



Swim England

North East

IMPACT REPORT 2021



Welcome

I am delighted to be able to present the Annual Impact Report for Swim England North East Ltd.

As you will see in the coming pages, the work of the Officers and Volunteers in the Region continues to have a significant impact on the provision of high quality opportunities for people to be involved in Aquatic disciplines.

The report highlights the impact made against each of our current Strategic Objectives.

The team and Board of Directors, in consultation with the membership, have refreshed these Strategic Objectives moving into 2022:

Strategic Objectives

SO 1 - Provide strong leadership and be the recognised authority for swimming in the North East Region

SO 2 - Increase opportunities for swimmers to take up club membership

SO 3 - Increase the diversity of people enjoying and benefiting from aquatic club membership

SO 4 - Lead the Region in the development of aquatic disciplines

SO 5 - Building quality clubs through delivery by a highly skilled, diverse and motivated workforce in the northeast Region

SO 6 - Strengthen our organisational sustainability to continue to provide effective support to the Region

The full strategic plan will be available to view on the Swim England North East Region website.

For me some of the highlights within the report are the Young Leaders,

both in terms of pride at the support they have been given to develop and the impact they are having on the delivery of the sport within clubs and at events. Similarly, the Regional staff have worked closely with Swim England to develop and deploy Coach Mentors in to clubs and I know these have been extremely useful for coach development.

Inevitably the way that the sport has been delivered has continued to change over the course of the last year and the way that the membership has been supported has needed to be agile and staff and volunteers have responded to this fantastically.

I am hugely grateful to the team for their hard work and dedication over the course of the year and I am sure this will continue in the coming year, with the team being supplemented by the addition of Louise Graham, focussing on external partnerships, and Chris Leighton who is covering Sarah Small's maternity leave.

I hope you enjoy reading the report and whatever your involvement in our sport is in the Region thank you for your continued support and we look forward to working together in the coming year.

David Watson
Chair Swim England North East Ltd.

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Section 1: Governance

Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 1 - Provide strong leadership and be the recognised authority for swimming in the North East Region.

Strategic Objective 4 - Lead the Region for the development of aquatic disciplines.

Strategic Objective 6 - Strengthen our organisational sustainability to continue effective support for the region.

Interventions and Actions

- Organising and hosting competitions, support for the Regional Water Polo Academy, Swimming & Para-Swimming and Artistic Swimming pathway activities, Start Para-Swimming programmes, Coach Mentoring programmes and support for club candidates completing coach education courses.





Feedback - Growth & Sustainability

The Region has revisited their Strategic Plan to take into consideration the recovery of the sport from the effects of the pandemic, the development and growth of clubs and the sustainability of the Region. As part of this process, the membership were asked to give their feedback and comments in a range of different areas.

43 overall responses have been received from 21 different clubs.

	Level of Importance			
	High	Medium	Low	Not Important
Talent	72%	21%	5%	2%
Governance	67%	28%	5%	0%
Workforce	67%	28%	5%	0%
Membership	67%	21%	12%	0%
Clubs	65%	28%	5%	2%
Partnerships	60%	32%	5%	1%
Marketing/Comms	42%	48%	10%	0%

The Youth Forum ranked the priority areas in the following order:

1. Governance
2. Workforce
3. Clubs
4. Talent
5. Marketing & Comms
6. Membership

Members made the following comments in each of the respective priority areas. Examples of comments received were as follows:

Governance

"Little impact seen at grassroots level on the ground."

"Smaller clubs go pretty much unrecognised and unsupported."

"COVID has had a negative impact on everything, but swimming pools and facilities have been particularly hit with the subsequent impact on swimmers."

"Good governance is key."

"I think its key that good governance of the sport is prioritised so that the sport continues to grow including its profile within general sport and activities within schools."

"It is important but not the most important thing."

Workforce

"Number of officials required at championship events need to be a reflection of the numbers of swimmers you have attending rather than a set figure."

"Significant shortage of diving coaches, the courses are rare and also expensive."

"Ideas on recognition and reward for volunteers would be welcome."

"The online training modules are valuable."

"Short of qualified volunteers (coaches/officials) but courses not flexible enough or too expensive, or don't know how to get training."

"By investing in your coaches and volunteers clubs can only grow better."

"It's critical to have support from parents."

"Coaches recruitment drive and Officials refresher courses."

"There needs to be clear opportunities and development to encourage young players to go into coaching, refereeing etc. to ensure sustainability for the future."

Clubs

"We have SwimMark and this is already a burden on the club. Further improvements will inevitably cause a greater burden on the club when we are already struggling."

"Swim Mark is invaluable for taking stock and keeping records up to date."

"Club already works well with its own practices and doesn't have the time or need the grief of more "red tape" as ALL volunteers are just that - volunteers (and unpaid)."

"It's not enough to say "we're volunteers" - there must still be professional standards."

Talent

"COVID has delayed the progress of our divers. I would like to see competitions and camps back in full swing"

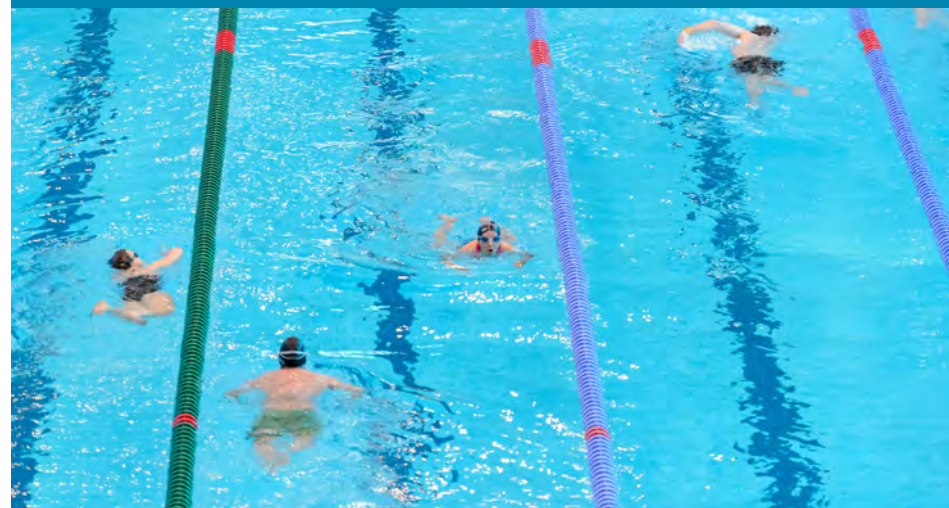
"The club has never been contacted by a talent development officer. Makes us feel worthless and unsupported."

"Not really clear on what the programme structure is and what opportunities exist (the pathway) etc."

"Could be different levels of opportunities for those who have made significant improvement but are not yet in the top 10 of the region."

"Could be online master classes for stroke, diet, land training, how to handle competitions etc. This would make it accessible to many swimmers and give them tips on how to aspire to be a regional swimmer."

"Focus always seems to be on the best swimmers, but there should also be opportunities for all. Probably less than 30% of our swimmers have Yorkshire times and only around 10% have regional times, yet it is those 90% that the club rely on."



Marketing & Communication

"We need communication with Swim England North East representatives to be easy. This is not always so."

"This is one of our biggest challenges and biggest opportunities for improvement"

"Get the basics of club support right before marketing campaigns."

"Members and staff always need good communication and without this both will become disinterested and leave."

"This is good for North East Water Polo and should continue in the same manner."

"Already have an excellent relationship with main pool operator. No need to change it."

"This is just so important. However, do not come across with a "high-handed" approach which is what I so often hear when working with swim schools and pool operators."

"Important to support and tricky relationships with pool operators and offer % to support fees as so much difference between different operators which can cripple clubs."

"Pool time and costs are immensely important."

"Assisting with pool hire costs/help on how to get a better deal."

"Pool hire costs are the only threat to the club and makes it far more difficult to run."

Membership

"Membership is key to any organisation. Support centrally means that, if locally the knowledge goes, then there is someone to talk to, likewise for any committee role."

"Currently a low priority since the volunteers and coaching numbers are not sufficient to think about increasing numbers. We

and have a waiting list."

"The Club is only as good as its members and maintaining swimmer numbers keeps the costs proportionate."

"Memberships are down post-COVID so this is really important for us (all clubs?) for building members back up. The profile of the Sport has had a boost after the Olympics and Paralympics - how can we capitalise on that?"

"As so many members lost due to COVID Swim England needs to invest in clubs and help promote membership."

"Without members and continued growth the sport would fail."

Impacts

The refreshed regional priority areas moving into 2022 are as follows:

Strategic Objective 1 - Provide strong leadership and be the recognised authority for swimming in the North East Region

Strategic Objective 2 - Increase opportunities for swimmers to take up club membership

Strategic Objective 3 - Increase the diversity of people enjoying and benefiting from aquatic club membership

Strategic Objective 4 - Lead the Region in the development of aquatic disciplines

Strategic Objective 5 - Building quality clubs through delivery by a highly skilled, diverse and motivated workforce in the north east Region

Strategic Objective 6 - Strengthen our organisational sustainability to continue to provide effective support to the Region

The full strategic plan will be available to view on the Swim England North East Region website.

Section 2: Workforce

Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 5 - Building quality clubs through delivery by a highly skilled, diverse and motivated workforce in the North East Region.

Interventions and Actions

- Increase the number and quality of the teaching and coaching workforce across all disciplines and abilities to support the needs of the membership.
- Increase the number of active, trained, retained volunteers from all appropriate ages.
- Increase the number of coaches engaged in coach development programmes on a local, county, regional and national level.



Impacts

As in 2020, workforce training, education and continuous professional development opportunities have continued to mainly be delivered online. This has proved to be a positive way of engaging with the key members of club workforce. Online opportunities are now available for coaches, various Club Officer roles, Team Managers, Officials and those who need safeguarding training. The level of uptake has been encouraging.

Coach Education Courses

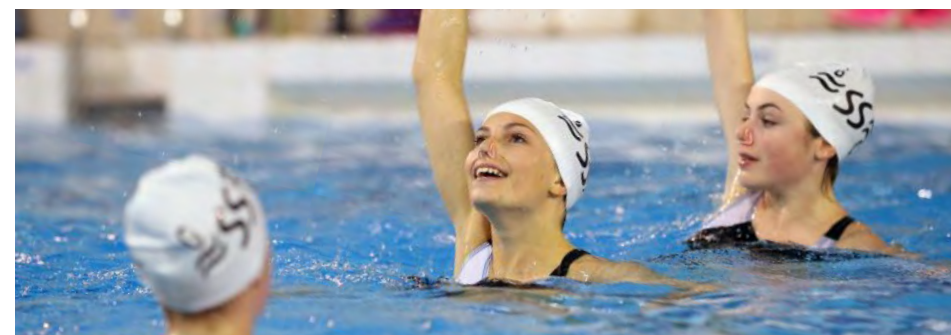
Online courses have been made available through the Institute of Swimming. Courses have been delivered as blended online learning, virtual class rooms and a face to face assessment. For a variety of reasons, the assessments have proved to be a challenge to schedule and for some candidates to attend. Financial assistance has continued to be available from the North East Region to support club candidates.

The following information gives an indication of the number of courses and candidates who have received training. **Please note** however that we are conscious this information may not be 100% accurate record for a variety of reasons which are beyond our control.

Coach Education Courses

Opportunity	Number of Candidates
Foundation Swimming Coaches Conference	23 from 18 difference clubs
Pathway Coaches Conference	13 coaches from 12 different clubs
County, Regional, National Swimming Camps	Approx 15
Swimming Coach Forums	12 to 25 coaches at each session
Coach Mentoring	7 mentors with 27 mentees

Coaching Course		Number of scheduled courses	Number of candidates
Coaching Courses	Swimming Assistant	8	72
	Swimming Coach	1	7
	Senior Swimming Coach	1	3
	Diving Assistant	2	17
	Diving Coach	1	6
	Water Polo Assistant	0	0
	Water Polo Coach	0	0
	Artistic Swimming Assistant	1	17
	Open Water Swimming	1	5
Coaching Total		15	130
Teaching Courses	Swimming Assistant	28	277
	Swimming	36	234
Teaching Total		64	511



CASE STUDY **Swimming Coach Forum**

To support swimming coaches as they and their club programmes continue to recover from the effects of the pandemic. To help keep coaches engaged, listen to common challenges, share good practice and provide an opportunity for continual professional development.

Intervention

The Region has tried to maintain the momentum that the forum built up in 2020. The forum has continued throughout the year on a regular basis. The Region has coordinated the forums, put together a range of CPD topics, shared opportunities, promoted discussions and feedback with coaches on a range of subjects, particularly return to competitions.

Nine forums have taken place during the year. The number of coaches attending the forum has dropped from last year mainly due to coaches' availability. This has been a national trend with most other Region's forums ceasing to take place due to a lack of numbers attending. The North East forum has however continued with on average 12 to 15 coaches attending each forum. The forum continues to be recorded and made available to watch when coaches request to do so.

CPD topics covered include:

- Anaerobic Training
- Working with Parents
- Strobe Lights Deaf Awareness Training – UK Deaf Sport
- Developing a Support Network/Environment for success
- Junior Performance, a launch pad for success
- Swim England pathway update for the 2021/22 season

- Bod Treffene Model – training intensity, balance of training week, periodisation
- 'The Key Elements of an Age Group Programme'.

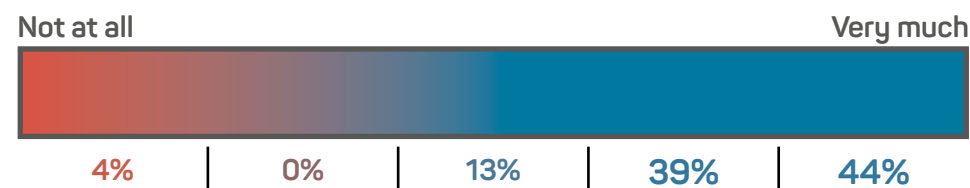
These have been delivered by members of the Swim England Talent Team - Richard Blackshaw and Tom McManus together with contributions from the more senior coaches from within the Region including Russ Barber and Ryan Livingstone. The Region's Swimming Lead, Barry Saunders, has attended on a regular basis to discuss a range of subjects with the coaches.

Impacts

To ensure that the forum met the needs of coaches, during the course of the year, they were asked for their feedback to help influence the direction that the forum took. Their responses were as follows:

23 individual responses were received to the following questions:

Q1 How much do you value the Swimming Coach Forum?



"An extremely important mechanism, especially during COVID."

"I value the educational aspects, the contact with the coaching network and the regional updates."

"It has been important to learn what the other more experienced coaches from larger clubs do in their training for swimmers and handling of the different people within their clubs."

(CASE STUDY CONTINUED)

Q2 To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the forum?

91% agreed that it helps them to keep connected with swimming. (51% strongly agree, 40% partially agree)

86% agreed that it helps to keep them updated with what is currently happening. (68% strongly agree, 18% partially agree)

88% agreed that it helps their development as a coach. (55% strongly agree, 33% partially agree)

76% agreed that it motivates them to keep actively engaging with club swimmers. (36% strongly agree, 40% partially agree)

Q3 How regularly would you like the forum to take place in the future?

Monthly 26% | Bi-monthly 61% | Quarterly 13%

Q4 Would you value being able to access recordings of forums which cover a range of CPD coach related topics?

Yes 83% | No 0% | Maybe 13%

"As I work full time, as well as coach, the recordings are beneficial to me."

"Meaningful CPD courses are hard to find, being able to browse through previous recordings would be more time efficient."

Q5 Are there any specific coaching topics or themes that you would like covered in future forums?

- Stroke development and breakdown from senior coaches.
- Age group development.
- How to coach crossover turns
- The training intensity balance of a training week
- Managing the development of volunteer coaches.
- Goal setting and review.
- Planning.
- Training models and periodization.
- Land training. Pre pool activation.
- S & C without access to a gym.
- Initial teaching of & improving racing dives.
- Physiotherapy, S+C.

Links to the Regional business plan

Strategic Objective 4 - Lead the Region in the development of aquatic disciplines

Strategic Objective 5 - Building quality clubs through delivery by a highly skilled, diverse and motivated workforce in the North East Region.

Strategic Objective 6 - Strengthen our organisational sustainability to continue to provide effective support to the Region

Next steps/future plans:

The plan is for the forum to continue on a bi-monthly basis in 2022. Information gathered by the coaches who attend the Swim England Connecting with Coaches sessions will be shared and made relevant to the coaches working further down the swimming pathway. It's hoped that the forum will continue to be a useful way to listen to coaches and try to address the challenges they face and support the ideas they have to help develop swimming in the region.

CASE STUDY Coach Mentors

Coach Mentors provided support and personal development opportunities to coaches of all disciplines within the Region and at a local level

Intervention

Seven coach mentors worked to support 27 mentees across Swimming, Artistic Swimming and Diving.

The regional staff worked with the Swim England Talent team to source mentees and matched them with an appropriate mentor. They provided administrative support to those joining the programme and attended review meetings where appropriate with Swim England and the coach mentors.

Impact

"I have found the mentor programme useful. It has made me focus on what development needs I have and put these into a plan to move forwards.

I have enjoyed getting to know my mentor and having access to his knowledge and experience.

I think I am becoming more confident as a coach as a result of this. It helps me look outside my own club and see how things might be done in other programmes. This raises the standard of coaching in my own club. I would recommend it to other coaches.

The only problem with it seems to be us (my mentor and me) both finding the time to engage with it."

Katy Batley, Alnwick Dolphins



Links to the Regional business plan

Strategic Objective 2 - Support overall club development.

Strategic Objective 4 & 5 - Increase the number and quality of the teaching and coaching workforce across all disciplines and abilities, to support the needs of the membership.

Strategic Objective 5 - Increase number of coaches engaged in coach development programmes on a local, county, Regional and national level.

Next steps/future plans:

Both the Northumberland and Durham and Yorkshire Swimming Association have, along with the North East Region, agreed to once again financially support the delivery of the programme for 2022. Subsequently, where there are spaces to fill, after reviewing 2021's delivery, additional mentors and mentees are being recruited onto the programme. Swim England Talent team check in the mentors quarterly for updates and progress reports on how the programme is running.

Club Workforce Support

Course	Number of scheduled courses	Number of Candidates
Team Manager Module 1	4	52
Team Manager Module 2	1	16
Time To Listen	6	49
Total	11	117

These training opportunities have continued to be delivered online. Team Manager module 2 courses have returned as clubs prepare for the return of overnight stays. Safeguarding training has been delivered through Swim England, UK Coaching and Active Partnerships. Course uptake information has not been made available to share.

CASE STUDY Young Leaders

Building on the success of the young leader development programmes which have been delivered over the past few years. The aims were to engage those aged from 14 to 18 years of age in activities which develop their skills, broaden their experiences in aquatics, improves their knowledge, gives them the opportunities to volunteer within their club environment and support their club in the delivery of their programme of activities.

It was felt this was especially important during the current year when members couldn't always fully access their club programmers due to lockdown. The initiatives would help to keep them positively engaged during these challenging times and help create the future volunteers for aquatics sports.

Intervention

The North East Region Development Officers have put together a range of training and development opportunities based on resources which have been made available through Swim England and other providers. These have been designed to be delivered online in an engaging virtual setting with the young leader being made responsible for taking away the learning and volunteering to apply the learning in their club setting with the support of a mentor they know. The Region coordinated the training, promoted the opportunity, delivered the training with the support and assistance of lead volunteers, monitored the impact of the training, rewarded the young leaders when they have completed the required outcomes and provided them with additional development opportunities.

A further training opportunity was provided and delivered later in the year with the support of funding provided by the Alec Dickson Trust. The Trust support young people who, through volunteering or community service, aim to enhance the lives of others, particularly those most marginalised by society. The UK Coaching Inclusive Activity workshop was delivered online in a virtual classroom setting to those young leaders who applied.

Overall, all the training opportunities focused on three different areas:

- **Leadership**
- **First steps into coaching**
- **Inclusive Awareness**



(CASE STUDY CONTINUED)

Development module	Applications	Attended	Successfully completed all outcomes
Leadership	61	59	25
First Steps into Coaching	62	58	22
Inclusive Awareness	37	35	35
Total	160	152	82

All applications were given an opportunity to attend the training that they expressed an interest in.

Each training workshop lasted between 2 to 2 ½ hours in groups of up to 20 participants.

Each participant was encouraged to go away and implement the knowledge that they had been taught through doing a leadership task and volunteering to assist with coaching on poolside under the direction and support of a designated club mentor.

Each young leader and their mentor reported back once that had successfully completed the task and/or volunteered the required number of hours and demonstrated the learning outcomes.

In total over 120 hours of supported volunteering was recorded.



Young Leaders comments

"I supported the athletes well if they were unsure of something or if they made a mistake."

"I helped to demonstrate technique improvements and was able to do this with a range of people during the session. I learnt that I need to use more demonstrations when talking to those who I trying to help."

"I think I was able to interact well with both the swimmers and other poolside helpers, as well as recognising and improving stroke technique."

Mentors comments

"Chloe has shown great promise and loads of enthusiasm in this programme. I hope that she continues to flourish and grow."

"Ben demonstrated maturity whilst assisting with the coaching and has been able to communicate very well to different groups."

"Olivia has shown great empathy and has a lovely way of giving instructions. They are dedicated to the swimmers who are happy to achieve under their guidance."

"Hannah has a fantastic work ethic and is a good role model within the swimming club."

Inclusive Training Feedback

9/10

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent) the young leaders gave an average feedback rating of 9

(CASE STUDY CONTINUED)

"It gave me some really good knowledge and helped improved my confidence."

"Good course and very helpful to learn about disabilities and how to coach people with disabilities."

"Got everyone involved and was very informative! Thank you Louise and David."

"It was really good and engaging. I learnt a lot and I am more confident leading more inclusive sessions for everyone. Thank you."

"I felt engaged and confident to speak. Learnt lots of new information."

"I really enjoyed it, very informative. Feel so much more confident in the topic then i was before. engaging."

"Very good, and interactive! Learn lots of new things and understand it much more now."

Links to the Regional business plan

Strategic Objective 5 - Building quality clubs through delivery by a highly skilled, diverse and motivated workforce in the north east region

Next steps/future plans:

Eight of the young leaders put themselves forward to volunteer at the Swim England Winter Nationals that were held in Ponds Forge in early December 2021. Event volunteering is something which is being considered as a future training opportunity in 2022. The Swim England Events team appear receptive to providing opportunities for volunteers at national events which take place in the region.

The Region's Youth Panel will continue to be liaised with to make sure that development opportunities that are provided are what young adults want and to try and make sure that they are delivered in a suitable format.



CASE STUDY

Young Leader Blog from the Swim England Winter Nationals

The first Swim England Winter Nationals for two years were held in Sheffield over the weekend of 3rd, 4th & 5th December 2021.

Jack Nylor Dunn, the North East Region Youth Forum Chairperson and British Swimming Technical Official, got to experience it first-hand volunteering at the national event. Jack, 16, was the youngest Swimming Official to attend a national competition.

Jack was supported at the event by other young volunteers from the North East Region including Chloe Hutchinson, Eva Scaife, Katie Joyce, Abi Heald, Orla Cassidy, Anastasia Rodgers and Bess Naylor.

Jack gives his a behind-the-scenes look at what life was like as a young volunteer and swimming official at a national competition...

(CASE STUDY CONTINUED)



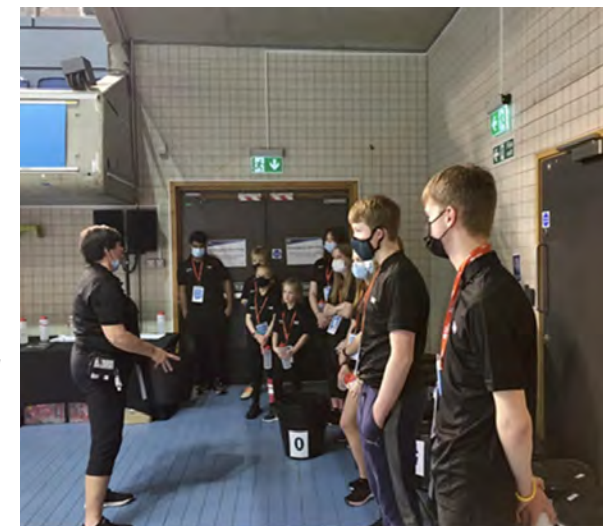
After stopping swimming in September last year, I was on a mission to make myself known in the swimming world, albeit not as an athlete. So - after qualifying as a level 1 judge in October this year - when the opportunity to officiate at the Nationals arose I was not going to miss it! Thanks to a last minute decision to use two short course pools, and the requirement for more Officials, I was in!

I arrived in Sheffield on Friday evening, collecting my uniforms, volunteer pack, and accreditation ready for an early start the next morning. We were each provided with a white polo shirt (for Officials) and/or a black polo shirt for event volunteers; a Swim England water bottle; Swim England clipboard; our very own clip-on tube of hand sanitizer, and accreditation.

My Saturday began at 7am, too early for a weekend hotel breakfast, so I made the short walk from my hotel to the pool, signed in and waited for the action to begin. Officials briefing was at 8:15 ready for a 9 o'clock start. Everything at the Nationals is finely detailed, from the timings and Officials dress code, to the way they parade onto poolside. Onto the pool deck we

went... The day was formed of 3 shorter sessions with breaks and snacks in between each. Lunch - a jacket potato with a choice of fillings - was provided, and a good opportunity to get to know some of the other Officials who had travelled from all across England! The last heat session of the day finished mid-afternoon, then it was time to prepare for finals. I changed out of my whites and helped organise the pool deck.

For Saturdays Finals, I was lucky enough to be joined by 6 Young Volunteers - ranging up-wards from 7 years old - from the North East Region, along with 4 other Young Volunteers who all took well to the role of kit carriers. Since the whole event is live streamed it is vital that everyone is presentable and follows the event procedures. The team did really well and appeared to enjoy themselves. Not many can say they have volunteered at a national event featuring the likes of Matt Richards and Molly Renshaw, especially at 7 years old! Due to a lack of accommodation, it was back home following the finals...



Sunday was a shorter day for me, catching the train over in the morning and arriving just after lunch; I assisted the event's Field of Play (FoP) team prep the pool deck for the finals then spent some more time getting to know my fellow volunteers (with complimentary flapjack)! It was a pleasure to meet so many key figures in the world of swimming including the Swim England President Ian Mackenzie. Unfortunately, a lack of volunteers in aquatics is becoming more and more prevalent to me as I attend more events and competitions...

For Sunday's finals session, there was only myself and another NE Young Leader volunteer as kit carriers - far too few to cover all 10 lanes at Ponds Forge! Nevertheless, as always, the aquatic community pulled together with

(CASE STUDY CONTINUED)

the Technical Director, and a very willing security guard offering to help. The weekend finished with a medal ceremony, then pack down. One FoP volunteer summed it up nicely that these events are like swans; everything appears very graceful for the spectators and live stream, but behind the cameras is a team of extraordinary people working very hard to ensure all of this could be possible.

I feel very lucky to be part of this team, but we need more people to join us! Hopefully this article has shown that age and experience is irrelevant in volunteering, everyone starts some-where, and anyone can be a volunteer! Too many people leave their sport behind after quit-ting as a teenager, but there are many ways you can still be involved with no set commitment or pressure to succeed... There are many ways you can get involved with volunteering, whether it be within your club or becoming a Swimming Official.



Swim England National Volunteering Awards 2021

The Awards recognised and celebrated the incredible spirit of our aquatic community especially evident during these challenging times. The Awards showcased individuals and groups across a number of categories based around two streams: Inspirational Awards and Innovation Awards reflecting the sports ability to adapt and meet the challenges our community has faced. The Swim England North East Region asked members for nominations in each category and awarded a regional winner in each category. They were put through to the national finals where nominations from the Region were successful in three of the national awards.

Award Categories

Swim England Innovation Awards

Innovation Awards recognised creativity and innovation by individuals or groups, where complex, innovative or engaging activity ensured aquatic community was motivated and engaged during the challenging times.

Swim England Engagement Innovation Award

This Award recognises the creative approach taken to engage our members across the aquatic community. This could range from virtual quizzes, parties, campaigns, fundraising activity and more, which ensures continued member support.

The Swim England North East Region nominations were:

- Abbie Whiting, Sheffield City Swimming Club
- Nikki Smith, City of Sheffield Diving Club – **North East Region Award Winner**

"Sheffield Diving Club's home, Ponds Forge Sports Centre, closed its doors on the 18th of March 2020. Due to a lack of local council funding, it did not open again until 26th October, over 7 months later. After only 10 days back in the pool, the facility was shut again for the second national lockdown. We

were thrilled to be able to train throughout the whole of December, only to be then closed again from January to April, for the third national lockdown. Our members had just over 5 weeks of training in their home pool in 12 months. For almost a year, our coaches worked incredibly hard to motivate and engage both club members and the wider diving community.

During the first National lockdown, the club immediately moved to virtual training. We recorded daily workouts, delivered live Instagram and Facebook home workouts every week, set varied weekly challenges, from catching to handstand walking and developed a Club Online Home Portal, containing content and support videos to access at home. Members of our senior elite team created a series of 10 pre-recorded technical home diving workout videos, which were shared with clubs across the whole of the UK. We set up two 6-week courses of online Zoom of Ballet and Yoga classes, which were open to and attended by divers from across Yorkshire.

Away from physical activity we set regular non-sporting challenges such as a Lego challenge, posted 'Try it Tuesday' cooking recipes, delivered live cook-alongs, ran four zoom family quizzes and bingo nights, and ran a Sheffield Diving's Got Talent competition, which clubs from around the country joined. We also ran a Sport Psychology workshop to support divers mental wellbeing and a nutrition workshop with Youth Sports Nutrition. We organised an Instagram Live chat with World High Diving Champion Gary Hunt, in which Gary discussed his own lockdown experiences and coping mechanisms. During Lockdown 3 we ran a 12 week 'Friday Fitness' programme, in which we offered a different activity such as Boxing Fitness, Insanity, Taekwondo, Weights, Yoga, Ballet Conditioning, Dance Fitness, Pilates and HITT. Many divers train a lot of hours and do not get the opportunity to try new activities. This was an opportunity to bring as many as varied activities as possible into their homes. Whenever restrictions allowed, the coaches did outdoor training sessions in local parks. We ran a successful Crowdfunder campaign, in which members walked, cycled and ran the distance from Ponds Forge to the International Pool in Rome, where we would have finished our 2020 competition season. To help achieve the mileage 1 coach completed a marathon and 5 did half marathons. We almost doubled our original mileage target of 2199 miles and achieved 4195.35 miles in just over a week.

Whilst our pool remained closed, we travelled to Leeds, Maltby and Barnsley diving pools every week, in order to continue diving training. During this time, the club committee, with support from parents and the local community, led a comprehensive campaign by the Sheffield Aquatics Clubs, to successfully overturn the local council's decision to close Ponds Forge. Aquatic clubs across the country have done an incredible job at motivating members.

Sheffield Diving stands out through the length, standard and consistency of it's activities and efforts. Each lockdown the club delivered a different programme and new activities, striving to work even harder. The club's maintained the physical, psychological and social wellbeing of its members and their families, to the very best of its ability and has shown resilience and creativity, through the many challenges it has faced."

Swim England Inspirational Awards

Swim England Inspirational Volunteer Award

This Award recognises volunteers from the age of 18 and upwards. This could be anyone from within clubs.

The Swim England North East Region nominations were:

- Graham Robinson, Derwentside ASC
- Mike Gill, Harrogate District Diving Club
- Mandy Ward, Harrogate District Diving Club
- Paul Taylor, Grimsby Aquatics swim Team
- Stephen Ward, Durham city aquatics
- Leanne Jalland, Harrogate Diving Club
- David Culf, Halifax SC - **North East Region Award Winner & Swim England National Award Winner**

"The family joined the club at the beginning of 2015 and little did we know what a blessing that has turned out to be. The whole family have a huge investment in our club- three girls who love swimming, one of whom is Junior Girls Captain, a mum who is competition secretary but is also willing

to help out with many other club things and dad, Dave, who seeks tirelessly to make the swimming experiences the best they can be with the resources the club has; though he has introduced things we didn't have, e.g drinking water on poolside for the swimmers, competition style start blocks to replace the smaller models in situ and a confidant to share concerns with.

Dave has been an absolute inspiration throughout the COVID pandemic and continues to inspire even today. Dave volunteered to be our COVID Lead which involved working tirelessly to attend online seminars, read all COVID related documents, confer, produce, refine, train and implement his guidance to coaches, teachers, volunteers, swimmers and parents all with a smile and oodles of patience. Whilst Halifax pool remained closed in the summer of 2020 Dave had the foresight, with another committee member, to follow up a lead to find alternative water time for our swimmers. As a result, for the last year over 100 children have accessed quality training in very safe, secure surroundings. Because his procedures were accurately followed this resulted in us only having one incidence of COVID where only 5 children had to self-isolate.

Dave even volunteered to aid Yorkshire Swimming Association as COVID lead should the need have arisen. Many more volunteers were required as poolside helpers; they came forward in their droves with Dave maintaining a timetable of daily cover, often finding replacements at the very last minute. He continues to do that now. Teams of parents have come together to support Dave by ensuring certain training sessions are always covered. More parental involvement thanks to Dave!

Unfortunately, Halifax pool has remained closed so finding an alternative pool last year was invaluable. Removing all of our equipment was another major task but a workforce team was formed and various people came forward to help, Dave included. Since the permanent closure Dave has tried on many occasions to secure some water space within Calderdale Leisure Services, but to no avail. That has not deterred Dave. He perseveres all for the benefit of all our swimmers and now, the Club, which has been in existence in Halifax since 1864. A new pool is to be constructed but we recently discovered when the plans went to the planning committee for approval that it is to be another leisure pool with no facilities for competitive

aquatic athletes for which Halifax has a long history of producing. Yet again Dave stepped forwards to coordinate a planned and organised approach to this. With expert help I'm sure he will find a way to get some compromise from the council. Many parents and past coaches and swimmers have come forward with objections to support the cause. As chairperson, at times, I need to share my thoughts and decide on the best course of action for the benefit of the club.

Dave has become one of my group of trusted people who support me. Dave is entirely trustworthy, fair, open-minded, approachable and confidential when the need arises and a great asset to Halifax Swimming Club. Volunteers can make a difference. This one certainly does. I am proud to nominate him for this award.

David said others at the club, including chairperson Mary McClung and president Elaine Shaw, had given him the motivation to help out.

He stepped up for his club during the pandemic after volunteering to be the COVID-19 lead, writing risk assessments and planning for reopening after lockdown to ensure the club was ready to 'hit the ground running'.



David said:

"The inspiration around why I went out to volunteer was twofold.

When you're part of a club where you have got a raft of volunteers that put themselves out there for free every week – led brilliantly by Mary and Elaine who again are in their 70s and doing a fantastic job leading one of the oldest clubs in the country – throwing your hat in the ring is not a hard thing to do.

The other inspiration came from our three young daughters and it was how can we keep them fit, how can we keep them going.

We went to the Pennine hills open water swimming and there were another dozen kids from the club there doing it all off their own back and parents putting themselves out which is fantastic.

I've been at the county championships today and 10 of those swimmers were there competing 18 months down the line.

It's day likes today that make you feel extremely proud."

Swim England Inspirational Young Volunteer Award (14 – 17 years of age)

This Award recognises volunteers from the age of 14 to 17. This could be anyone from within clubs.

The Swim England North East Region nominations were:

- Zoë Clark, Durham City Aquatics - **North East Region Award Winner**

"Zoë has fully embodied the ethos of lifelong participation in swimming. Starting off in the junior squads, Zoë made her way up through the system before landing in the performance squads with coach Mike Perry. Within the squad she was always hard working and really listened to the advice she was given, engaging with it and applying it into her swimming.

Despite being a strong athlete, Zoë chose to take a step away from performance swimming, instead choosing to focus more on her music and academia. However, despite making this decision to step away from what was at this point likely a way of life, Zoë kept her hand in the game and moved to the clubs fitness squad. Here she continues to demonstrate high attendance and 100% commitment to the sessions delivered. She has observed and studied multiple coaches within the club, she has listened to their advice and has developed her own coaching style and values.

A memorable moment from one coach is when Zoe, whilst describing why she would coach a particular point in a particular way, accurately quoted degree level skill acquisition back to them despite it being several weeks since that discussion had taken place - this at the age of 15.

Despite being a high flying academic and musician, Zoë has continued to support the club by assisting squad coaches initially and latterly completing the assistant teachers course followed almost immediately by the teacher course.

She is wonderful with the athletes, a pleasure to be around and always eager to help in whatever way she can. The sport of swimming is lucky to have her and it is our please to nominate Zoë for this award."



Swim England Inspirational Club Coach/Teacher Award

This Award recognises a Coach or Teacher, who can be paid or unpaid.

The Swim England North East Region nominations were:

- Adele Graham-King, Sunderland City Diving Team
- Allie Campbell, York City Baths Club
- Bill Cook, Saltburn & Marske ASC
- Carol Huntley, Blyth Lifeguards & Competitive Swimming Club
- Charlotte Hughes, Halifax Synchronised Swimming Club
- Georgia Davenport, City of Sheffield Diving Club
- Lauren Murray, Halifax Synchronised Swimming Club
- Martyn Dunbar, Durham City Aquatics
- Mike Gill, Harrogate District Diving Club
- Sarah Fisher, City of Bradford Swimming Club
- Sue Thorpe, Newcastle Swim Team (previously Gateshead & Whickham)
- Becki McGuire, Morpeth ASC - **North East Region Award Winner**

“Becki McGuire is an exceptional coach on several levels. Since joining Morpeth ASC as Head Coach just three years ago, she has transformed a small, rural “feeder” club swim into a high-achieving, aspirational club but importantly without compromising on the highly inclusive and supportive culture that runs throughout the club. Morpeth has eight squads ranging from Minnows (post-swimming lessons), up to Performance (includes a British Champion as well as multiple swimmers on National and Regional programmes). Becki’s results are highly impressive as evidenced recently at the Festival of Swimming. Despite being a relatively small club, Morpeth had over 20 qualifiers for the event (from two squads), with 23 Top 3 finishes, including 13 of our swimmers taking 1st place in their event/age group. These have fed through as multiple Top 25 finishes nationally, including two 1sts, a 2nd and a 3rd place on the National Leaderboard.

However, this nomination is not just for her outstanding results and incredible commitment in enabling swimmers of all abilities to fully achieve their potential, it is for her amazing flexibility and resilience in making the

very best of the challenges that 20/21 threw at all of us. Despite three National, plus one local, lockdowns, Becki worked tirelessly to keep all of her swimmers physically fit, mentally healthy and also highly engaged (remotely) with their peers. She quickly co-opted a Strength and Conditioning Coach to run “Zoom” land training sessions – organised on a squad basis to ensure appropriate content, as well as enabling engagement with friends and peers to continue. Recognising that some of the squads were missing out on their regular friendly competitions, she leveraged apps like Strava so that peers could “compete” even when swimming switched to running, and especially when running separately. Importantly, Becki recognised that the swimmers also needed just to connect as a team, so ran a weekly no-exercise Zoom which ranged from quizzes to informal conversation, to Q&A sessions with ex-Olympians and other relevant professionals designed to inspire, engage and support at all levels.

In addition, to working exceptionally hard to maintain everyone’s fitness and engagement, Becki was also highly focussed on returning to the pool, as quickly and as safely as possible. Morpeth were one of the first swimming clubs to return to in-pool training, and this was only possible due to her meticulous planning. Those first few months of in-pool training were very different and highly restricted – no changing rooms, no social kick, masks on poolside, social distancing were all necessary to keep everyone safe, but it worked, and exceptionally well with the swimmers, coaches, parents and volunteers all quickly adapting to the “new normal”. As a parent of two swimmers who have progressed through the Club, albeit on very different paths; one into Performance and currently pushing for National times, and one as a social swimmer who has developed a passion for 1:1 coaching of swimmers especially those with Special Needs. I have seen



Becki adapt and flex her style and approach to get the very best out of everyone – regardless of natural ability. This is why I wanted to nominate her for the Swim England award for Inspirational Coach. Becki is making such a difference, and on so many levels for swimmers, parents and also volunteers at Morpeth ASC. She really deserves to be recognised for her outstanding achievement and unwavering determination to help every swimmer achieve their maximum potential, whatever that happens to be.”

Swim England Inspirational Athlete Award

This Award recognises participants across all disciplines from the age of 12 and upwards. This could be anyone taking part in our sports within clubs.

The Swim England North East Region nominations were:

- Ava Cook, City of Sheffield
- Emily Crossley, Rotherham Water Polo
- Joe Field, Richmond Dales
- Tilly Moor, Durham City Aquatics
- Henry Howarth, Grimsby Aquatics - **North East Region Award Winner & Swim England National Award Winner**

“Henry is a passionate swimmer and has done everything possible throughout lockdown to keep motivated, maintain fitness and more importantly to inspire others to do the same. During the first lockdown even though he was not a runner he challenged himself to running 10k a day for 30 days to improve his stamina whilst the pools were closed. He also used the



opportunity to fund raise to help supply his local hospital with scrub sets to help protect the people protecting us. He posted daily updates on the club Facebook page to try and motivate others to try something new to maintain their fitness. He also used the opportunity to become a qualified swimming teacher, lifeguard and now almost completed his assistant swimming coach.

During the summer of 2020 he was able to put his skills and training to good use whilst on holiday in the Lake District by saving a teenaged boy from drowning. It has been a difficult time for everyone over the last 18 months but Henry continues to encourage, motivate and inspire others with his hard work and commitment, during 2020 his school did some sport challenges to see who could cover the most distance and Henry rose to the challenge by taking up cycling, covering 3000km and inspiring hundreds of other children showing them what a swimmer can achieve. He was awarded a British Citizen Youth Award for all his efforts and would love to be an ambassador for swimming and winning this award would go a long way to achieve that.”

Henry, who was back in the pool racing before receiving his honour, said:

“It was good to be back in the water competing and good to see everyone back.

I’m still cycling, still running and trying to keep my fitness up but it’s nice to be back in the pool training.

I’m thinking of trying to incorporate a triathlon but it’s finding the time – I’m sure I’ll get round to it at some point.

I’m also trying to raise awareness of different charities and inspire people to do their bit as well.

Looking ahead, I’ll just try and compete and get new PBS and get back to where I was and try to do my best.”

Swim England Inspirational Youth Champion Award

This Award recognises individuals who continue to champion the voice of the young people (under 25 years of age) within aquatics, have a clear passion for the sport and made a volunteering commitment or advocacy through campaigning, fundraising or committee work).

The Swim England North East Region nominations were:

- North East Region Youth Forum – **Swim England National Award Winner**

"The North East Regional Youth Panel was formed during the pandemic and at a time when the engagement of young adults within the sport has been so important whilst they were unable to access the water.

The Group helped to ensure that the voice of young adults can be expressed, and represented and have an influence on decision being made with key stakeholders.

They successfully gained financial support from the region to support the young volunteer development programme and recruited 77 participants with more than 150 learning opportunities and almost 100 hours of quality volunteering at a local club level so far.

The group created a video to highlight the experiences young people went through during the coronavirus lockdowns."



Panel member Jay Manners said:

"The whole purpose of the video was to spread awareness of how these challenging times made an impact on young aquatic athletes as we require facilities in order to train.

We thought it would be a good idea to express these thoughts and feelings but also to show how positive resilient and determined we are as athletes."

Jack Naylor Dunn, from the panel, said:

"The group will listen to the voice of young people in all aquatic disciplines in the north east.

We will also hopefully inspire other young people to volunteer in their clubs and maybe even join the forum itself and make a difference to aquatics in the North East."



Section 3: Clubs

Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 2 - Increase opportunities for swimmers to take up club membership

Strategic Objective 3 - Increase the diversity of people enjoying and benefiting from aquatic club membership

Interventions and Actions

- Use the Swim England Club Strategy to support club development
- Increase number of Swim England affiliated club members

Impacts

129 Total Affiliated Clubs

82 SwimMark Accredited

47 Completed Stronger Affiliation

The number of affiliated clubs, in comparison to the previous year, is very similar. Some clubs have decided to merge with others and some have ceased to operate. The number of SwimMark accredited clubs remains largely unaffected and all affiliated clubs now meet the minimum standards required to affiliate.

Swim England North East Region Affiliated Members

	2020 Members	2021 Members
Cat 1	6,527	5224
Cat 2	7,929	7173
Cat 3	1,312	752
Total	15,768	13,149

Discipline	2020 Members	2021 Members
Water Polo	833	547
Swimming	13,816	11,320
Open Water	232	284
Diving	591	332
Synchro	296	229

Interventions to support clubs

Workshops have been delivered and clubs have been supported in a variety of ways whether individually, in groups by way of online meetings, one to one support and via the club affiliation/SwimMark portal. The Region's Development team, together with the assistance and support of the Swim England central team, have made efforts to engage with clubs to support them.

Club Forums and Networks have been held on a regular basis to ensure that club representatives have been kept up to date with opportunities.

These have included:

- Workforce development opportunities
- Covid guidance and updates
- Grant Funding opportunities
- Discipline specific forums
- Club governance



CASE STUDY **Diving Club Forums**

The Diving Club Forum was one of several ways of engaging with clubs during the COVID lockdown periods to try and help keep their workforce and volunteers supported and engaged during challenging times. The forum met virtually regularly. Various examples of good practice have been shared and COVID guidelines discussed.

Intervention

The Region's Development Team initiated the forum, administered the online meetings, shared information including COVID guidance, Swim England updates, recorded meeting notes, distributed and shared relevant information and liaised with key partners.

Impact

Of the seven diving clubs in the Region, six have attended the forum on a regular basis.

One particular outcome from the discussions has been the funding opportunities which have been shared for clubs to potentially apply for. Clubs have regularly provided updates covering which funding opportunities they have prioritised, applied for and been successful with. Clubs have also shared where the funding will be invested.

In total circa £40k of funding has been received by the clubs involved over the period from January to August 2021. These funds have come from a variety of organisations including Sport England Return to play funds, local council community funds, Arnold Clark Community Fund, Swimathon, Made by Sport – Clubs in Crisis, Poundland Community Fund, Crowdfunding/ Sport England Match Fund.

Funding will be invested in a variety of different areas including:

- Accessing alternative venues while usual facilities are not accessible.
- Targeting groups with special needs including learning difficulties and physical disabilities.
- Talent identification for children from hard to reach communities.
- Software IT to support club membership administration.
- Video replay systems to aid athlete feedback and social distancing.
- Replacing equipment which has enabled additional divers to be accommodated and enabling synchronized diving to be offered.
- Kit for athletes.

Additional positive outcomes have been clubs training together when there has been the opportunity for them to do so for the benefits of their membership. Clubs have been able to access water time when they would not have otherwise had an opportunity to do so. The additional benefit has been coaches sharing knowledge and learning from each other.



(CASE STUDY CONTINUED)

Club representatives who attended made the following comments:

"Thank you both for keeping us up to date with what funding is available and for setting up the North East Region Diving Forum. The support from you both and the other diving clubs in our region have been a lifeline for our club and without it, our club would not have survived the pandemic."

City of Sunderland Dive Team

"As a diving community we have always previously struggled to find time to meet and discuss issue that we are all experiencing and look for ways to provide support. The forum has enabled us to achieve this and in doing so, we have all benefitted. I hope the forum continues on a regular basis going forwards."

Harrogate Diving Club

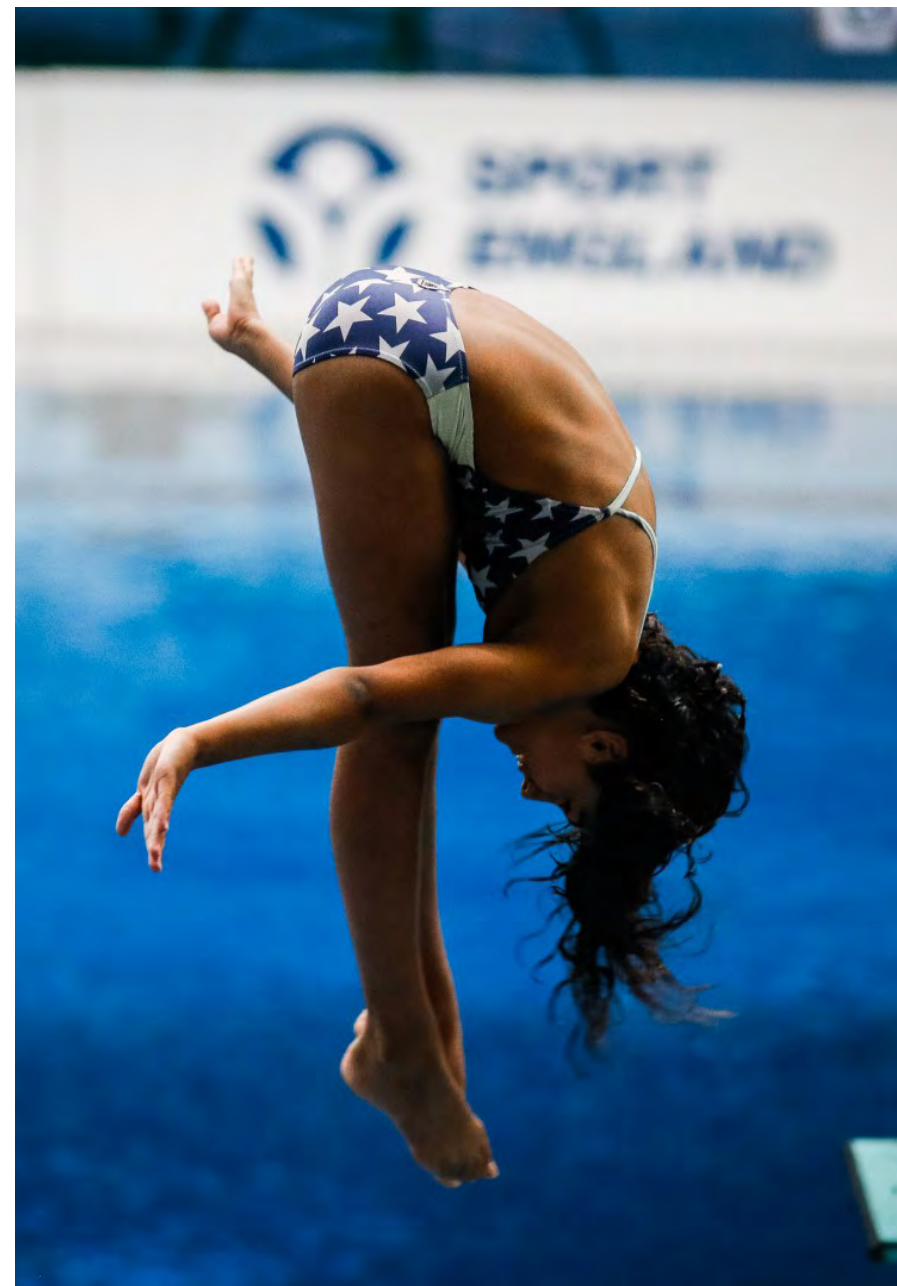
"I really enjoy the forum, I think it's been a great addition to the north east dive coach community."

Darlington Diving Club

Links to the Regional business plan

Strategic Objective 5 - Building quality clubs through delivery by a highly skilled, diverse and motivated workforce in the north east region

Strategic Objective 6 - Strengthen our organisational sustainability to continue effective support for the region





Section 4: Talent

Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 4 - Lead the Region in the development of aquatic disciplines

Interventions and Actions

- Support talented athletes by offering a talent development pathway at a county and regional level which supports the national talent programmes
- Improve the learn to swim / club links to grow the talent pool
- Organisation of regional competitions

Impacts

2021 saw the return of competitions for all disciplines. Level X competitions proved a useful opportunity for athletes to ease themselves back into a competitive environment post lockdown. Face to face competitions have had to operate under COVID guidance restrictions and proved a challenge to organise. While they were clearly frustrating for organisers, athletes, volunteers and spectators alike, it was great to see all disciplines being able to offer these opportunities which are such a key driver. Needless to say, by providing these opportunities, it demonstrates that the sport is robust and resilient and able to bounce back although admittedly not to how things were pre-pandemic.

Artistic Swimming

Tracy Wyke

North East Region Artistic Swimming Lead

Another very challenging year for our Region's Artistic swimmers.

During 2021, the Region were unable to offer any Face to Face grade days or competitions, we did however hold these events virtually.

During 2021 the Region held a virtual Land Grade competition and several Figure grade days. These have proved challenging for our club as it took up part of their training time filming their swimmers -training time for some clubs that has already been reduced. The clubs however were pleased that we did put these on, as they used these as a motivation tool to keep swimmers engaged in the sport.

In August, the restrictions were lifted enough for us to hold our annual Summer camp. This was well attended with 58 swimmers from all North East Region clubs attending. Parents said they were really pleased the camp was able to go ahead as they felt it gave the swimmers some hope that things would return to normal.

Some of the Region's clubs are running on less training hours that they were on pre-pandemic.

As a Region we are also struggling to find suitable pools, at least 2metre deep, to hold our competitions and grade days. I feel this will also continue into 2022.

Artistic Swimming Clubs in the Region have identified the following challenges as they move forwards into 2022:

- Membership levels
- Providing access to competitions and grading events
- Access to relevant pool time/space
- Financial sustainability of activities

Water Polo

Dawn and Richard Cousins

North East Region Water Polo Lead

National representation

GREAT BRITAIN Senior Women Danube Water Polo League (Sep 21)

- Alex Robinson - Rotherham Metro Water Polo Club

ENGLAND Senior Men European Nations Competition (Nov 21)

- John Pratt - Sedgefield Water Polo Club
- Finn Parnell - City of Sheffield Water Polo Club

ENGLAND Junior Men European Nations Senior Competition (Nov 21)

- Oliver Vodden

GREAT BRITAIN Junior Women European Competition (Aug 21)

- Emily Crossley - Rotherham Metro Water Polo Club
- Anna Motley - City of Sheffield Water Polo Club
- Chris Motley (HC) - City of Sheffield Water Polo Club
- Michelle Crossley (TM) - Rotherham Metro Water Polo Club

GREAT BRITAIN Junior Men European Qualifiers (Jun 21)

- Ben Urquhart - Rotherham Metro Water Polo Club/ City of Sheffield

ENGLAND Junior Women European Nations Competition (Oct 21)

- Laura-Jean Skelton - Rotherham Metro Water Polo Club/ City of Sheffield

ENGLAND Junior Men European Nations '04 Competition (Nov 21)

- Ben Alderson - Sedgefield Water Polo Club/ Rotherham Metro
- Ryan Griffiths - Sedgefield Water Polo Club
- Henry Jackson - Rotherham Metro Water Polo Club
- James Jackson (TM) - Rotherham Metro Water Polo Club

REGIONAL TEAM SUCCESS**Girls Inter-Region '06 Silver Medal (Dec 21)****CLUB TEAM SUCCESS****City of Sheffield U15 Girls Bronze at National Age Group Championships (Dec 21)**

Even with all the restrictions and difficulties in travel, players, coaches, and team staff from the North East Region have represented from Senior to Junior levels. Everyone who participated at the higher levels of competition gained a tremendous amount of valuable experience which is being bought back into the Academy Training

ACADEMY TRAINING

Both the boys and girls academy training was able to re-start in April, with a session that took all the available water space at Ponds Forge. With no swim galas taking place, the Ponds Forge team were very supportive of the Regional Academy and a further two sessions in May and June, again taking all the available water space.

During lockdown the Water Polo Managers from North East and North West Region started working on the idea of having players attend each other's sessions at various points in 2021. The joint session with North West Academy is seen as an opportunity to improve the overall standard within both academies as well as increasing numbers of players, keeping costs as low as possible for all those involved. North West Academy girls and boys attended at Ponds Forge making for a very full and enjoyable session. The North East Academy girls have also had the opportunity to attend a North West Academy session in Liverpool.

Academy training was able to complete 7 of its proposed 10 sessions in 2021 and without doubt the highlight was having the whole of Ponds Forge water space filled with water polo players on 3 occasions.

INTER-REGION COMPETITION

As rules and restrictions changed late in the year it became possible for an Inter-Region competition to take place for both boys and girls. In November 2021 the boy's 2006 team had a tough competition and learnt some hard lessons.

The girl's 2006 team had their competition in December 2021 and had an excellent run to the final, where they were just pipped to the gold medal. It was asked if North East could enter an additional team in both boys and girls competitions. However, the event was fully subscribed and the entries were declined for the younger development teams.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has been grown over the last 2 years and will continue to be grown and shaped to reach across all age groups, and clubs.

An example of the reach with social media was the 'Keep Ponds Forge Open' campaign. The North East Water Polo manager put together a series of tweets and Facebook posts in support of the campaign. One particular tweet with graphics was seen by over 10.5K viewers.

Another example of the power of social media was during National Bullying week. The North East Water Polo manager was contacted by a young player who wrote about her experience in Water Polo and the impact it had on her. This article was posted on Facebook and viewed 5.5K times.

SUMMARY

Without the support from the North East Region the Regional Academies for Boys and Girls would not be possible. At recent events it has been an eye opener for some coaches about the amount of support Water Polo is given from the region.

Finally, at the backend of the year a water polo calendar was made available showing planned National level training, BWPL and junior age competitions. This has cut out some of the guess work for planning Academy sessions, but makes it no easier trying to find pool time at a location with the associated goals and at a viable cost.

Player recruitment at club level is having, and will continue to have, impact on Regional teams. Without support to the clubs to recruit and develop players, the Region will struggle to compete. As well as players, Regional Academy is trying to bring young coaches through. However, we find ourselves competing against Universities and the different sporting opportunities outside of Water Polo.

Talent pathway opportunities have continued to be made available with good levels of success at all levels of the pathway across the different disciplines. Examples of the opportunities provided are highlighted in the case studies.



CASE STUDY

North East Region Virtual Swimming Camp

The initiative aimed to engage with swimmers from across to provide swimmers aged 12 years old from within the North East Region with the opportunity to develop and learn new skills as part of the Swim England Talent Pathway.

In previous years, swimmers have been selected based on their performance at competitions. With no competitions having taken place, the first camp of the year was made available to all swimmers in the relevant age group. The camp would look to provide them with relevant information to them as an age group swimmer and provide a stepping-stone to progress and develop their swimming career, helping them to be the best swimmer that they can be.

An additional aim of the project was to provide an opportunity for coaches from within the Region to engage in the programme as a development opportunity working in partnership with the Swim England Talent Team and North East Region Development Team.

Intervention

As a face to face camp and athlete selection wasn't possible during lockdown, alternative ways of delivering an informative, educational, inspiring and rewarding camp was created working in partnership with the Swim England Talent Team.

A range of suitable resources were made available which covered the swimming performance pathway, athlete physical growth/development, technical information, lifestyle information and inspirational interviews with elite swimmers. The most relevant learning resources were selected and put together in a range of delivery styles including presentations, quizzes and access to recorded videos for swimmers to access, watch listen and learn from in their own time.

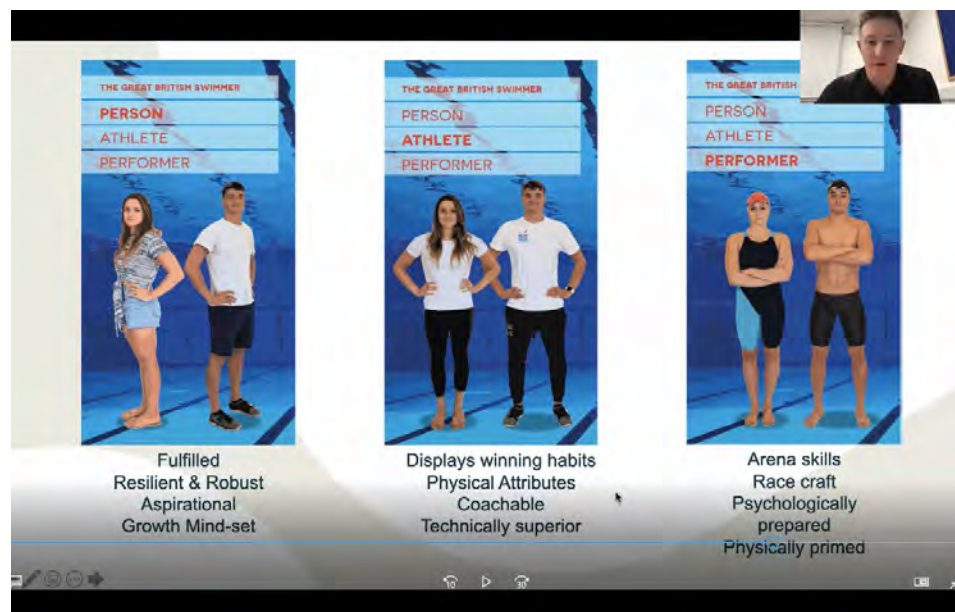
(CASE STUDY CONTINUED)

Kevin Schofield from City of Leeds SC was selected as the Head Coach to deliver the planned interventions in partnership with the Region's Development Team who coordinated and administered the programme.

Impact

Invitations were sent to 717 Cat 2 swimmers who were in the relevant age group and members of a Swim England North East Region club. All swimmers had to register if they wanted to attend and pay a £5 fee. In total, 91 swimmers registered and attended from 36 different clubs.

The delivery programme consisted of a 2½ hour online virtual classroom style interactive work-shop. Those who registered were then sent access to the two video resources which each lasted between 30 and 60 minutes.



The swimmers were asked to give us their feedback and ask questions once they had attended the workshop, accessed, watched and listened to the video recordings.

Overall, their feedback was as follows:

Area Covered	Good	Excellent
The swimming talent pathway	66%	34%
Technical/tactical skill development, individual medley turns & transitions	25%	75%
Nutrition & lifestyle	34%	66%
Physical growth & development	75%	25%
Athlete interview	25%	75%

Swimmers feedback on what they took from the sessions

"I really enjoyed the session and the videos and got a lot out of them."

"The best things to eat after swim training and what to drink during training. Don't dwell on bad swim sessions or races, keep moving forward and stay positive during ups and downs."

"That a swimmer's diet needs to be balanced using the eat well guide, To keep your goal in mind and To be confident in your ability."

"The growth spurt video has shown that everyone's growth spurt comes at a different time and not to be jealous of other people's growth spurts because you may become taller and more energetic but just at a different time. It has helped me understand that how this links up in my swimming club with my peers. Especially as they are not training so hard and aren't as committed."

"The benefits of good diet and land Training."

Parents feedback

"My daughter took a great deal from the camp. Thank you. It was amazing."

"Thanks very much for organising and Kevin for the coaching instructions and tips."

"We took a lot from it and was good to know we are doing the right things and others that we can improve on to make Tom a better swimmer. I especially was pleased that squash is better to drink than water and a ham sandwich is a good post snack as that's something we do just because he likes both."

"Just to let you know Freya really enjoyed yesterday's camp. She wrote lots of notes which she told us all about with much energy and went away and created her own presentation slides on what she had learnt! A really valued opportunity and so a big thank you to everyone for their time yesterday! Super interesting!"

"Just a quick e mail to thank you for the Zoom camp on Saturday. My daughter loved it! Given the current COVID restrictions, it was lovely that they were all still able to participate."

Where this links to the region's business plan

Strategic Objective 4 - Lead the region in the development of aquatic disciplines

Strategic Objective 5 - Building quality clubs through delivery by a highly skilled, diverse and motivated workforce in the north east region

Next Steps

A face to face camp has been scheduled for November which 36 swimmers have been invited to. The swimmers have been selected based on ranked swims in 2021 up to and including the Festivals of Swimming. A Head Coach, six Skills Coaches, Team Managers and S&C Coach have been appointed. Half of the swimmers who have been selected attended the virtual camp. The camp will include a session to see what information they have retained and built on since the virtual camp to help educate the other swimmers who didn't attend.

CASE STUDY North East Region Swimming Camp

The initiative aimed to engage with Swimmers and Para-Swimmers from across the region and provide them with an opportunity to develop and learn new skills as part of the Swim England Talent Pathways.

An additional aim of the project was to provide an opportunity for coaches and volunteers from within the region to engage in the programme as a development opportunity working in partnership with the Swim England Talent Teams and North East Region Development Team.

Intervention

Working with the Swim England Swimming and Para-Swimming Talent Teams, the regional team put together a timetable of activities for the camp and sessions, recruited the various workforce including Head Coaches, Skills coaches, Strength & Conditioning Coaches and Team Managers. For the Swimming Camp, swimmers were selected and invited from in the 12 year old age group based on their performance at the Festival of Swimming. For the series of four Para-Swimming sessions, Para-Swimmers aged 17 and under were invited to attend. The appropriate facilities were identified that were suitably located with availability, hired and the appropriate COVID measures were put in place.

It was decided to hold both the Swimming camp and the first session in the series for the Para-Swimming sessions at the same venue on the same day mainly due to facility availability and avoiding any clashes with other events. However, this also provided an opportunity for sharing of resources between the two events as well as enabling an element of integration of programmes, something which the North East Region wishes to do more of.

The Swim England Development Team supported the staff in each of their roles to ensure they knew what was expected of them and what they needed to do to deliver an engaging camp.

Impact

Swimming Camp

36 (18 boys and 18 girls) were invited.
swimmers

A total of 7 swimming coaches, 1 Strength and Conditioning coach and 2 Team Managers were employed.

Para-Swimming Session

21 took up the opportunity to be part of the series,
swimmers with 19 attending the first session.

A total of 3 coaches with 3 volunteer observers, 1 Strength and Conditioning Coach and a Team Manager supported the first session.



(CASE STUDY CONTINUED)

Swimming Camp

All the athletes were asked to complete a survey following the camp. Their feedback was as follows:

	Average	Good	Excellent
Pool session 1	13%	7%	80%
Pool session 2	20%	26%	53%
Lifestyle quiz	7%	60%	33%
S&C	6%	47%	47%
Pre-camp communication	5%	30%	65%
Camp location	12%	47%	41%
Camp facilities	12%	35%	53%
Camp staff	5%	5%	90%
Overall enjoyment	6%	27%	67%

Swimmers feedback

"I found it hugely useful and I can't wait until the next one. I particularly liked the races at the end of the swimming session."

"Loved all of it. Thank you, I would maybe have found some additional sport psychology useful as sometimes 13+ hours a week\school\land training\lack of social life is tough to balance."

"I really enjoyed all sessions on Sunday & learnt lots of new drills & techniques that I can use in the future. It was lovely to meet some new people too."

Parents feedback

"A great opportunity to mix and socialise with swimmers who I'd see briefly at Yorkshires & NER's etc. Thanks to everyone involved!"

"Some parental feedback indicates that they may have a lack of understanding of the importance of IM training in the age group programme."

Para-Swimming Session

Athletes and Team staff were asked to complete an online feedback form following the first session. Their feedback was as follows:

	Average	Good	Excellent
Pool session	0%	100%	0%
S&C	0%	83%	7%
Pre-camp communication	17%	50%	33%
Camp location	0%	71%	29%
Camp facilities	0%	71%	29%
Camp staff	0%	71%	29%

Swimmers feedback

"I was very nervous but I had a really good time & learned a lot."

"Brilliant to be with others with differences and train with them."

"Meeting up with old friends and coaches. Learning about rotation in backstroke"

(CASE STUDY CONTINUED)

Parents feedback

"My child was very nervous but from the start he was made very welcome and so was able to relax and really enjoy the session. Thankyou."

Links to the Regional business plan

Strategic Objective 3 – Increase the diversity of people enjoying and benefiting from aquatic club membership.

Strategic Objective 4 – Lead the region in the development of aquatic disciplines.

Strategic Objective 5 – Building quality clubs through delivery by a highly skilled, diverse and motivated workforce in the north east region.

Next Steps

At this stage it's expected that the Region's swimming camps for 2022 will be a mixture of online and face to face delivery. These will be as part of the Swim England's talent pathway opportunities. It is likely that the online development opportunities will be made available for all swimmers in the relevant age group to participate in. Swimmers will be selected at the end of the season to participate in two face to face camps. It is hoped that the experience of attending, working, delivering and observing the camp will be extended to additional members of the regions coaching and team managing workforce.

The three remaining sessions in the Region's Para-Swimming series are due to be delivered in January, March and May 2022. After this, the sessions will be reviewed and it is hoped that either a series or stand-alone camp will be planned for the 2022 – 2023 season.





Section 5: Marketing and Communications

Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 6 - Strengthen our organisational sustainability to continue to provide effective support to the Region

Interventions and Actions

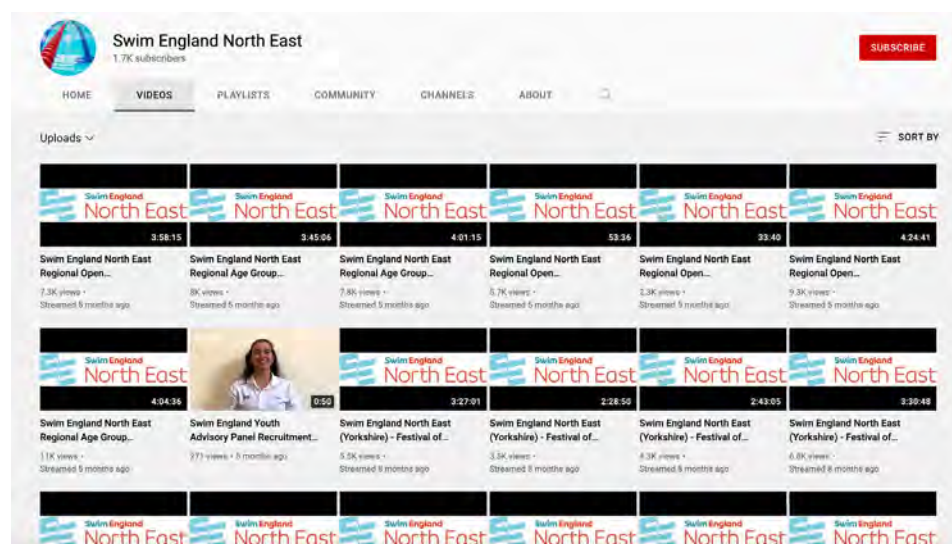
- Effectively communicate and promote the opportunities within the region to its members

Impacts

The Region has used a range of methods to promote aquatic activities and information to members.

The monthly regional e-zine (electronic newsletter) subscribers has gone up from 526 to 551. The relevant club contacts are direct mailed for specific pieces of information. Articles and events are added to the regional website and posted on social media. Information is also shared at relevant meetings with clubs, club networks, coach forums, club forums, discipline leads and County Associations.

Figures indicate that engagement with all social media channels continues to increase year on year. The new Facebook account has been set up after the previous account could no longer be used and the region is slowly beginning to build up its followers to this page.



The Region's swimming championships have been streamed online. During the 11 sessions that were streamed, the average viewing figures were 6,000/session. These range from a high of 10,000 viewers to a low of 2,100 viewers.



3,615
FOLLOWERS



789
PAGE LIKES



1,289
FOLLOWERS



138,417
PAGE VIEWS



Thank you to all volunteers within the region
for your continued support.



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