

7 Increasing Participation of Swimmers with a Disability

Historically the network has not catered sufficiently well for athletes with a disability however over the course of the first three years of this development plan considerable progress has been made, including:

- Establishing a Swim England-recognised and accredited assessment and signposting centre now fully integrated into City of Bristol;
- Commencing coach training in October 2014 for coaches at all network clubs to enable the assessment of an athlete's individual specialist needs and provide signposting appropriate for that athlete
- Creating a dedicated para-squad training at Hengrove Park Leisure Centre under the guidance of a qualified head coach
- Forging links with organisations such as Avon Swifts and Keynsham Seals that specialise in providing services for disabled athletes and circulate advice and guidance across the network
- A sub-committee has now been formed which comprises representatives from City of Bristol Aquatics, Bristol City Council, Swim England, Parkwood Leisure and Avon Swifts
- Improving the range and availability of information available to athletes with a disability to encourage more such athletes to participate in the aquatic sports offered within the network
- A full development pathway has been agreed and is now being implemented in full

There are currently fifteen athletes with a formally recognised disability swimming within the network however there is no management information available to be able to understand how many athletes have not received appropriate signposting, or who have not felt able to approach the network at all.

Discussions between the network, Bristol City Council, local leisure centre operators and the disability sports groups in Bristol over the construction of a Learn to Swim disability programme based at Hengrove Park have resulted in the development pathway which is shown on the following page.

Deliverable	Current Situation	Aim	Provider/Owner	Actions	Timescales
Learn to Swim lessons for Children with a Physical Disability Priority for 2017	<p>“Level Water” (note 1) have a contract with SLM (Everyone Active). Currently 12 swimmers in Bristol are attending lessons. The COB Disability Head Coach (Louise Johnson) works, one day per week, with Level Water to, initially, expand the Level Water offer to all Bristol SLM sites.</p> <p>There maybe other ad hoc provision, however, we are unaware of anything structured</p>	To extend the Level Water offer to all pools in the Bristol Area	Level Water	Louise to expand Level Water offer to all SLM sites and other LC's in Bristol Area	TBC
Learn to Swim lessons for Children with a Learning Disability Priority for 2017	Only structured provision we are aware of is the “Super Swimmers Academy” at Easton pool (note 2)	To Extend to all pools in the Bristol Area.	COB & SIS	<p>SIS Board have agreed to fund a post, one day per week for 6 months on a trial basis. Project to be managed by COB & SIS.</p> <p>Louise will take on the role. Contract</p>	Start September 2017

Deliverable	Current Situation	Aim	Provider/Owner	Actions	Timescales
				and targets being agreed	
Club Links Priority for 2017	Transition from LTS to Able Bodied training sessions or dedicated Disability Swimming at Clubs. from No structured delivery, we are aware of. (see note 3)	To have a series of Club Link session across the area, working to a consistent structure	Club Networks	Pilot session/s to be introduced	To be funded by SIS and operated by COB. Start – Sept 2017 - TBC
Clubs – Swimmers in Able Bodied Sessions	Currently most Clubs will have some Swimmers with a Disability Swimming in their Able-Bodied sessions. The number of swimmers are likely to be low. There is a lack of training for Coaches and Clubs often lack confidence in their ability to integrate swimmers into their sessions. Information for potential swimmers is fragmented.	All Clubs offering places for swimmers with a disability. A consistent source of information for potential members on what the Clubs in the area offer	Clubs	(1) Survey of current situation with Clubs (2) Training (3) Information for potential swimmers	TBC – 2018

Deliverable	Current Situation	Aim	Provider/Owner	Actions	Timescales
Clubs – Dedicated Sessions	We are not aware of any Clubs in the area offering dedicated sessions (apart from COB). We are aware of one Disability Swimming Club – the Keynsham Seals (Note 4)	Dedicated Network Sessions. Number based on potential demand	Club Networks	(1) Assessment of requirement (2) Design of Sessions (3) Identification of delivery resources	TBC – 2018
Para Squad	The Current Squad has been running for over a year, once per week at Hengrove. Coached by a qualified Coach and integrated into the COB Club. Currently 12 swimmers. Grants currently held - £2500. 2nd session once per month, funded by Swim England. During swimmers from a bigger geographical area	Squad to grow in size with additional swimmers and more sessions. Focussing on those with Podium potential.	COB	Swimmers will only be accepted if they have the potential to obtain an ASA classification for a Physical or Learning Disability (agreed at COB Aquatics Board – 28 th Feb 2017)	Ongoing
Competition	Annual “Inclusive” Gala held at Kingswood LC run by SIS, October each year	Gala relocated to Horfield for October 2017 The Gala will be used by Swim	SIS (lead 2017) & COB	COB reps – Louise J and Chris Metcalfe - to support SIS for 2017	Booked at Horfield for Saturday 7 th Oct.

Deliverable	Current Situation	Aim	Provider/Owner	Actions	Timescales
		England as a classification event			

Notes

1. Level Water is a charity operating at 40 sites Nationwide providing 121 swimming lessons to 400 Children with a Physical Disability
2. Super Swimmers Academy - Super Swimmers Academy (SSA) currently operates once a month, at Easton leisure centre, offering bite size lessons to children who otherwise would not fit into mainstream lessons. Funding currently comes through Access Sport and other local businesses. Run with the National Autistic Society. SSA has the potential to expand, however, funding would be required
3. Current Henbury water time is paid for by SIS – Wednesday 7pm to 8pm and SLM run a Sunday 2pm to 3pm session. These sessions are unstructured
4. Keynsham Seals are based at Keynsham Swimming Leisure Centre. They train for one hour on a Sunday and have 30+ members. They have been running for over 30 years and are affiliated to the National Association of Swimming Clubs for the Handicapped. The majority of their swimmers have learning difficulties (Downs) and some are profoundly disabled.

Improve Training Opportunities within the Network for Swimmers with a Disability

Implement fully the development pathway for disability competitive swimming in the Bristol area

Further develop the centre of excellence for disability swimming which acts as a point of reference for all clubs in the network.

Extend the range of training activities relating to coaching disability swimming which are co-ordinated through the centre of excellence and open to all network clubs.

Grow the new para squad from its current size of fifteen swimmers

Provide more competitive opportunity through participation in open meets with multi-classification events.

Explore options to link more closely with the activities of Keynsham Seals and Avon Swifts

Introduce a Learn to Swim programme for athletes with a disability and publish a swimming pathway showing how athletes with a disability can progress from LTS through to international competition with City of Bristol Aquatics.



CITY OF BRISTOL AQUATICS PARA SQUAD

Have you got what it takes to
be a Paralympic swimmer?

**RECRUITING NEW
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ON 07947 296466

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Leisure Centre

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www.cobswimmingclub.co.uk

Figure 9.1 - Recruitment Poster for City of Bristol Para Squad

Whilst not listed as a development priority for the majority of the clubs, improving facilities for swimmers with a disability is essential and forms one of the network's key performance indicators with Bristol City Council as shown in section 2.8 . As a starting point in this respect, Bristol Central has adopted the co-ordinating role for all work in this area across the network. Initially this has consisted of:

- Establishing a formal assessment hub
- Forging contacts and consulting with groups interested in promoting and enabling competitive swimming for disabled athletes
- Writing and implementing a development pathway
- Organising and co-ordinating assessment training for coaches in all network clubs
- Liaising with governing bodies and support groups on behalf of the network
- Researching facilities that are currently available to support competitive swimmers with disabilities and to which swimmers can be signposted accordingly.

A disability squad has been established within the network, training at Hengrove Leisure Centre on a Saturday morning under the guidance of network coaches. Whilst the disability squad currently trains in a separate environment the future aim is to focus activities to enable disabled as many athletes as possible with specialist requirements to train alongside able-bodied squads and maximise their full potential.

The network has produced an information leaflet on disability swimming as part of its "Joining In" series; this is shown on the following pages.

Did you know?

- Swimming is the only sport to combine a range of disabilities to provide a fair competitive structure for all athletes.
- The biggest individual medal hauls of the 2012 Paralympic games came from swimmers.
- The City of Bristol Network maintains its own disability assessment Hub which can provide an expert needs assessment for individual swimmers.
- City of Bristol offers a dedicated para squad for competitive training.
- The Hengrove Park Leisure centre is fully accessible and enables swimmers, coaches, carers and parents to enjoy fully the benefits of participating in this wonderful sport
- We can provide mentoring and development opportunities for coaches with a disability from some of the finest coaches there are.

Don't be put off ...

- Through its six clubs, The City of Bristol Aquatics Network provides opportunities for swimmers, coaches, teachers, judges and administrators, irrespective of impairment.
- We welcome any involvement and any participation from Learn to Swim right the way through to elite competition.



... Join In!

"Swimming saved my life - I don't know what I would have done if I hadn't been able to get in the water and compete."

Maggie McEleny,
Scottish Paralympian gold medallist and swimming coach

"I'm a normal person, just a lot smaller. I get on with it. Everybody should do that. You only live once and you need to enjoy life, to go out and achieve whatever you want to."

Ellie Simmonds



Affiliated to the ASA

Joining in :

Participating with a Disability



Chairman: Mike Pearce
visit: www.cobswimmingclub.co.uk

Participating in Swimming with a Disability

Participating in swimming when you have a disability can mean many different things to many different people. For us at **City of Bristol** it means that:

- You can achieve your true potential irrespective of your disability
- You can swim alongside able-bodied athletes and experience a training programme designed to bring out the best in you
- You can swim in a dedicated para squad if you are more comfortable in this environment
- You can become an elite athlete if you choose that path
- You can access the leisure centre, poolside, pool, changing areas, viewing gallery and all other facilities without making special arrangements
- You can follow a path in swimming, coaching, judging, administration and any other activity associated with the running of the club
- As a parent or carer with a disability you can participate fully in a parent's journey along the athlete pathway, not forgetting being the 5am taxi driver
- You will be made very welcome in the network

British Swimming supports athletes with a disability at a number of different levels.

Dedicated disability swimming clubs specialise in teaching swimmers how to swim and then provide opportunity for recreational swimming in a safe environment.

For competitive opportunity however you will need to find a competitive club that can accommodate your particular needs so that you can train alongside able-bodied athletes, or in a dedicated squad.

The **City of Bristol** network has its own disability assessment Hub, and offers a dedicated para squad which trains at Hengrove Park Leisure Centre.

If you are interested in pursuing swimming at any level and wish to discuss your particular requirements with a friendly coach that understands your needs then please contact us.

Together we will identify the most appropriate club and squad to meet your needs, be that in recreational swimming, fitness training or national standard competition. This may be within the **City of Bristol** network or outside of it.

For further information about the assessment services offered through our hub club and the City of Bristol para squad please visit the aquatics web site:

www.cobswimmingclub.co.uk



The London Paralympic Games taught us that sport is about ability, not disability.

If you have the desire to compete or to coach then at **City of Bristol** we have the facilities and the team to help you reach the heights to which you aspire.

If your skills are more aligned to working behind the scenes then we would equally love to hear from you.

“Go out there, enjoy your life and achieve something.”

8 Increasing Participation of Swimmers from Low Income Households

The subject of the cost of participation has also been identified in section 6.5 as a participation barrier to athletes from BME communities as, statistically speaking, such athletes are more likely to live in households with lower incomes. The level of household income however should not be a barrier to accessing the aquatic disciplines and the network is committed to finding ways to encourage and assist athletes from low income households to participate.

8.1 Cost as a Barrier

Section 3.1 of this development plan examines ways in which the network clubs can increase levels of participation in the aquatics sports. Swim England Club Strategy identified the second most common reason for not joining an aquatics club as “Cost” and this accounted for nearly 30% of the data return.

The following section of this plan examines how the network can improve participation figures by reducing dropout and retaining those athletes that are already participating in the aquatics disciplines. With information taken from Swim England Club Strategy, figure 11.1 shows the primary reasons given by athletes who have left swimming clubs. It is interesting to note that the cost of participation is not specifically listed as a primary reason for athletes leaving the sport.

The two findings demonstrate that the cost of participation is a major factor in denying athletes from a low income background the initial opportunity to participate, however it is not a primary cause of dropout. The network must therefore focus on financial strategies that assist more swimmers to participate initially.

8.2 Hardship Funds

All clubs within the network maintain a *hardship fund* approach to membership by which athletes who experience financial difficulties can apply for a reduction in training fees. Such schemes however are often based on a temporary change in circumstances and do not address the situation where an athlete and/or their family exist in a permanent or semi-permanent state of financial hardship.

Whilst a hardship fund provides a simple means to enable athletes from low income families to participate, such an approach has some key drawbacks, including:

- The lack of scalability of the approach – there are a limited number of athletes that can be supported at any one time
- Such schemes are usually open only to existing members of a club and not new members
- The schemes are generally not openly advertised for fear of attracting many applications
- Criteria are sometimes loosely written and inconsistently applied

8.3 Bursary Schemes

A bursary scheme is in many ways operates on a similar principle to the hardship fund described above with the major difference being that bursary schemes are openly offered to those potential athletes who are not already involved in a club. The level of financial support can range from fully funding the activity through to a contribution that represents a percentage of the overall fees.

8.4 Grant Funding

Grant funding is made available to organisations from a variety of sources for the purposes of addressing key priorities within a specific area of interest. Sport England for example provides five grant schemes, four of which are open to sports clubs and societies:

- Inspired Facilities Fund: £110M programme to enable the renovation and modernisation of sports facilities as part of small scale community projects
- Small Grant Scheme: uses lottery funding to make awards of £300 - £10,000 to cover the project costs of getting more people to play sport
- Protecting Playing Fields: £28M fund to provide grants to improve and preserve playing fields across the country
- Improvement Fund: £54M programme to fund medium sized projects which will improve the quality and experience of sport
- Strategic Facilities Fund: Only open to major, multi-agency projects that require high levels of investment to provide more people with the opportunity to play sport

The conditions associated with such grants are often impossible to satisfy for a funding assistance programme given that the grant funding available is one-off funding intended for capital purposes whereas the funding required is for ongoing revenue.

Such grant funding can be used to *establish* a participation scheme and an application is likely to succeed, provided that the scheme addresses a demonstrable community need, increases participation in a sport or target group, and is sustainable. The grant funding cannot however be used as the basis for keeping the scheme running on an ongoing basis.

8.5 Other Revenue Generation

In the absence of grant funding to seed such an income support scheme, clubs are left to generate the required revenue for themselves through the normal channels of sponsorship, open meets, membership fees and other fund raising activities.

Clubs must set aside their own targets for support schemes in terms of a percentage of the overall revenue income which can be set aside for hardship support and bursary schemes however there should be consistency across the network in the type of scheme and how criteria are applied.

8.6 Future Actions

In order to improve participation in the aquatics disciplines by athletes from low income households the network will, over the next twelve months:

- Work collectively to establish a consistent set of governance procedures for the operation of a hardship fund that will be used exclusively to support athletes from low income households;
- Investigate the relative merits of operating such a scheme at a network level in comparison to operating individual schemes at club level;
- Construct the basis of a bursary scheme with the sole purpose of attracting promising athletes not currently involved in the aquatics disciplines;
- Seek external funding opportunities to maintain the bursary scheme in future years

9 Maintaining Participation in Swimming

Preventing athletes leaving the aquatics sports is as just as important as attracting new members to the pool. Traditionally boys start to leave swimming from the age of 12-13, whilst the exodus for girls starts a little later, usually around the age of 14-15. There are many anecdotal theories for this, the most common being:

- The appeal of team sports, particularly football, rugby, netball and hockey
- Pressures of schooling, exams and homework
- The need to balance many interests into a dwindling amount of free time
- Lack of social activity within swimming clubs in comparison to clubs in other sports

Both Swim England and Bristol City Council have set specific performance targets in retaining swimmers in the sport and the City of Bristol Network must identify and take steps to address the triggers that cause athletes to leave the sport, recognising that there are some triggers over which the network has little control.

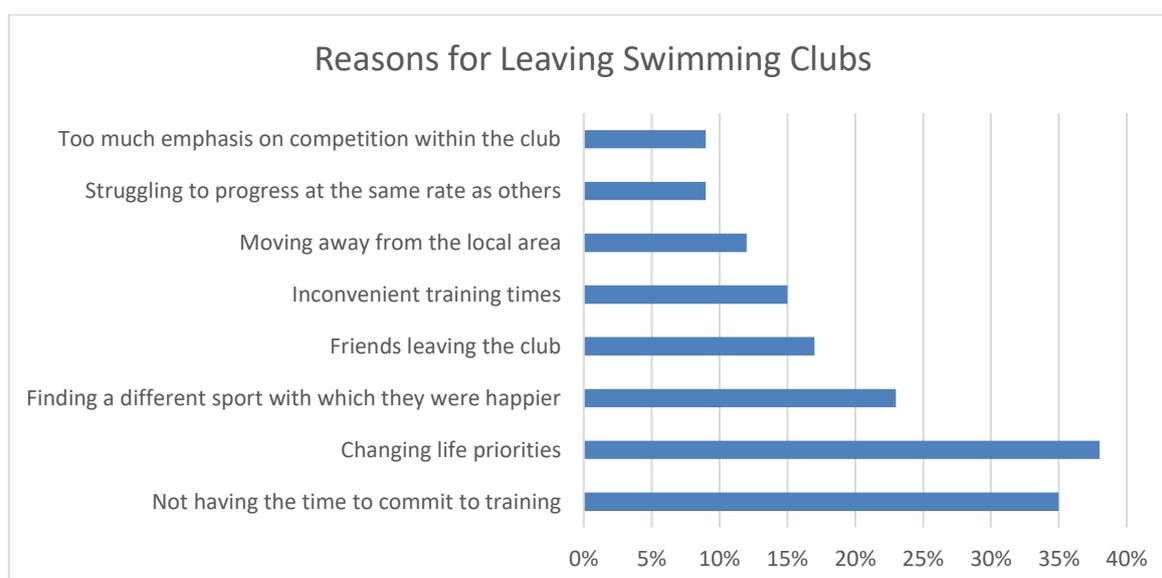


Figure 11.1 – Reasons cited for leaving a swimming club¹⁰

¹⁰ ASA Club Strategy, 2013-2017

9.1 Swimming as a Sport

Competitive swimming, unlike many land-based sports, is an activity that requires a high degree of physical effort on a regular basis, i.e. three to four times per week for older swimmers, just to enable an athlete to complete a training set. By the ages at the highest risk of dropping out, club swimmers will be covering up to 20km per week in training distance, and 40km-50km in a performance environment. Long sessions, early morning starts and constant competitive disappointment at the hands of others who are more willing to sacrifice sleep, socialising, school work and a normal life in the pursuit of success in the pool all combine to negative effect. For many they see alternative ways of maintaining fitness whilst garnering the enjoyment of competition with a reasonable chance of some success to the often lonely world of swimming.

9.2 The Role of Parents

According to Swim England, the role of parents in swimming is twofold:

1. Pay the bills
2. Provide the transport (on time)

According to club committees, the role of parents is to become involved in the running of the clubs so that all tasks do not continually fall to the same small number of people.

Parents cite that their job description also includes “picking up the pieces”. They are likely to be the greatest role model a child can have however their unwitting, and often unhelpful, behaviours are easily emulated. What should be universally accepted is that parents are there to support, nurture, and encourage their children, celebrating with them when they do well and consoling them when they don’t have such a good day. In practice however there is an almost constant burdening of children with pressure created by the expectation of winning or achieving unrealistic outcomes, often accompanied by rewards for “success” and therefore, implicitly, threats for “failure”. Sadly the parental definition of success and failure is almost exclusively measured in terms of medals and PBs, whereas coaches define success at a much lower level in terms of element or process goals.

Parents struggle with the concept that a coach may want a swimmer to enter a race fully in the knowledge that the athlete is over-trained and tired. Coaches see the bigger picture whereas parents only see the next medal. Allow the coach to coach.

Allow children to develop at their own pace, make their own mistakes and enjoy their swimming on their own terms, free from the pressure of satisfying unrealistic expectations of parents. The alternative is to drive children to a position where it is easier to go and play rugby, football, netball or hockey or indeed any team sport where they are less likely to feel responsible for disappointing their parents.

“My idea of coaching heaven is to have a ten lane, world-class swimming facility, with a fully equipped, professional quality gymnasium and a state of the art recovery centre built right alongside the world’s biggest orphanage.”¹¹

¹¹ “Ten Things that Swimming Parents Do that Coaches Can’t Stand”, Wayne Goldsmith, Swimming World, March 2015

9.3 The Role of Coaches

In simple terms, if an athlete dislikes a coach then the athlete is unlikely to continue training with that coach, particularly as the athlete gets older and has a larger say in determining their own future. The added complexity in children's sport is that if a parent dislikes a coach then the child is less likely to continue training with that coach. For the majority of club swimmers, changing coaches involves a change of clubs, a process which is too challenging for many.

The primary reasons for parents complaining about coaches include¹²:

- Lack of constant, clear, consistent communication
- Applying a "One Size Fits All" coaching philosophy to a group of swimmers
- Favouring more talented swimmers over the rest
- Failing to take other commitments (family, school etc) into consideration
- Failing to take the goals and aspirations of the individual into consideration
- Applying different rules and standards for different athletes, particularly the better ones
- Failing to apply discipline fairly and appropriately
- Not making it fun
- Failing to make time for those athletes that need it

Parents are particularly protective of their children and often seek accountability elsewhere for their child's poor progress in comparison to other children, failing to recognise that the child may just be a late developer, or indeed not ideally suited to swimming at all. That said, the majority of those involved in swimming clubs will recognise the statements and clubs have a responsibility to ensure that their teachers and coaches do not exhibit behaviours that give credence to these sensitive areas whilst simultaneously recognising that the coach has the right to coach.

9.4 Academic Pressures

Once a child reaches secondary school age, a steadily increasing supply of homework and the demands of tests and exams compete for the same diminishing amount of social time that is available. Swimming is not a career prospect to be entertained by the majority of athletes and hence training attendance suffers when academic pressure is applied. With each academic year seeing an increase in the amount of homework being set, a trigger point is reached whereby attendance at training drops below that which is sustainable, and financially acceptable resulting in the athlete leaving the sport.

9.5 Social Opportunity

Peer pressure creates demands on after-school time to socialise and relax with friends, often at a time conflicting with when an athlete is either supposed to be training, or recovering from training. By comparison, the opportunities for social interaction within the swimming environment are generally limited to the pre-pool warm-up, post-pool stretching or on the lane ropes between the elements of the set.

¹² "Ten Things that Swimming Coaches Do that Drive Swimming Parents Nuts", Wayne Goldsmith, Swimming World, March 2015

Whilst social activities organised by clubs are not uncommon, they do not take place frequently, particularly in comparison to those organised by team sports like rugby. There is also no concept of the weekly “match day” activities in swimming, as team-based galas only occur sporadically throughout the year and often at intervals measured in months.

Close friendships are formed within aquatics clubs however and the loss of key athletes, whether to another club or away from the sport entirely can lead to an exodus.

9.6 As A Network, What Can We Do?

In attempting to reduce the swimmer dropout rate, the network action plan should focus in four key areas:

1. Develop a collective education programme for parents, coaches, administrators & swimmers.
2. Ensure that we retain the fun element in swimming where it is appropriate
3. Cater for the needs of the talented, driven swimmers as well as the recreational swimmers who are there for fitness, or maybe social purposes
4. Cater for Masters swimming and actively encourage it. Letting children see older adults take part in the sport just to take part, will inspire them and encourage them to stay in the sport. If parents still see sports as fun, the chances are their children will too.

9.6.1 Education Programme

9.6.1.1 PARENTS

Families new to swimming are faced with a number of questions which are not easily answered. Bishopsworth SC has developed an [online FAQ list](#) for parents to read, as well as a means to post any further questions for the club to answer. This excellent scheme would translate well to a network level approach such that it appears on all clubs’ web sites.

To address the regular complaint of a lack of constant, clear, and consistent communication, [regular parental talks](#) can be introduced and even made compulsory so that all parents are knowledgeable in respect of their role in their child’s swimming development.

Whilst all clubs in the network provide new swimmers and their parents with suitable club documentation, there is no [Network Welcome Pack](#) which introduces the concept of the clubs working in partnership to deliver a complete swimming pathway. Such information would provide valuable information and reference material for parents to refer to throughout their time with the network.

[Parent liaison officers](#) at each club provide a point of contact for parents to go to when they are seeking help and information. They run regular sessions for parents to ask question and to reinforce the role of the parent in child’ swimming development.

Parents should join the [Masters squads!](#)

9.6.1.2 COACHES

The coach education programme should be an annual process, linked to SwimMark personal development planning. Courses should reinforce the role of the club within the network, and from a teaching perspective focus on fun, skills and mastery of swimming rather than the times achieved.

The personal development plans should also include additional courses on child development so that our coaches understand child development and how their actions today can have a lifelong effect on a young person, bad as well as good.

It is important to ensure that the level of coaching is constantly improving so that the swimmers are taught the correct things in the correct way consistently across the network. This is discussed further in section 3.2.2

9.6.1.3 ADMINISTRATORS

All clubs should be working together to ensure the network is attracting and educating families properly and consistently.

9.6.1.4 SWIMMERS

We need to ensure that all swimmers understand appreciate the amazing benefits that sports in general, and swimming in particular, will bring to their lives no matter how successful they are perceived to be.

Furthermore swimmers need to:

- be aware of their role and responsibilities as well as what's expected of them
- know who they can speak to other than their parents and coaches
- be aware that the performance pathway via CoB is well defined and is there to retain and nurture the ambitious and talented swimmers.
- Be aware that there are many different attitudes towards swimming and not all swimmers may have the desire to follow the performance pathway:

The network must cater for the needs of each different type of swimmer. One of the advantages of working collaboratively in a network is that not all clubs have to cater for all types of swimmers; certain clubs may excel in masters swimming whereas other clubs may be more suited to learn to swim. A good network will signpost athletes according to the best fit between club and swimmer. Categories of swimmers other than performance swimming will include:

- Social swimmers – Sessions for swimmers looking to improve but in a more social environment

- Fitness swimmers – sessions for swimmers looking for general fitness in a low impact sport
- Swimmers who want to be competitive but may not have the ability to reach the CoB performance pathway. The network must offer these swimmers the chance to compete.
- Masters squad – Give opportunities for older swimmers (18+) to stay in swimming or to come back to swimming. Bishopsworth and Keynsham both have dedicated masters squads
- Disability swimming, which is covered in more detail in section 7.

9.7 Initial Plan

In addition to that detailed above, the following will be expanded to add to the initial network retention plan:

Theme	Actions
Increase intake of swimmers at a young age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should contribute to the increase in numbers above the age of 12 even if we can't reduce the drop off rates. • Plan to reach out to schools and clubs in network club areas and form links in each of our operating areas ensuring a consistent approach. • Bishopsworth SC, in association with ASA SW, are introducing galas for the LTS at Hengrove to improve in take of swimmers via that route and this could be expanded across the network to ensure we are giving more young swimmers the chance to experience competitive swimming.
Good provision of appropriate competitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that swimmers across the network are competing regularly at an appropriate level. • The network competition calendar is presented in section Error! Reference source not found.
Provide “The Four C’s”, i.e. Constant, Clear and Consistent Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open, honest and consistent feedback for all swimmers, understanding their desires and ambitions for their swimming. • A consistent parent/swimmer/coach review process should be adopted across the network to ensure best practice and swimmer satisfaction.

Theme	Actions
Diversify the aquatics offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create links across the network with the other aquatic disciplines to give children other avenues but still within the aquatic sports. • Encourage particularly Water Polo and Synchro within the network • Also consider open water and biathle sports
Improve the social “offer”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regular out of pool activities • Build team spirit and enjoyment of being part of a club
Vary the location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer end of season road trip; an annual tour that all squads look forward to and don’t want to miss • Training camps, particularly during school holidays, which combine pool training with non-pool based activities having an emphasis on fun
Provide volunteering opportunities for the 14+ age group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an introduction to teaching and coaching • Offer skills and volunteering opportunities for those participating in Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme • Support the regional young volunteer programmes with poolside opportunities across the network
Work with third parties to strengthen the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations such as WESPORT and Swim England SW Development Office will have many ideas on how to make the club programme more appealing

Table 11.1 - Action Plan for improving the retention of athletes in swimming

10 Co-ordination of Training Activities for Supporting Roles

There is a significant cost benefit to clubs if training courses can be co-ordinated centrally. All clubs require properly qualified teacher and coaches and therefore are reliant upon Swim England to deliver an adequate number of level 1 and level 2 courses at convenient times and locations. Level 2 coaching courses however are sometimes scarce and at almost £700 per person, are expensive. Co-ordinating the demand from across the network allows:

- Swim England to create bespoke courses that are available only to the network
- Courses to be run in convenient locations
- Reduction of course costs by up to £200 per attendee

The likely demand for such courses across the network in the next twelve months is shown in table 12.1 below.

	Backwell	Bath Dolphin	Bristol Penguin	Calne Alpha	City of Bristol	Keynsham	Soundwell	Totals
Level 1 Teaching Aquatics	4	0	2	0	0	6	1	13
Level 2 Teaching Aquatics	2	1	2	0	0	2	2	9
Level 1 Coaching Swimming	0	1	2	1	0	6	0	10
Level 2 Coaching Swimming	1	1	2	1	0	2	0	7
Level 3 Coaching Swimming	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Team Manager 1 / 2	5/0	0/0	0/0	1/0	5/3	8/0	0/0	19/3
Time to Listen	0	1	1	1	3	1	0	7
Safeguarding and Protecting Children (SPC)	10	2	1	5	10	10	4	42
Judge Level 1	5	2	5	0	4	5	3	24
Judge Level 2	3	2	4	0	3	2	1	15
Judge Level J2S	1	0	2	0	1	1	2	7
Referee	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1

Table 12.1 - Network training needs

11 Development Plan Summary

Key Objective	Specific Targets	Who will be responsible	Timeframe
Maintain SWIM 21 Network Accreditation during 2017/2018 season. (Section 3.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit documentation according to panel schedule 	COB SWIM 21 Co-ordinator	31 October 2017 in time for winter regional panel.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COB Network to create “Centre of excellence” on SWIM 21 issues to support network clubs in maintaining SwimMark status. 	COB SWIM 21 Co-ordinator	Initial activity completed Q4 2014.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COB to deliver SWIMMARK Performance accreditation in all three disciplines. 	COB SWIM 21 Co-ordinator	Accreditation for Performance Swimming during 2019/20 season
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All COB network clubs to maintain SWIM 21 accreditation. 	Network clubs’ SWIM 21 Co-ordinators supported by COB SWIM 21 Co-ordinator	Submit documentation to portal according to SwimMark accreditation requirements.
Strengthen the Network. (Section 3.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	COB Aquatics Board Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary Discipline chairs and secretaries	Extend network footprint each year

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate Bristol Central Synchronised Swimming into the network and compete at regional level and above under the City Of Bristol banner. 	COB Chair and Secretary, Bristol Central(Synchro) Chair & Secretary	Completed and formalised as part of One Club merger in 2016
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate Bristol Central Water Polo into the network under the City Of Bristol banner. 	COB Chair and Secretary, Bristol Central (Water Polo) Chair & Secretary	Completed and formalised as part of One Club merger in 2016
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance visibility of the network and performance club through quality marketing materials and publicity. 	COB Communications Officer.	Activity ongoing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet pool performance targets established in COB club development plan. 	COB Head Coach and Committee.	Specific performance targets met 2016/2017.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review principles for club and network engagement, i.e.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit local clubs, who approach us, to discuss membership of the COB 	COB Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary.	Successful addition of Calne and Soundwell SC to the network in 2015/16 and Penguins in 2017 Review network general literature and development priorities for the start of each

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	<p>network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The COB network is very happy for a club to belong to more than one network - When a club has signed an MoU with an existing network COB will only approach that club after having discussions with their current network 		<p>swimming year.</p> <p>React as required to further enquiries with existing material.</p>
<p>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. (Section 3.2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract new athletes to the sport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce network wide training sessions for members of all clubs. - Produce written material to address the perceived barriers to joining an aquatics club. See plan section 3.2 	<p>COB Network Development Group.</p>	<p>Monitor membership trends at a network level quarterly through the year.</p> <p>Network-wide sessions to be continued through 2017/18 season.</p> <p>Written material reviewed at Easter 2017.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the rate of athletes <i>leaving</i> the network is at least lower than the national average and provides continuous improvement over the life of the plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that the overall network “offer” appeals to swimmers in the age groups that show a higher risk of quitting the sport, i.e. 12 years and over. - Improve social elements of the network. Provide at least one network-wide social activity in the season. 	<p>COB Network Development Group.</p>	<p>Monitor membership trends at a network level quarterly through the year.</p> <p>One network-wide social activity before the end of the season</p>

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<p>Improve performance standards across the network. (Section 3.2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a series of workshops and training events beginning with twelve-week series of development sessions aimed at 9-12 year old swimmers in the network clubs, and their coaches. 	<p>COB Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Head Coach.</p>	<p>Network-wide training sessions first implemented in 2014 and continued throughout subsequent seasons.</p> <p>Finalise programme of workshops and training events by end of December.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four specialist stroke clinics will be run through the year and open to all network club swimmers and coaches. 	<p>COB Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Head Coach.</p>	<p>Clinics to be run at regular intervals throughout 2017/18.</p>
<p>Improve the standard of coaching across the network. (Section 3.5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 clubs. 	<p>COB Head Coach working in co-operation with club head coaches.</p>	<p>Network-wide training sessions first implemented in 2014 to be continued throughout subsequent seasons</p> <p>Finalise programme of workshops and training events by end of December.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the leadership of the City of Bristol Head Coach the network will maintain a unified coaching strategy across the clubs. 	COB Head Coach working in co-operation with club head coaches.	Ongoing monitoring of network-wide coaching strategy throughout 2017/18 season
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a programme of scheduled visits to club training sessions to assess strengths, weaknesses and opportunities to enhance the coaching, swimming and CPD programmes. 	COB Head Coach working in co-operation with club head coaches.	Dates of scheduled ongoing sessions for 2018 agreed by end December 2017.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce formal club coaches' meetings on a quarterly basis and agree scope of formal CPD activity for the period ahead. 	COB Head Coach working in co-operation with club head coaches. Volunteer Co-ordinator, supported by Swim England SW Club Development team and WESPORT	Dates of advanced meetings for 2018 agreed by end December 2017.
Improve access to training time through shared use of pool space. (Section 3.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider Swim England proposal to merge Hengrove-based clubs into a single operating unit. 	Chairs at Bishopsworth and Bristol Central Chair and Vice-Chair. City of Bristol	Completed as part of the One Club merger in 2016.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the management information available across the network to ensure that pool time utilisation can be accurately measured and monitored. 	Club chairs COB SwimMark Co-ordinator	Process in place to improve the collection and collation of information centrally by Easter 2018.
Reduce coaching costs through collaboration. (Section 3.6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The network will use the experience gleaned from the additional cross-network training sessions to examine options to exploit further opportunities afforded by joint training sessions and shared coaches. 	Network Development Group supported by COB Head Coach collaborating with the clubs' head coaches.	Completed as part of the One Club merge in 2016. Further proposals considered at Easter 2017. Review Easter 2018
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	Network Development Group.	Further proposals following One Club merge explored and to be reviewed by Easter 2018.

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<p>Raise the profile of the network such that it is not perceived to be of benefit only to the privileged and talented few. (Section 3.7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 network members. 	<p>COB Committee Network Development Group</p>	<p>Establish timetable for further one-off ‘masterclass’ sessions and stroke clinics by December 2017.</p> <p>Establish one pan-network social activity for 2018 in the calendar before end of December 2017.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network activities to focus initially on helping clubs to retain members in the high risk age groups of 14-15 and 16-19. 	<p>COB Committee Network Development Group</p>	<p>Establish one pan-network social activity in 2018 for the target age groups in the calendar before end of December 2017.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>Club chairs COB SwimMark Co-ordinator</p>	<p>Refined process in place to improve collect and collate information centrally by Easter 2017.</p>
<p>Increasing Participation of Athletes from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ethnic composition of the membership of a network club should at least reflect the ethnic composition of the resident population within that club’s “catchment area”. 	<p>Club Chairs under the leadership of COB chair.</p>	<p>Work will be ongoing through the 2017/18 season involving Bristol City Council and relevant community groups.</p> <p>The full programme is a long term (three year) ambition.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate the benefits of swimming • Address concerns over perceived clash of sport with cultural and/or religious values • Raise awareness of success in swimming achieved by BME athletes • Promote the City of Bristol network clubs within the relevant communities using appropriate and relevant material • Create an environment where discrimination in swimming is recognised and addressed • Create a document library containing material written for BME communities that addresses the concerns of athletes from those communities • Targeted publicity campaign • Provide readily accessible 		

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	<p>information on swimming activities in order to allow for informed choices, using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a variety of channels and media; and ○ centralised and local access points. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure information materials contain positive and appropriate images in relation to participation in swimming by ethnic minority communities. • Involve participants in the running of activities and clubs at local level. • Create an environment where discrimination in swimming is recognised and addressed • Ensure that those who wish, can develop their skills in a competitive context or at an elite level. • Provide a coaching development opportunity 		

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	within COB for a coach from a BME community.		
Improve the opportunities across the network for swimmers with a disability. (Section 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a learn to swim pathway for swimmers with a disability 	COB Disability Sub-Committee COB Head Coach Disability Lead Disability Coach	Initial work completed and implemented. Further engagement with LTS groups and schools during 2018
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish a swimming pathway showing how athletes with a disability can progress from LTS through to international competition with City of Bristol Aquatics. 	COB Disability Sub-Committee Disability Coach	Initial work completed and implemented. Review and improvement activities throughout 2017/18
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of swimmers in the newly introduced para squad from six to twelve 	Disability Lead COB Head Coach Disability Coach	Completed in 2016/17 season. Targets to be reviewed for 2017/18 season in line with development pathway
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore future integration options with Keynsham Seals and Avon Swifts. 	Keynsham Secretary COB Secretary	Long term aim to be explored for 2017/18.
Increase Participation by Swimmers from Low Income Households (Section 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work collectively to establish a consistent set of governance procedures for the operation of a hardship fund that will be used 	Club Secretaries Club Treasurers	Initial work completed. Further revisions required following One Club merge to be completed by Easter 2018.

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	<p>exclusively to support athletes from low income households;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the relative merits of operating such a scheme at a network level in comparison to operating individual schemes at club level; • Construct the basis of a bursary scheme with the sole purpose of attracting promising athletes not currently involved in the aquatics disciplines; • Seek external funding opportunities to maintain the bursary scheme in future years 		
<p>Maintain Participation in Swimming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate competition across all age groups and abilities • Ensure Constant, Clear and Consistent Communication • Diversify the aquatics offer in 	<p>Club chairs and committees co-ordinated by the network development group</p>	<p>Work to be undertaken throughout the 2017/18 season in a bid to refine the network swimming programme.</p>

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	the network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the social offer across the network • Vary swimming location • Provide volunteering opportunities for the 14+ age group • Work with third parties to strengthen the programme 		
Maintain high quality communication across the network.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the network clubs are kept informed of information that is critical to them and their swimmers. • Improve the collection of management information to drive better decision making across the network. 	COB Head Coach to co-ordinate requirements through coaches' meetings and design communications plan. Club secretaries.	Throughout the lifetime of this development plan.
Training for Coaches, Officials and Volunteers. (Section 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish network-wide training and development calendar for 2017/18 season. 	COB Volunteer Co-ordinator Network Development Group	By end September 2018

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture requirements of network clubs for the delivery of training for teaching and coaching at level 1, level 2, and level 3. 	<p>Club secretaries and volunteer co-ordinators.</p> <p>COB co-ordinator supported by Swim England SW Club Development Team and WESPORT.</p>	<p>Requirements by end Q2 2018.</p> <p>Programme to commence from Q3 2018 and throughout the lifetime of this plan</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture requirements for non-coaching requirements such as Safeguarding, Team Management and officials' training. 	<p>Club secretaries and volunteer co-ordinators.</p> <p>COB co-ordinator supported by Swim England SW Club Development Team, WESPORT and regional officials' co-ordinators.</p>	<p>Requirements by end Q2 2018.</p> <p>Programme to commence from Q3 2018 and throughout the lifetime of this plan</p>