



Scottish
Swimming

Performance Plan 2015—2021

Introduction

Scottish Swimming's new Corporate Plan is complete and outlines the Scottish Swimming vision, mission and strategic objectives for the next 6 years.

Vision: “Everyone Can Swim”

Mission: “To inspire our members and partners in the development of aquatics, providing leadership and expert support, resulting in more people taking part and reaching their full potential”

Strategic Objectives:

- to increase the number of people of all ages and abilities participating in swimming for health, fitness and fun
- to support and develop stronger, more sustainable clubs that will provide increased and quality opportunities for people to participate at all levels
- to enhance the aquatic pathway, ensuring high performance results through effective athlete development and quality coaching

Context

As part of the Corporate Plan review process, a comprehensive evaluation of the Scottish Swimming Performance Plan 2006–2014 was undertaken by an independent group, including a consultation process with a wide range of contributors involving coaches, swimmers, partners (eg sportscotland, British Swimming) and National committees. The review was completed against a backdrop of improving, systematic and sustained success at international level (Olympic, Paralympic, World, Commonwealth, European) throughout the duration of the plan, together with significant progress in developing depth and competition across the sport in Scotland.

The main recommendations of the Review Group in regard to the Scottish Swimming Performance Plan 2015–2021 were:

- **Consistency of approach** – continue to identify swimmers in a systematic, development based manner with evidence based decision making at its core.
- **Sharper focus on “elite” performance** – set challenging standards at the highest level towards meeting the Performance Plan outcomes, providing world-class, bespoke support to swimmers and their coaches.
- **Improved technical focus** – develop and target improvement in key technical areas towards supporting the achievement of improved performances across the swimmer pathway.
- **Quality coaching** – ensure coaching remains central to the development process of athletes
- **Emphasis on female development** – develop a targeted programme aimed at improving female swimmers across the pathway
- **Diving** – include diving within the Performance Plan, focussing on developing daily training environments and athlete/coach development

Taking account of the Performance Review and in the context of Scottish Swimming’s new Corporate Plan, the Performance Plan focuses on swimming, para swimming and diving, as disciplines in a position to deliver against the strategic objectives and outlines our approach in the following areas:

1 Strategic Objectives & Associated KPIs

2 Philosophy and Approach

3 Focus

4 Priorities

The Performance Plan is a core Scottish Swimming document and must continue to impact positively and consistently on the progression of the sport in general, linking closely with all areas of Scottish Swimming. Running for six years, it is anticipated that the plan will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis, taking into account changing circumstances and thus evolving over time.

MEGA



1 Strategic Objectives & Associated KPIs

Performance Strategic Objective:

“To enhance the aquatic pathway, ensuring high performance results through effective athlete development and quality coaching”

The Scottish Swimming Performance Plan 2015 – 2021 will build on the progress made through the previous Plan. Scottish Swimming will continue to positively influence the swimmer pathway, linking to the development of the sport and leading to sustained performances at the highest level.

From current status, Scottish Swimming wants to make the most of available talent and to increase the depth of this talent. In terms of measurable results, Scottish Swimming wants to punch well above its weight relative to both per capita population and number of registered swimmers.

Scottish Swimming is working towards positive outcomes across the next six year cycle, including medal winning performances on the international stage (Olympic, Paralympic, World, Commonwealth and European Championships) and making a strong contribution to British teams.

In order to ensure that Scottish Swimming is on track to achieve this objective, three headline performance indicators have been agreed;

- **6–8 swimmers attaining top 16 in the world ranking (2 per nation focus 2016/2020)**
- **5 para-swimmers attaining top 8 in the world ranking (absolute and IPC Championship Events focus 2016/2020)**
- **Scottish divers ranking in the top 18 in the world measured by achieving the average degree of difficulty on dives for 1m/3m/10m (individual or synchro) derived from the Olympic Games and World Championships 2004–2012 (focus 2018/2020)**

To supplement the above, a range of underpinning KPIs aimed at evaluating progress in terms of depth and quality across the sport have been developed. These include World Class representation, British depth trend analysis across each event (open and age group) along with National Programme progression.

2 Philosophy & Approach

Scottish Swimming will continue to follow a “coach driven, athlete focussed” approach to the delivery of the Performance Plan, establishing appropriate standards and levels of expectation at each stage of the pathway. **The approach will be inclusive and collective, process based and innovative, with the development of coaches, athletes and performance staff at the heart of what we do.** The approach will be underpinned by effective and consistent communication amongst and between Performance staff, coaches and partners, taking learning from across the sport to contribute towards success.

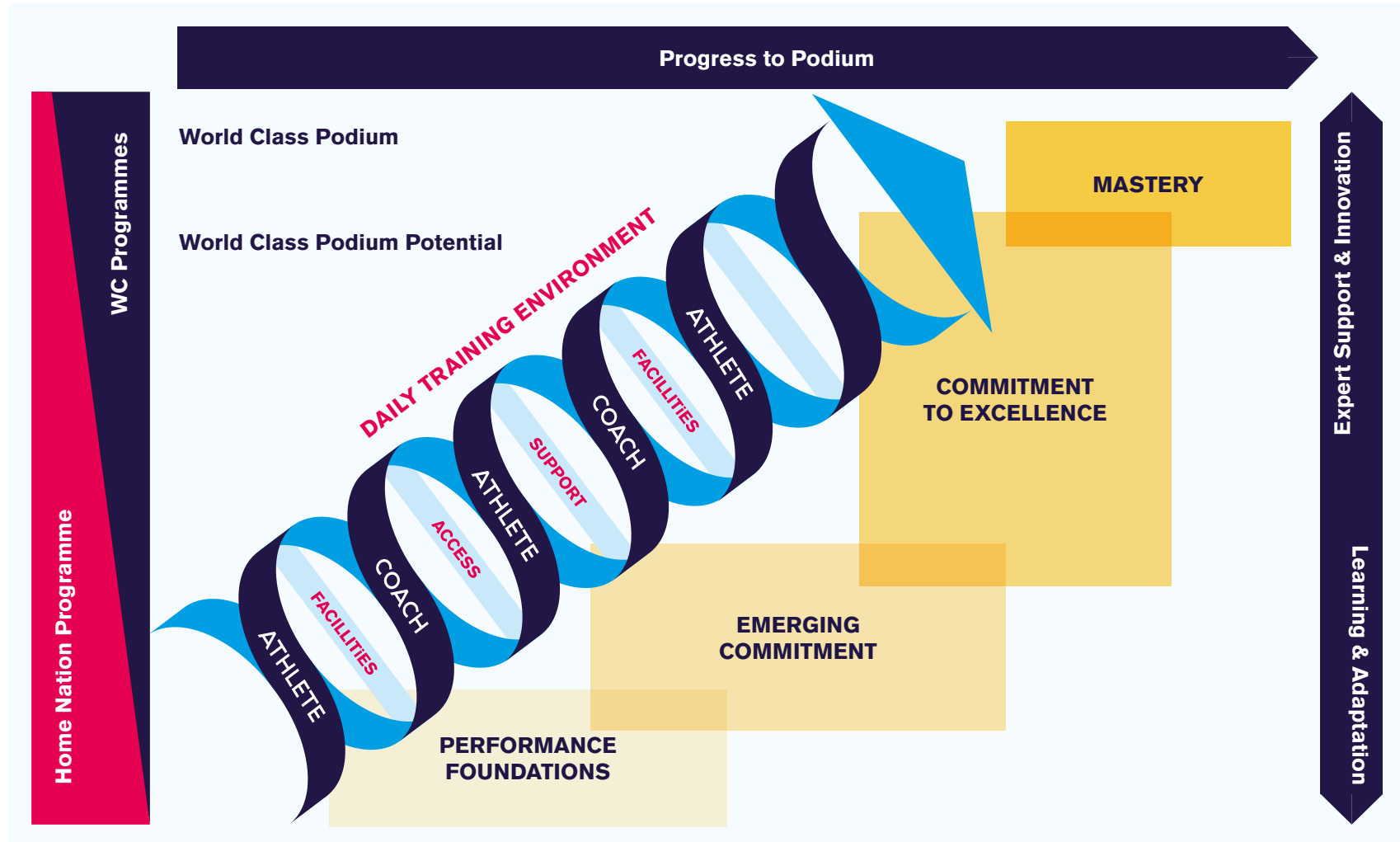
Scottish Swimming’s focus is to develop a system that our athletes and coaches believe gives them an edge over anyone else in the world in terms of its ability to inspire, challenge and support their improvement. Furthermore, Scottish Swimming will continue to strive to make the system sustainable and not dependent on any one club, programme, coach or athlete. In doing so, Scottish Swimming recognises that the success of the sport in Scotland is based largely on the support for the daily training environment (clubs, programmes, centres). More specifically, Scottish Swimming continues to believe that clubs providing quality coaching and development are critical to the sustained success of aquatic sport in Scotland. In acknowledging that the development of athletes is non-linear and takes time, Scottish Swimming will continue to work positively with clubs (swimming and diving) through both the coach and athlete development process, and in doing so maximise potential within the sport. Moreover, Scottish Swimming is committed to the

continued integration of para-swimmers into swimming programmes where appropriate and to working with swimming clubs and coaches to provide inclusive daily training environments ensuring that para swimmers are supported through the future pathway.

Linked to the Development Plan, Scottish Swimming continues to emphasise and believe in the wider impact and benefits of athletes being involved and committing to the aquatic pathway. Benefits of involvement with sport have been extensively researched and outlined (specifically around physical/psychological health) however, as athletes progress along the pathway, exposure to areas such as lifestyle organisation, commitment/dedication, discipline, aspiration, mindset, dealing with success and failure and relationship building are important factors in the development of young men and women as people, as well as athletes. As such, Scottish Swimming will proactively encourage the promotion of these areas as part of the athlete development process and through the duration of our plan will explore research opportunities to monitor this effect.

The delivery of the Plan requires effective collaboration with performance swimming and diving partners, including; the sportscotland institute of sport, British Swimming, Clubs, Universities and Colleges, Local Authorities and Leisure Trusts. The diagram below illustrates the

relationship between the development of swimmers through the daily training environment and applied support through partners. The diagram is linear in nature however in reality most athlete development does not follow this flow.



Evaluation & Monitoring

In addition to the on-going monitoring from the Scottish Swimming Board, specifics within the Performance Plan will be evaluated and monitored by the Swimming High Performance Group (SHPG). The group consists of Scottish Swimming Performance Team staff (including a representative from diving), two sportscotland staff members and one independent member. British Swimming, National Swimming/Diving Committees and the Scottish Swimming Coaches Technical Panel will continue to be an integral part of the consultation/feedback process.

3 Focus & Approach

The overall recommendations of the performance review group have been distilled to “4 Centre Lanes”, critical to on-going development and sustained longer term success.



Each “Centre Lane” is distinctive however, each “Centre Lane” influences the other, interacting continually through the performance development process.



3.1 Quality Coaching

Strategic Objective:

“Scottish aquatics performance programmes are populated with effective and knowledgeable decision-makers, who enable athletes to develop technical excellence, thus impacting significantly on their performance and development”

Raising ambitions and confidence in both our coaches and athletes – to believe we can compete with the best athletes in the world and have a positive impact on aquatic sport in general is a core feature of the strategy. Furthermore, Scottish Swimming seeks to further understand and learn from coaching excellence across the world in order to challenge coaches to aspire to be “World Class”. The approach is inclusive of the current set of coaches we are working with and a wider group of coaches who want to be a part of this vision.

Scottish Swimming will:

- a) Deliver the defined coaching pathway with clear expectations**
- b) Provide relevant support at each stage of the coaching pathway**

a) Deliver the defined coaching pathway with clear expectations

Scottish Swimming needs a network of world class coaches at every stage of the aquatic pathway (swimming/para-swimming/diving) to produce world class athletes in a systematic way. Scottish Swimming recognises the contribution of coaches at every level, more specifically, a commitment to excellence at every level of coaching, based around what athletes need at each stage of development with specific awareness of the differences between genders in application. Essential to the successful delivery of the coaching pathway is a collaborative culture of learning and good practice in the coaching community in Scotland. Integral to this shared approach is an ethos of challenging coaches to become exceptional, the best in the world, and supporting them in this journey.

Coaching Pathway

The National Coach will work with high performing coaches and external partners (sportscotland, British Swimming, UK Sport, other sports) to identify specifically what is required at each stage of coach development. The pathway will have four stages linked to the pathway – developing athletes from young age-groupers through to senior Podium athletes.

The four stages are:

- **Children's Coach (8–12 years)** – working with children participating in early age group swimming in clubs
- **Age Group Coach (12–18 years)**
– working with young swimmers involved in age group competition at District and National level
- **Performance Development Coach (12+)**
– working with swimmers participating in National squad activity
- **High Performance Coach (16+)** – working with swimmers competing at the elite level

Each stage of the coaching pathway will provide a structured, purposeful development process for coaches through which the key aspects of excellent coaching practice will be identified and addressed. In doing so, it will be critical to work closely with the Development Team, especially the Regional Swimming Development Manager (RSDM) network (operational) and Education colleagues to ensure that the formal coaching qualification and training process is enhanced and improved.

Coach Mapping

To identify where strengths and weaknesses of the coaching system are, a coach mapping exercise will be undertaken. This process will benchmark each of the four stages against the requirements of coaching practice. Furthermore, this will provide the opportunity to assess individual coaching needs and development priorities. Likewise, the process will provide the opportunity for coaches (paid or unpaid) who wish to be involved in developing themselves, to be identified.

Personal Coach Development

As coaches progress along the pathway, an individual coach development approach will be taken. This will include a meaningful review and appraisal process aimed at enhancing both coaching attributes and technical knowledge in conjunction with effective application. The clear intention of this is to increase the self-reflective capacity of our coaches to extend and develop their expertise. For diving, this will include exposure to the best practice in GB Diving, Gymnastics, competition and the soft skills associated with the sport. In both instances, where possible, it is Scottish Swimming's intention to work closely with British Swimming to implement specific projects and more specifically encourage clubs/programmes to embed the appraisal process within the culture of their organisations. Central to the overall initiative for coaches, will be the encouragement of a growth mindset aimed at promoting positive response to challenge and learning, along with the recognition of the need for responsibility and accountability for performance.

Development v Reward

A feature of the coaching pathway will be ensuring a balanced approach to providing opportunities, based on individual need and athlete results. Accordingly, coach initiatives and appointments will be driven by the learning needs of coaches (linked to the key areas of coach development identified within the plan), recognition of athlete achievements and the specific needs of the athletes. A process-based approach to coaching will continue to be promoted linked to evaluation of agreed outcomes.

b) Provide relevant support at each stage of the coaching pathway

A fully functioning and effective coaching pathway requires significant level of support, ranging from formal training and education, experiential learning, direct on deck contact and personal development. To deliver this type of support, key areas of implementation are set out below and will be led by the National Coach.

Programme visits

National Coach – programme visits will be defined by athlete level and coach needs. The visits will be both challenging and supportive (for coach and swimmer) and, if necessary, interventionist. Focused on the implementation of plans for identified athletes, the visits will be conducted regularly and based on observation of practical sessions and more reflective meetings to discuss progress on previously agreed actions. Linked to the programme visits, the formal institute athlete review process will add to an evidence-based framework to identify objectives for coaches and athletes.

Programme of Coach Development Opportunities

Associated with the four stages of the coaching pathway, a progressive and systematic programme of coach development opportunities will be delivered in partnership with British Swimming and the Scottish Swimming Development Team. Core elements will include workshops at National Championships and Squad gatherings, in addition to which there will be bespoke learning events and seminars (both national and local) as required for identified coaches. Building on the existing Coaching Matters programme, a further series of technical and generic workshops will be delivered on an annual basis, accessed by a range of coaches across the

pathway. Furthermore, a targeted 1:1 mentoring process will involve the National Coach and specialist practitioners to ensure that all aspects of developing coaching expertise are being addressed.

Linked to these opportunities will be the creation of a series of learning events placing identified coaches in challenging environments both at home and overseas (for example, attending a GB Stroke/Relay Camp or spending time with a world leading coach in their own programme). These coaches will then present at an agreed coaching seminar, disseminating their learning for the benefit of others in the pathway.

Central to the successful delivery of this programme will be a detailed training needs analysis process undertaken by identified coaches and resulting in a personalised development plan for each coach.

Coach Education and Learning

Coaches will be encouraged to engage with the formal education system inside and outside of swimming. In order to do this, it is essential that this system is relevant and authentic, taking into account the latest research and development in the world of swimming and the broader sphere of coach education. The National Coach will work closely with development colleagues and coaches to enhance the current coach education system. This includes areas such as UKCC, Coach CPD's and qualifications in the tertiary education sector. Likewise in diving, Scottish Swimming will continue to review and progress the current level 1 and 2 diving qualifications, and introduce an annual calendar of CPD workshops to run alongside the Diving National Programme.



GLASGOW 2014
XX COMMONWEALTH GAMES

3.2 Technical Excellence

Strategic Objective

“Scottish athletes can apply skills effectively at speed, under fatigue and under pressure, consistently in competition conditions”

In swimming, races are won or lost by millimeters or hundredths of seconds. Swimmers who win are those who have prepared to do the little things well under pressure by practicing and refining in training. It is accepted and understood in sport that athletes fall back upon their training “habits” when under pressure in the competitive arena, thus if swimmers have been allowed to complete sessions without an uncompromising attention to detail in their technique and skills, these bad “habits” will fail them under competition pressures. If Scottish swimmers are to be successful at the highest levels, it is essential that their learned training “habits” are technically outstanding in order that when the pressure and pain of racing hits them, their “good habits” help to achieve an outstanding result.

Scottish Swimming will:

- a) Create an environment supporting the understanding of technical excellence**
- b) Drive the application of technical excellence throughout the coach and athlete pathways**

a) Create an environment supporting the understanding of technical excellence

To support the right environment, we want to set expectations whereby technical excellence is recognised as one of the key objectives to be met in achieving optimal performance and which can have a significant detrimental impact on performance when not addressed. Technical excellence is fundamental within the swimmer development process and must be the priority at all stages including Learn to Swim (LTS), where fundamentals are taught in the right way, through to high performance where a specific focus on detail is required. Scottish Swimming is committed to influencing the coach and swimmer pathway in this regard, including taking a forensic approach to those swimmers with ambition and capability to succeed on the international stage. In essence, we will recalibrate the technical agenda and refocus our attention to skilful as well as fast swimming. We fundamentally believe that the former leads to the latter and develops robust, sustainable foundations for successful performance.

The National Coach will have a technical focus with coaches and athletes through a process based approach, examining technical trends across world swimming, embedding fundamentals and incorporating new innovations, themes and standards. A central feature of work with coaches will be asking questions and looking for deep, technical knowledge and effective application of this understanding; challenging the coaches of performance swimmers and demanding of coaches of developing swimmers not to focus solely on training at the expense of technique. Although challenging to progress, this philosophy will be addressed through the “Quality Coaching” section above and in-particular the development v reward approach.

Technical Modelling

We will establish technical models of strokes and events by gender, using performance trends in the sport and analysing the techniques and performances of world-leading swimmers. Benchmarking our swimmers against these standards requires significant monitoring and evaluation capacity. To this end, working collaboratively with partners (sportsotland, British Swimming Aberdeen Sports Village (ASV) we will develop ASV into an internationally recognised centre for technical development. Auditing Scottish swimmers across the pathway against established criteria will form an integral part of our technical excellence objective, coupling swimmer improvement with coach learning and will also provide the opportunity to identify trends in stroke mechanics within Para-Swimming.

In diving, the creation of a diving skills matrix that suggests dive development order and progression will be formulated and implemented along with diving-specific dryland coach resources covering a range of areas including gymnastics, diving specific conditioning, trampoline and dry board skills. The matrix will be linked with British Swimming initiatives and approach, allowing flexibility and room for innovation in each of these areas.

Coaching Practice – evaluation and change

Our system requires that coaches know how to effect change on athletes, particularly technical changes, to improve stroke efficiency and speed. Using the technical modelling outcomes as a starting point, we will implement a series of technical themes across the pathway, encouraging coaches at all levels to use key technical markers as a means to improve swimming in a progressive manner. Linked to Scottish Swimming's new LTS Framework, the technical themes in performance swimming will build on the foundation skills learned in teaching programmes. Developing technical excellence should be a key component of all programmes and Scottish Swimming will support coaches and swimmers to achieve this.

b) Drive application of technical excellence

National technical themes will be established in conjunction with British Swimming and delivered as core elements of the drive towards technical excellence. It would be impossible to deliver all of these at once, so priorities will be set and a rolling programme of technical developments mapped out. One of the key elements of this programme will be an emphasis on racing skills in addition to stroke technique. A benchmarking exercise (looking at start and turns) was piloted several years ago and this will be updated and established as a set of standards to be achieved. Under the leadership of the National Coach, technical 'champions' for each of the competitive strokes and racing skills will be given responsibility to develop and improve performance against benchmark standards. These will consist of a gender-specific athlete and coach unit, extending the principle in use at our National Stroke Camps. Likewise in diving, re-emphasising technical excellence within diving competition is paramount and to this end a competition resource suggesting dive list creation, order, progression, group coverage and tariff will be developed.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Essential to the success of this technical excellence objective will be high quality monitoring and evaluation. An effective race analysis resource is already in place, however, we must strive to continually improve this to be world leading. The new facility developments at Aberdeen Sports Village, in conjunction with provision of camera and analysis equipment, will deliver on the objective measurement components of monitoring and evaluation. In addition to this, we will establish a national programme of auditing our swimmers against technical standards with regular progress measures taking place with agreed performance outcomes for coaches and swimmers. To extend the existing provision, we plan to provide race footage and evaluation at identified National Events for all swimmers, incorporating new camera technology and direct coach/swimmer feedback.

Competition

The ultimate measure of technical development is performance under competition conditions, when swimmers are pressured (physically and mentally) and challenged to repeat consistently (heats, finals, over several days). Being able to apply techniques consistently under these conditions requires more than skills and drills in practice sessions. We will encourage and support the development and implementation of technique-based awards at meets where skill and tactics are rewarded alongside race times. Linking effective competitive performance to technical improvements is much more significant in the development of swimmers than chasing times through an adult based physiological training model. Such innovative competition conditions will allow swimmers and coaches to develop race models and experiment with them in non-threatening, supportive environments. This innovation will be included as part of the competition review process. Linked to “Quality Coaching”, buy in from coaches to the process of technique development is critical for overall improvement in this area to occur.

3.3 Performance & Performance Development Environments

Strategic Objective:

“Centres/hubs, programmes and clubs where people, facilities and conditions exist to enable planned, sustained success and achievement”

Scottish Swimming continues to lead on the implementation of a structure that enhances the daily training environments for our developing and performance athletes, linking the athlete pathway from learning to swim/dive, to club swimming/diving and through to high performance. Providing opportunities and options for athletes to train in focussed, coach led and supported environments is critical, as is ensuring that there is enough capacity and quality within the system. Coaching continues to be a central feature of the Performance Plan, and as such Scottish Swimming will implement a strategy of maintaining or increasing (if required) the number of full-time coaches in Scotland, along with improving the quality of the environments delivered through this strategy.

Scottish Swimming will:

- a) Establish four effective swimming Centres/Hubs delivering strongly to Scottish Swimming performance outcomes**
- b) Support and enhance performance development environments across Scotland, contributing towards underpinning measures and performance outcomes**

a) Establish four effective swimming Centres/Hubs delivering strongly to Scottish Swimming performance outcomes

Scottish Swimming has identified the need for four sustainable centres/hubs across Scotland – in Stirling, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow. In addition, Edinburgh will be established as a centre for diving in Scotland and Britain. Currently each centre/hub has a different model of delivery and all are at different stages of development. The main objective for Scottish Swimming will continue to be the delivery of an enhanced, performance driven daily training environment, whereby all elements required for successful athlete performance and development are in place. These include;

- **Quality Coaching** – full time, performance focussed, varied approaches
- **Performance focus** – performance/coach led, athlete centred, strong and embedded culture of shared standards and expectations
- **Appropriate facilities and access** – pool (appropriate long course and short course balance), time (pool, boards, land), space, equipment
- **Service provision** – strength and conditioning, physiotherapy, medical, performance science
- **University/College relationships** – academic flexibility, scholarships, support service provision, personal development, pastoral care
- **Sustainability** – relationship/integration with the local pathway; financially stable

Ensuring that the above are in place for each centre, providing appropriate coaching choice with differing approaches, will help to support the transition of age and youth swimmers to senior swimming.

Effective Performance Management

Scottish Swimming will lead in the implementation and alignment of the evaluation process across each of the centres/hubs, linked to the partnership agreements in place at each. Working with partners, part of this process will be an audit against the key factors identified above, taking into account the different stages of current centre development, and then an action plan for each centre will be produced. In doing this, Scottish Swimming will ensure a greater level of consistency in benchmarking to show progress and trends, along with establishing clear expectations for the development/management of each centre.

Establish centres/hubs as Centres of Learning

Each centre/hub will be developed to incorporate ongoing swimmer and coach development and linking in with the on-going coach education process. Scottish Swimming will lead a process where formal and informal learning opportunities will be provided as part of the strategy and will be linked to the Scottish Swimming National Programme. An example of this will be Stroke Camps held at each of the centres/hubs on an annual basis and delivered by technical 'champions'.

Managed Link and Pathway to Centres/Hubs

Ensuring that swimmers, parents and coaches are clear as to how swimmers can access/move to centres, a transparent process allowing athletes to make informed decisions, in a timely manner, will be developed and implemented. The development of this process will involve consultation with various groups including coaches, swimmers, performance lifestyle experts and parents, considering specific areas such as coaching; academics; lifestyle; performance staff guidance and timescales. The Performance Director and National Coach will engage in transparent discussions with all parties to ensure that an effective process is put in place and implemented.

Development of Edinburgh as a Performance Centre for Diving

Edinburgh will be developed as a Performance Centre for diving incorporating the approach and expectations of swimming described above. The aim is to create a structure in Scotland where appropriate coaching and training up to junior elite level is accessible in all diving clubs. During this phase a once-a-week training slot will be made available in Edinburgh to offer access to better facilities and higher levels of coaching expertise. Once divers have shown themselves as established junior elite divers, links will be made to encourage full time training in Edinburgh to promote further development as a senior athlete.



b) Support and enhance performance development environments across Scotland, contributing towards underpinning measures and performance outcomes

Quality coaching remains a central feature of the Performance Plan and Scottish Swimming continues to highlight full-time coaching as a priority within the sport. The number of full-time swimming coaches in Scotland now stands at 32 (18 in 2006) supported in a variety of ways including partnerships invested in by:

- **Clubs, Local Authorities and Scottish Swimming**
- **Individual clubs**
- **Universities**

Scottish Swimming is committed to maintaining or enhancing the number of full-time swimming coaches, providing there is an identified need and a strong likelihood of sustainability for the long term. Investment in posts/programmes will be considered alongside other investments such as Direct Club Investment (DCI). Furthermore, where partnerships exist around full-time coaching posts, commitment to the National Framework for Swimming, access agreements and/or events a longer term “circle of life” funding investment into an overall swimming plan may be considered.

Performance Development Review

Scottish Swimming will undertake an evaluation of current investments in full-time coaching, alongside the effectiveness of performance development programmes across the country. The outcome of this will guide Scottish Swimming to ascertain where strengths and weaknesses are apparent and identify where further support and development is required.

Evaluation and Monitoring

A consistent approach to on-going evaluation of performance development environments will be established in conjunction with clubs, programmes and partners. This will sit alongside established swimming development plans and refer specifically to KPIs in areas such as coaching, access (space/time), results and trends, investment/ sustainability, land conditioning, engagement with National Programme, swimmer progression, and contribution to the overall performance development system.

Combining the two areas identified above will enable Scottish Swimming greater insight and clarity around investments decision making.

Diving Performance Development – Aberdeen, Dundee, Ayr (and Glasgow)

The building of the first-class diving facility in Aberdeen will enhance considerably the opportunity to develop diving over the coming years through a cohesive, collaborative and strategic approach across the country.

Setting up a strong Performance Development programme in Aberdeen, led by a full-time coach is a high priority and Scottish Swimming will lead this process through partnership and engagement with Aberdeen Sports Village.

Furthermore, development of a strong lessons base and Talent Identification programme, progressing to coaching and a squad structure able to nurture talent through programme, is essential for the long term.

Likewise support in establishing Dundee as a plausible location for Performance Development diving could be provided. Support and encouragement will also be offered to Local Authorities in Ayr towards the implementation of a new diving board project, allowing for the development of a springboard focus capable of creating talent to an elite level.

There is a long-term ambition that a diving facility will be developed at Tollcross. It is unlikely that this happen until after the European Championships in 2018, but as soon as the project is confirmed a Talent Identification programme will be established so that a new diving facility can be populated immediately on opening.



3.4 Effective Athlete Development

Strategic Objective

“Deliver a sustainable pathway based on the progressive developmental needs of the athlete resulting in technically excellent, robust, self-sufficient, independent performers”

Producing a critical mass of athletes in swimming, para swimming and diving toward the top end of the pathway, in the right way takes time. Presently, the pathway within swimming in Scotland is strong however further improvement in quality is required along with strengthening of the diving and para swimming pathways. Moreover, the process of development applied within each may require slightly different approaches due to the needs of the sport. However, collectively ensuring that children coming in to clubs, (primarily from Learn to Swim, Dive or through SDS Clubs) are exposed to a quality process of athlete development wherever that may be is essential.

Scottish Swimming will:

- a) Deliver a National Programme supporting the process of athlete development and self-determination**
- b) Evolve the competition structure supporting the needs of developing athletes**

a) Deliver a National Programme supporting the process of athlete development and self-determination

The Scottish Swimming National Programme will continue to support the process of athlete development through the daily training environment including water based and land based development – delivered by clubs and programmes across the country. Spreading the net wide in the first instance, engaging with coaches and setting out an approach aimed at challenging athletes to achieve progress and individual success through their hard work and dedication will be a core feature. Furthermore, coaches will be encouraged to develop a philosophy of holistic, process based athlete development linked to the needs of the individual and appropriate to age and stage.

In addition, we will continue to work cohesively with British Swimming to further develop and enhance the athlete tracking, monitoring and evaluation process, ensuring that identified World Class Podium/Podium Potential athletes are supported appropriately.

Athlete Identification and Support

Swimmers will be selected as per the process described within the National Squads Selection Policy, which is a clear description of the future direction. The Scottish Swimming standards promote a wider approach to swimmer selection, identifying swimmers with potential over a longer period of time, accepting swimmer movement within the system, identifying late developers and linking to sound principles of athlete development.

The Scottish Swimming National Programme will consist of four squad programmes;

- **Senior (Gold/Silver/Bronze)**
- **Youth Gold**
- **Youth Silver (Youth Development)**
- **District Regional Programme (Bronze)**

As per the National Squads Selection Policy the Scottish Talent Programme will identify athletes with a disability for inclusion into the four National Squad programmes above. Allocation to squads will be based taking into account age; classification; swimmer development; current place on the swimmer pathway; and potential to make World Class Programmes or representative teams.

Linked to the performance of athletes, the National Programme will focus on the coach/athlete unit on an individual basis, emphasising the importance of coach education and development at each stage of the coaching pathway. A range of activities will be delivered through the National Programme including an educational curriculum (both theoretical and experiential) influenced by and building towards the needs of a performance athlete. Training and competition experiences along with individual support delivered primarily by the sportscotland institute of sport will be key components of the programme. In all of these areas, a challenging approach, promoting high standards and expectations, will be adopted, linked fundamentally to a robust formal athlete review process.

Development of Diving National Programme

Where the Scottish Swimming National Programme is delivering/supporting non-technical elements, more specifically around educational, TEAM or coach development opportunities, swimmers, divers and para-swimmers will be integrated. In diving, a fresh approach will be taken to the development and delivery to divers and coaches within the Scottish National Programme in the following way;

Three groups of divers will be identified:

- **Scottish Senior**
- **Scottish Junior**
- **Scottish Talent**

Divers will be identified and selected through published criteria. The groups above will, where possible (specifically non-technical areas) be integrated within the National Programme. Divers will be developed and supported appropriately, based on identified needs, through a range of activities including National Camps; coach development seminars; coach/individual support on individual training plans; and competition opportunities.

Service Provision Supporting Athlete Development

Scottish Swimming continues to engage in a positive relationship with the sportscotland institute of sport and will continue to develop and evolve a service level agreement (SLA) to deliver support athletes and coaches. In addition, an evaluation process to identify areas for improvement will be undertaken, to inform and improve current working practices. Support services for diving and para-swimmers selected within the Scottish National Programme will be incorporated within the Scottish Swimming SLA. Where possible, tertiary education establishments will be encouraged to work in partnership with Scottish Swimming and the sportscotland institute of sport to deliver agreed levels of support to athletes training within this framework.

Mindset Underpinning Swimmer Development

Now an embedded part of the swimmer selection process, mindset assessment will play an increasing part in the identification and development process of athletes. A key element of development will be working with individual coaches to progress in this area, along with working with clubs and parents to ensure that positive reinforcement is in place.

Strategy for the Enhancement of Female Performance Swimming

The Performance Plan review process identified the need to implement a strategy for improving female performance swimming. Having identified that there are fewer world-ranked females than males (over several years) there is a clear need to focus on re-energising female swimming across the pathway, both to encourage and develop our girls and women to remain within the sport and to achieve on a more regular basis. In the first instance, Scottish Swimming will form a steering group to engage with coaches, athletes and external experts along with researched evidence and strategies used by other sports.

An initiative selecting an inclusive group for focused attention in training, lifestyle and motivation from 2015–2018 will be implemented, with Gold Coast Commonwealth Games as the first benchmark meet to measure and evaluate improvements made.

Strength and Depth Development in Para-Swimming

The identification and classification of potential para-swimmers is key to further developing our strength and depth in the disability swimming pathway. Working closely with British Para Swimming and Scottish Disability Sport, Scottish Swimming will continue to identify athletes with a disability, signpost them into appropriate swimming opportunities and track their progress as they advance through the swimmer pathway.

Identification – the four following opportunities will be utilised to identify potential athletes through partnership working with SDS.

- **Swimming Talent Identification Days**
– Regional & National
- **Disability Specific Talent Identification Days**
– targeting impairment groups e.g. Visually Impaired
- **Competition** – SDS Regional & National Championships
- **SDS Regional Development Managers** – multi-sport and Talent Transfer Opportunities

Tracking

- **Scottish Swimming, utilising the athlete tracker database, will monitor the development of all athletes linked to SDS regional and Scottish Swimming National Squad Programmes.**
- **Coach education will continue to be offered with a focus on hands-on experiential opportunities to develop coach understanding of eligible impairments and progression through the swimmer pathway.**

Classification

- Classification remains fundamental to Para swimming and as such Scottish Swimming will work with British Para Swimming, the sportscotland institute of sport and other disability-specific sport organisations to understand the changes and developments in the classification system; to educate and develop athletes, coaches and parents; and to develop, as classifiers, two physiotherapists, ideally linked to the institute, and two coaches who have a minimum UKCC level 3.

Gap Analysis Project

Within Para Swimming across the UK and indeed globally, there are clear gaps emerging in lower classification events (S1 – S5) and potentially in visually impaired classifications (S11 – S13). Scottish Swimming will consider initiatives and special projects to take advantage of any gaps.

b) Competition structure supporting the needs of developing athletes

It is essential that the competition pathway offers relevant opportunities for each stage of athlete development including the retention of people in our sport and the development of performance athletes. From a Performance perspective a competition system that emphasises technical development in guiding coaches in the preparation of swimmers for major championships is required. Scottish Swimming must continue to build on its growing reputation for delivering high quality meets and through this will attract UK and international teams to events which will also contribute towards the raising of standards.

Our approach to para swimmers will be to offer a mixture of inclusive and disability specific opportunities which offer structured and progressive learning experiences which will challenge swimmers and coaches.

Scottish Swimming will also continue to work with Scottish partners and British Swimming to attract international events to Scotland which allow our athletes to compete in home soil, our volunteers and officials to get involved in international sport and our clubs and supporters to witness the best athletes in the world competing in Scotland, all of which helps to promote the sport.

The Scottish competitive diving programme also continues to evolve and develop. As progress is made across the centres we will add and develop these competition opportunities.

Competition Review Process

British Swimming's competition review has been completed and changes are being implemented during 2015 / 2016. Scottish Swimming will now consider the domestic calendar and look at opportunities to enhance what is currently offered. This review will take account of the drive towards greater technical skills, the importance of a long term approach and the opportunity to use the competition structure to support the education of athletes and swimmers.

4 Priorities

Moving forward, Scottish Swimming continues to deliver core elements of the current Performance Plan (e.g. National Programme activity, support services, calendar planning) already in place.

The following diagram highlights approximate timeline of implementation of new or developed initiatives within the plan. These priorities and timelines will be evaluated on a bi-annual basis as described earlier in the plan.

