

Artistic Swimming Leadership Group

19th May 2025 18:30 – 20:00

Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Maria Ramos (MR)	Chair
Louise Ross (LR)	Coaching Lead
Hannah Secher (HS)	Workforce Lead
Ian Atkinson (IA)	Competition Lead
Sarah Clarke (SC)	Athlete Reward and Recognition Lead
Karen Thorpe (KT)	Artistic Swimming Manager
Richard Blackshaw (RB)	Swim England Head of Performance
Claire Coleman (CC)	Swim England Head of Development
Ekaterina Boyd (EB)	Swim England Head of Events
Gareth Picken (GP)	Swim England Sport Development Administrator

Apologies:

Keith Munday (KM)	Sport Operations Committee Leadership Group Liaison
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MINUTES	
1.	Chairs welcome and Apologies
MR opened the meeting and outlined the agenda items for the meeting.	
2.	Action Log
MR noted that the action log required reviewing by the group as a number of items were now complete.	
Action - GP to recirculate the action log to the group and members to update GP on completed actions/progress made on individual actions.	
3.	2025-2032 New Artistic Swimming Strategy
RB explained that the Artistic Swimming Strategy is still in development, ensuring that it aligns with the overall Swim England Strategy and their aims and objectives. Additionally, a greater understanding of who needs to have an impact on the strategy needs to be established at which point RB is happy to reach out to the group for feedback.	
MR asked in terms of timings, at what point should the group be involved as MR and KT have already been involved. RB replied that he hoped that the strategy process would be able to include the group by the next meeting.	
4.	National Qualification Standards - A new approach

The strategy involves the National Qualification Standards and therefore an update couldn't be provided.	
5.	Update from each of the Leads:
5.1	Grades
<p>SC advised the group that there has been a number of grade days which have taken place over the past few weeks, and all data should be updated</p> <p>MR asked whether any grade days had been booked after the cut-off date for Combo Cup? SC confirmed none as yet.</p>	
5.2	Coaching
<p>LR met with Craig McCulloch to go through the coaching strategy which is progressing well. In terms of timings: RB explained that the strategy is in different sections, the first part will be released at the end of July/beginning of August. The second part of the coaching strategy will be released in September 2026.</p>	
5.3	Officials
<p>HS mentioned that some officials courses might need to be updated over the summer depending on potential changes from World Aquatics. Some interest in Technical Controller courses has been received.</p> <p>The Introduction to Judging online course will be issued very soon.</p>	
5.4	SOC Update
Postponed until the next meeting.	
5.5	Development Update (report attached)
<p>In addition to the report – which was acknowledged and assumed read, CC presented to the group an outline of the Event Volunteer Succession Planning project; the aim of which to understand which competition roles currently having a limited number of active volunteers in those roles and where targeted recruitment and training is required. This is a project which is taking place throughout the disciplines.</p> <p>EB provided an overview of the national event roles where they believe there are gaps. MR & IA made some recommendations based on the initial list.</p> <p>EB provided clarity that FOH roles are volunteer roles even though Swim England staff have been leading the desks in at AS events supported by other volunteers.</p> <p>Recruitment for the targeted roles to take place in September.</p> <p>Action – MR and IA to feedback to EB & CC on roles most at risk. Action – CC to send GP the EVSP presentation for circulation to the group.</p> <p>HS left the meeting at 19:14.</p>	
5.6	National Talent

KT updated the group that the national talent programme is currently being developed alongside RB. Selection policies have been recreated by KT which will then be reviewed by RB and Anna Garside, Swim England Head of Performance Operations.

KT further updated that athletes recently attended the World Cup in Markham (CAN) with Ranjuo Tomblin – achieving Gold and Bronze in the Men’s event, 4th place in the Mixed Duet when combined with Holly Hughes and the new duet of Robyn Swatman and Eve Young placed 9th place in the duets tech event.

The European Championships will be held in Maderia 1-4 June. Combined with the Comen Championships – both Youth and the Senior Squads will be competing. As several athletes are taking exams – acknowledgement was given to the additional logistics and efforts by everyone.

Junior, Senior and Mixed Duet squads are all in action in a busy international season, with GB attending the World Aquatics Super Finals in China, , Junior Europeans in Athens, and the World Championships Singapore

Finally, the Regional Games are shaping up to be a great event on Friday in Bristol with all the regional teams sending full squads.

6. AOB

MR had received a request from the South West region to increase the upper age limit should be changed from under 19’s rather than under 18’s for Combo Cup – to allow those within their last school year to compete. The ASLG understood this age limit is currently in place as a safeguarding provision. The group is open to the idea subject to approval from the safeguarding team.

Action – CC to speak with the SE safeguarding for guidance on whether under 19’s can compete alongside under 18 athletes.

MR advised it had been brought to her attention that a Regional committee believed they could amend the minimum age to compete in regional competitions if required, This comes after a request for a 7-year-old to be allowed to complete. MR referred to the SE handbook 410.6 which outlines the minimum ages for all types of competitions. It was confirmed that Regional Committees do not have the capacity to amend the general conditions outlined in the Swim England handbook. The ASLG agreed there is no need to review the minimum age as no evidence was presented that this is holding back the development of athletes and aligns as this aligned with other disciplines of protecting young swimmers from over competing.

SC advised she had received a request from a club that a swimmer had been prescribed a medication and what the process is check anti-doping policies: The response given by the group to the club of the swimmer is as follow;

“We would advise to check the medication on GlobalDRO and it will provide a result for in and out of competition, prohibited, not prohibited or conditional. Dependent on the result and only if you were then subject to doping control whilst at an event would you need to apply for a retroactive TUE. This would need to be completed by UKAD, but AGB and/or ourselves can support if this were needed. All information relating to antidoping and the need for TUE’s can be found here on the website: <https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/anti-doping/> “

EB raised that the Health and Safety forum is taking place on Wednesday and requested the proposals based on the Depths Review Project for Artistic Swimming be submitted. IA and MR to share ASAP.

SC asked MR whether two referees have been sourced for Combo Cup; MR replied that this is in progress.

There were no other items of business.

7.	Close of meeting
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The date of the next meeting is Monday 9 th June	
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The meeting closed at 19:48	
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