

2.7 Club Development Plans Summary

The network development plan must identify those key themes of the individual club development plans that are common between clubs and can be progressed consistently across the network. The common themes arising from the clubs' plans include:

- Addressing falling membership numbers, particularly with boys
- Attracting new swimmers to the sport from communities not traditionally associated with swimming
- Improving facilities for swimmers with a disability
- Retaining existing swimmers in the sport
- Improving pathway entry points, particularly from Learn to Swim
- Extending the pathway to offer opportunities for elite swimmers through performance programmes
- Teacher and coach development and training
- Improved access to pool time
- Recruitment and retention of club volunteers
- Increasing income

Given the overlapping footprints of the network clubs typical catchment areas it may be seen that some of these themes actually encourage clubs to compete as opposed to collaborate. Given a fixed cohort of swimmers from which clubs can generate members then this would indeed seem to be the case. The role of the network is therefore to ensure that clubs work actively in collaboration to increase the size of the cohort to the benefit of all clubs. Increased participation in the sport should therefore be a key network aim for which grant funding from Sport England is potentially available.

Given that the network clubs have historically had a long history of working in competition with other clubs, achieving the levels of collaboration indicated within the network development plan might not at first sight seem to be easy. Club officials however have shown that they are prepared to consider the wider benefits to the athletes over the benefits to an individual club and the network has been seen to succeed. This evolution has not taken place overnight and began with small and obvious steps such as the co-ordination of training activity and the introduction of a common coaching strategy. Flexibility through the pathway remains an achievable goal.

2.8 Network Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

Bristol City Council incorporated 16 hours per week of training time for the City of Bristol performance club into the contract of Parkwood Leisure, the operator running the Hengrove Leisure Centre. A number of performance indicators have been agreed with the club by which the council can monitor the benefit that is delivered to the community by the City of Bristol network. The indicators are summarised in Table 2.1.

When considering the progress made against the KPIs it is important to consider the context within which the development programme operated between July 2015 and December 2016. The merger of the three clubs consumed practically all of the available capacity of three of the network's clubs and precious little was available to drive through the network development plan. In spite of this, considerable progress was made in relation to disability

swimming, and the baseline preparation for improving participation amongst black and ethnic minority communities has been completed.

KPI	Baseline	2015/16 Objectives and Targets	2016/17 Objectives and Targets	2017/18 Objectives and Targets
Increase the number of swimmers from the Black & Minority Ethnic (B&ME) population taking part in training at COB and the Network Clubs	Carry out an audit to establish the number of swimmers from the B&ME population swimming at the Home Clubs - By end of July 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Home Club - Keynsham ASC • Engage the support of the South West ASA Club Development Officer • Engage with other external bodies that can provide support – e.g. Parkwood, local schools, community groups etc. • Develop and agree a plan across the COB Network – V1 by end April 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set targets for COB and Home Clubs – based on % of the population from the B&ME communities • Implement the plan developed in 2015 • Seek sponsorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve targets • Continue to deliver and enhance the plan
KPI Progress		Completed	Completed	Behind Schedule
Increase the number of swimmers with a disability taking part in training at COB and the Network Clubs	<p>Carry out an audit to establish the number of swimmers with a disability swimming at the Home Clubs – By end of July 2015</p> <p>Carry out an audit to establish the number of Coaches at the Home Clubs with a qualification to train swimmers with a disability – By end of July 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Club – City of Bristol Aquatics • Engage the support of the South West ASA co-ordinator for swimmers with a disability • Engage with other external bodies that can provide support - Parkwood • Develop and agree a plan for action across the COB Network – V1 by end April 2015 • Establish specialist disability squad within currently allocated pool time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set targets for COB and Home Clubs – based on % of the population claiming disability living allowance – 7.98% (at Oct 2014) • Implement the plan developed in 2015 • Seek sponsorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve targets • Continue to deliver and enhance plan
KPI Progress		Completed	Completed	Ahead of Schedule

KPI	Baseline	2015/16 Objectives and Targets	2016/17 Objectives and Targets	2017/18 Objectives and Targets
Retain more swimmers at COB and Home Clubs between the ages of 12 & 24 (swimmers over the age of 12 is also an ASA National target)	Carry out an audit to establish the number of swimmers over the age of 12 and the associated drop-out rate at the Home Clubs - By end of July 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Club – City of Bristol Aquatics • Engage the support of the South West ASA Club Development Officer • Engage with other external bodies that can provide support – e.g. local schools, other sports clubs, Parkwood • Develop and agree a plan across the COB Network – V1 by end July 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set targets for COB and Home Clubs – based on the % of the population between the age of 16 & 24 – 11.82% (at Oct 2014) • Ensure drop-out rate for this age group is lower than the national average • Implement the plan developed in 2015 • Seek sponsorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve targets • Continue to deliver and enhance plan
KPI Progress		Completed	Behind Schedule	Behind Schedule

Table 2.1 – Details of City of Bristol Performance Indicators for Participation

Ensuring that the network satisfies the key performance indicators is a fundamental aspect of the development plan and each of the three key areas shown in Table 2.1 is discussed in detail in its own dedicated section:

Section 8	Increasing participation in swimming from athletes in BME communities
Section 9	Increasing participation in swimming from athletes with a disability
Section 10	Increasing participation in swimming from athletes from low income families
Section 11	Increasing participation in swimming from athletes aged 12-24

3 Network Development Plan

The Network Development Plan will take into consideration the:

- priority activities that are essential to enable the new network to fulfil the purpose for which it was created;
- development activities of the affiliated network clubs as outlined in the development plans presented in Section 2, and the
- development priorities of the performance club
- key performance indicators agreed with Bristol City Council

In a good network development plan, fulfilling the objectives of the network will simultaneously fulfil the objectives of the network clubs.

The development plan is grouped into three themes, each of which maintains a number of strands as summarised in Table 3.1:

Theme	Title	Strand
1	Participation	Attract new athletes to aquatics
		Attract athletes from black and minority ethnic communities
		Attract athletes with a disability or other special needs
		Attract athletes from low income families
		Attract new clubs to the network
		Improve retention of athletes already in the sport, particularly in the 12-24 age group
2	Success	Improve the standard of swimming consistently across the network
		Improve the standard of coaching consistently across the network
		Increase the number of athletes participating at county, regional and national level
3	Stability	Co-ordinate common activities to drive down costs
		Recruitment and retention of club volunteers
		Increase access to pool time
		Provide swimming and non-swimming activities for all network club members, not just those swimming with the performance club
		Maintain SwimMark accreditation

Table 3.1 – The Themes of the Development Plan

3.1 Theme 1 - Participation

3.1.1 Attract New Athletes to Aquatics

Each club in the network, regardless of discipline, relies almost exclusively on membership fees to fund its activities. As membership numbers drop then so does the income of the club. It is therefore essential that new members are found at a rate higher than the rate of swimmers dropping out of the sport for any kind of progress to be made. Retention of existing members is therefore just as vital to the clubs as is the recruitment of new members.

The network relies on the individual clubs to strengthen their entry pathways and maintain healthy relationships with leisure centre operator learn to swim programmes, local primary and secondary schools and other local activity and youth groups. A consistent approach cannot be taken across the network owing to the different arrangements between pool operators in respect of Learn to Swim programmes however there is a role for the network to play for certain initiatives, such as marketing the various aquatics disciplines and the promotion of the network as a whole to the benefit of all clubs.

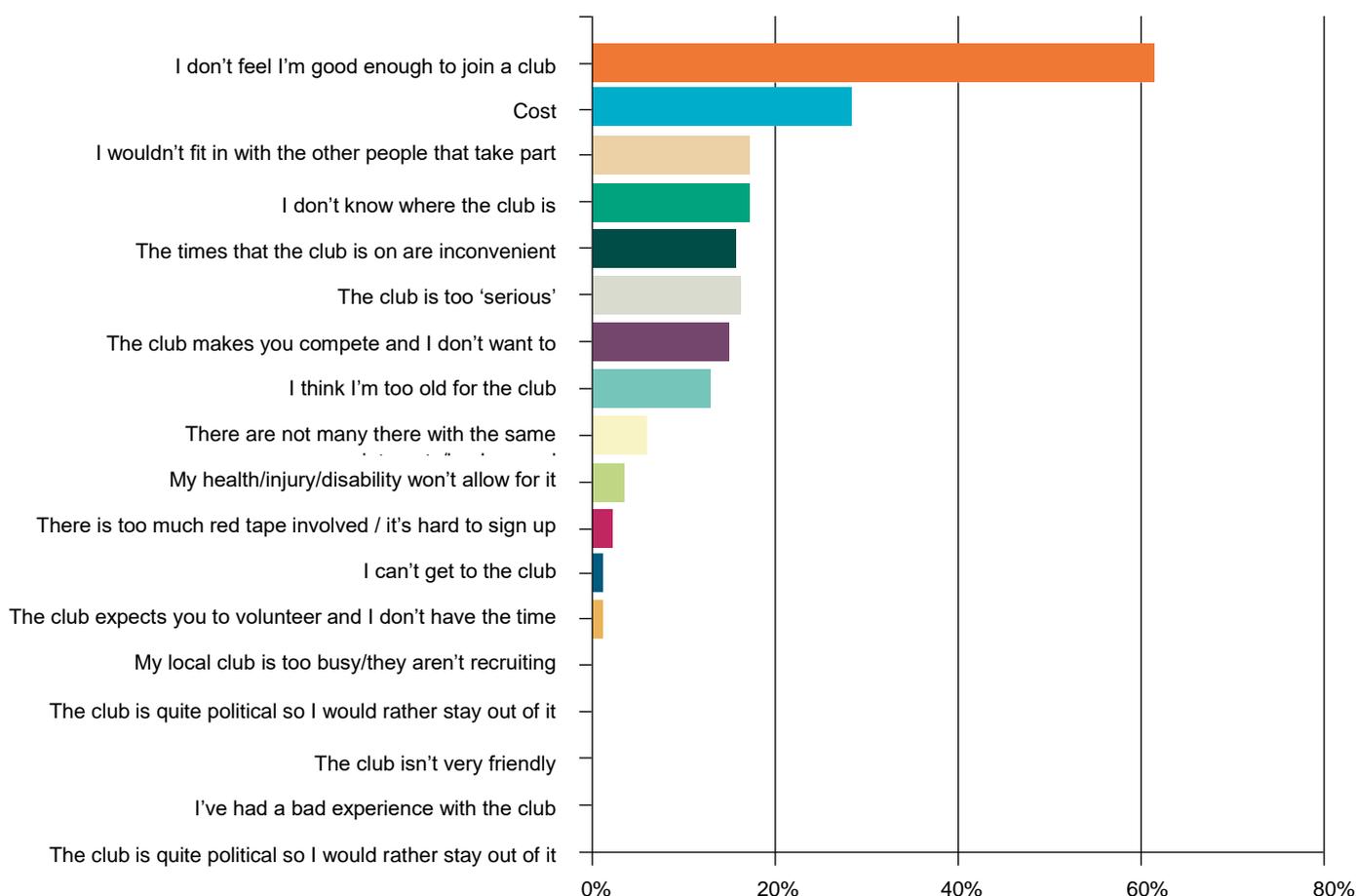


Figure 3.1 - The Perceived Barriers to Joining an Aquatics Club¹

¹ ASA Club Strategy, 2013-2017

Figure 3.1 shows the reasons given in response to an ASA survey looking into the reasons why athletes do not join a swimming club. People felt discouraged from joining a club due to a lack of knowledge about the club owing to a poor website, the small size of the club, perception of elitism, not being personally good enough, exclusivity (waiting list), the cost of being a member and clubs being too serious. Specifically for water polo, members commented that it takes a lot of time and training to make the team, yet newcomers often wish to play matches immediately.

With a minimum amount of effort, clubs should be able to tackle a number of the barriers listed on the chart. Some possible mitigating actions that the network can examine are shown in Table 3.2:

Reason for not joining a club	Mitigation
I don't feel I'm good enough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress charts for typical club members • Swimmer histories • Tiered structure of competitive swimming allows for different standards
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing membership will keep costs down • Effective pool time utilisation • Collaboration on pool and coaching costs
I wouldn't fit in with the other people that take part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character profiling of typical club members • Develop greater range of social activities
I don't know where the club is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain quality web site information that is accurate and up to date • Improve information flow to local press • Entries in local sports guides
My health/injury/disability won't allow for it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie in to the support for disability swimming provided by the network through expertise at Bristol Central
I think I'm too old for the club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swimmer profiles • Swimmer histories
It's hard to sign up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify the application process • Self-service process using web site • Maintain accurate and up to date information on web sites

Table 3.2 - Overcoming Barriers and Perceptions

For clubs working in partnership in a network then there should be signposting between clubs for those athletes who, for whatever reason, do not believe that a particular club is right for them; the rejected club should be trying to signpost the swimmer to a club within the network that provides a better fit. This co-operation between the clubs defines the characteristics of the network.

A law of diminishing returns applies in identifying actions that the network can take to address these barriers. Proactively addressing the “I don’t feel that I am good enough” issue would not require significant resources yet would have a significantly high impact.

Preventing athletes from leaving the sport is as effective in maintaining club income as is attracting new members. The network should therefore examine the common reasons for members quitting the sport and identify common themes that may exist within the clubs and explore whether collaborative solutions at the network level may keep athletes in the sport. Establishing a non-competitive network club that focuses on technique and fitness training may for example address the 9% of athletes leaving swimming clubs that cite the reason as being that clubs are too competitive and that there is too much pressure applied to the athletes to swim in competition.

There are specific barriers that potentially prevent some groups from participating in the aquatic disciplines and which warrant a more detailed discussion than this general section on participation allows:

- The under-representation of athletes from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in swimming is discussed in detail in Section 6 of this document which outlines how the network will increase the level of participation from such athletes.
- Section 7 of the development plan provides more detail on the subject of disability swimming and the steps being taken by the network to attract more swimmers with disabilities, and those with special needs, to the sport.
- Section 8 of the plan provides further information on how participation levels will be increased for athletes from low-income households.
- Section 9 of the plan provides further information on how the network can help retain swimmers in the sport, particularly those between the ages of 12 and 24.

There is of course a limitation to the number of new athletes that any club can accommodate owing to the availability of both pool time, coaches and volunteers. In this respect, there is greater capacity for a network to accommodate new swimmers than an individual club, provided that clubs within the network signpost other clubs once they have reached capacity.

Attract New Swimmers to the Sport

Work at a network level to ensure that clubs maintain membership numbers to a minimum of 95% of their capacity allowed by the available pool time, either through attracting new athletes to the sport or by reducing the drop-out rate of existing athletes.

3.1.2 Strengthen the Network

The purpose of growing the network is to:

- Extend the reach of the principles, practices, coaching resources and training facilities of City of Bristol aquatics to as many athletes in the wider Bristol area as possible;
- Provide a pathway for talented swimmers who wish to explore further options in a high quality competitive swimming environment, yet retain the benefits of remaining part of a local club;
- Establish Bristol as a nationally recognised successful aquatics programme
- Increase the cohort of swimmers available to the three performance programmes in the journey of creating a highly respected and nationally recognised performance scheme;
- Use the reputation and success of the aquatics programme to attract new members to the network clubs

The network has grown from the initial two founding members, through a period of merge and restructure, to the six that are currently affiliated, within a three-year period. The principle of the Cycle of Success is shown in Figure 3.2.

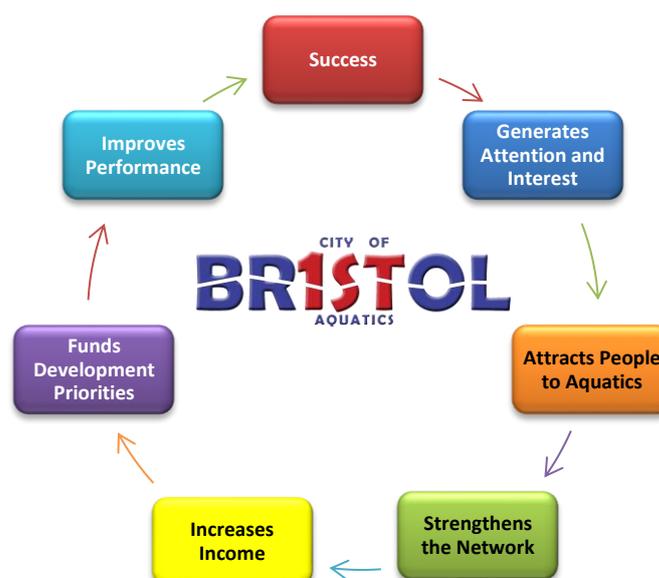


Figure 3.2 - The Cycle of Success

If the aquatics programme is successful and generates a national reputation for producing high quality athletes that consistently reach national and international standards, this will attract new interest in the network both from the perspective of athletes, volunteers and potential commercial investment. Attracting new interest to the network increases the opportunities available to the network clubs as well as the cohort of potential athletes available to the performance programmes. Increasing the cohort of athletes available to the performance programmes increases the income to those programmes which funds future

development activities. The development activities will realise greater success at a national level and further enhance the reputation of the network. The cycle is self-sufficient in that success generates the new members from which further success is created.

Whilst at first sight *strengthening the network* may appear to be a straight forward process of engaging with swimming clubs in the area, existing networks and performance clubs must be taken into consideration. The proximity of neighbouring networks to City of Bristol is shown in Figure 3.3 and it is clear that clubs already operate in a crowded space. It is therefore likely that any additional clubs joining the City of Bristol network are likely to partner with another network or performance club already and will do so in order to ensure that swimmers and parents have a choice of aquatic pathways depending upon where they live in relation to training facilities. The logistics of attending training are often more of a determining factor in selecting a swimming club than the facilities or standard of the club itself, particularly where younger swimmers are involved. Keynsham, Bath Dolphin and Calne Alpha provide examples of this type of successful multi-network affiliation.

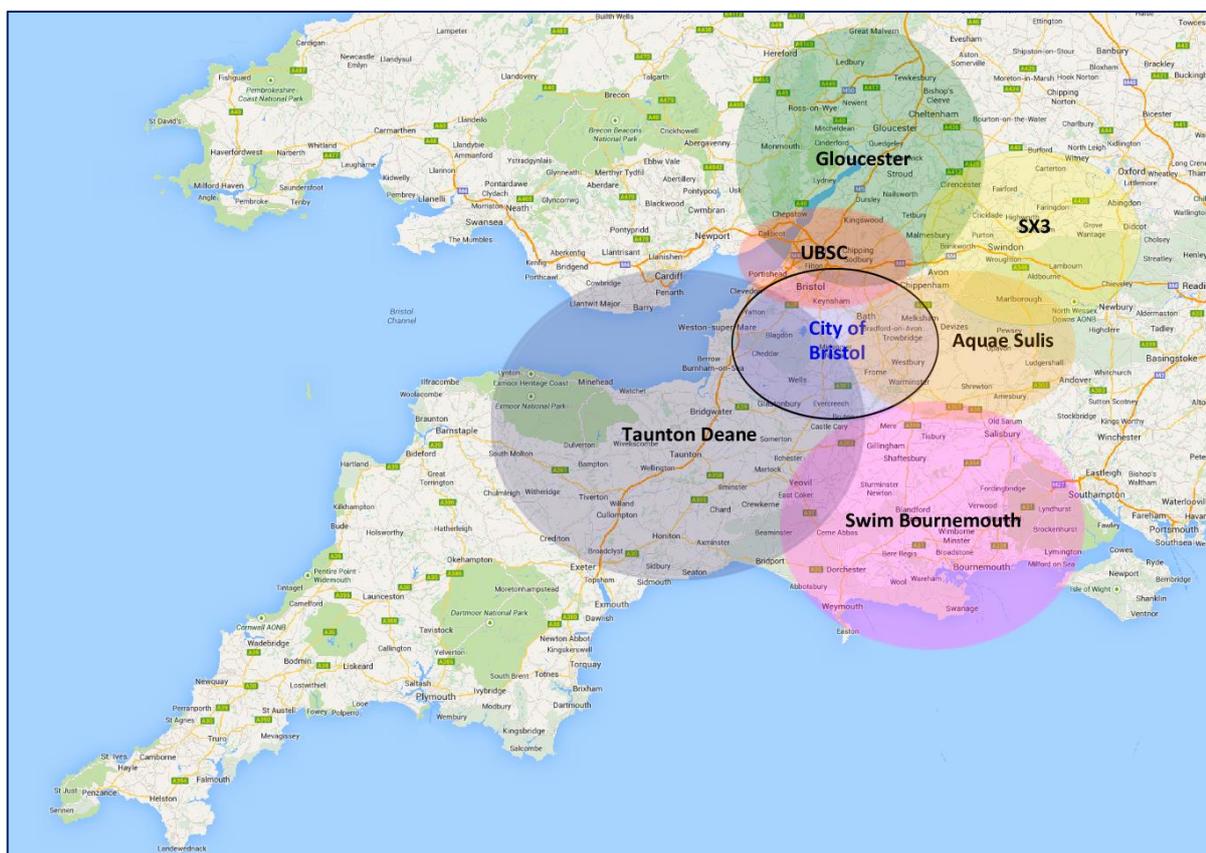


Figure 3.3 - Neighbouring Network / Performance Club Footprint

The City of Bristol network operates a strict policy of not actively encouraging clubs to leave an existing arrangement in favour of City of Bristol however the network will always respond positively to an approach by a club. It is clear however that any clubs not already affiliated to a neighbouring network represent an opportunity to explore. In order to exploit the

opportunity, the network must put together suitable marketing materials so that they are immediately available to sell the benefits that the network has to offer.

Attracting clubs to the network will be best achieved through:

- Achieving success in the pool
- Maximising the attraction of the superb facilities offered by the Hengrove sports complex from where the network is based
- Exploiting the reputation of the performance coaching teams
- Developing a marketing campaign designed to capture the attention of athletes in the wider Bristol area, particularly those that are new to the aquatics disciplines or relocating to the area
- Convincing clubs and other networks of the benefits of multi-network affiliation;
- Establishing links with institutes of higher education

Strengthen the Network

Work with clubs in the wider Bristol area to enhance the footprint of the network and offer a performance pathway to a wider cohort of athletes in the three disciplines;

Develop a wider base of volunteers from which to deliver the support required for the programmes

Identify external sources of funding with which to fund the network's development priorities

3.1.3 Increase the Level of Participation by Athletes from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities

On a visit to any competitive swimming event in the UK, regardless of the level of competition involved, an independent observer will immediately be aware of the under-representation of athletes from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. The level of participation in other sports, and the domination of some events such as track and field athletics by black athletes, is not reflected in any of the aquatic disciplines. In this respect the challenge faced by City of Bristol to attract athletes from BME communities is a mirror of the challenge faced by the sport internationally, and is one which has seen little success, particularly in comparison to other sports.

There is no shortage of anecdotal explanations for the lack of swimmers from BME communities in the network's swimming squads, including:

- Cultural attitudes to water-based exercise
- Modesty in a public swimming environment, particularly for female athletes
- Attitudes towards education, including the desire not to dilute academic excellence through the distraction of sporting activity

- Parental attitude towards sport
- Attitude of teachers and particularly the different levels of understanding of religious and cultural values
- The impact of PE policies in schools on children from BME backgrounds
- The domination of swimming by white, middle-class athletes provides little attraction for athletes from BME groups
- Few role models to which athletes from BME communities aspire

Some of these anecdotes inevitably have a basis of truth, whereas some of them may simply be untrue or irrelevant.

It is clear that there is not one determining factor that can explain the under-representation of BME athletes in competitive swimming squads. Each ethnic group is likely to be affected by different factors in different ways. All of these factors will however play a role to some degree and collectively they combine to drive athletes to other sports, or away from sport altogether. It is clear that to redress this effect, a complete rethink of the way in which the aquatic disciplines are marketed is required if the imbalance in participation in the sport is to be addressed in a meaningful way.

The network is committed to increasing the number of athletes from BME communities according to the following principle:

Network Principle

The ethnic composition of the membership of the network clubs should at least reflect the ethnic composition of the resident population within that club's "catchment area".

The subject of the current lack of participation from athletes from BME communities is sufficiently important and complex that it is discussed in more detail in Section 8 of this development plan.

3.1.4 Increase Participation from Athletes with a Disability or Other Specialist Needs

The lack of facilities to support swimmers with a disability was recognised as a priority when the network was first established in 2013. During the first year of this development plan, Bristol Central Swimming Club adopted the role as lead club for the development of disability swimming and the club is formally registered with Swim England as a disability hub. This means that there are suitably trained coaches in the network that can assess an athlete's particular needs and signpost the athlete to the most appropriate club and squad, be that inside or outside the City of Bristol network.

In addition to setting up the disability hub, the swimming programme has been altered to accommodate a dedicated para squad. Whilst this currently only trains once per week, there is a plan in place to:

- i. Increase the pool time available for the para squad,
- ii. Accommodate the swimmers in the mainstream training activities of the network clubs and the performance club

The subject of participation from athletes with a disability is sufficiently important that it is discussed in more detail in Section 9 of this development plan.

3.1.5 Increase Participation from Athletes from Low Income Families

The visible costs of swimming with a club include an annual membership fee to cover ASA membership, insurance etc., as well as a monthly recurring cost such as a pool fee, training fee, termly fee for lessons or some other regular charge.

The real costs of swimming with a club are identified only when an athlete joins a club where the invisible additional costs, which are usually not levied by the club, come to light. Such costs include:

- Kit bag items such as hand paddles, kick boards etc.
- Replacements swimming hats and goggles which split and break with monotonous regularity
- Replacement swimming costumes
- Gala entry and spectator fees
- Post-swimming snacks
- Raffle tickets, sponsorships and other club fund raising activities
- Travel costs

Whilst the fees of the clubs in the network are comparable with other peer clubs, Figure 3.1 still tells us that the second most likely reason for an athlete not joining a swimming club is cost.

With statistics showing that children in BME communities are far more likely to be living in poverty than children from white communities,^{2,3} the real cost of swimming is a barrier that disproportionately affects BME communities.

The steps being taken by the network to attract more athletes from low income families are discussed in more detail in Section 8.

3.1.6 Improve the Retention Rate for Athletes Already in the Sport

It is important for the network not to be perceived as an entity which benefits only the privileged few who have the talent, time, financial ability and the parents willing to allow their children to pursue competitive swimming through a performance club.

² *Three in Four Pakistani and Bangladeshi children in UK living in poverty at age 7*, Institute of Education (London, Institute of Education, 2010).

³ Mike Collins, Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy Loughborough University

Retention of members is a significant factor in protecting club income and all network clubs work hard to ensure that the activities on offer at the clubs are sufficiently diverse to appeal to the entire membership.

The network clearly has a role to play in providing additional activities, both pool-based and non-pool based, that support the clubs in retaining members. With 16-19 being the age that most athletes leave the sport it is logical to target initial activities at this particular age group. If this analysis were to be broken down by gender however, a significant proportion of the 14-15 year olds who leave the sport would be seen to be male and activities to address this should also be considered as a priority.

A key performance indicator has been agreed between City of Bristol Performance Swimming Club and Bristol City Council relating to the retention of swimmers over the age of 12. The network must ensure that its retention rate is at least better than the national average in this area.

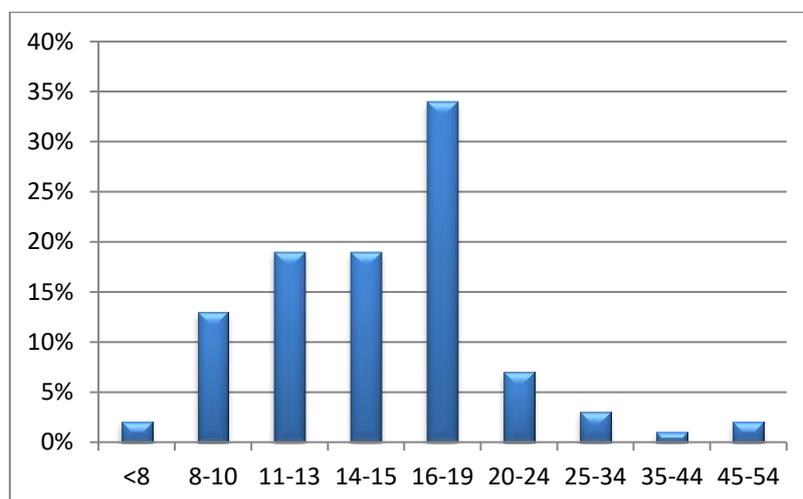


Figure 3.4 - Average Age of Athletes Leaving Swimming Clubs

Whilst much of the emphasis of competitive swimming is obviously focused on training in the pool, swimming clubs generally fail to provide the regular social activities that can be found in team-focused environments such as rugby, football, hockey and netball. This lack of a social element inevitably contributes to the exodus from swimming in the teenage years.

Provide a range of Inclusive Activities for all Members of Network Clubs

The network should offer a range of pool-based and social activities open to all members of network clubs such that the network is seen to be beneficial to all members rather than an elitist entity for the privileged and talented few.

Network activities should be focused initially on helping clubs to retain members, particularly in the high risk age groups of 14-15 and 16-19.

A performance indicator will be established to monitor that the network maintains a retention rate for swimmers over the age of 11 that is at least better than the national average.

The retention of swimmers aged between 12 and 24 is of particular interest to Swim England and as such how the network will improve retention of this age group this is treated in Section 9 of this development plan.

3.2 Theme 2 – Success

3.2.1 Improve Performance Standards across the Network

There is of course a desire to see the performance standards raised consistently across the network. This statement does not intend any disrespect to athletes or coaches anywhere in the network however it is made in recognition of the fact that athletes today generally swim faster, run quicker, jump higher and throw further than those of previous generations. Much of this improvement can be attributed to improvements in:

- Training techniques and attitude
- Coaching methods
- Nutrition
- Psychology
- Land training / Cross Training
- Classroom sessions
- Squad structures
- Support resources

The network has a role to play in this respect through:

- Delivering workshops and training activities open to all members of network clubs
- Providing specialist stroke clinics
- Increasing access to pool time through co-operation between clubs
- Sharing information and ideas relating to best practice in swimming

To begin the process the network will run winter, spring and summer development sessions which will be open to all network club members from all disciplines. Aimed at 9-12 year olds, the sessions will be aimed at those athletes who wish to improve their performances in sport further. The sessions are also aimed at coaches and trainee coaches from the network clubs. Led by the Head Coaches, the purpose of the sessions is to:

- Improve fundamental stroke technique
- Improve basic stamina
- Improve core stability
- Introduce long course swimming for those that do not have access to 50m facilities

- Provide a mentoring opportunity for more inexperienced coaches working alongside some of the best coaches in the country
- Provide an opportunity for coaches to agree standard techniques and practices to put into effect across the network
- Encourage athletes from different clubs to mix together
- Encourage coaches from different clubs to work together

Further ideas for improving performance across the network will be shaped through dialogue and collaboration arising from the interaction that emanates from workshops and these will be revised in more detail in later iterations of this development plan.

Improve Performance Standards across the Network

The network will arrange a programme of workshops and training events beginning with development sessions aimed at 9-12 year old athletes in the network clubs, and their coaches.

Four specialist stroke clinics will be run through the year and open to all network club athletes and coaches.

3.2.2 Improve the Standard of Coaching Across the Network

3.2.2.1 Coach Development

Similar to the previous objective to improve the standard of swimming across the network, the aim of improving coaching standards does not imply that there is a lack of coaching skill or experience within the network clubs. As with all swimming clubs at all levels, there remains a need for ensuring that there is a pipeline of suitably qualified coaches available to work with the various squads. Only in exceptional cases do readily qualified and experienced coaches fall in to the lap of a club. For the majority of non-performance swimming clubs, coaches are raised by the club and follow a progression of attending ASA training courses and gain experience from working alongside existing coaches in the club. The network offers an opportunity to accelerate that process through:

- Co-ordinating training activity across the network to bring down costs
- Establishing a quantum of interest that enables a bespoke course to be run in the local area
- Offering an opportunity to work alongside highly experienced coaches at a performance club and learn from some of the best in the business
- Supervisory visits to training sessions by COB head coaches, to assess squad training and coaching strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

As described in section 4.4, the network will run a series of development sessions and stroke clinics which are designed to provide access to additional training at the performance club. It is important for club coaches to be involved in these additional sessions, particularly

those who are looking for an opportunity to gain additional experience or work alongside and learn from more experienced colleagues.

3.2.2.2 Unified Coaching Strategy

It remains an ambition to introduce a single unified coaching strategy across the network. This does not mean that individual network clubs will not have the ability to address local priorities however it does mean that the development of a common set of core skills across the partnership can be delivered.

Most clubs operate a coaching schedule based on a cyclical series of activities (the x-week plan) that focus on specific aspects of swimming such as stamina, speed, technique, strength, endurance etc. There is considerable benefit to be realised for those swimmers that swim both at the performance club and at a network club for the elements to be synchronised across the network. Training in the stamina element of the cycle at the performance club is counter-productive if the network club is training in a different element. Producing a consistent approach would also enable the possibility of allowing swimmers the opportunity to attend a training session at a different network club without losing the focus of the overall training schedule.

Implementing a unified coaching strategy may take time as this involves network clubs giving up an element of, what would be seen as, independence to the performance club and may need to be convinced of the benefits associated with a synchronised approach when these benefits will only be realised by a small number of swimmers. Again, this level of collaboration forms a distinguishing characteristic of a network, as opposed to a collection of clubs that occasionally allow swimmers to swim together.

The unified coaching strategy will also generate a degree of standardisation between squads at different competitive levels. More information on this is provided in Section 4, specifically in Table 4.1 which provides an overview of the swimming programme across the network. In all clubs, transition between the different squads in the club structure is based to some degree on a swimmer being able to fulfil expected criteria. A unified coaching strategy would aim to standardise the criteria that define the transition between the broad ASA levels of swimming, i.e. at Development, County, Regional and National standard.

Easier to introduce are formal network coaches' meetings which will take place on a quarterly basis through the year at which strategic coaching decisions will be taken. These meetings do not replace the direct, face to face, ad hoc contact on which the system relies to work successfully in practice.

Finally, the COB coaching team will make scheduled visits to all network clubs throughout the year to assess strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in the various coaching and swimming programmes and provide guidance as appropriate.

Improve the Standard of Coaching across the Network

The workshops, training events and clinics that will be run across the network, beginning with twelve-week series of development sessions aimed at 9-12 year old swimmers, will simultaneously be used to provide coaching development opportunities for all coaches within the network clubs.

Under the leadership of the City of Bristol Head Coach, Matt Puddy, the network will maintain a unified coaching strategy across the clubs.

3.3 Theme 3 – Stability

3.3.1 Co-ordinate Common Activities to Improve Performance and Drive Down Costs

The two major costs incurred by the majority of swimming clubs are:

- Facility hire
- Coaching expenses

The major factors that prevent clubs from expanding to accommodate increased numbers include:

- Lack of pool space offered by the pool operators
- Cost of additional pool space when available
- Availability and cost of additional coaching time

3.3.1.1 Shared Pool Time

Before the start of the financial crisis in 2009, swimming clubs were very much at the mercy of local authorities who enforced strict quotas of time for the private hire of pool facilities. The ensuing recession and crisis in the public sector finances has relaxed the attitudes to strict quotas as local authorities now find themselves needing the income that the swimming clubs can provide. Clubs that have the income are in a better position to increase pool time, particularly if they can be flexible about timing. Few clubs however are able to afford the quantity of pool time that would ideally support their swimming programme and more inventive ways of increasing access to pool time are needed.

Maximising the available pool time at Hengrove Park was the primary driver behind the move to the One Club model in 2016. Whilst this required an enormous investment in time from the officials and coaches at the clubs involved, as well as significant involvement from Swim England, the resulting pool programme has realised a significant increase in available pool time.

Analysis of the programmes as a whole across the network clubs shows where pool time is not being fully utilised and where opportunities exist for overall costs to be brought down and

access to pool time increased. A detailed breakdown of the coaching programme currently in use across the network is presented in Section 6.

Reciprocal training arrangements between the clubs can also provide a means for increasing access to pool time for those swimmers that are not able to train sufficiently within the programme of a single club. Maximum benefit from such reciprocal arrangements would be made if the unified coaching strategy described in section 3.5.2 could be introduced. The ultimate arrangement would allow any member of a network club to train at any session offered by any other network club.

The likely degree of take-up of such a flexible approach to training involving sessions at different clubs is questionable, particularly in the short term, owing largely to the social difficulties associated with training in an environment where a swimmer is not known, and knows none of the other swimmers. If the introduction of the additional network training sessions described in section 3.4 is successful however and the swimmers from the different network clubs mix effectively then this option may become attractive to some over time.

The location of training sessions must also be taken into consideration as parents will be unlikely to take children to training sessions regularly at a pool that involves travelling across the network area.

Improve Access to Training Time through Shared Use of Pool Space

The network will explore options for further collaboration in respect of training recognising the need to maintain individual club identity and minimise travelling time for parents and swimmers yet realising the cost efficiencies that can be achieved.

Improve the management information available across the network to ensure that pool time utilisation can be accurately measured and monitored.

3.3.1.2 Shared Coaching Resources

Sharing pool time may or may not involve sharing the use of coaching resources. Two clubs can train alongside each other under their own coach in the same pool, yet they can also choose to run a fully combined session under a single coach. Obviously there are as many considerations involved in determining the appropriate level of co-operation between clubs sharing coaches as there are for clubs sharing pool space. The additional cross-network training sessions described in section 3.4 will show what can be achieved and the level of success that can be expected.

3.3.1.3 Co-ordinated Training

The co-ordination of teacher, coach, officer and officials' training, offers an obvious means for clubs to reduce costs. This subject is discussed in more detail in Section 9.

3.3.1.4 Supporting the Competition Programme

The network competitive calendar for each of the network clubs is shown in Section 5. The congested array of league galas and open meets throughout the year tests the capacity of

each club's supporting structures, particularly coaches and team managers. For those clubs within the network that remunerate their coaches, the competition calendar can also be a major expense.

Given that there is insufficient capacity within clubs to support every open meet in the calendar, clubs can achieve efficiencies through collaboration by providing reciprocal team management and coaching facilities to other network clubs that may not have the resources available to support that particular meet. Obviously this only works where small numbers of swimmers are involved however it can be of significant benefit for swimmers entering open meets seeking specific qualifying times.

Reduce Expenditure through Collaboration on Coaching Costs

The network will use the experience gleaned from the One Club Model, as well as from the additional cross-network training sessions, to examine options to exploit further opportunities afforded by joint training sessions and shared coaches.

Identify parameters and reciprocal arrangements whereby coaching and management resources from one network club can support swimmer(s) from other network clubs at open meets.

3.3.2 SwimMark Status

The purpose of the Network SwimMark programme is to quality-assure clubs that work collaboratively to deliver the athlete pathway in a geographic area, and ensure that athletes meet their potential and are retained in the sport.

It will assist in identifying gaps in provision and opportunities available for clubs to increase and sustain membership. Each club in the network will be valued for their role. Accredited network clubs work towards the following objectives:

- To retain and increase ASA club members
- To retain and increase volunteers, teachers, coaches and officials
- To raise the standards of performance across appropriate aquatic disciplines

The aims of the SwimMark Network programme align precisely with the aims and ambitions of the clubs within the City of Bristol network. Accreditation would provide further legitimacy to the network and contribute to the drive to attract new members to the clubs and new clubs to the network.

All affiliated clubs in the network are already accredited to SwimMark Essential level and maintain a commitment within their development plans to retain this accreditation. It is also a requirement of new clubs joining the network that they are already accredited, or will commit to becoming accredited within a guaranteed timeframe.

There is considerable SwimMark expertise within the network from which a SwimMark Centre of Excellence will be created. This will assist:

- Affiliated clubs in maintaining their SwimMark status
- New clubs in the network in reaching this standard if required

As discussed previously, the Synchronised Swimming and Water Polo programmes are currently accredited to SwimMark Performance standard and the Performance Swimming programme will be accredited to this level by the close of the 2018 season.

SwimMark Status

Work with all existing and new affiliated clubs to ensure their Essential status is maintained throughout the life of the plan.

Develop a SwimMark Centre of Excellence within the network to support network clubs.

Maintain the SwimMark Network accreditation throughout the life of the development plan.

Maintain the SwimMark Performance accreditation in Synchronised Swimming

Maintain the SwimMark Performance accreditation in Water Polo

Achieve SwimMark Performance accreditation in Competitive Swimming in 2018

4 Swimming Pathways Across the Network

The swimming pathways in place across the network are shown on the following pages. The squad structures that are in place at each club are summarised in Table 4.1.

The aim of the integrated coaching strategy for competitive swimming is to synchronise the development cycles such that athletes could move between squads of a similar level across the network without affecting training patterns. The start of an endurance phase for a squad at one club should therefore coincide with the start of an endurance phase at a similar squad at another club in the network.

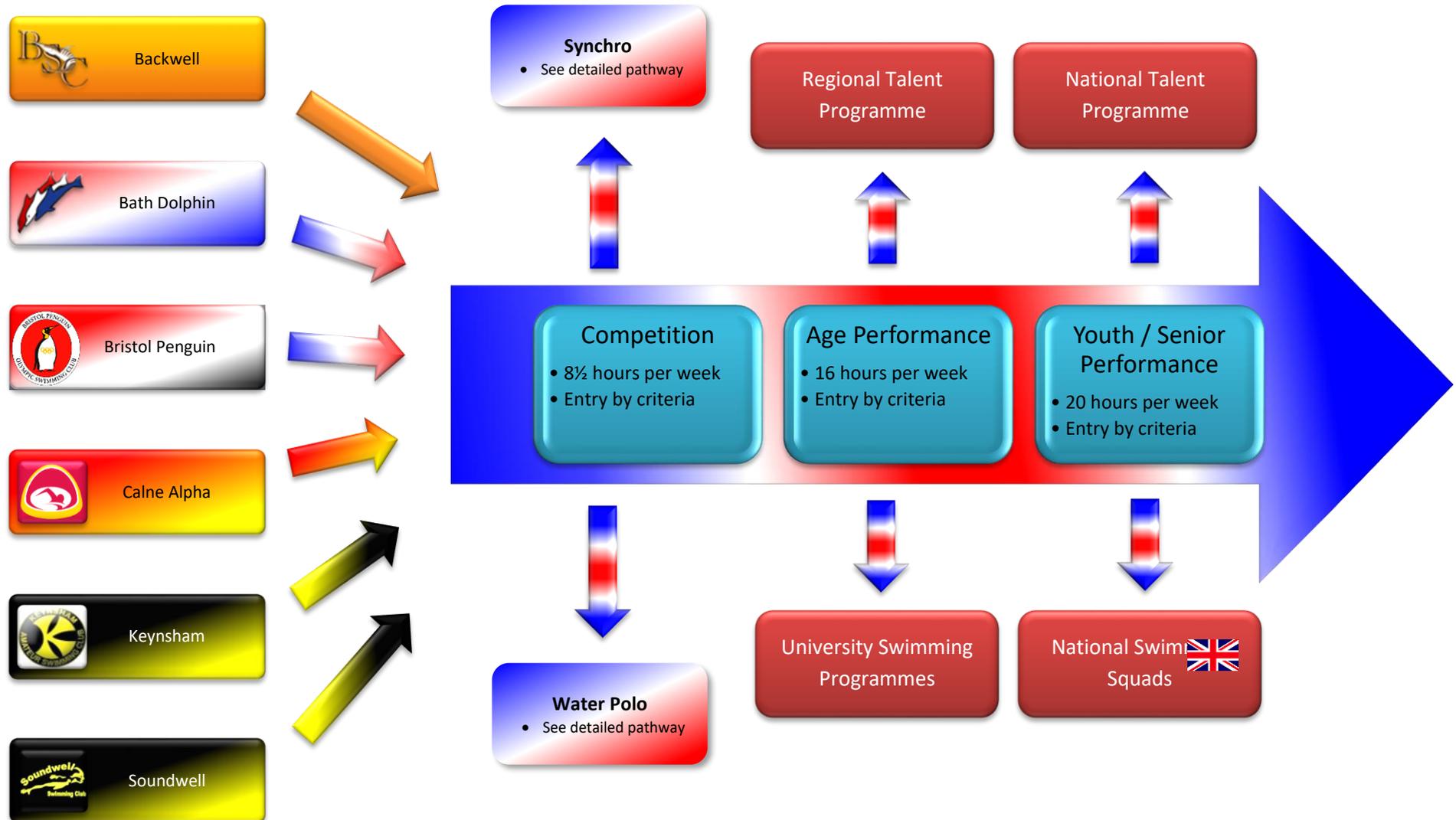
Each club currently maintains its own squad structure and criteria for moving between the squads although, as described in section 3.5.2 the introduction of the unified coaching strategy would enable the transition criteria to be more standardised. The network pathway can clearly be seen to accommodate swimmers at all levels from Stage 1 of Learn to Swim all the way up to National Level and beyond.

The detailed pathways within each of the clubs are shown in the charts presented on the pages that follows table 4.1.

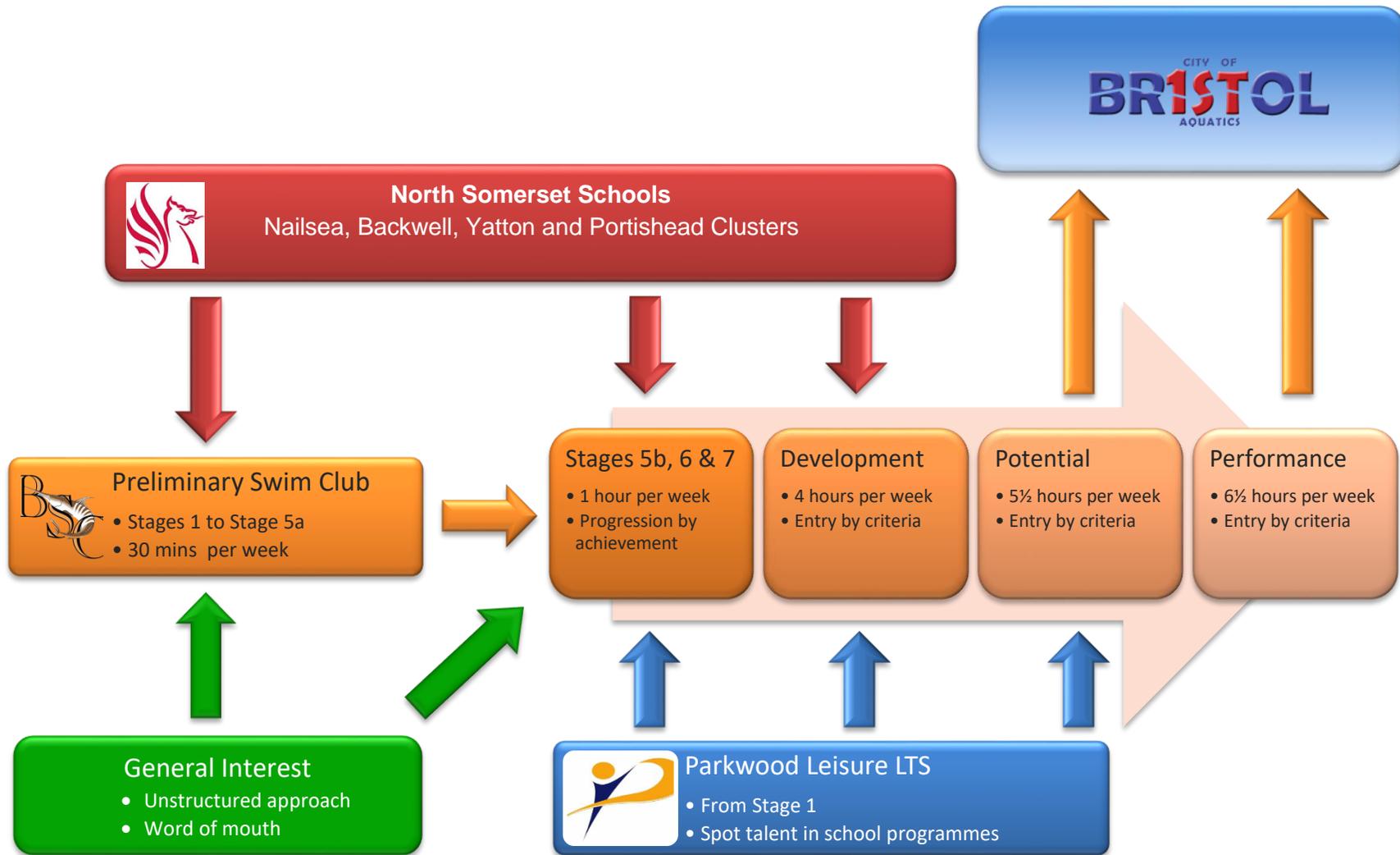
	Backwell	Bath Dolphin	Bristol Penguin	Calne Alpha	Keynsham	Soundwell	City of Bristol
National Level							
Regional Level	PERFORMANCE	SENIOR SQUAD 2	Youth 1 Youth 2	REGIONAL B REGIONAL A	GOLD	PERFORMANCE SPRINT	SEN & YOUTH PERFORMANCE AGE GROUP PERFORMANCE
County Level	POTENTIAL	SENIOR SQUAD 1	Bronze Dev Bronze	REGIONAL B COUNTY B COUNTY A	SILVER JUNIOR	A Squad B Squad	YOUTH COMP. AGE GRP DEVELOP.
Development	DEV.	DEV JUNIOR	DEV 1 DEV 2 DEV 3	COUNTY C COUNTY B COUNTY A	PRELIM	D Squad C Squad B Squad	SKILL DEVELOPMENT
Lessons / Community Activity	PSC	Sen AG & MASTERS TEACH L6-10 TEACH L1-5	Masters Youth Club AG/Junior Club	MASTERS ACADEMY A ACADEMY B	MASTERS SENIORS	D Squad C Squad B Squad ACADEMY	GOLD SILVER BRONZE MASTERS

Table 4.1 - Network Squad Structures

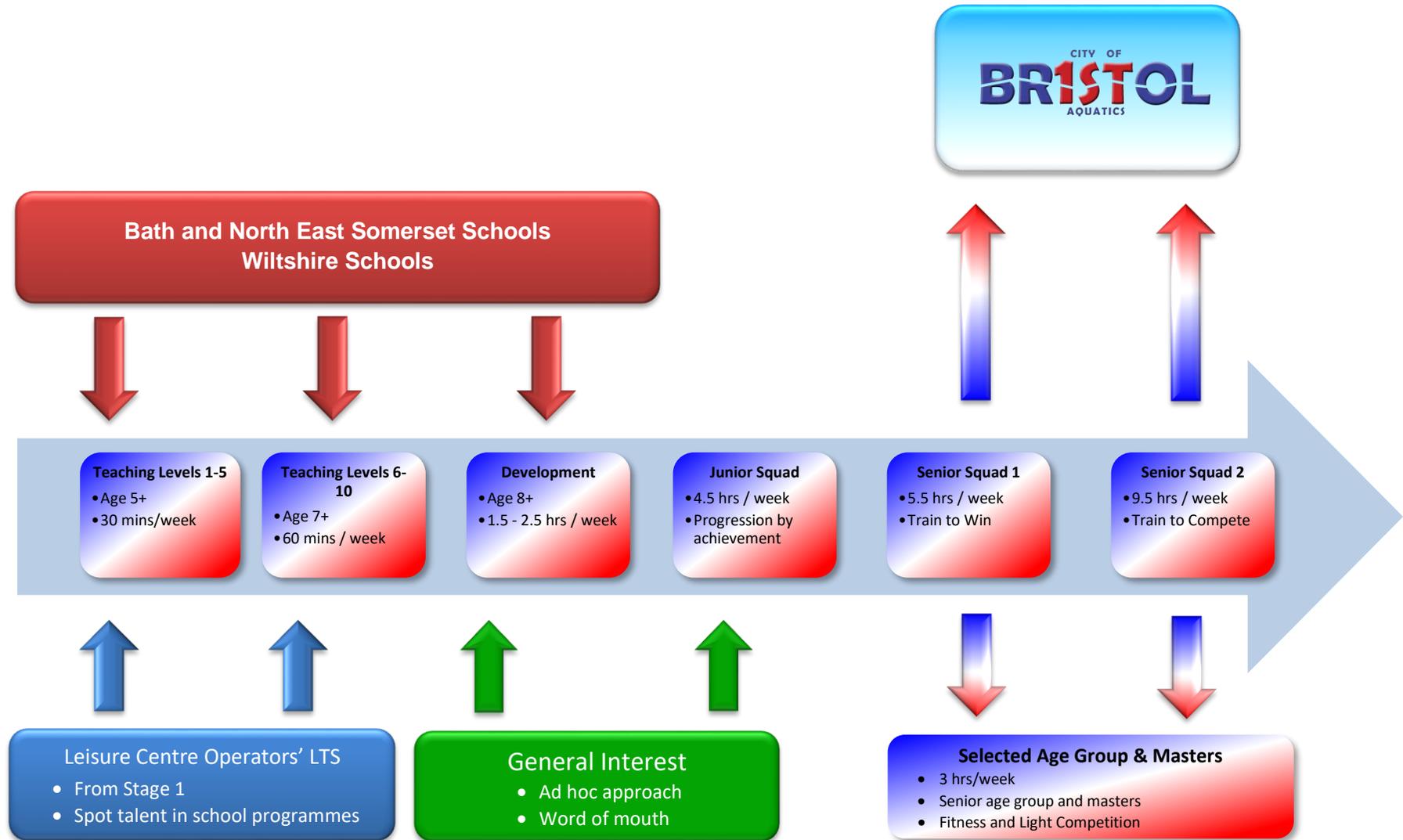
Network Swimming Pathway for City of Bristol Aquatics



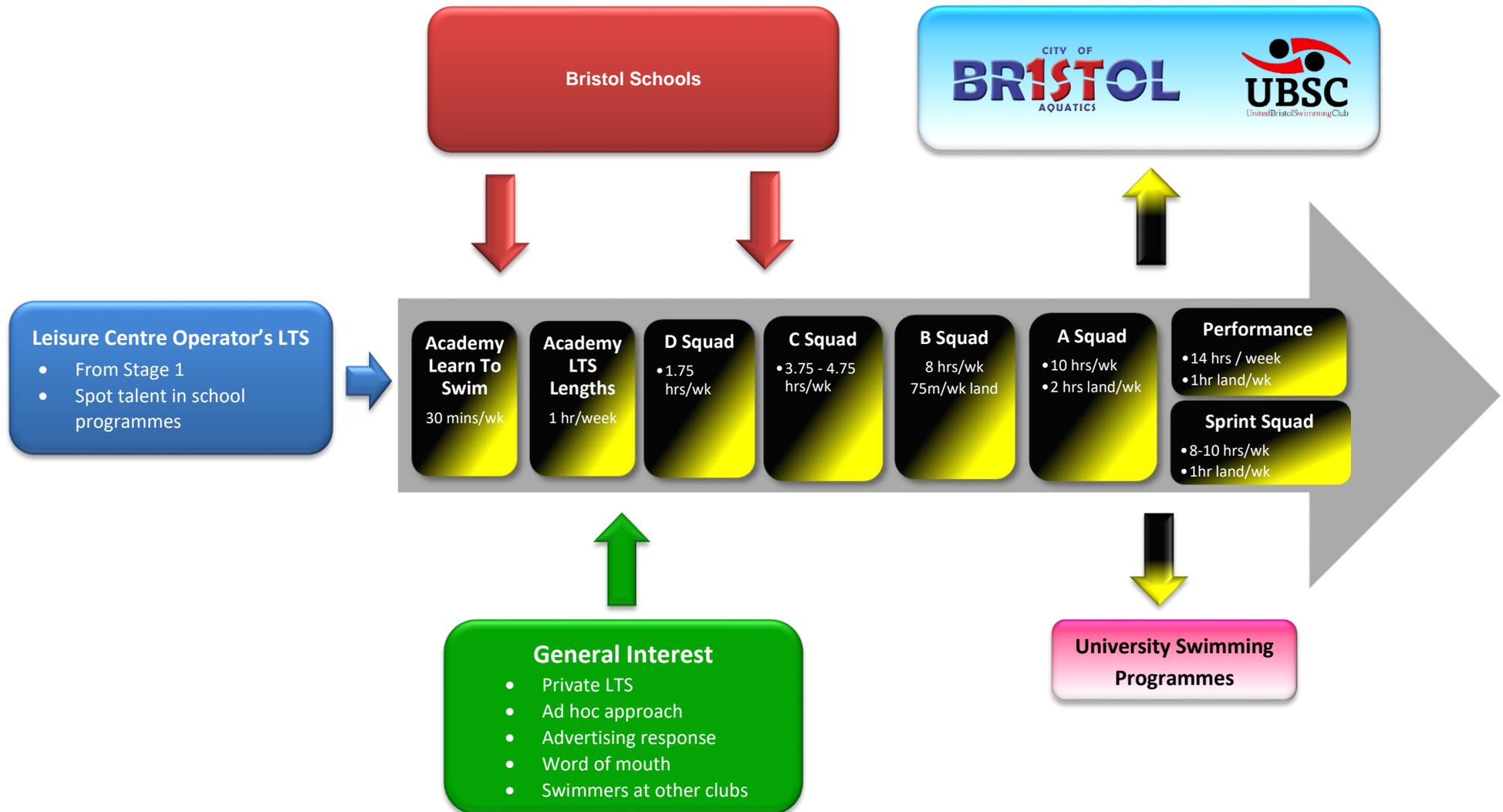
Swimming Pathway for Backwell Swimming Club



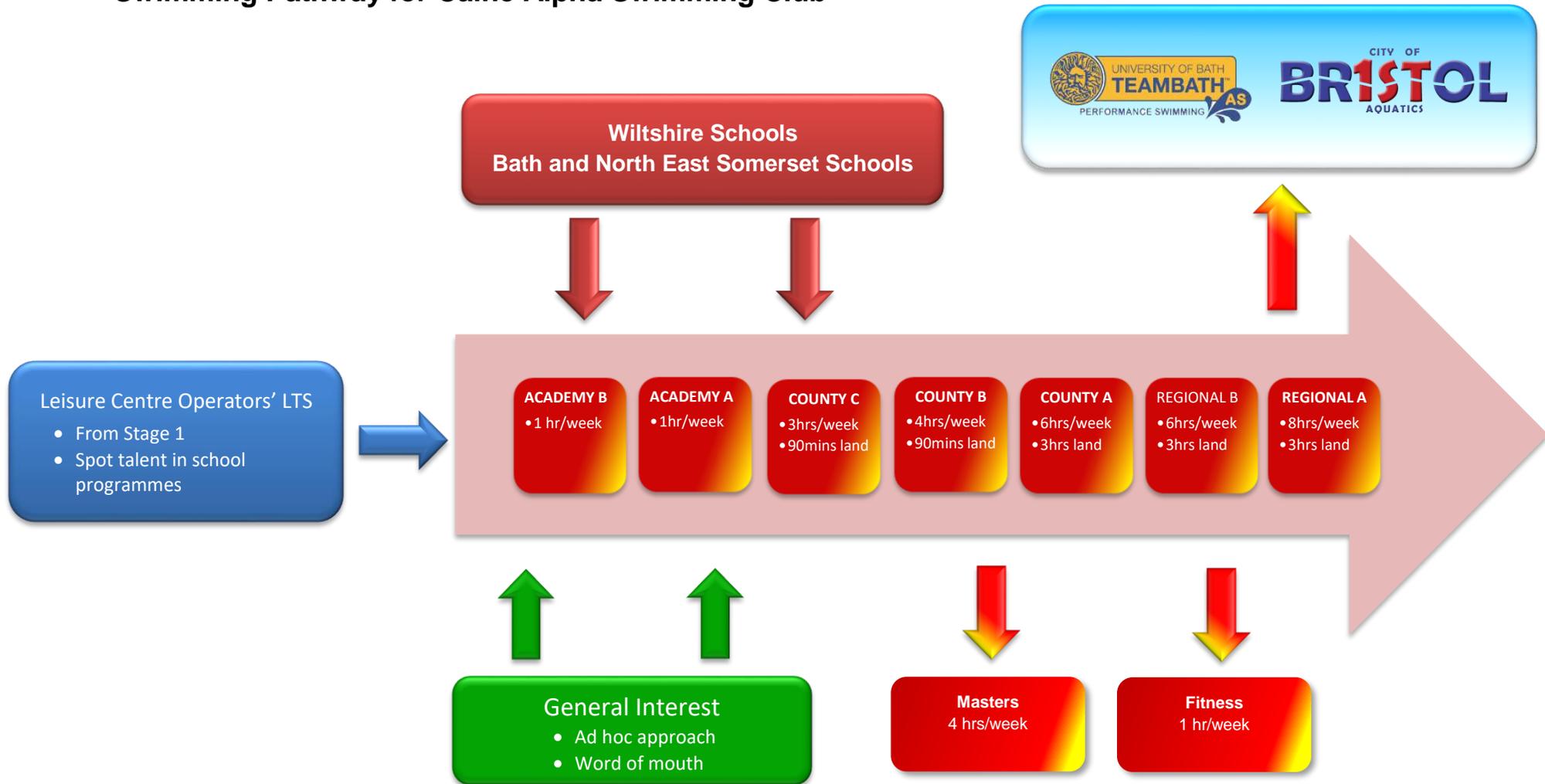
Swimming Pathway for Bath Dolphin Swimming Club



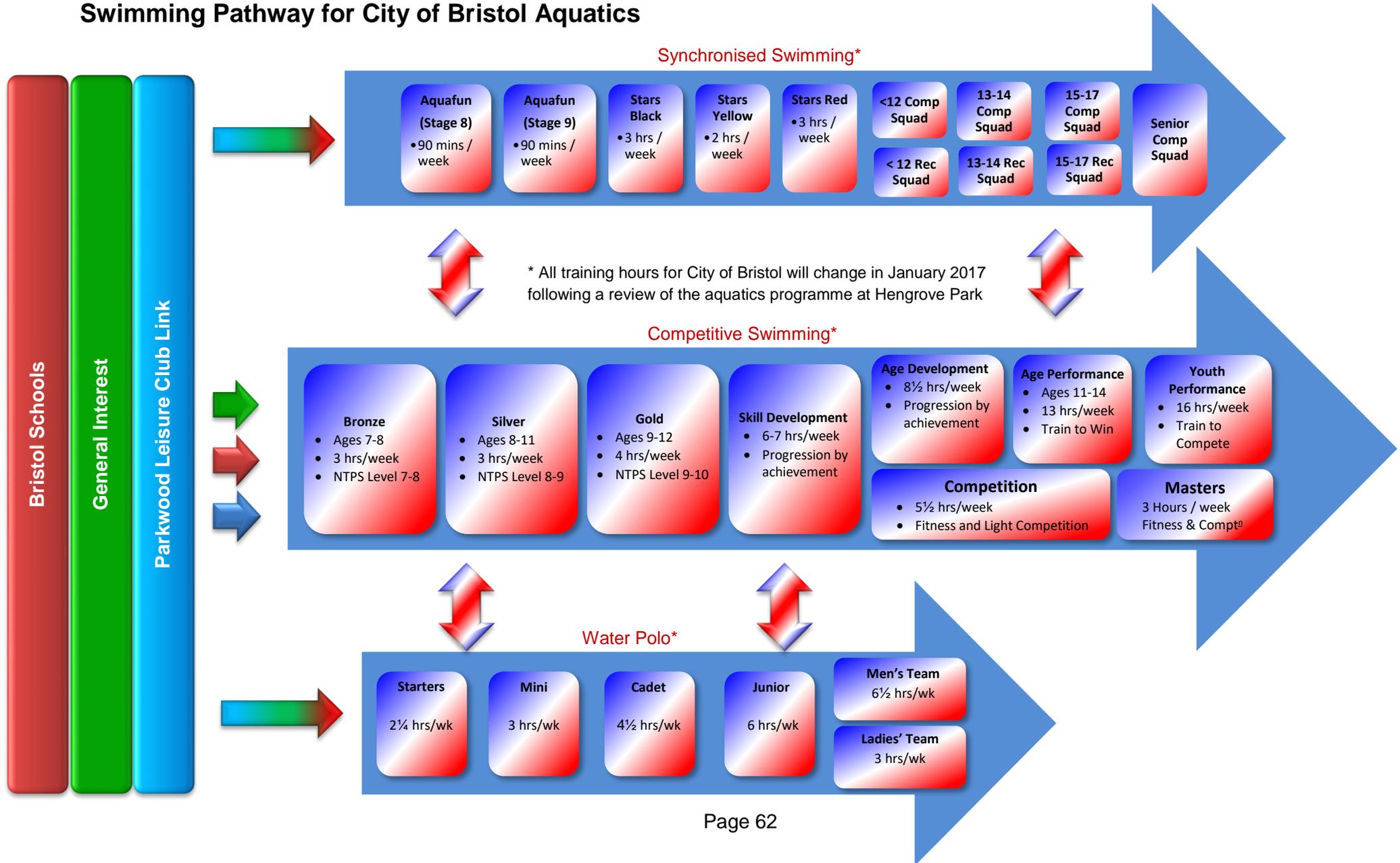
Swimming Pathway for Bristol Penguin Olympic Swimming Club



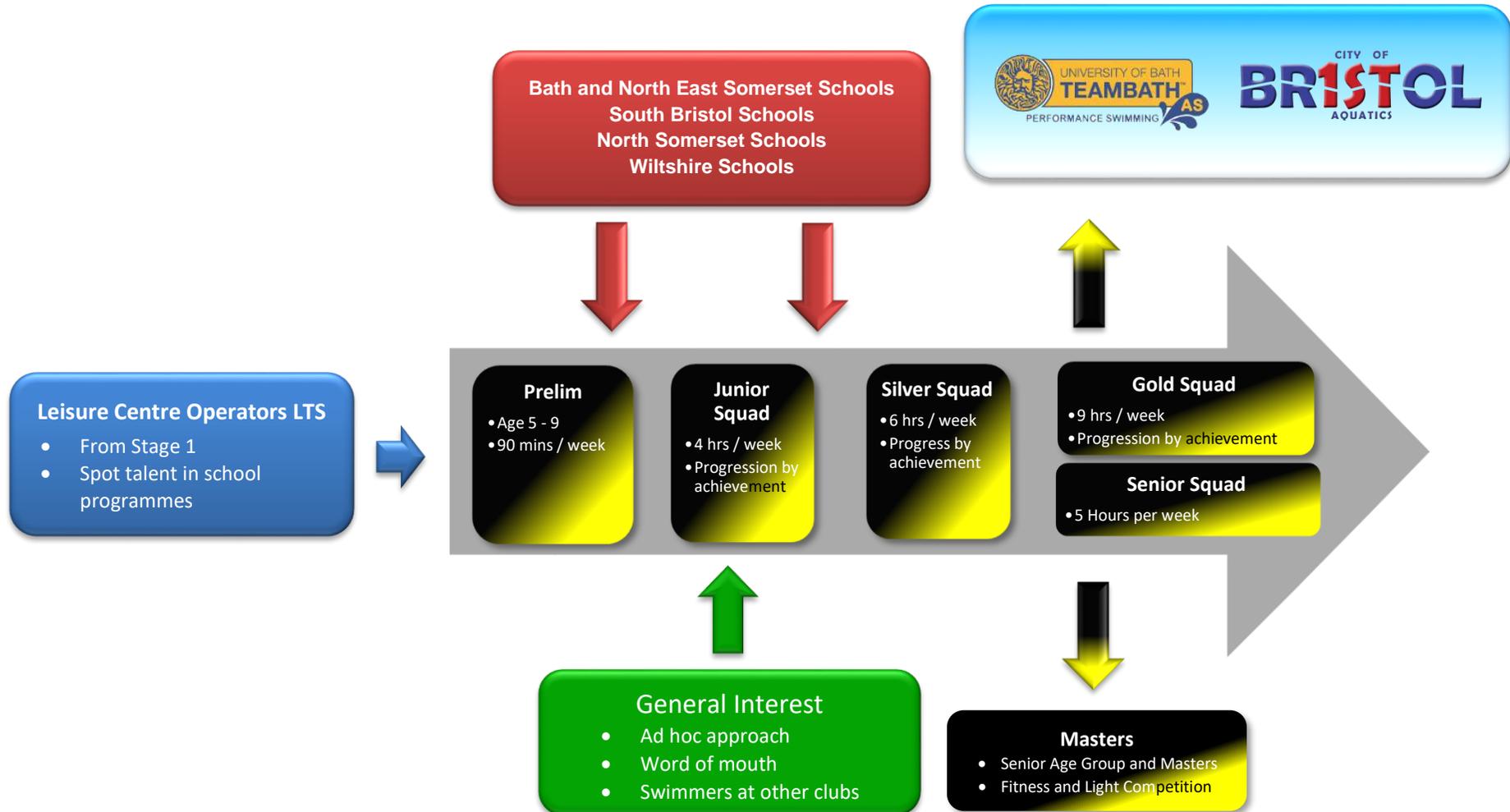
Swimming Pathway for Calne Alpha Swimming Club



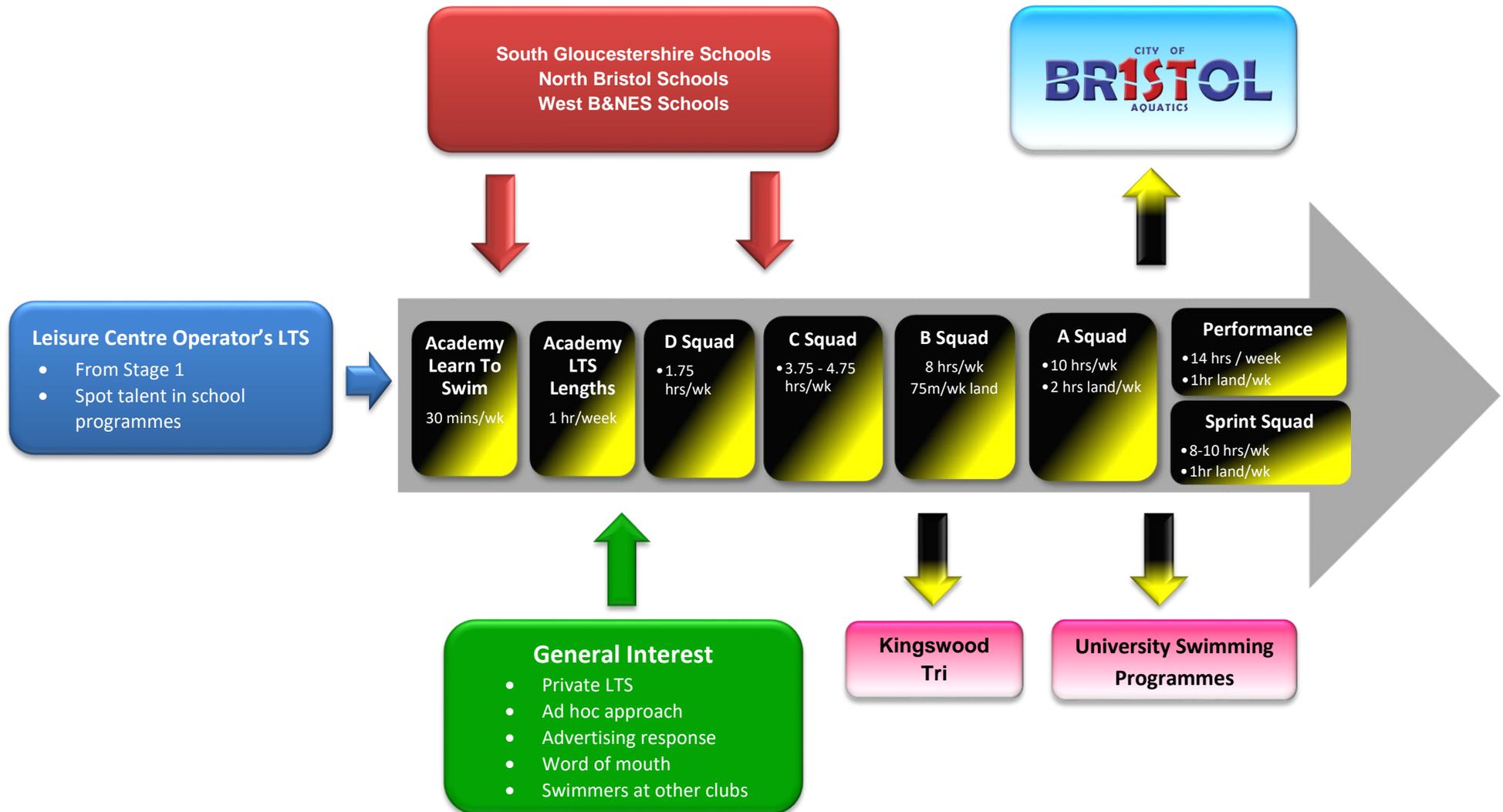
Swimming Pathway for City of Bristol Aquatics



Swimming Pathway for Keynsham Amateur Swimming Club



Swimming Pathway for Soundwell Swimming Club



5 Memorandum of Understanding

One of the defining characteristics of a network is that the participating clubs commit to a level of collaboration through the formal mechanism of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This document constitutes a partnership between the clubs within the SwimMark Network; it enables all parties to formulate a working partnership that allows the achievement of the plan as laid out in this document.

An MoU has been signed by the secretaries of all clubs in the network and the wording of this document is laid out below.

Having been written before the development plan was created, it is accepted that the MoU will be re-drafted during the lifetime of the plan so that it better reflects the aims, intentions and commitments of the partners in delivering it.



City of Bristol Network - Memorandum of Understanding

Performance Club (COB) agrees to;

- Operate within the Constitution of City of Bristol Swimming Club (COB)
- Fully support the Membership agreement between COB and Participating Home Clubs (**see below**)
- Provide membership to Participating Home Club swimmers at all COB squad levels; meeting the needs of Participating Home Clubs and their swimmers
- Keep all Participating Home Clubs advised of the progress of their swimmers (as agreed between COB and Participating Club)
- Regularly report to Participating Home Clubs on the progress of COB against its objectives (at least Half Yearly)
- As required by Participating Home Clubs provide advice and coaching support; only constrained by the time the COB Coaching team have available
- Hold regular, 3 times a year, forums for Network Club Coaches
- Communicate aims & objectives of the COB Strategy and Mission
- Actively publicise Network Clubs via website, Newsletters etc

SWIM 21 Network Club agrees to;

- Actively publicise COB and the swimmer Pathway, in ways that ensure the purpose of COB is understood by all Clubs membership and parents.
- Encourage all swimmers (and parents) who qualify for COB to attend a trial.
- Support swimmers who leave COB and look to retain them within the sport
- Provide Officials and Helpers for COB events
- A Club representative to be an active member of the COB Committee
- Work with the other Clubs within the Network sharing, on a regular basis, best practice
- Build and maintain relationship with Pool providers
- Gain and retain SWIM 21 accreditation

Swim England Clubs Team agrees to;

- ⤴ Facilitate the working relationship between the COB Network of Clubs at meetings
- ⤴ Provide additional resources, as deemed necessary, to support the COB Club Network
- ⤴ Work with the Network of Clubs to gain and retain SWIM 21 accredited
- ⤴ Aid the development of a Business Plan that defines and develops the athlete pathway

Membership agreement between COB and Participating Home Clubs;

1) Swimmers will be expected to swim in the following competitions for COB if they meet the entry criteria;

- ⤴ National Championships – Individuals and Relay Teams
- ⤴ Regional Championships – Individuals and Relay Teams
- ⤴ Open Meets on the COB meet programme

(2) Swimmers will swim for their Home Club in the following events;

- ⤴ The Home Club's main league events e.g. Arena League, Cotswold League, Southern Junior League etc
- ⤴ County Championships
- ⤴ Club Galas - which don't clash with the COB programme of events
- ⤴ Open Meets – which don't clash with the COB programme of events
- ⤴ Swimming in other competitions to be agreed by the COB Head Coach and Home Club Head Coach

(3) Swimmers will also be released to swim for their – School, County, Country

Signed

Club Secretary

.....Swimming Club.

Date-----