

Working Together

A Guide for Coaches, Committees
and Parents

Section Four: Safer Recruitment and Further HR Support

Introduction

This guide has been designed to be a practical, hands-on resource to help strengthen the relationship between committees, coaches and parents in all types of aquatic clubs. It focuses especially on the key partnership between the head coach, the club chair, showing how they can work together to lead a positive, successful club.

We'll explore how to create a strong vision and set of values that are reflected in everyday actions and guide everything the club does. Inside, you'll find a range of downloadable templates you can adapt, along with inspiring case studies that highlight great practices in action. There are also reflection points throughout for you to think about how the topics relate to your own club.

This project wouldn't have been possible without the support and input of many committee members and coaches who've generously shared their time and expertise. A big thank you to all of them for working with us on this project.



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Section 4: Safer recruitment and further HR support

Best practice in recruiting and supporting coaches throughout their development

Clubs have told us they would like more support with managing and developing employees, commonly referred to as 'HR' or human resources. In this section, we detail considerations and provide templates for the most frequently requested areas of support.

It is important to remember that 'Safer Recruitment' in **Wavepower** applies to both voluntary and paid workforce and the requirements of the recruitment process outlined in Wavepower will assist clubs to ensure best practices implemented.

As a guide, the seven essential steps to recruitment detailed in Wavepower are summarised below:

1. Role profile/job description.
2. Application form.
3. Plan for meeting and interviewing applicants.
4. Take up references.
5. DBS checks.
6. Recruitment decision and contract/volunteer agreement.
7. Induction/post recruitment plan – including initial mentoring.

In addition, we highly recommend you read all the requirements detailed in Wavepower. We have created templates and examples which can be adapted to assist with your commitment to these policies.

Please see the 'Further Support' tab for additional resources and support options.

Different processes for volunteers and employees

Paid coaching or teaching roles in clubs are now very common whereas, historically, more volunteers would have filled these positions. This change of landscape brings about further considerations for clubs in terms of employment law and the employment status for coaches (or any other individual working for the club).

Information around employment status, volunteer expenses, and organisational legal structure can be found in the **Club Financial Toolkit**.

The seven essential stages of recruitment in Wavepower are the same for volunteers and employees. However, it is important to remember that volunteers are giving their time

voluntarily and the formality around their role should be reduced. Below are some language changes which are important for clarity when working with, and recruiting, volunteers.

- Volunteer agreement not 'contract'.
- Volunteer role description', not 'job description'.
- 'Reimbursement' not 'payment' of expenses (e.g. actual expenses based on receipts).
- 'Development meeting' not 'appraisal'.
- Support if issues arise' not 'disciplinary procedures'.
- 'Expectations' not 'obligations'.
- Volunteer coordinator, not line manager.

1. Role profile/job description

Wavepower requires a 'role profile' or job description to identify the main responsibilities of the job, the skills and experience required to fulfill the role and a person specification. We also believe recruitment is a perfect opportunity to find people who want to work together to deliver the club's vision and values, so be sure to feature and highlight them at every stage of the process.

See the 'Further Support' tab, for example head coach job description and chair role profile.

2. Application form

Wavepower requires clubs to use an application form to collect the information required and this should include verification of the applicant's identity.

Again, advertising for positions within your club is a great opportunity to showcase your values, visions and excellent opportunities you offer your members. It is worth considering the most appropriate channels to reach your target audience, such as job boards e.g. [Careers in Aquatics](#).

You can also post the job or role opening on your club's website and share it across your social media channels to reach a wider audience.

See the 'Further Support' tab, for example head coach and chair application form.

3. Plan for meeting and interviewing applicants

It is important that the questions asked of the applicant, plus the process is prepared in advance. You want to ensure you can explore the information given on the application form, as well as a chance for the applicant to discuss their experiences and qualification for the role.

See the 'Further Support' tab, for example interview plan plus questions.

4. Take up references

Wavepower requires a minimum of two references to be taken up before offering the job or role to an applicant. Much more information of the requirements can be found in [Wavepower](#).

See the 'Further Support' tab, for example email/letter to send to referees.

5. DBS checks

If you require advice or guidance on how to carry out a DBS check or which level you require, you will find information on the Swim England website [here](#).

You can also contact **01509 640 727** or dbs@swimming.org with any questions you may have. Once an applicant has been DBS cleared, you will receive the clearance letter from Swim England to confirm this.

See the 'Further Support' tab, for example email/letter to send to applicants to give permission for DBS checks.

6. Recruitment decision and contract/volunteer agreement

Once steps one to five have been completed the decision can be made either to appoint the applicant and agree a start date or to reject the application.

In conjunction with legal experts Browne Jacobson LLP, Swim England has produced employment contract documentation and guidance notes to support clubs with their contractual requirements. The following four documents are available for paid positions:

- A. Contract for services (self-employed coaches).
- B. Employment Contract template (for employee coaches/teachers).
- C. Casual worker contract (for temporary/casual coaches).
- D. Guidance on legal and taxation issues arising on the engagement of swimming coaches and teachers.

These templates may be used by club officers to appoint potential employees and coaches on an employed or self-employed basis.

They are available to download via 'BJ Access' – Browne Jacobson's web-based document sharing portal. Access to the 'BJ Access' portal can only be obtained by officers of Swim England affiliated clubs by emailing renewals@swimming.org with your name, email address, club name and club officer position.

Clubs must understand the legal and taxation implications of the distinction between employed and self-employed teachers and coaches. You can check employment status for tax using HMRC's [Check Employment Status for Tax \(CEST\) tool](#).

Casual worker contracts can provide a flexible option for both the club and employee. For example, if the work requirements are not constant, a casual worker contract may be appropriate. This arrangement means the club is not obliged to offer any work or that work does not need to be accepted by the individual when offered.

Casual workers are entitled to statutory annual leave and the National Minimum Wage in the same way as regular workers.

Volunteer workers should not be issued with a contract, although a written agreement should include expectations, role and responsibilities.

See the 'Further Support' tab, for example volunteer agreement.

7. Induction/post recruitment plan – including initial mentoring

An induction plan is a positive way to support all new members of the committee and coaching team. Wavepower requires all new recruits to be formally informed about the policy and to sign up to and abide by the Wavepower guidelines. It should also include a period of mentoring, supervision and observation as well as an opportunity to establish training needs that may be needed.

See the ‘Further Support’ tab, for induction process example, checklists for managing induction and an initial mentoring form.

The ‘how to do a review’ example is also applicable for induction meetings.

8. Review meetings

Also known as appraisals or one-to-one development reviews, these meetings between a staff member or volunteer and their line manager / volunteer coordinator provide an opportunity to discuss progress, wellbeing, and development.

These reviews are not disciplinary. They should be based on a clear role description and previously agreed objectives, set during induction or at the last review.

Coaches have expressed that regular reviews help build strong relationships and offer reassurance in their roles. This aligns with the Swim England Listening Report 2024, which highlights a desire for greater job security among coaches and teachers.

Reviews should cover performance, wellbeing, and development. Both parties should be able to contribute, set new targets, and agree them in writing. Clubs are encouraged to include broader objectives beyond athlete performance - such as athlete retention, enjoyment, and wellbeing.

See the ‘Further Support’ tab, for example review meetings framework.

9. How to conduct a review meeting

There are several key steps to ensure a review meeting is productive, constructive and fair.

Preparation

The meeting should be scheduled for a time and date that is convenient for both parties and allocates sufficient protected time. A self-assessment should be completed in advance and shared with the person reviewing.

An agenda for the meeting should be set which outlines the key points to be discussed, goals and development plans.

Create a positive environment

The meeting should be in a private, quiet space to ensure confidentiality and minimise distractions. Start with positives to make the person feel comfortable and valued.

Setting goals

All goals should be SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound. We strongly encourage these to take into consideration the club’s vision and values and not around the performance of athletes. For example, they might include the wellbeing of all athletes measured against the six-monthly membership wellness survey.

Follow-up

The meeting should be documented in writing. On the example template document, there is a column for the line manager / volunteer coordinator's comments. This could be completed by the reviewer and shared back with the employee.

Intervals

It is good practice to set the next review point immediately, so both parties know the timescales for development and actions. The frequency of review meetings can vary depending on the club. We suggest six monthly or quarterly.

Tips for a successful review meeting

- Be objective: base your feedback on observable behaviours and results, not opinions.
- Balance: aim to balance positive feedback with constructive criticism.
- Empathy: show empathy and understanding, especially when discussing areas for improvement.
- Support: demonstrate your commitment to personal growth and success.

10. Code of conduct

Code of conducts are commonly used documentations outlining rules, norms and expectations for all club activities. They help ensure the club's values are central to day-to-day practices from all members. Unless stated in contracts, these are rarely legal documents. However, adhering to them is a sign of good or best practice. Codes of conduct should be detailed and practical and clearly outline what is and isn't appropriate behaviour.

See the 'Further Support' tab, for example code of conducts.

11. Grievance procedure

A grievance is a formal complaint raised by a member of the workforce - this includes both employees and volunteers - regarding issues within the organisation. These concerns may relate to working conditions, treatment by colleagues or supervisors, breaches of policies, or other matters affecting their role or wellbeing.

Grievances are initiated by the individual who has the concern.

The purpose of a grievance procedure is to ensure that all members of the workforce are treated fairly, that concerns are heard, and that issues are resolved in line with the organisation's values and policies.

Typically, the process involves submitting a formal complaint, which is reviewed by a relevant manager, coordinator, or committee. This may involve meetings or investigations to understand and address the issue. The procedure should clearly outline:

- How to raise a grievance
- What types of complaints are covered
- What is not covered
- Possible outcomes

All clubs, especially those with paid staff, should have a clear grievance procedure that applies to both employees and volunteers, ensuring consistency, fairness, and transparency.

See the 'Further Support' tab, for example grievance procedure.

12. Disciplinary procedures

Clubs may need to take action if there are concerns about the conduct, behaviour, or performance of a workforce member - this may include both employees and volunteers.

This process, often called disciplinary action or performance management, is initiated by the organisation to:

- Address concerns fairly
- Reinforce standards and policies
- Support improvement
- Maintain a safe and respectful environment

The approach taken should reflect the nature of the individual's role, with different processes for employees and volunteers.

Employees

By law, disciplinary procedures for employees must include:

- Written notice of the issue
- A meeting to discuss it
- A formal decision
- A right to appeal

Outcomes may include warnings or, in serious cases, dismissal.

Volunteers

Volunteers aren't covered by employment law, but clubs should still follow a clear and fair process. This may include:

- Informal discussions
- Written concerns
- Suspension or ending the volunteer role in serious cases

Clubs should have procedures in place for both employees and volunteers to ensure transparency and fairness. For more on employee procedures, visit the [Government website](#).

See the 'Further Support' tab, for example disciplinary procedure.

Further Legal Support

Swim England's relationship with [ARAG UK](#) provides access to legal helplines on matters of law to help you manage your legal responsibilities at the club. As an affiliated club, your insurance cover with Howden Insurance may extend to providing legal expenses for certain defence matters, including:

- Employment disputes and awards.
- Legal defence.
- Property protection.
- Bodily injury.
- Tax protection.

It is essential that you obtain advice from ARAG before you act to ensure that you do not prejudice your defence. If ARAG have not been contacted prior to your action, they are unlikely to support the claim.

Club Legal Helpline – 0330 100 7901

For legal assistance European law, or to discuss claims on the above matters.

Counselling Advice Line – 0344 893 9012

For assistance and support in dealing with medical and health issues. You will need to quote your policy number, which can be found on the Swim England Summary of Cover provided at renewal.

