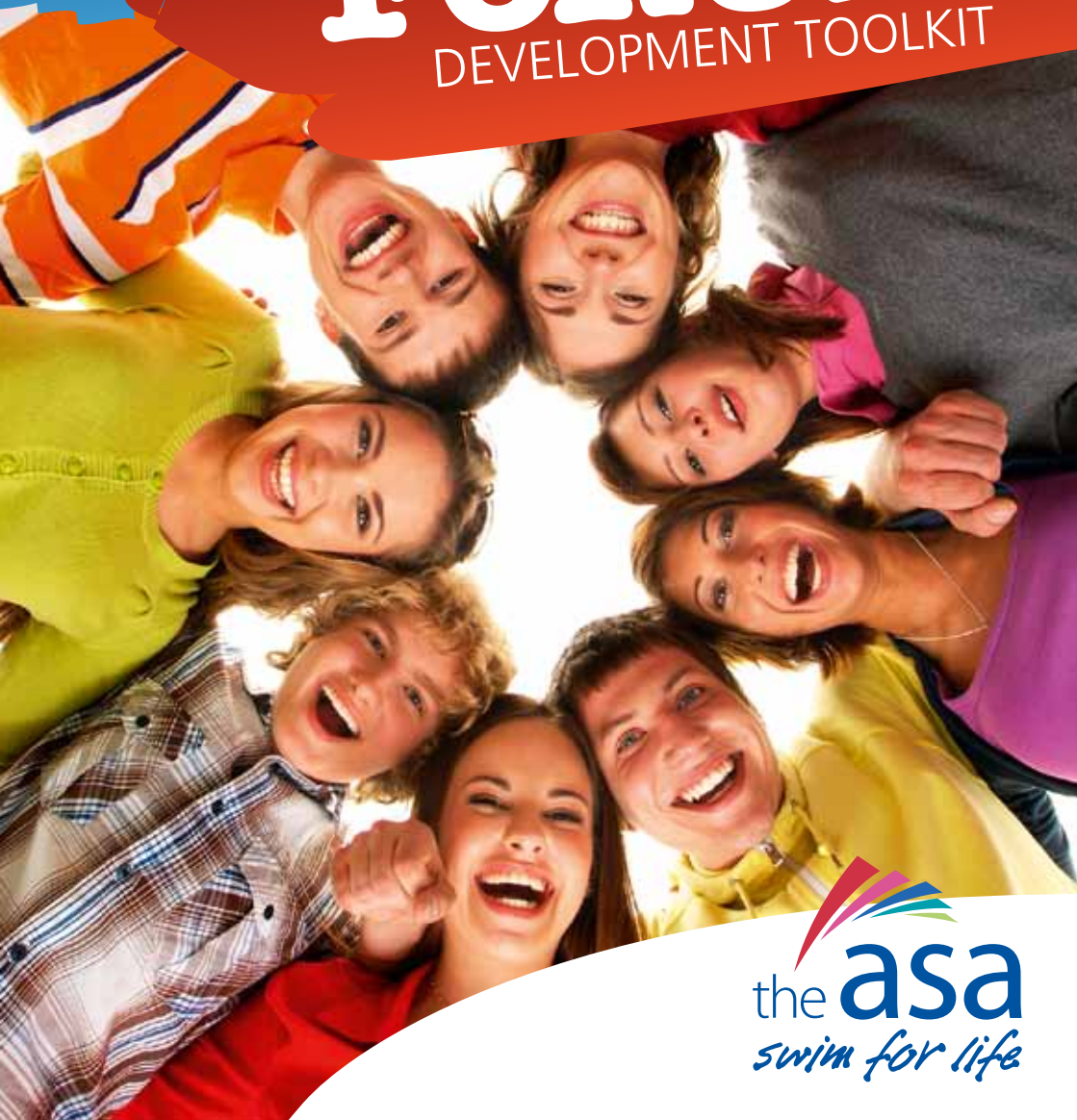


GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE A VOICE: DEVELOP LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

YOUTH FORUM

DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT




the **asa**
swim for life

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YOUTH FORUM

DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT

GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE A VOICE: DEVELOP LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

Engaged young people are essential to ensure the sustainability of our aquatic clubs and swimming communities. All too often, decisions which affect young people are taken, with no opportunity for them to be involved in the actual decision making process.

Young people are more likely to engage with all aspects of their club, and develop as capable young leaders, with guidance and support from experienced club members. Providing young people in your club, county or region with the opportunity to work together with their like-minded peers to have an impact on their surroundings can have a profoundly positive effect.

This toolkit will focus on how to develop a Youth Forum or youth group and the great benefits to your club, county or region.

DECISION MAKING

HOW CAN WE INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE?



Young people can be involved in the decision making process in a number of ways, for example:

Regional or national programmes

Young people can apply to be a part of a regional or national programme. National/ regional programme opportunities give young leaders a platform from which to develop themselves and their skills. They are able to network, meet like-minded young people from across the country, gain knowledge from experienced volunteers and engage with ASA/BS staff.

Take on additional club responsibilities

Provide opportunities for young leaders to take a step up from their existing responsibilities to learn more about the running of the club. For example, roles of committee members, undertaking additional training or CPD opportunities. Shadowing experienced volunteers or committee members will benefit both the young leader and the club in future years.

Club Captains

Young people can develop their skills using the ASA Club Captain online guide. The Club Captain role provides young leaders with the perfect opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

Create or become part of a 'youth group' or Youth Forum

This could be within the club, county or regional forum or even the National Youth Forum. Sitting on a forum provides great experience for young people who would like to hold a role on a committee in the future. A forum can support the club, county or region in a number of ways and is a great approach to giving young people a voice.

Become part of a club, county or regional committee

Developing knowledge and experience increases the likelihood of young leaders moving on to sit on a club, county or regional committee/board. You could also introduce a young representative to an existing committee to feed in youth ideas.

WHAT IS A YOUTH FORUM?

A Youth Forum is a group of proactive young leaders (aged 25 and under) who aim to support the involvement of young people and who want to make a difference in their local community, and in this case, their sport. The group would meet on a regular basis to develop new initiatives or discuss current youth issues. They will drive positive changes in the sport and in their clubs, counties and regions, influencing other young people.

Since it was created in 2008, The ASA National Youth Forum has supported a number of projects and initiatives across ASA departments and external bodies.

The exciting work at a national level is something which the Youth Forum would like to see replicated at a local level, by giving their support to clubs to set up their own youth groups.

Forming a youth network across the sport will further enhance the experiences of young volunteers at all levels, giving them a voice and providing them with a platform from which to represent their views. Youth Forums across the country will be ambassadors for the sport and the ASA at a local level.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A YOUTH FORUM?

Setting up a Youth Forum can seem like a daunting task, but once the initial 'set up' process has taken place, the benefits of the Youth Forum for both the young leaders and the organisers will quickly become evident.

A structured Youth Forum is an ideal way to stimulate new and fresh ideas and has many other benefits.

A Youth Forum:

Provides young people with a voice

Young people are the main participants in aquatic sport. Decisions made affect them in some way, shape or form. Ideas and views from young people are important for the future sustainability of the sport.

Will support the development of the Youth Forum network

The creation of a Youth Forum network ensures a clear communication channel from grassroots to national level. It provides counties and regions with a way to identify the key issues affecting young people and how to communicate with them effectively.

Creates role models

A Youth Forum provides other young club members with role models – young people to lead by example.

Will improve the opportunities available for young people

Young people are in the best position to tackle issues that face young people. A Youth Forum can provide them with an opportunity to voice their opinions and raise their concerns, which will have a positive impact on their level of engagement.

Provides positive publicity for the club or organisation

A youth group can publically support their club in the local community and amongst their peers. This positive publicity can increase the appeal of the club for members or volunteers and provide support in reference to applying for funding applications.

To ensure sustainability

Young people are the next generation of volunteers and officials. It is important that they are able to impact the sport they are committed to. Developing volunteers from a young age benefits the club, county and region as they look for turnover in roles of responsibility and commitment.

Provide an exit route – ensuring retention

A Youth Forum can provide a brilliant opportunity for retiring athletes to become involved in a volunteering capacity. They can utilise their competing experiences to aid the development of the sport.

Develop young competent leaders

In addition to helping develop their sport, young people will gain valuable skills by being part of a Youth Forum such as; leadership, team work, project management and delivery, all of which can help to build a young person's CV.



HOW TO DEVELOP A YOUTH FORUM

THE 5 STEP PROCESS

Over the years the National Youth Forum has established a structure (outlined in Step 3) allowing the upward flow of ideas and initiatives; we encourage regional and county Youth Forums to follow a similar structure.

Ideally, meetings should be held quarterly throughout the year, or more often if necessary to provide the group with plenty of time to come together and maintain progress on Youth Forum projects. Each meeting should follow a similar structure and last for an appropriate length of time to cover the agenda.

Recruitment for the Youth Forum should take place at the beginning of each new year in January. The length of post is determined by the club, county or region and we would recommend a term of one to two years. This ensures that commitment can be maintained but continuity is kept and new faces continually flow through the group to keep the ideas fresh.

STEP 1

GETTING STARTED

Excellent, you have decided to develop a Youth Forum, but what are the first steps that you need to take?

1. Hold an initial planning meeting to ensure that you are clear on the purpose of the group. What will be the overall aims and objectives?
2. Recruit a group leader (must be over 18) who will co-ordinate the Youth Forum, this could be a committee member or member of staff.
3. Arrange a suitable venue for the meetings to be held – potentially regional or county hub or club leisure centre.
4. Visit www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/safeguarding-children/ to ensure you are following ASA safeguarding policies and procedures.



STEP 2

THE LOGISTICS

Once you have your Youth Forum co-ordinator in place and you are clear about the purpose of the group, it is time to look more closely at some of the start up logistics. There are a number of things you will need to consider before recruiting your Youth Forum members.

- 1. Allocate a budget to your Youth Forum**
Will the forum have an allocated budget? Will travel expenses be covered? Will there be funding available for development work? What will the allocated funding be used for?
- 2. Decide the frequency of your meetings**
Meetings should be held quarterly at a minimum, club forums may wish to meet more regularly but for shorter periods of time. The number of meetings should be regular enough to ensure that members stay focused and on task, but not so that they lose interest and feel they are over committing.
- 3. Decide meeting length**
Meetings should ideally be between two – four hours in length (club meetings held regularly could be reduced). Enough time should be allocated to ensure all agenda items are covered. Try to keep meeting lengths consistent to create routine.
- 4. Determine the level of commitment required by Youth Forum members**
Outline the expectations of the Youth Forum and its members. What are Youth Forum members expected to achieve during their time in post?
- 5. Draw up the Terms of Agreement for the Youth Forum members including the following:**
 - a. Expectations of Youth Forum members.
 - b. Term in post (recommended to be between one to two years).

STEP 3 RECRUITING YOUR YOUNG LEADERS

1. There should be a clear selection criteria for Youth Forum members, this could include any of the following:

- Enthusiastic and passionate about sport
- An understanding of aquatics and knowledge of the ASA
- Excellent leadership skills
- An effective communicator and confident in expressing views and opinions
- Excellent organisation skills
- Knowledge and understanding of the key issues that young people face
- Committed to involving young people in key decision making processes
- Passionate about developing a network of young people through sport
- Experience of previous involvement in volunteer roles and sports clubs

2. Determine how you will structure the Youth Forum. It is recommended that county or regional Youth Forums are structured in a similar way to that of the National Youth Forum which is outlined below.

- a. Youth Forum Chair
 - i. Spokesperson for the Youth Forum
 - ii. Co-ordinate Youth Forum meetings and actions of the group

- iii. Make key decisions when the need arises
- iv. Any additional responsibilities to support the Youth Forum

b. Youth Forum Vice Chair

- i. To provide support to the Chair regarding all of the above
- ii. Support all Youth Forum members

c. Youth Forum Secretary

- i. Assist the Chair and Vice Chair to co-ordinate and lead Youth Forum meetings
- ii. Assist the Chair and Vice Chair to co-ordinate actions of the Youth Forum
- iii. Distribute meeting agendas and take meeting minutes
- iv. Document actions of the Youth Forum

d. General members (minimum of two)

- i. Support the development of a youth network
- ii. Contribute to Youth Forum programmes and projects
- iii. Represent the voice of young people to achieve objectives of the Youth Forum

Visit www.swimming.org/asa/volunteering/asa-youth-forum/ for example role descriptions.

3. Create an Expression of Interest form

Visit www.swimming.org/asa/volunteering/asa-youth-forum/ for an example expression of interest form.

4. Promote the Youth Forum

In order to promote the forum you could use posters, word of mouth,

emails, newsletters, notice boards, conferences, websites and social media etc.

5. Select successful applicants

- a. Notify all those that expressed an interest as to whether or not they have been successful.
- b. Invite Youth Forum members to the first meeting.

STEP 4 HOLDING YOUR FIRST MEETING

1. Decide the date of the first meeting

Ensure that you give all members plenty of notice, discuss the date with members in advance (top tip – include the date of the first meeting on the expression of interest form so all members are aware prior to applying).

and adhere to it. Outline the process in place if the code of conduct is breached.

6. Targets and goals

Outlined and agreed upon by members (long term and short term).

2. Refreshments

Depending on the time and length of the meeting, you may need to provide lunch and refreshments.

7. Projects

Start to think about some of the projects the Youth Forum could work on over the next 12 months. Projects, programmes and initiatives.

3. Outline the aims and objectives of the forum

Outline to the group the aims and objectives that have been decided by the forum co-ordinator/committee/board.

8. Date of next meeting

Prior to meeting closure, decide the date of the next meeting to ensure all members can attend. Outline any tasks that Youth Forum members should complete before the next meeting.

4. Mission statement and aims

Develop a list of aims and objectives of the Youth Forum members, what do they want to achieve? What would they like to get out of this opportunity?

9. Distribute the meeting minutes

Post the finalised meeting minutes (taken by the secretary) online or distribute to all Youth Forum members, clearly highlighting any actions to take place.

5. Code of Conduct

Draw up a code of conduct and ensure that all members sign to agree

STEP 5

MOVING FORWARDS

Once the first meeting has taken place, you will need to think about how you will move the group forwards to achieve your overall objectives.

Ensure that you create a routine with group logistics – this will save you time in the long run and ensure consistency in attendance.

In preparation for meetings:

- All Youth Forum members should contribute to the meeting agenda.
- Agendas should be produced and distributed a minimum of one week prior to the meeting taking place.
- Members should be expected to attend all meetings or send apologies if non-attendance is unavoidable.

Youth Forum programmes and projects:

- Encourage Youth Forum members to use their initiative when discussing potential programmes and projects,

this will encourage fresh new ideas and feed the young leader's enthusiasm.

- Promote the work that the Youth Forum are doing; communicate their actions to the wider audience, raising awareness of their aims and objectives.
- Set up a clear process for your club, county and region to communicate with the forum. How should information/suggestions or comments be received?
- Have a Youth Forum representative at AGMs, conferences, fundraising events, social occasions, club galas etc. Highlight what the Youth Forum can offer and encourage the group to network.



THE YOUTH FORUM NETWORK

Communication amongst Youth Forums is paramount, particularly in reference to the National Youth Forum. This will ensure that appropriate suggestions, initiatives or issues are raised at a county, regional and national level.

Meeting dates of the National Youth Forum will be published in the 'Youth Forum briefing' (further information detailed below) and counties/regions should ideally schedule their meetings to fall prior to national forum dates. This will offer an opportunity for agenda items to be raised timely and effectively.

For more information on the Youth Forum network, please contact volunteering@swimming.org

Get your hands on a Youth Forum logo

When creating an ASA Youth Forum, groups will have the opportunity to sign up to receive the ASA regional, county or club Youth Forum logo.

Please visit www.swimming.org/asa/volunteering/asa-youth-forum/ to download a logo application form.

By signing up to receive the Youth Forum logo you will be able to proudly display the logo on all Youth Forum material to highlight that you are part of the Youth Forum network!

Only clubs who have signed up to the network will be able to use the logo, it is the quality mark that shows that you are a part of the communication network and will highlight that you are receiving Youth Forum updates from a national level. By joining the network you will be improving the opportunities available to your young leaders.

Why do I need to provide Youth Forum contact details?

We require Youth Forum contact details for a number of reasons:

- To send the logos for use on your Youth Forum material
- To add the forum to the 'Youth Forum briefing' mailing list. The briefing note will provide up to date information

on the National Forum's activities, provide details of unique opportunities available for Youth Forum members, and provide a first look at ASA national programmes and projects. Youth Forums may also be contacted to support with national initiatives.

- The Youth Forum will also be added to the Volunteering News mailing list. Volunteering News is distributed quarterly and is our one stop shop for everything volunteering!

All Youth Forums who sign up to the network will become a unique part of the communication channel from national to grassroots. By signing up to the network, Youth Forums will be able to access additional support and advice from the National Youth Forum and ASA staff.



ASA Regional Youth Forum logo



ASA County Youth Forum logo



ASA Club Youth Forum logo

Additional resources available

You will find a number of resources available on the ASA website. Visit www.swimming.org/asa/volunteering/asa-youth-forum/ including:

- Example role descriptions for Youth Forum members
- Youth Forum Logo application form
- Example expression of interest form

For further information please contact volunteering@swimming.org

For further information regarding child safeguarding please visit www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/safeguarding-children/



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The ASA would like to thank the 2013 National Youth Forum for their contribution to the development of this resource.