

Access Aquatics Inclusive Club Guide

October 2024 Update

Swim England

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Welcome to the Swim England Inclusive Club Guide!

This resource has been designed to support you in making your club environment more inclusive for all of your members. As a 'live' document we are committed to updating it as new resources and support become available. Whilst many of the documents will be useful for clubs, this guide is not exclusively applicable to them. We are sure that our Regions and Counties will also find the information useful in their journey to become more inclusive.

Access Aquatics

In 2023 we released our new strategy with a clear mission to 'improve the health and success of the nation by enabling access to aquatics for all'.

Our mission is to make our sports and activities accessible, inclusive and safe for everyone. We will champion our sports and work with and empower our partners to tackle inequalities; remove the barriers to participation currently experienced by people and communities; provide a governance structure that ensures great, safe experiences and enable everyone to reach their full potential in the water.

You can find out more about our strategy **here.**

Why be inclusive?

Ask yourself; is your club as inclusive as it could be? Does it open its doors to any individual who wants to get involved? Does your club truly reflect your local community?

Being inclusive means that regardless of background, your club enables everyone to participate as members. Being inclusive means creating a welcoming environment and sense of belonging for all of your members.

Opening your club to everyone will aid with sustainability. It will add new dimensions to the club's social element, and you may even find talent in many different forms, perhaps where you least expect it.

Benefits of being inclusive include:

- Increase in the membership of your club.
- Increase in the number of volunteers, administrators, and participants who can help contribute to the success and running of the club.
- Increase in the level of skills and abilities within your club.
- Provides positive role models – particularly for younger members.
- Club benefits from a widespread understanding and experience of diversity.
- A richer club environment in which members appreciate and learn from each other's backgrounds and experiences.
- A potential positive impact on the outcome of funding applications.
- Attracting a greater number and diversity of participants, including a wider talent pool.
- Strengthening of the community as a whole by encouraging everyone to contribute to building a stronger society.

Being more inclusive could involve having to change your clubs culture; a task which requires strong leadership and a real commitment to change.

Feedback and Further Reading

We welcome feedback from all of our members. If you think there is something missing from this guide that could be beneficial please let us know via **our dedicated equality email.**

Alternatively, Swim England have a Sport Development team dedicated to supporting our sports. For further club support, please contact **clubdevelopment@swimming.org**

As part of this Inclusive Club Guide we are committed to sharing best practice from across the sector and beyond. We have included many of the resources we believe you will find most useful, but we would recommend viewing a full list of **Sport England's further reading** for support and inspiration.

The Swim England Approach to Inclusion

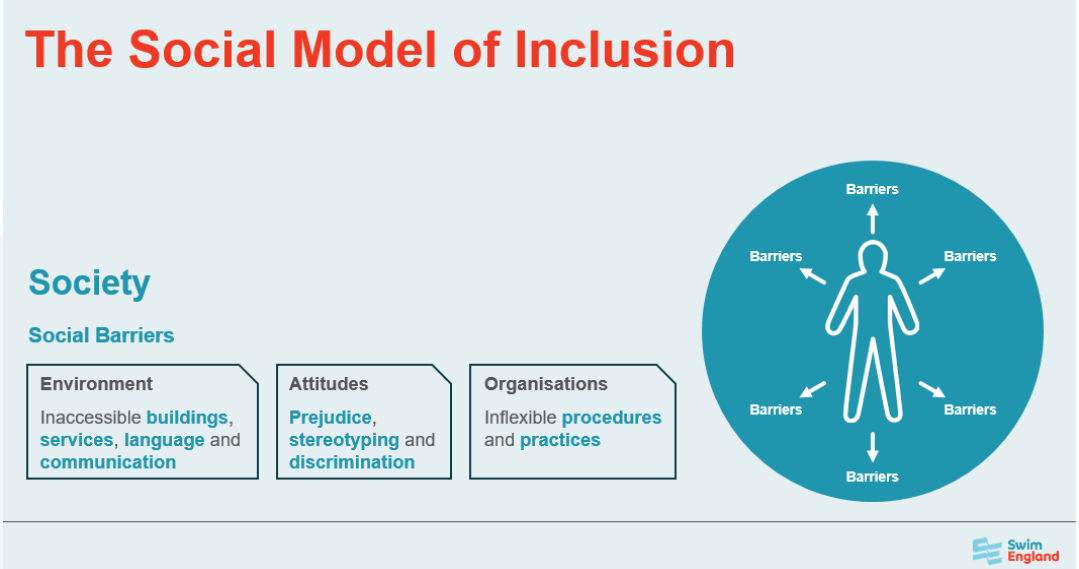
Swim England is fully committed to the principles and practice of equality of opportunity and we consider the aquatic disciplines to provide sport for all. Aquatic sports can and should be made accessible to everyone to the greatest extent possible.

You can read more about the Swim England commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (**"EDI"**) and find out more about our ongoing work **here.** For clarity, Swim England defines EDI as follows:

- **Equality –** This is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents.
- **Diversity –** The differences between people. From a legal perspective, you may have heard of the term 'protected characteristics'.
- **Inclusion –** We refer to the Miller and Katz (2002) definition. Specifically, '*a sense of belonging: feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best*'.

We approach our activities via the 'social model of inclusion'. This includes an underlying belief that social barriers such as the environment, attitudes and organisations are what prevent people from participating, not personal characteristics. For example, with the right consideration a wheelchair user is able to fully access our club environment via physically accessible facilities, a trained and enthusiastic workforce and flexible practice that would enable participation within club training.

To find out more about the social model, we would recommend completing our FREE 'Foundations of Inclusivity' CPD. Details for this can be found on page 5.



Club Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)

Organisationally Swim England have published and worked towards an annual **'Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan'** or 'DIAP' for a number of years. From 2023 onwards this obligation has been added to 'Club Affiliation', the required minimum standard for clubs, to ensure EDI is given appropriate consideration at the point of delivery.

The Club DIAP is not intended to be administratively intensive and instead focuses on 3 or 4 key actions that can be completed each year to help your Club become more inclusive. If you are unsure where to start, we recommend reading through this guide to give you some ideas about the groups you may consider. A template of the Club DIAP can be found in Appendix 4.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

This policy provides information on Swim England's obligations and commitments relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in all of the aquatic disciplines. The policy includes reference to Swim England's expectations, the legal framework and the relevant procedures in the event the policy is breached.

For clubs this policy lays out legal requirements with regards to discrimination, harassment and victimisation along with further information about the Swim England Complaints procedure. The policy can be viewed in full **here.**

Tools and resources

Swim England Language Guide (Appendix 1)
In order to deliver inclusively we recognise that clubs must be able to discuss the topics of equality, diversity and inclusion confidently. The language guide found within Appendix 1 has been designed to enable this. The guide focuses on disability, race and ethnicity, and the LGBTQ+ community given they are often referred to when discussing underrepresentation within our sports.

Swim England Example Membership Form (Appendix 2)
Registering new members provides the perfect opportunity to find out more about them and ensure you can cater for any 'reasonable adjustments' (see page 8). We have created a template registration form for clubs to use. Importantly this includes an 'additional information' section, allowing for new members to detail reasonable adjustments, pronouns or even a preferred nickname! Effective inclusion is generally good customer service and asking these questions will allow clubs to provide a positive experience.

Training

Foundations of Inclusivity CPD

Intended to be your first step into the world of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; the Foundations of Inclusivity CPD explains the Swim England approach with a variety of case studies from across the sporting world. The purpose of the CPD is to ensure all clubs have a model or lens from which to view inclusion within their clubs.

Key dates

A key element of inclusivity in any club is ensuring that diversity is celebrated. From a communications perspective this can include spotlighting events such as international 'days of' and religious holidays via your social media channels. Helpfully, the organisation Inclusive Employers have published **a full calendar** of these events throughout the year. Sporting Equals have also produced this **handy wall planner** which highlights key religious festivals.

Whilst a Club would not be expected to raise awareness of every event, it is recommended that you create an annual comms plan that will allow for promotion of the most relevant. What is 'relevant' may be determined based on the existing membership of the club, the local community or the barriers you are working to break down.

Further support

If you cannot find the information you require from this guide please contact our Head of Diversity and Inclusion via **our dedicated equality email.**

Inclusive Volunteering

Like many sports, aquatics simply wouldn't be able to function without the incredibly generous support of our volunteers. This is especially true of our clubs where volunteers will give up their time to support in roles ranging from the Club Committee to officiating at events.

It is therefore vital that clubs take into account the volunteer experience, ensuring that anyone giving up their time feels that they belong within the club environment.

Inclusive Culture – Starting from the Committee

The Club Committee are fortunately in a position to lead by example, setting the culture for the rest of the club. Some examples of steps that can be taken to achieve this include:

- Providing inclusive training and support for volunteers and staff to ensure that everyone feels welcome.
- Incorporate and celebrate diversity in committees and boards by encouraging people from a mix of backgrounds, ages and genders to become involved.
- Promote a welcoming attitude amongst members and develop plans, policies and procedures to support inclusion.
- Consider the use of accessible venues for both training and competition.
- Display posters/images on your website/social media pages and club notice boards that reflect the diversity of your club.
- Serve food and/or play music at social events that reflect members' cultural backgrounds, e.g. halal food.
- Offer welcoming messages in different languages reflecting the membership of the club.
- Build good links with local community organisations that are connected with the groups you are aiming to work with, e.g. youth organisations, multicultural agencies and disability service providers.
- Keep up-to-date with changes in your local community, such as changes to local population and demographics, barriers to participation and what programmes/initiatives exist in your area.
- Promote local public transport links to help all to attend training and competitions and minimise 'cost' as a barrier.
- Ensuring Club Committee meetings are physically accessible, including Club AGM's.

Volunteer communication

Good communication with your volunteers is essential. Without clear communication mistakes are easily made. You should ensure that you:

- Communicate regularly with your volunteers and send them updates via their preferred methods of communication (this should be identified during the induction and if the volunteer is under 18, consent must be given by a parent or guardian).
- Hold regular meetings to update your volunteers.
- Have a volunteering page on your club website; update it regularly with volunteering news.
- Upload case studies of volunteer achievements to acknowledge their dedication and commitment.
- Consider whether a 'Volunteer Coordinator' is needed. These individuals could ensure that messaging is consistent and effectively passed to those involved in the club.

Disabled volunteers

Working with disabled volunteers may at first feel quite daunting, but it's important to remember that it's okay to ask the individual what support or help they may need. As with all volunteers, every individual brings their own skills, knowledge and experience, and disabled people are no different.

Ensure that you and your club:

- Always address the disabled person first, not the person they are with.
- Are aware of personal needs and preferred ways of communicating and respect individual requirements.
- Work around an issue, rather than avoid it.
- Do not underestimate the intelligence or ability of the individual.
- Do not assume that all disabled people require assistance. Ask in the first instance if they require your help and how best to assist, or wait to be asked.
- Demonstrate what you mean if you are not successfully getting the message across verbally.
- Respect the individual and their needs. Do not interrupt, correct, speak for the person or be tempted to finish sentences off for them.
- Understand that a wheelchair or mobility aid should be viewed as part of the user's body space – keep an appropriate distance and never use a wheelchair as something to lean on.
- Understand that it is perfectly acceptable to offer to help!

Top Tip: Be open, honest and don't be afraid to ask questions!

Volunteering opportunities

All volunteering opportunities should be open to everyone. If volunteers display enthusiasm and commitment to develop their knowledge and skills, clubs should strive to support them to do so.

Please see our selection of **volunteering role descriptions** to find out more information on what roles could be advertised. Should you have any questions regarding volunteering opportunities or how to access training, please contact the Volunteer Engagement Team by emailing **volunteering@swimming.org.**

- Ensure your marketing makes it clear that anyone can volunteer (and ensure you follow the Wavepower safe recruitment policy when recruiting volunteers).
- Market your volunteer opportunities in a variety of places to widen your potential audience – you could advertise in your local volunteer centre, local faith centres, schools/colleges, leisure centres, etc., or by using recruitment portals such as Join In or Do-It.org.
- Provide an induction for all volunteers as standard procedure to make all new volunteers feel welcome.
- Identify skills and training that will benefit both the individual and the club.
- Provide volunteers with a mentor if they feel this would support them to familiarise themselves with the club and their volunteering role.
- Establish from the volunteer at the offset if they require any additional support and what this looks like.
- Ensure that you establish how the volunteer would like to be communicated with.

Disability

Introduction

At Swim England we are proud of the achievements of our para-swimmers, with many going on to achieve success at both the Paralympic and Commonwealth Games. However, we also recognise that like non-disabled people, disabled people do not always aspire to reach these levels of competition and instead participate for other reasons such as enjoyment and health.

Therefore, regardless of whether a Club offers a 'para' discipline, we want them to feel confident and competent that they are providing an accessible offer for disabled members (including participants, workforce and volunteers).

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 places a legal duty on Swim England and each of our clubs to provide 'reasonable adjustments', taking positive steps to remove barriers that may prevent a disabled person from accessing the same services as their non-disabled peers. What is 'reasonable' is determined based upon factors such as effectivess of the requested adjustment, health and safety, cost and organisation (club) size/resource. We would ask and expect that clubs make every effort to meet these adjustments, working with members to find a mutually agreed solution.

Examples of reasonable adjustments could include:

- Allowing a 'spotter' to be in an agreed position on poolside to support a member with epilepsy e.g. identifying when they may be about to have a seizure.
- Agreeing to provide club communications in a voice note as well as via the usual, written format.
- Being flexible with club policy where it is clear that perceived poor behaviour is as a result of an impairment. Please note, ensuring a clear boundary is still in place is advised.

What is right for one member may not be right for another. We recommend that reasonable adjustments are co-produced with the member and, if appropriate, their parent/carer. The Coaching Consultation Form (Appendix 3) can assist with guiding these conversations. If you are unsure or require any advice please contact **our dedicated equality email.**

Tools and resources

Certificate of Exception

In 2022 the 'Certificate of Swimming Disability' was updated to the 'Certificate of Exception'. The certificate was initially created to enable disabled swimmers to participate in competition without being penalised for rule infractions beyond their control.This was particularly relevant to swimmers who could not, or did not, want to have a para-swimming classification.

Whilst uptake was positive, it was recognised that the application process may be a barrier for some and there may be potential to expand its use. Therefore, the following updates were made:

- The removal of the need for medical evidence when submitting the **application form** for the certificate. This has been replaced with a simple co-signatory process. The form can be countersigned by a fellow club member such as a coach.

- The extension of the certificate to include a ‘swimwear exception’. This will enable competitors to wear swimwear outside of the standard regulations whilst also ensuring compliance with World Aquatics regulations in relation to swimwear.

We recommend that clubs make their members aware of the certificate as part of their welcome process and via club communications.

Coaching Consultation Form (Appendix 3)
Following feedback from our members, this form has been created to help clubs ensure their members receive the best possible aquatics experience. It has been written primarily with consideration for autistic club members, however we recognise it may be useful for many other individuals. The form will enable both the Club and member (or parent/ guardian) to determine how best to deliver and agree on responsibilities across the differing environments of training and competition.

Health Factsheets
Following publication of the **Health and Wellbeing Benefits of Swimming report**, Swim England’s Health Commission group worked collaboratively to develop a range of fact sheets on swimming with particular health conditions, written for competitive swimmers, the general public and to also assist those who support or advise swimmers. Examples include: Diabetes and Competitive Swimming, Asthma and Competitive Swimming, Cancer and Swimming etc.

Activity Alliance – Disability Club Hub
The Disability Inclusion Club Hub is a free online tool that supports sports clubs and community organisations improve their the delivery and access of activity opportunities, so more disabled people can be active.

It enables sports clubs, community organisations, and the sport and activity workforce to self-assess their offer for disabled people. As part of the assessment, users will understand how inclusive and accessible their current offer is for disabled people and identify areas for improvement.

The Disability Inclusion Club Hub invites users to answer a series of questions, taking approximately ten minutes to answer, across three key areas:

- Organisation operations
- Promotion of activities
- Workforce

Once the questions have been answered, the tool will direct users to a range of relevant Activity Alliance resources to help them make positive changes to ensure their activities meet the needs of disabled people.

Ripple Effect
This 2-year project aimed to identify and remove barriers to volunteering for disabled people. Working in partnership with the National Disability Sports Organisations (NDSO’s), the team were able to support novice volunteers all the way to officiating at national events. You can find out more about the project, what has been learned and the volunteer’s experiences **here.**

Swim England – Environmental Assessment Tool
It is important to consider both the physical and social environment of any public or community building in order to identify areas of improvement. There are a range of things pool facility providers can do to help remove barriers to access. This can be done by

ensuring the physical environment is easier to navigate and safe for people living with long term health conditions or impairments. Whilst clubs might not always have direct control or influence over changes needed to the physical environment, they may need to make reasonable adjustments to help people navigate around certain physical barriers. The tool allows anyone to identify the potential facility barriers and therefore consider how to work around, improve upon or completely remove the barrier.

Training

Swim England – CPD's for Supporting Swimmers with Additional Needs

In order to support our clubs and workforce a range of CPD covering various impairments have been created. Each CPD will provide information about the impairment before providing practical advice for how this could be considered within a lesson, training session or competition. The CPD's include:

- Making Your Lessons Engaging for Autistic Children
- Supporting Pupils with SEND in School Swimming
- Integrating Swimmers with a Physical and/or Sensory Impairment into Mainstream Swimming Lessons
- Teaching Aquatics to Children with Learning Difficulties
- Introduction to Deaf Awareness and using British Sign Language in Aquatics
- Deaf and Visually Impaired Friendly Swimming
- Introduction to Disability Swimming
- Introduction to Para-Swimming

Swim England – Introduction to Supporting Swimmers with Long-Term Health Conditions

This CPD will give you an introduction to supporting swimmers with Long Term Health Conditions. Its engaging content will ensure you obtain up-to-date knowledge and aquatic adaptations around health conditions and the tools to help improve the overall experience of aquatic activity programmes.

The strength of this CPD lies in its co-production with health experts from Swim England's Swimming and Health Commission group.

Activity Alliance and UK Coaching - Inclusive Activity Programme eLearning

Activity Alliance's eLearning module offers a fun and interactive introduction to the 'Inclusive Activity Programme'. It is a great starting point for anyone wanting to learn more about the key principles of inclusion in sport and physical activity.
Through self-led study, you will:

- Understand the benefits of being active and recognise potential participation barriers for disabled people.
- Explore what makes a good, inclusive deliverer.
- Develop an understanding of different inclusive approaches, including Activity Alliance's Ten Principles, the Activity Inclusion Model and the STEP Model.
- Learn about the importance of inclusive communication.
- Receive an interactive online workbook to support your learning.

British Blind Sport and UK Coaching – Coaching People with a Visual Impairment

This course raises awareness of the crucial role coaches play in helping people with visual impairments (VI) overcome barriers to participation in sport and physical activity.

Completing this course will enable coaches to feel more confident including people with a visual impairment within their sessions.

In 2024 a further swimming-specific module was launched. This was developed in partnership with British Blind Sport and includes reference to pool orientation, top tips for coaches and how you can best support your swimmers. Swim England are happy to offer a number of free licences to this CPD. Please contact **our dedicated equality email** to request a licence.

Marketing support

Activity Alliance – Access for All: Inclusive Communications – Activity Alliance
We must be conscious of inclusivity when creating our resources as we may inadvertently be creating barriers to disabled people participating. Fortunately the Activity Alliance have a created a comprehensive guide as well as a range of factsheets that break this down further, explaining how to make various types of comms, including social media, accessible.

Ethnic Diversity

Introduction

Approximately 6% of our club membership are from diverse ethnic communities, in comparison to 18% of the general population (2021 Census). Whilst low this should be viewed as an opportunity with huge potential for growth and the chance to open our aquatic sports to a significant number of new members.

By using our **frontiers toolkit** we can structure our activity to increase participation of groups and individuals that may previously have felt swimming and aquatics wasn't for them.

To be successful in this area it may require non-traditional methods with religious and cultural considerations embedded throughout the planning and delivery process. If we follow 'traditional' practices then we can only expect 'traditional' results!

Sporting Equals Charter

Organisationally Swim England are signatories to **Sporting Equals' Charter**, laying out our commitment to increase the ethnic diversity of our membership via a more inclusive offer. As part of the Charter, Sporting Equals lay out 3 areas of focus or the '3 C's':

Capture – Ensure you're collecting data about your membership and using available insight.
Commit – Publicly show your support to tackle underrepresentation at all levels.
Celebrate – Share positive role models and stories.

As clubs, the 3 C's model can be used when writing your DIAP to ensure that you are taking a rounded approach to increasing ethnic diversity amongst your membership.

Tools and resources

England Swims

In early 2022, Swim England carried out the biggest piece of research of its kind, looking into the perceptions of aquatics amongst ethnically diverse communities.

Using a localised approach and with the support of 100+ individuals and organisations, we received 4488 responses. This insight can be used to determine the barriers to different communities that you may be hoping to attract. A summary report is available via the link above, if you require a report on a specific community please **complete this form.**

Black History Month

Occurring every October, Black History Month provides a chance to reflect upon the Black community's involvement and contribution to aquatics. As an underrepresented group across our sports, it also provides an opportunity to learn and consider how we can change our delivery to meet the needs of prospective members. Throughout October 2024 we spoke to a range of stakeholders about a range of topics including:

- **Parent and Swimmer** – Andrea and India share their experiences as a swim parent and a national swimmer.
- **Teacher –** Elidia discussed how she got into teaching.
- **Swimmer** – André discussed the intersectionality between the LGBTQ+ community and the Black community.

Hair Care

As part of the England Swims research project, it was identified that hair care is one of the primary barriers to the Black community's involvement in aquatics. Specifically, fear that chlorine and/or salt water can damage afro hair. To assist with this, Swim England team member Marie Owen, provided her advice to safely protect afro hair. Marie shared her personal experience whilst drawing on her previous professional experience.

Engaging Respectfully with Ethnically Diverse Communities

We recognise that confidence and fear of accidental offending can be a significant barrier to engaging with ethnically diverse communities. To assist with this Sporting Equals have produced a short guide detailing some of the key considerations you can make to ensure you remain respectful throughout your work in this area.

Muslim Sports Foundation – Ramadan Nutrition and Competition Guidance

This guidance was co-produced with the Muslim Sports Foundation in order to support members who are observing the holy month of Ramadan.

Three documents have been developed to provide coaches and members with a resource to support both themselves and their members to fuel appropriately whilst fasting.

As Ramadan falls within aquatics' competitive calendar it is important to recognise and assist those members to overcome the challenges they may face in training, nutrition and competition. The documents that have been released contain a competition plan, guidance around nutrition as well as an example training day regime which will assist members parents/guardians and their coaches.

Murabiyoon Sports – Ramadan Webinar and Learn to Swim Shorts

To mark Ramadan 2024 Murabiyoon Sports created a number of supporting resources for the aquatic community. These consist of:

- A 20 minute webinar explaining the importance of Ramadan, the impact of fasting and how you can get involved.
- A series of Learn to Swim shorts (3-5 minutes) that include teaching and coaching-specific considerations that can be made during Ramadan.

Marketing support

Terminology

In 2020 Sporting Equals carried out extensive research with 200+ community groups into the use of the term 'BAME' (Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic). Having being used for several years it had become the accepted term to describe ethnicities other than 'White British'. The research found that many now found the term outdated with the term 'minority' particularly inappropriate. These findings echoed earlier governmental research that found the term 'BAME' to be largely misunderstood. If the need arises to refer to ethnicity we should therefore be looking to refer to specific demographics, rather than grouping.

Sporting Equals do address that for admin-based purposes it is sometimes unavoidable to group ethnicities. To do this appropriately they therefore carried out several focus groups to find out what should be used. The terms **'diverse ethnic communities'** and '**ethnically diverse communities'** were both deemed acceptable and we should therefore use these where relevant.

Marketing for Ethnically Diverse Communities

Sporting Equals have pulled together a brief guide on some of the considerations that you will need to make when looking to diversify your membership.If you have questions about any of the recommendations please contact **our dedicated equality email.**

LGBTQ+

Introduction

Multiple studies have shown that the LGBTQ+ community are underrepresented within sport. For example, the National LGBT Partnership found that 56% of LGBT women were not active enough to maintain good health, compared to 45% of the general population. Similar results were also found in both men (55% compared to 33%) and gender-fluid respondents (64% not active enough to maintain good health).

We have the opportunity to have a genuine impact on this inequality, by ensuring our clubs and activities are inclusive

Pride in Water

Founded in 2020, Pride in Water aims to enhance the support, visibility and engagement of the LGBT+ community within the aquatic disciplines.

Organisationally we aspire to support the network with these three objectives whilst helping to grow the network. If you are interested in finding out more or getting involved please contact **our dedicated equality email.**

Top Tip

Consider, is there space to share information about the network on your registration form?

Transgender and Non-Binary Competition Policy

The updated competition policy was implemented in September 2023. This included the introduction of an ‘Open’ category alongside the ‘Female’ category for many of our competitions. It is important to note that this policy relates solely to competition and therefore transgender or non-binary members should be free to self-ID and participate within the club in non-competitive environments such as training or volunteering, free from discrimination and exclusion.

Changing rooms and facilities

Alongside the policy above we have received many queries from clubs looking to ensure they are providing an inclusive environment for members. Given Swim England do not own the leisure facilities in which many clubs operate, we cannot set policy in this area. It is therefore recommend that you speak to your operator in order to determine their policy. Where possible, this should be done proactively to ensure that members receive a straightforward answer upon request.

Tools and resources

Pride Sports – Non-Binary People, Sport and Physical Activity
In a report written by Pride Sports and funded by Sport England, they detail the sporting experiences of non-binary people. The report provides a great opportunity to raise awareness and provide a point of reference from which clubs can assess their own practices.

Marketing support

Inclusive communications with regards to the LGBTQ+ community are particularly important as they can reflect the wider culture of our sports and clubs. The guide below provides a great starting point for anyone who wants to ensure that the content they produce is inclusive to the LGBTQ+ community.

Rainbow Ready – Resources for Communicating LGBT+ Inclusion in Sport
A guide produced by Sports Media LGBTQ+ and endorsed by Pride Sports UK that lays out best practice for communications that reference participants who are LGBTQ+ or activities that focus on this community. The guide aims to increase engagement amongst both the LGBTQ+ community and prevent some of the more common pitfalls.

Visible Role Models
The phrase ‘you can’t be what you can’t see’ is particularly true when considering the LGBTQ+ community within sport. For many, fear of being ‘outed’ or discriminated against can lead to individuals not feeling comfortable to be themselves in our sports.

We are therefore grateful to those individuals who have put themselves forward as role models, showing that aquatics is a sport for all.

As part of Pride month in 2021 and 2022 we produced a range of case studies in order to increase the visibility of the LGBTQ+ community across all levels of our sport. Examples of these can all be viewed below:

- **Josh Devine – Pride in Water Chair**
- **Kate Gilwood – Open Water Swimming Coach**
- **Stephanie Ramsay – Artistic Swimmer**
- **Michael Gunning – Elite Swimmer**
- **Rich Robinson – Masters Diver**

Whilst no Club member should be obliged to share their story, those that do should be celebrated and supported.

Mental Health

Introduction

Regardless of the level at which individuals participate, we must remind mindful that appropriate consideration of Mental Health is paramount. As traditionally 'training intensive' sports this is particularly true of our aquatic disciplines. Fortunately, there are many helpful resources available that enable clubs and their members to ensure this area isn't neglected.

Tools and resources

Mental Health and Swimming

Working in partnership with Mind, the mental health charity, the fact sheet on mental health and swimming offers advice on dealing with anxiety, body consciousness and general wellbeing.

Mind – Mental Health and Physical Activity Toolkit

Mind's Mental Health and Physical Activity Toolkit aims to increase the number of sport, physical activity and mental health providers who are equipped with the knowledge and skills to support and engage people experiencing mental health problems in physical activity.

The toolkit is made up of a variety of guides. Each one provides guidance, tools, templates and good practice case studies to help organisations provide an inclusive and welcoming environment for people experiencing mental health problems to be physically active.

Mind – Mental Health Champions Toolkit

This toolkit is for organisations, clubs and groups in the sport and physical activity sector that want to support the mental health of their members, participants, staff and volunteers. It introduces the idea of mental health champions, and provides guidance on establishing a mental health champions scheme.

Mind – Mental Health in Elite Sport

The 'Mental Health in Elite Sport' report shows how attitudes have changed whilst spotlighting some of the best practice that is occurring. From a Club perspective it is a great resource and for using as a point of reference to assess your own practices (where applicable).

Training

UK Coaching – Mental Health Awareness for Sport and Physical Activity

This online course aims to provide the knowledge, skills and confidence to better understand and support people living with mental health problems, and create a positive environment that ensures they enjoy the benefits of being active and keep coming back for more.

The four modules will increase your knowledge and understanding of mental health, providing you with the practical skills and strategies to be able to:

- Build people's resilience, self-esteem and confidence
- Adapt your sessions to make them more inclusive
- Enable and support mental health recovery, and
- Tackle stigma and discrimination.

Swim England Mental Health Advice

While we can all agree swimmers are the fittest (and most fun!) athletes, chasing personal bests and representing their club and their own ambitions takes an immense amount of drive and commitment! It's not always easy to balance training and competing alongside study and life, therefore we must all remain mindful of stress, 'burnout' and other mental health problems.

Approximately one in four people will experience a mental health problem in any given year – that could be two or three individuals in every race at your next competition.

Mental health problems can effect anyone, and have a wide range of causes that can be complex and interrelated.

Swim England's **Mental Health Advice** can therefore be used to determine how best to support members who may require help.

Helplines

Helplines such as the ones below are often only thought of in a crisis but this needn't be the case. To normalise the stigma around mental health we recommend ensuring that all members are made aware of the contacts below. Supporting the mental health of our aquatics family is vital to creating and inclusive culture.

Samaritans – 116 123 (24/7 Service)
The Samaritans offer a safe place for people to talk at any time about whatever may be impacting them.

Common reasons people contact Samaritans include:

- Relationship and family problems
- Loss, including loss of a friend or a family member through bereavement
- Financial worries
- Job-related stress
- College or study-related stress
- Loneliness and isolation
- Depression
- Painful and/or disabling physical illness
- Heavy use of or dependency on alcohol or other drugs
- Thoughts of suicide

Mind's Infoline – 0300 123 3393 (Open Mon-Fri 9am-6pm)
This infoline is an information and signposting service. Common reasons people contact Mind include:

- Mental Health problems
- Where to get help locally
- Treatment Options
- Advocacy Services

Summary

We hope you have found this guide informative. Thank you for proactively taking the time to learn more about how you can make your club more inclusive. We will only enable access to aquatics for all with the support of our fantastic Club members and hope this guide will support your club, wherever you may be on your inclusion journey. We will continue to update this guide as resources and tools are developed and the areas of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion continue to evolve.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all of the organisations that have provided the information and resources that have been shared throughout this guide. It is clear that there is a massive amount of supporting information that can assist our clubs.

Thanks must also go to those who have shared their experiences as part of this guide, be that in a case study or via the listed resources.

Further updates

We are committed to ensuring that our clubs have access to the latest guidance and research to help with their EDI journey. This document will be continuously updated with new versions uploaded to the website periodically. Planned updates for 2025 include:

- Adult Safeguarding
- EDI Fundraising Advice
- Women's Health
- Neurodivergence in Aquatics

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Inclusive Language

Our approach to language

This brief guide has been written to increase awareness of the terminology being used around diverse groups and the rationale for its use. The groups referred to have been chosen based on underrepresentation within aquatics and the increased likelihood that you will refer to them.

Wherever possible we should be looking to refer to individuals rather than groups. We need to avoid terms being used as a 'catch all' as this will simply lead to them becoming outdated (see 'Ethnicity' for more info). It is the intent of our use that matters most, as long as we remain considerate of individual differences we can't go far wrong!

Why does it change?

Like all areas of society, language is ever-changing and we need to ensure that we remain up to date with these changes. To do so shows that we respect the individuality of our members and those we are looking to getting involved in aquatics.

The guidance provided below has been recommended following extensive research and co-production with the demographics involved. Rather than 'labelling', the language provided has been reached through consultation and collaboration, ensuring it is both respectful and fit for purpose.

Disability

As detailed above, At Swim England we refer to the 'social model of disability' rather than the 'medical model of disability'. In the past the traditional medical model has been used, putting the onus of 'disability' on the individual, essentially implying that they are unable to access opportunities as a result of their disability. The social model flips this idea by explaining that it is actually societal barriers that restrict people. For example, under the medical model an individual with a hearing impairment may be unable to attend an online CPD as *they* wouldn't be able to communicate. However, under the social model, the onus switches and the only reason they cannot attend is because other 'reasonable adjustments' haven't been made e.g. an interpreter or captions. This approach therefore makes it possible to overcome the barriers, enabling inclusion.

To reflect this approach we should use the term '**disabled people**' rather than 'people with disabilities. Aside from disability the social model or 'approach' can be applied across all areas of inclusion. If we view barriers as things that can be removed or adapted we will often find solutions where previously it may not have appeared possible.

If you would like to find out more about the social model of disability please visit:
disabilityrightsuk.org/social-model-disability-language

Ethnicity

In 2020 Sporting Equals carried out extensive research with 200+ community groups into the use of the term 'BAME' (Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic). Having being used for several years it had become the accepted term to describe ethnicities other than 'White British'. The research found that many now found the term outdated with the use of 'minority' particularly

inappropriate. These findings echoed earlier governmental research that found the term 'BAME' to be largely misunderstood. If the need arises to describe ethnicity we should therefore be looking to refer to specific demographics, rather than grouping. For example, if we hope to increase the representation of Black people within our clubs then we need to state this clearly.

Sporting Equals do address that in some instances it may be unavoidable to group ethnicities. To do this appropriately they carried out several focus groups to determine what language should be used. The terms '**diverse ethnic communities**' and '**ethnically diverse communities**' were both deemed acceptable and we should therefore use these moving forwards.

If you would like to read more about Sporting Equals' research please visit: **sportingequals.org.uk/news-and-blogs/sporting-equals-bame-terminology-survey-statement.html**

LGBTQ+

Although terminology around the LGBT+ community hasn't fundamentally changed in recent years it has expanded to include the full spectrum of individuals included under the broad LGBTQ+ banner. Like the groups above we should, where appropriate, look to make reference to individuals rather than 'LGBTQ+' as a collective.

Rather than creating a separate Swim England approach, it is beneficial to develop an understanding of the terms you may hear in this area. Stonewall have developed a helpful glossary of terms that is updated as language continues to develop: **stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/faqs-and-glossary/glossary-terms**

What if I am unsure?

Ultimately we need to ensure that we are being considerate of others when using language, regardless of whether we are speaking to them directly or referring to them.

If you do make a mistake simply apologise and move on, there is no need to dwell on it!

If you have any questions about any of the terms included in this guide please contact equality@swimming.org

Appendix 2 – Club Membership Form

CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

Welcome to >Insert Name< Club! In order to ensure we can provide you with a safe and enjoyable experience please complete the details below and submit to the club's Membership Secretary (contact details at end of form). If the new club member is under 18 years of age then please provide contact details for the parent/guardian rather than the member.

Name			
Date of Birth			
Gender (*Please delete as appropriate)*	Male / Female / Prefer Not to Say / Prefer to Self-describe:		
Category (*For the purpose of competition)*	Open / Female		
Telephone			
Email Address			
Address			
Medical Information (*Please include any primary and secondary impairments. All disclosures will be kept confidential).*			
Allergies			
Medication			
Emergency Contact 1			
Emergency Contact 2 *(One of these must be a mobile number and not a landline)*			
Ethnicity (*i.e. White British / Mixed White & Asian / Black Caribbean* etc.)			
Country of international representation			
Additional Information *(Please include any information that you believe is relevant to help us provide you with a positive experience. Some examples may include: gender pronouns, reasonable adjustments you require, previous swimming experience or simply a preferred nickname!)*			
Is this the only club that the swimmer is a member of?	Yes / No	**Other Club:**	

The club may wish to take photographs of individuals and groups of swimmers under the age of 18 which may include your child. All photographs will be taken and published in line with the Swim England Photography Policy. The club requires parental consent to take and use photographs. Parents have a right to refuse agreement to their child being photographed. As the parent or carer please indicate your permission below. Please note you can withdraw your consent in writing to the club Welfare Officer at any time should you wish to do so.

Photos to be used on club (secure) website	Yes/No
Photos to be included in newspaper articles	Yes/No
Photos taken by professional photographer at events	Yes/No
Filming for training purposes	Yes/No

I confirm that I have read, and agree to abide by the code of conduct and the club policies. I acknowledge receipt of the rules of {insert name of club} and confirm my understanding and acceptance that such rules (as amended from time to time) shall govern my membership of the Club. I further acknowledge and accept the responsibilities of membership upon members as set out in these rules.

Signature .....(Parent/Guardian if under 18) Date…….

I (PLEASE PRINT ON BLOCK CAPITALS)…….. hereby give permission for the Coach or Team Manager or authorised person accompanying my child/myself to give the immediate necessary medical or surgical treatment as directed by medical authorities.

Signature …… (Parent/Guardian if under 18) Date……

Club Membership Secretary:
Email:
Telephone:

All data collected on this membership form will be kept securely by club personnel and medical/disability information will be provided to teachers/coaches on a need to know basis. If at any time any of the above details change please contact the membership secretary.

Appendix 3 - Coaching Consultation Form

Dear Parent/Carer/Member,

Thank you for joining our club!

Following feedback from our members, this form has been created to help ensure you or the person you care for receives the best possible aquatics experience. It has been written primarily with consideration for autistic club members, however we recognise it may be useful for many other individuals. Please read the questions below and record any information the club need to be aware of. We recommend that this is completed in collaboration with the Club Welfare Officer to ensure the club fully understands the needs detailed below. Any information you provide will only be shared with your consent.

Name of Member:
Name of Club:
Name of Emergency Contact:
Emergency Contact Phone Number:

Please provide details of any behaviour/ support plan that is in place for the child/person you care for.

An example may include an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan that has been completed at school.

Goals

What would the club member like to achieve within the club?

This may be a performance-related goal or something more generic such as getting fitter or making new friends.

How can the club help the member achieve their goal(s)?

This should be agreed depending on the member's objective above.

General Information

Are there are triggers that the club should be aware of?

E.g. Sensory differences (light, sound etc.), changes in routine, communication difficulties etc.

Does the member have a preferred method of communication?

E.g. Verbal communication, visual demonstration, written instruction etc.

Situational Considerations

In all instances please consider the roles/ responsibilities of the club and the parent/carer.

Changing Rooms

Is supervision required? If so, ensure process is agreed with parent/carer.

Training

Does the club need to be aware of any factors that may affect training? What behaviours will be considered acceptable/ unacceptable?

Competition

What support does the swimmer need on the day? Where will the parent/carer be? Are there any reasonable adjustments that need to be requested? (quiet room etc.)

Emergencies or ‘Meltdowns’

According to the National Autistic Society, a ‘meltdown’ can be described as an intense response to an overwhelming situation. The participant will become completely overwhelmed and temporarily loses control of their behaviour, this may be expressed verbally, physically or both.

Are there any specific triggers that are likely to cause a meltdown? What responsibilities do the club/parent/carer have in this situation?

Additional Information

Please include any relevant information that may not have been covered in the sections above.

Name of Club Welfare Officer:
Signed by Club Welfare Officer:

Name of parent/carer:
Signed by parent/ carer:

Date:

Agreed Date of Review:

Swim England is committed to continually updating our resources utilising feedback from our members. If you have any questions or think this form can be improved, please contact us via **equality@swimming.org**.

Appendix 4 - Club Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)

As a club, you have the opportunity to contribute to the inclusivity of our sports and activities and reap the rewards in doing so. Having an action plan in place to address equality, diversity and inclusion could mean an increase in the proportion of under-represented groups in both participation and the workforce. Swim England are advocates for the 'Social Model of Inclusion', meaning that we believe many barriers that prevent people from participating are removable, given the right consideration and resource. As part of the Club DIAP process, we hope to see incremental changes that, spread over a number of years, will see a significant shift in the diversity of our sports.

This document can include last years actions as an opportunity to update Swim England on your progress. This update can include what you did to achieve the action, however if it was not completed, please document any barriers you faced. Any completed actions that have been identified, please make sure you replace the action ready for the next 12 months. Please consider the 'SMART' principle when setting your actions by ensuring they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound. For more information please reference the 'Club DIAP – completed example' and the 'Inclusivity Guide' for more guidance and support in completing this action plan.

Club Objective: *Brief explanation on the Clubs objective for the year with regards to equality, diversity and inclusion. This can be updated from last years submission or kept the same. You may also choose to include the clubs long-term vision in this section.*

Actions	Action Required	Update on Action	Lead Person	Completion Date	Review Date
Example: Increase completion rates of the 'Diversity Profile' across the club to a minimum of 60%.	*Update club registration forms (including reference to consent of data sharing) to allow for accurate completion of the Swim England database 'Diversity Profile'.*		*Club Membership Officer*	*Nov 2025*	*Feb 24*
Action 2					
Action 3					
Action 4					

DIAP Completed By: *Insert Name of Club Member*
Date Completed: *Insert Date*