

2025 – 2026

Swim England Selection Policy

Para-Swimming and Swimming

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1. Introduction

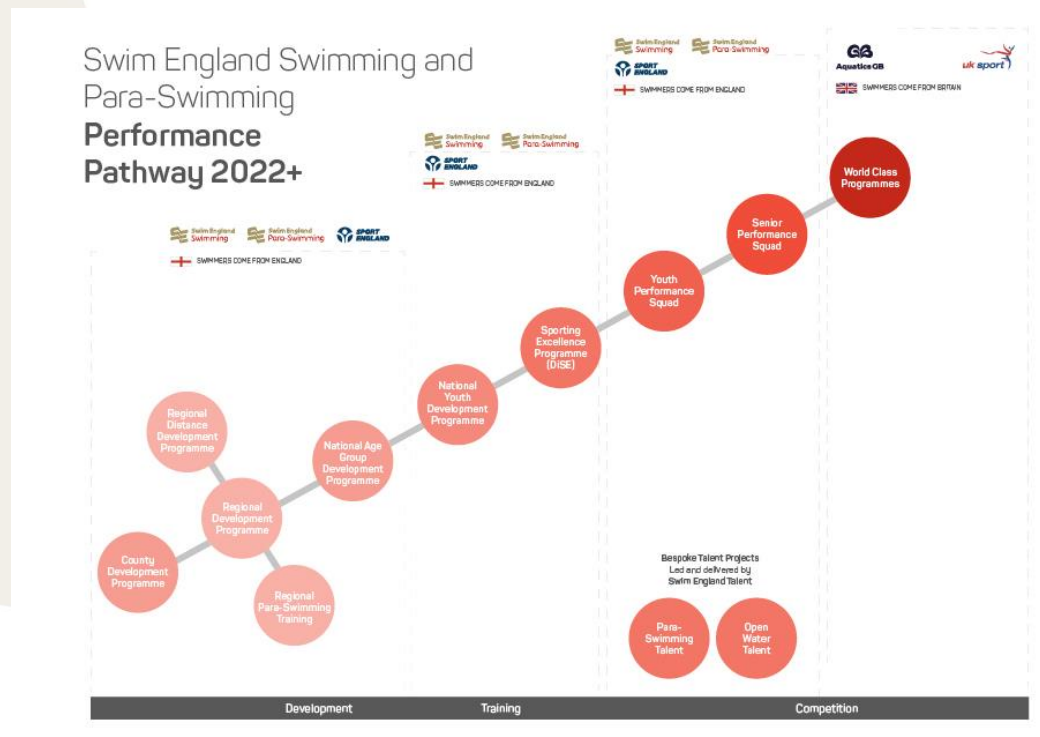
Swim England is the National Governing Body for aquatics in England and is responsible for the delivery of the Great Britain performance pathway for Swimming, in line with the Swim England vision **Great experiences in water. For all. For life.** A foundation goal of the *One Swim England* strategy is “Success on the World Stage” – this policy is written in line with this ambition.

To deliver against this goal, the talent mission is to “*develop the strength and depth of the aquatic pathway through effective athlete development, in order to achieve high performance*”. The performance pathway aims to deliver this through six objectives; **PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT, SPORTING CULTURE AND IDENTITY, EFFECTIVE ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT, OPTIMAL PLANNING, PERFORMANCE AND PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENTS AND EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS.**

This selection information applies to the following Swimming National Programmes and competition activities (all of which are a “programme” and make up the “national programme”):

- Senior Performance Squad
- Youth Performance Squad
- National Youth Development Programme
- Diploma in Sporting Excellence (DiSE)
- National Age Group Development Programme
- Para-Swimming Talent
- Any other programme or competition that Swim England are responsible for and;
- Any competition attended by Swim England, with the exception of the Commonwealth Games

This selection policy intends to provide clarity regarding the process of selection, along with the performance factors that athletes will be considered against. The illustration below outlines the structure within the Swim England Swimming Programme.



2. General Requirements

- 2.1. This section applies to selection for all programmes and competitions, unless explicitly stated otherwise within the programme-specific selection criteria.
- 2.2. All athletes must be a current Club Compete member of Swim England in good standing at the time of selection and for the duration of any programme or competition.
- 2.3. Athletes' age for consideration is based on their age as of 31st December.
- 2.4. Athletes must be of an age below the maximum age for the programme in question, in the final year of the programme.
- 2.5. Selections will be made in accordance with Swim England's Transgender and Non-Binary Competition Policy. Please see Appendix 3 for more details.
- 2.6. Where applicable, athletes must be eligible to represent Great Britain as per the World Aquatics Competition Regulations at the time of selection and for the duration of any programme or competition.
- 2.7. Swim England may in its absolute discretion select an athlete for a programme who is not eligible under clause 2.6, where the athlete is expected to become eligible and has commenced their application process for English or British citizenship where relevant.
- 2.8. When representing England at a competition, athletes must be eligible to represent England under Regulation 322 of the Swim England Handbook at the time of selection and for the duration of the competition.
- 2.9. Depending on the number of eligible athletes, fewer or more athletes may be selected than stipulated for each programme
- 2.10. Aquatics GB's World Class programme athletes may be allowed to participate in Swim England Talent Activities at Swim England's discretion, following consultation with Aquatics GB.
- 2.11. Additional athletes may be selected who have not met all of the required consideration criteria but are showing performances that are progressive. This will be at the discretion of the Selection Panel.
- 2.12. Additional athletes may be selected throughout the season to access bespoke, targeted activities or programmes, or to fill (on a temporary or permanent basis) an open space. This will be at the discretion of the Head of Performance in consultation with the Swim England Technical Lead.
- 2.13. There is no automatic individual funding support as part of Swim England Talent programmes
- 2.14. Athletes selected will be required to comply with any requirements and/or additional conditions required by the Swim England Talent Team from time to time including but not limited to:
 - 2.14.1. Committing to all aspects of the programme and engaging with all activities, with talent programme activity taking priority unless prior agreement with the Technical Lead.

- 2.14.2. Ensuring that the Swim England Talent Team are informed immediately of any illnesses or injuries and/or if the athlete is planning to leave the sport or Programme.
 - 2.14.3. Complying with the Swim England Handbook, Wavepower, Swim England Talent Code of Conduct, and any relevant Aquatics GB policies.
 - 2.14.4. Following any directions from the Swim England talent workforce.
 - 2.14.5. Complying with any specific conditions or requirements of the programme or competition.
 - 2.14.6. Making any required financial contributions for the delivery of Talent Activity with such financial contributions allow Swim England to maximise the quality and extent of the Programmes and Competitions and will be detailed in advance prior to the start of the Talent Activity. Please see information regarding [Swim England's Financial Hardship fund here](#).
- 2.15. Previous selection for a programme or competition by Swim England is no guarantee of selection for another programme or competition in the future. When considering selection of an athlete who had been selected previously, Swim England will consider their past performance, conduct and behaviour on the previous programme(s) and competition (s), including but not limited to:
- 2.15.1. the athlete's rate of development;
 - 2.15.2. the athlete's conduct and behaviour, including any breaches of the Swim England Handbook, Wavepower or Talent Code of Conduct;
 - 2.15.3. whether the athlete has previously withdrawn early from any Programme or Competition and the reasons for doing so; and
 - 2.15.4. the level of communication from the athlete.
- 2.16. Swim England may, in its absolute discretion, temporarily or permanently deselect any Athlete from a Programme or Competition for reasons including but not limited to:
- 2.16.1. the athlete becoming ineligible to represent England or participate;
 - 2.16.2. the athlete breaching any requirement within this selection policy or any direction by the Swim England Talent Team;
 - 2.16.3. lack of engagement with the Programme;
 - 2.16.4. the athlete engaging in conduct deemed likely by Swim England to bring the athlete or itself into disrepute; and
 - 2.16.5. poor performance and/or a rate of development slower than that expected of an athlete on the Programme or Competition squad

3. General Selection Information

The aim of the Swimming performance pathway is to develop and support athletes both in and out of the pool, preparing them for future senior success.

When making selections for a programme or competition, both the 'General Requirements' and the conditions specific to that programme or competition will apply.

Swim England may enter certain competitions separate to the National Programme during the season. When this occurs, any specific criteria and information relating to that competition will be published and shall apply in addition to this selection document.

Each programme has a maximum squad size, with final numbers selected to reflect effective delivery and planning. The final squad numbers will be selected to ensure high-quality coach-to-athlete ratios and appropriate access to development opportunities. The final number of athletes selected may vary depending on the number of athletes achieving the Performance Criteria and the strategic needs of the programme.

Where full quotas are not met through athletes meeting the consideration times, the Selection Panel may nominate additional athletes at its discretion. All discretionary selections will be documented and approved by the Technical Lead.

4. Selection Process

4.1. Selection Panel

A selection panel will be established for both National Programme and Competition selection.

The selection panel will be chaired by a senior Swim England staff member or Leadership Group member who does not have day-to-day involvement in the operation of the Talent Programmes (non-voting) and be made up of the following people:

Voting Members:

- Swim England Technical Lead (voting)
- Talent Officer (2 x voting)

Non-Voting Members: may provide expertise for the selection discussion

- Swim England's Sport Science and Medicine Practitioners (if required to provide expertise – (non-voting)
- Note taker (non-voting)

Representatives from Sport England and/or Aquatics GB may be invited to observe the selections.

In the event the panel cannot come to an agreement, the Swim England Technical Lead (or any replacement as required by the chair) shall have the casting vote.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:

All panel members are required to declare any conflicts of interest at the beginning of a selection meeting. Depending on the nature of the conflict, the member may be required to abstain from the selection discussion and decision of the specific athlete, they are in contention for, the Selection Panel Chair will confirm at the beginning of the meeting if this is required.

4.2. National Programme

4.2.1. Senior Performance Squad (SPS)

Athletes selected to the SPS represent some of the highest-performing senior athletes in England outside of the World Class Programme. Many are tracking toward future representation at senior international competitions.

Athletes receive bespoke support tailored to their individual needs, with a focus on refining performance behaviours, enhancing technical skills, and preparing for senior international competition. The SPS aims to bridge the gap between national performance and senior international success, helping athletes and coaches prepare for the demands of world-class swimming.

Up to 22 athletes will be selected for the programme.

Eligibility Criteria

- Athletes will be eligible for selection if they are 18 years of age or older.
- Athletes will be considered for selection to the SPS based on times achieved between 1st November 2024 and 3rd August 2025, as recorded in the Swim England long course national rankings.
- Athletes must have achieved performances equal to or exceeding the World Aquatics Points (WAP) standards, or the British Para-Swimming Points (BPSP) standards, as outlined in [Appendix 1](#).

Eligible Athletes will be selected onto the programme based on the ranking order of their WAP/BPSP points, up to the maximum number of athletes, and the factors listed in Clause 2.15 of the General Requirements.

In the event of equal points at the programme maximum, all athletes with the same points will be invited on to the programme.

Selected athletes will be notified of the selection process outcome via email within seven days of the selection panel meeting on the 5th and 6th August 2025.

4.2.2. Youth Performance Squad (YPS)

Athletes selected to the YPS are among the leading age group athletes nationally, with the focus on developing the skills and behaviours needed to transition successfully into senior-level performance.

Up to 36 athletes will be selected for the programme.

Eligibility Criteria

- Athletes will be eligible for selection if they are 16 or 17 years old.
- Athletes will be considered for selection to the YPS based on times achieved between 1st November 2024 and 3rd August 2025, as recorded in the Swim England long course national rankings.

- Athletes must have achieved performances equal to or exceeding the World Aquatics Points (WAP) standards, or the British Para-Swimming Points (BPSP) standards, as outlined in [Appendix 1](#).

Eligible Athletes will be selected onto the programme based on the ranking order of their WAP/BPSP points, up to the maximum number of athletes, and the factors listed in Clause 2.15 of the General Requirements.

In the event of equal points at the programme maximum, all athletes with the same points will be invited on to the programme.

Selected athletes will be notified of the selection process outcome via email within seven days of the selection panel meeting on the 5th and 6th August 2025.

4.2.3. Diploma in Sporting Excellence (DiSE)

The DiSE programme runs as a two-year academic and training programme for athletes in full-time education, with selection happening on an annual basis (subject to funding).

Up to 117 athletes will be selected for the programme

Details regarding eligibility and selection can be found in [Appendix 4](#).

4.2.4. National Youth Development Programme (NYDP)

The NYDP supports swimmers who are progressing toward the Future Performance Potential stage of development within the [Optimal Athlete Development Framework \(OADF\)](#), with a focus on building the foundations required for future success at youth and senior levels.

Up to 150 athletes will be selected for the programme.

Selection for the NYDP will be based on performances in events of 100 meters and above for Olympic swimmers. For clarity, this does not apply to para-swimmers, whose performances across all relevant event distances will be considered as per para-swimming criteria in [Appendix 1](#).

Eligibility Criteria

- Athletes will be eligible for selection if they are 15 or 16 years old.
- Athletes will be considered for selection based on times achieved between 1st November 2024 and 3rd August 2025, as recorded in the Swim England long course national rankings.
- Athletes must have achieved performances equal to or exceeding the World Aquatics Points (WAP) standards, or the British Para-Swimming Points (BPSP) standards, as outlined in [Appendix 1](#).

Eligible Athletes will be selected onto the programme based on the ranking order of their WAP/BPSP points, up to the maximum number of athletes, and the factors listed in Clause 2.15 of the General Requirements..

In the event of equal points at the programme maximum, all athletes with the same points will be invited on to the programme.

Selected athletes will be notified of the selection process outcome via email within seven days of the selection panel meeting on the 5th and 6th August 2025.

4.2.5. National Age Group Development Programme (NAGDP)

The NAGDP supports athletes as they build the foundation required for future performance at national and international levels. The focus is on developing the technical, tactical, and behavioural skills that underpin long-term progression within the pathway.

Selection for the NAGDP will be based on performances in a swimmer's best event of 100 meters and above for Olympic swimmers. For clarity, this does not apply to para-swimmers, whose performances across all relevant event distances will be considered as per para-swimming criteria in [Appendix 1](#).

Eligibility Criteria

- Athletes will be eligible for selection if they are 14 years old.
- The Relative Age Effect (RAE)¹ will be considered as part of a discretionary nomination process in relation to males and females aged 14 years, at the discretion of the Technical Lead.
- Athletes will be considered for selection based on times achieved between 1st November 2024 and 3rd August 2025, as recorded in the Swim England long course national rankings.
- Athletes must have achieved performances equal to or exceeding the World Aquatics Points (WAP) standards, or the British Para-Swimming Points (BPSP) standards, as outlined in [Appendix 1](#).

Eligible Athletes will be selected onto the programme based on the ranking order of their WAP/BPSP points, up to the maximum number of athletes, and the factors listed in Clause 2.15 of the General Requirements. An equal split across male and female athletes will be invited onto the programme.

In the event of equal points at the programme maximum, all athletes with the same points will be invited on to the programme.

The programme is split into four Zones across the country, with up to 60 athletes allocated to each Zone based on their location.

Selected athletes will be notified of the selection process outcome via email within seven days of the selection panel meeting on the 5th and 6th August 2025.

4.2.6. Para-Swimming Talent

The Swim England Para Talent Programme runs in parallel with all stages of the Swim England Talent Pathway. Its primary aim is to support the effective integration of para-swimmers across the pathway by providing tailored opportunities for both athletes and the wider workforce.

Up to 25 athletes will be selected for the programme.

¹ The advantage or disadvantage athletes experience due to their age relative to others in the same age group, where those born earlier in the selection year often have physical or developmental advantages over younger peers.

Para-swimmers will only be selected for one programme; an athlete cannot be on both Para-Swimming Talent and another national programme.

Eligibility Criteria

- Athletes will be eligible for selection if they are 11 years and older
- Athletes will be considered for selection based on British Para-Swimming points (BPSP) achieved between 1st November 2024 and 3rd August 2025, as outlined in [Appendix 2](#).

Eligible Athletes will be selected onto the programme based on the ranking order of their points, up to the maximum number of athletes, and the factors listed in Clause 2.15 of the General Requirements..

In the event of equal points at the programme maximum, all athletes with the same points will be invited on to the programme.

Selected athletes will be notified of the selection process outcome via email within seven days of the selection panel meeting on the 5th and 6th August 2025.

Aquatics GB will notify Swim England of any athletes having been classified throughout the season, at this point if an athlete meets the Performance Criteria in [Appendix 2](#) they may be invited onto the programme for the remainder of the season. In this situation, the athlete will be notified as soon as possible.

4.2.7. Open Water Talent (OWT) (subject to change)

The Swim England Open Water Talent Programme aims to identify and support swimmers with the potential to progress in open water swimming at national and international levels. The programme focuses on athletes who demonstrate competitive performances in the 1500m Freestyle in the pool and who have participated in regional or higher-level open water events.

The programme seeks to develop athletes' technical, tactical, and physical skills for open water racing, build knowledge and confidence in different open water environments, and support progression along the Swim England talent pathway towards future international success.

Up to 25 athletes will be selected for the programme.

Eligibility Criteria

- Athletes will be eligible for selection if they are 14 years old and over.
- Athletes must have participated in a regional open water competition, equivalent or higher-level event, such as home nation or international open water meets.
- Athletes must demonstrate competitive performances in the 1500m Freestyle in the pool, as outlined in [Appendix 3](#).

Eligible Athletes will be selected onto the programme based on the ranking order up to the maximum number of athletes, and the factors listed in Clause 2.15 of the General Requirements..

In the event of equal points at the programme maximum, all athletes with the same points will be invited on to the programme.

Selected athletes will be notified of the selection process outcome via email within seven days of the selection panel meeting on the 5th and 6th August 2025.

4.3. Competition Squads

Where the National Programme is attending a competition as part of the programme's activity, its athletes will attend the competition and there will be no additional selection for the competition. It is at the discretion of the Technical Lead as to whether any additional athletes, not part of the National Programme, are also invited to take part in this type of competition.

However, there may be additional occasions where a group of athletes are selected for a competition, outside the National Programme activity where a representative England team attends, as and when required, in line with this selection policy.

In order to be considered for selection for a Competition, an athlete must meet the eligibility requirements within the General Requirements, along with any factors identified for the specific competition of which will be detailed within supporting information to this policy and published on the Swim England website in advance of the selection.

This selection policy does not apply to the Olympic, Paralympic or Commonwealth Games.

4.4. Competition Selection Process

When required the Selection Panel will select athletes for a competition, including reserves where relevant, based on the Performance Criteria, financial viability and the performance objectives of the competition.

The split of athlete places by sex will be at the complete discretion of the Selection Panel.

There is no obligation to select athletes for all available events at a competition.

Selected athletes will be contacted via email following the Selection Panel meeting.

5. Deselection Process

There may be times when it is necessary for an athlete to be removed from the National Programme or from a competition selection. While deselection is at Swim England's discretion, we will ensure that any athlete who may be deselected will be treated fairly and under a set process, as detailed below.

5.1. Eligibility

If Swim England is made aware that an athlete selected for a programme or competition was or subsequently has become ineligible, the athlete will be temporarily or permanently deselected with immediate effect. In the event that the athlete later becomes eligible again, Swim England will consider whether it is appropriate to re-select the athlete to the Programme or Squad. Please see the General Requirements in Appendix 1 and any other relevant eligibility criteria as detailed throughout the policy.

There is no right of appeal against deselection for ineligibility.

5.2. Code of Conduct

Deselection for any breach of the Swim England Talent Code of Conduct will be made in accordance with the procedure stated within the Swim England Talent Code of Conduct.

5.3. Performance

Athletes may be deselected in accordance with General Requirement 2.16. Performance and rate of development will relate to the Performance Factors in the relevant Appendix.

Process

Any athlete being considered for deselection due to performance will undergo a review meeting with the Technical Lead and any other relevant member of the workforce, where the areas of concern will be posed to the athlete. The athlete will be invited to comment on the concerns at the meeting and may follow up in writing within seven days of the meeting.

If it is considered that further improvement is required by the Technical Lead in conjunction with the Talent team and the athlete's Home Coach, the athlete will be informed of a review date, where a decision will be made based on the needs of the programme or competition.

5.4. Injury and Illness

It is likely that all athletes will at some point suffer an injury or illness which limits their performance. Athletes on a programme or selected for a competition who are unable to participate due to illness or injury must inform the Swim England Talent Team as soon as possible. Athletes on the programme who suffer illness or injury will retain their place on the programme for the duration of such.

Athletes selected for a programme or competition who suffer illness or injury may be required, at the discretion of the Swim England Talent Team, to undertake a fitness or medical assessment to demonstrate that they are fit to participate. If the Technical Lead determines that an ill or injured athlete poses a risk to themselves, other athletes or team staff, or would be unfit to compete in a competition, they may at their sole discretion prevent the athlete from participating in programme activities or competition.

6. Appeals

Athletes have the right to appeal against the selection process for the national programme or any competition, in line with the Swim England's Appeal Policy.

Appeals shall be addressed in line with the details within the policy which can be found [here](#) - SE1038 Team Selection Appeals Procedure.

Appendix 1 - Performance Criteria, SPS, YPS, NYDP, NAGDP

Matrix of Performance Standards for World Aquatic Points (WAP) Required by Age and Programme

Female				Male				
SPS	YPS	NYDP	NAGDP	Age	NAGDP	NYDP	YPS	SPS
825				18+				800
	775			17			750	
	700	675		16		675	725	
		625		15		625		
			525	14	475			

For information relating to how WAPs are allocated, please see here: [Swimming Points](#)

Matrix of Performance Standards for British Para-Swimming Points (BPSP) Required by Age and Programme

Performances must be achieved in events that are recognised as official Paralympic events for the athlete's classification.

	Age	Physical (1-10)		Visual (11-13)		Intellectual (14)	
		Event 1	Event 2	Event 1	Event 2	Event 1	Event 2
SPS	18+	675	550	625	500	800	625
YPS	17	550	425	535	410	725	550
	16	500	400	500	350	675	525
NYDP	16	485	365	480	335	655	500
	15	450	325	450	300	625	450
NAGDP	14	375	300	375	275	525	400

Appendix 2 - Performance Criteria, Para-Swimming Talent

Matrix of Performance Standards for British Para-Swimming Points (BPSP) Required by Age for Para-Swimming Talent

Performances must be achieved in events that are recognised as official Paralympic events for the athlete's classification

Age	Physical (1-10)		Visual (11-13)		Intellectual (14)	
	Event 1	Event 2	Event 1	Event 2	Event 1	Event 2
11 - 12	275	225	250	200	350	275
13	325	250	300	225	425	350
14	350	300	350	275	500	400
15	425	325	425	300	600	450
16	465	365	465	335	650	500
17	525	400	500	350	700	550
18+	650	500	600	500	750	600

Appendix 3 – Performance Criteria, Open Water Talent

Matrix of Performance Standards for 1500m times by age

Female		Male
16:51.18	18+	15:49.32
17:04.50	17	15:58.91
17:31.46	16	16:25.60
17:58.18	15	16:50.88
18:25.83	14	17:16.80

Appendix 4 - DiSE

Diploma in Sporting Excellence (DiSE) (subject to change)

Selection Process

Athletes who meet the General Requirements in Appendix 1 and the performance criteria below are encouraged to apply for the DiSE programme. Applications open in June and details regarding the application process will be found here:

<https://www.swimming.org/sport/diploma-sporting-excellence-dise-swimming/>

SportsAid Criteria

To be eligible for DiSE programme funding, an athlete must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be aged 16 to 18 (or aged 19 to 24 if they have an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plan), when they start the programme. (Born between 1 September 2008 and 31 August 2009)
- Subject to paragraph 2 below, be enrolled on a state funded study programme and be studying towards an academic (e.g., A levels) or technical qualification (e.g., NVQs or City and Guilds)
- Be on a talent pathway managed by their sport's National Governing Body (NGB).
- Must not be employed by their sport body or club on a professional contract.

The requirement "be enrolled on a state funded study programme", does not apply to athletes who attend a fee-paying school for their main study programme in the following circumstances:

- a. The student is in receipt of the school's means-tested bursary of at least 50% fee remission; or
- b. The student is in receipt of a talent / ability-based scholarship of at least 50% but were this not to be the case then they would have otherwise qualified for the school's means-tested bursary of at least 50% fee remission; or
- c. At least 50% of the student's fees are being paid by a third sector organisation but were this not to be the case then they would have otherwise qualified for the school's means tested bursary of at least 50% fee remission.

Swim England will take all reasonable steps to confirm eligibility with the school before the student is enrolled on or starts the programme.

SportsAid will consider other exceptional circumstances, where Swim England believes that an athlete should be considered for DiSE programme funding for exceptional reasons, it will contact SportsAid to seek agreement before place is awarded.

Performance Considerations

Times used for selection to the DiSE programme will align to Olympic and Paralympic events and taken from the Swim England long course national rankings, to be achieved between 1st January 2025 and 4th August 2025. Based on the following:

- The highest ranked swimmer from long course performances in each Olympic/Paralympic event will be selected
- Further selections can be made from second, third etc. ranked positions until maximum numbers are achieved
- Swimmers ranked in multiple events will be selected on their highest ranked event
- Where swimmers have equal rankings for multiple events, the highest World Aquatics points score will be used to determine the event selected

It should be noted that any exceptional performances may be included at the absolute discretion of the Swim England National Technical Lead.

Appendix 5 – Transgender and Non-Binary Policy

Transgender and Non-Binary Competition Policy

From the 1st September 2023, Swim England's Transgender and Non-Binary Competition Policy has replaced the existing competition categories of 'Female' and 'Male' with the categories of 'Female' and 'Open'.

However, as per Clause 7.1 of the policy, any trans or non-binary competitors seeking selection to any of the Swim England talent pathways shall be required to be compliant with the eligibility criteria detailed in the World Aquatics Policy on Eligibility for the Men's and Women's Competition Categories prior to being eligible for selection. This is to ensure that selected competitors are eligible to compete at the respective national/ international competition(s).

World Aquatics 'Policy on Eligibility for the Men's and Women's Competition Categories' continues to use the terms Women/Female and Men/Male. As such, and for the avoidance of doubt, female athletes shall be selected from the 'Female' category, male athletes will be selected from eligible competitors within the 'Open' category. Non-binary athletes will be eligible for selection on the basis of their birth sex. If unsure, please contact equality@swimming.org

As an evolving area across the sport sector, this will be reviewed 12 months following the date of publication, or following an update to World Aquatics policy, whichever is sooner.