe that recognising these differing purposes is essential in supporting the interests of every athlete, at every level.

Participating in mountain running, a lesser backed discipline, I have first-hand experience of the barriers caused by lack of support; the motivation, success and longevity of current and promising athletes is in the balance when needs are not met. I hope to represent voices from all facets of our sport, influencing the growth of resources, opportunities and support networks available at all levels. The strong skill set in communication, reasoning and teamwork developed through professional experience and time on club committees will allow me to achieve this.

Committed to upholding the values of athletics, if elected I will work to sustain and develop a fair, safe and successful community for all athletes.



Hetty Bartlett

I am driven, dedicated, motivated, I am hard working. I am passionate about athletics. I am a good listener. I am extremely interested in this nomination. The Paralympics was my first international competition and my first Paralympic games. I would like para athletics to be more noticed not just the sport but the athletes too. I like to get disability awareness more noticed and get mental health awareness more out there for people.



Columba Blango

As a representative of Great Britain Paralympic team, I would like to put myself forward following the experience from international competition and athlete alike.

This opportunity would not only allow me to grow as an athlete on the front lines and background but understand the dynamics of track and field as a sport. Track and field has always been a strong passion since young and served as a major role in my personal development throughout the years. As a result, I have become the person I am.

Track and field serves as an identity for many people looking to participate as an athlete regardless of their background. Many benefits in sport works well for short and long term development having experienced it myself. As a result, I would like others to have that same experience to enhance their lives through sport personally and professionally.

Hopefully, my involvement in sport via the role will help to shine light upon those who are optimistic in taking part in sport. Furthermore, through passion and hard work in sport, my transformation has been a journey into who I have become today.



Dr Gemma Bridge

I've been involved with athletics for over 15 years. At the grassroots level, I ran for a local club and my school, where I developed a love for endurance events. As I continued in the sport, I ran for my county and later was awarded a scholarship at a university in the USA. After graduating, I sought a new challenge. I switched to race walking in 2016/17 and have since competed at several major events, including the World Championships and Commonwealth Games.

I have not received funding as an athlete and so understand the challenges that this can bring. I would like to be able to offer my insights on the Commission to help others in a similar position. I would also like to be able to work to challenge some of the negative cultures that exists in athletics to ensure that athletes enjoy their athletic careers and stay in the sport for as long as they wish. Moreover, as the Running Mayor of Leeds I have gained the skills needed to positively influence future decision-making through promote running as a mode of transport and a way to keep fit. I would love to utilise these skills in the Commission.



Ashley Bryant

After two years on the commission I would love to continue the work done so far and keep pushing the sport forwards during this big time of change. Having been very active within the commission over the two years I feel well placed to continue the work done so far and keep fighting for the best interests of the athletes and sport.



Joe Fuggle

My name is Joe Fuggle, former GB Junior 400m hurdler and the founder of theathleteplace.com - a platform targeting the wellbeing and support of track and field athletes and their parents.

Being an athlete can be challenging and at times, a lonely experience, the importance of support from others, therefore, cannot be underestimated. My own troubles in the sport lead me to some dark places, resulting in track and field losing yet another aspiring athlete, though thankfully for me, this was temporary.

At theathleteplace, we're listening to athletes' needs and are creating a community of like-minded individuals, facilitating peer-to-peer support and other innovative and exciting projects, making the athlete's journey happier and easier.

I believe that athletes should be happy and successful both on and off the track but as things stand within the current set-up, this is not always the case. I also believe that more could and should be done to facilitate athlete wellbeing and general support, and that governing bodies should consider that being an athlete goes way beyond just athletic performance.

By considering me for a position on the Athlete's Commission, I would work to ensure that athlete wellbeing becomes a priority rather than an afterthought.



Joe Harris

My name is Joe Harris. I have been actively competing within the javelin scene for around 7 years now. I am currently sitting at 4th in the UK for Javelin. I came second at the British champs by 1cm and won the English champs this year. Taking 2020 off to recover from a shoulder injury that saw me finish my 2019 season off on a low has meant i have had to fight hard this year to get back into the rankings. I am an extremely dedicated individual, training on my own and pushing myself considering I have not had a coach for the last 4 years. Looking onto the 2022 season where I should be competing at the commonwealth games, to gain your support would really bolster my chances of winning a medal and throwing over 80 meters. Thank you for your time in reading, Best, Joe Harris



Dominic King

VOTE FOR CHANGE!

UK Athletics is in crisis and needs to change. Athletes need to be represented by fellow athletes without fear of repercussion. As a non-funded athlete, I promise to speak my mind and represent ALL members of the Athletics Community, from funded elite through to the developing potential. Athletics should be a sport for ALL, whether young OR old, Olympic OR Paralympic, Track AND Field, Road OR Trail.

I have over 20 years of International level competition experience whilst also spending the past 16 years working full-time to develop University and community level sport. I have a keen interest in all sport and promise to listen and voice any concerns that you have, to ensure that those employed to run our sport safely, listen to the athlete voice.

I have personally experienced the displeasure of feeling victimised by our governing body through non selection for Tokyo Olympics, despite breaking a 31-year-old British Record AND receiving an invite from World Athletics. We should be encouraging future potential by selecting all available entries for future senior teams, something which is portrayed as a Governing Body No.1 Aim.

Let's make sure we are PUTTING THE ATHLETE FIRST!

Vote for DOMINIC KING



Lizzy Korczak

I'm currently studying in the US which has given me a unique perspective into how athletics, specifically the throws, is conducted globally. As an engineering major I can effectively manage my time and work cohesively with others to reach a specific goal, both leading and following direction. As part of my athletic career I have completed my level 1 field officiating course to ensure younger athletes have the same opportunity to compete and improve at competitions like I did when I was starting out. This is something which is very important to me as I have seen increasing numbers of events cancelled due to lack of qualified officials volunteering. To increase the momentum of athletes joining and pursuing the sport, I felt personally responsible to help in any way I could.



Maria Lyle

My name is Maria Lyle. I'm 21 years old and compete in the 100m and 200m T35 classification.

I've been part of the world class programme from the age of 14, being a young teenager to an adult.

Over the past 7 years, I've experienced a lot on and off the track. Along with the positives, more importantly, there have been negatives. I often felt that as a young developing athlete my needs were never fully met. My success on the track seemed more important than the value of me as a person. I was unable to control factors around me, along with personal issues, led to a decline in my mental health and performances.

I wish my time growing up in the athletics world had been different. As a result of my own experiences, I want to provide a voice for young athletes to be heard. For athletes to reach their full potential, a caring, professional culture needs to be in place.



Mhairi MacLennan

I believe myself to be a passionate advocate for athletes in the UK. In the past year I have made considerable sacrifices and commitments to prioritise and campaign for the safety and welfare of athletes in the UK. I believe that the Athlete Commission plays an integral role in bridging the communication gap between athletes and UKA and I am keen to enhance that communication, having hopefully built trust and shown leadership to my fellow athletes during my time in this sport. The Athlete Commission has shown effective leadership over the past year. Now is a crucial time to capitalise on that leadership and heal the relationship between athletes and UKA to encourage athletes to positively engage with and trust their National Governing Body. I feel that, given my active role in the athletics community both at a grassroots level and in my engagement with the leaders of the UK Home Country governing bodies, I could contribute significant value to the Athlete Commission. With the new strategy published by UKA focussing on “The Age of the Athlete” it is paramount that we involve athletes at all levels in the governing of our sport.



Chris McAlister

I'll be open and honest with the whole athletics community, it's a JOKE that only GB athletes are represented - there is so much more to our sport than just the elite division and I am the person who can deliver representation to the whole sport.

I have an open mind, open ears and an open inbox so if elected I will be a true representative. I will explore ways to improve communication and representation so your ideas are heard, because as far as I can see there the only way of feeding your ideas in is an angry tweet.

Let's talk about the tough issues - why is there not a stadium in our capital capable of hosting elite events? How can we improve the coverage of field events? How can we support the athlete journey and mental health? These are pertinent questions which I'm not afraid to tackle, and I will do that by listening to you.

A vote for me is a vote for you (cliché) - drop me a message and chat to me about your ideas.



Holly Mills

I have been competing in athletics for 13 years and have become involved with UK Athletics in most recent years having been a part of the British Athletics Futures Academy for 4 years. Throughout my athletic career thus far, I have met and formed relationships with a diverse array of individuals and become approachable to my competitors and teammates. I have connections with athletes from grass-root level to GB level and can therefore listen to different perspectives of varying ability athletes. My time representing GB, now on 14 occasions, has been enhanced through being selected to co-captain both the U20 (2019) and U23 (2021) European Championships's GB teams. Both experiences were enjoyable and enabled me to speak to other GB athletes on the teams about their athletic journey and experiences. I have strong morals and opinions, however, enjoy engaging in challenging discussions. I am particularly passionate about the treatment of female athletes, gaining additional knowledge on the subject having written my dissertation on the representation of female athletes. I often participate in conversation with other female athletes on their views surrounding sport and would like to be the voice to represent them in UK athletics.



Shelayna Oskan-Clarke

Athletes are the foundation of our sport, and they have a unique lived experience that they can share that will positively impact and develop our sport. It is vital that athletes feel that their voices are being heard and listened to when decisions are being made that will directly impact them. Our relationship should be a partnership with everyone's rights and interests respected, and with the choices that are being made should be putting the athletes' interests at the centre of them. It would be great to represent my teammates and friends, listen to their viewpoints and communicate with them to create change and a positive culture within our sport. I have been competing on international teams since 2008, so I have had my own experiences in the sport both high and low and therefore can relate to many athletes. Also, through my journey in the sport, I have also built relationships and friendships with athletes who I think would feel comfortable discussing issues they have or problems they would like to be addressed with me. This would also be a good opportunity for me to develop my communication and continue my professional development.

