

Working Together

A Guide for Coaches, Committees
and Parents

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 and 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.



Full acknowledgements at the end

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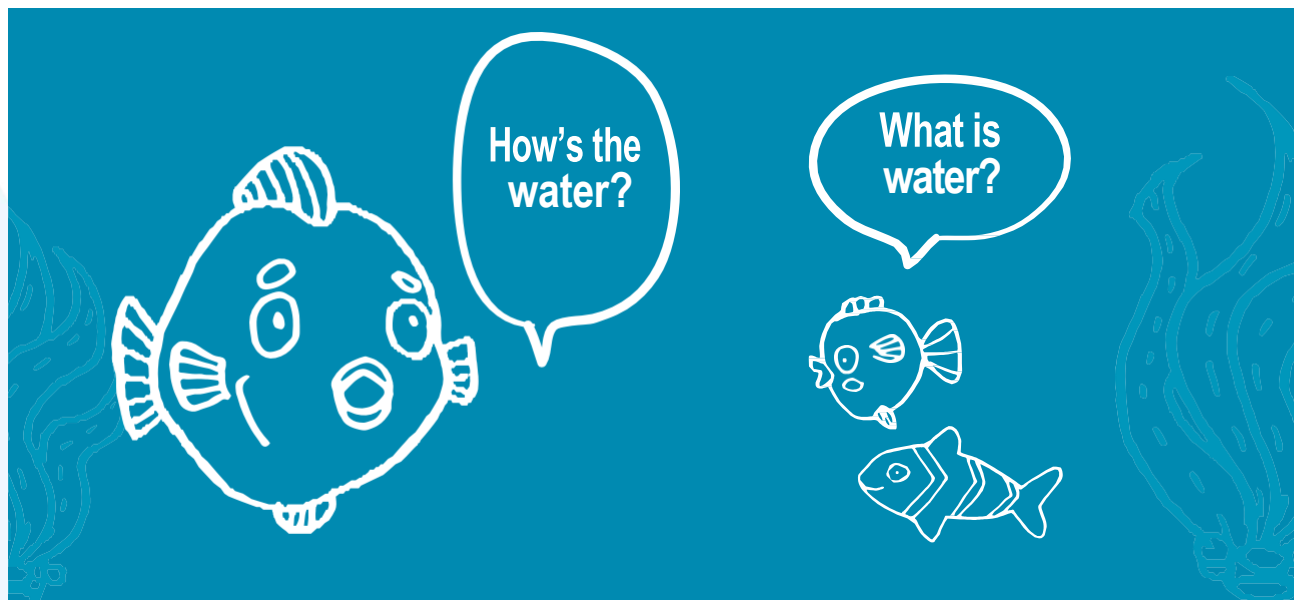
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Section 1: Culture, vision and values in aquatic clubs

The culture, vision and values of a club can have a huge impact on the experience of athletes, coaches and committee members alike. They affect the club's reputation and how easily they can attract new members. Whilst culture, vision and values are closely connected, each play a different role in shaping clubs into unique and distinctive organisations. A great first step is agreeing the fundamental purpose or reason for existence of the club, this provides a strong foundation for developing a meaningful vision and then the integral values and necessary culture that connects them.

Club culture

Club culture consists of shared beliefs and practices, reflected in the behaviours and attitudes that members are encouraged to adopt and celebrate. Building a club culture where the values and vision are visible in everything you do is key to creating a strong, unified community.



In the image above, the fish that no longer see the water have fully blended into their surroundings, becoming part of the culture.

Every club has its own culture, which sets the tone for what behaviours are considered acceptable or expected. For example, it could be something as simple as thanking the coach

after every session or cheering on fellow club members at events. Those who are part of the club's culture may not always notice these behaviours – they just feel natural. But for newcomers or outsiders, the 'water' is very visible. The atmosphere, or 'temperature', of the club culture is felt immediately – is it warm and welcoming, or cold and intimidating?

The culture of the club shapes how everyone experiences it and it's important to make sure that the 'water' is something that everyone can comfortably swim in.

If you're considering reviewing your current club culture and developing a vision and values, please see the 'Further Support' tab for ideas and helpful activities.

Vision

The clubs' vision or vision statement is usually one or two sentences concerning the long-term direction of your club or the big-picture goal. It's a clear and inspiring statement of what the club wants to achieve in the future and realistic for each club in terms of reviewing all available resources. This could consider access to pool time, the local competition (what other clubs are offering), your coaching team, volunteer engagement and the geographic and socio-economic communities you serve.

Vision examples:

Great experiences in water. For all. For life.

Swim England, One Swim England vision statement, November 2024

We're here to champion the life-changing impact of being active and ensure everyone across the nation can benefit from it.

Sport England, Uniting the Movement Strategy, vision statement

Values

Values are the principles or core beliefs that guide the behaviour and decisions of everyone in the club, helping to bring the vision to life. They reflect the character and integrity of the club and its members. These values should be simple, clear and easy for everyone to understand.

For example:

- Responsibility – taking ownership of your own growth and your role within the team.
- Respect – treating others, the pool and the equipment with care, showing that you value them.

Defining your club's culture, vision and values

Creating an authentic and inspiring vision and set of values for your club should involve input from everyone who's invested in its success. This means gathering ideas from athletes, coaches, committee members and parents. A great starting point is asking: "Where do you want the club to be in 5 to 10 years?" You can get everyone involved through workshops, brainstorming sessions, or by reviewing feedback from member surveys.

For help defining your club's culture, vision, and values, please see the 'Further Support' tab for additional resources and support options.

Club culture, vision and values in action

Once you've agreed on your club's culture, vision and values, it's important to keep them relevant and central to your club by regularly sharing and reviewing them. Take the time to think about how your core principles are being put into action every day.

It's one thing to talk about values but it's another to live them every day. The more you reference and embody them in your daily activities, the stronger the club culture will be. For example, you could include your values in your email signature, print them on swim hats, or even focus on them in a committee meeting.

To make it even clearer, identify the specific behaviours that reflect each value and how that contributes to the club culture. Here are a few examples:

- **Value:** Teamwork
- **Behaviour:** Coaches and committee members collaborate openly and share knowledge to reach common goals.
- **Culture example:** During meetings, everyone actively contributes ideas, supports each other, and shares relevant information.

- **Value:** Integrity
- **Behaviour:** Always act honestly and transparently in all dealings.
- **Culture example:** When a mistake is made, it's acknowledged immediately, and the person takes responsibility to correct it.

Club leadership should consistently model these behaviours in their interactions with each other and everyone else. When leaders set the right example, others will follow suit.

If you are considering reviewing your current club culture and developing your vision and values, please see the 'Further Support' tab for more ideas and activities to guide you.

Managing conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest can pop up frequently in clubs, especially when committee members are also parents of athletes. That's why it's important to understand where these conflicts might arise and have a clear, transparent way of dealing with them. Making decisions in the best interest of the whole club and its members is key to a positive culture – this means coaches and committee members should not gain personal benefits from their decisions.

[*Link to Good Governance Guide](#)

Showcase your values

Clubs have many fantastic initiatives and opportunities for the personal development of their members; the young coach programme at Long Eaton SC is a great example of this. Don't forget to shout about it and show all members and potential members that this is something you care about. At Halifax SC, they have exceptionally good teamwork between the coaching team and the committee, another example to be proud of. You can read more about these examples in the **Case Studies** tab.

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Section 2: Effective Communication

Communicating effectively is essential for keeping everyone updated and on the same page – whether that's the coaching team, committee members, parents or athletes. It is also important to consider when this is best done in person, in writing or via digital communication. When communication is regular and meaningful, it helps everyone stay connected and aligned. However, disconnects can happen if teams or individuals are working in isolation or if communication is inconsistent.

Internal club communication between the committee and the coaching team

Clear and open communication is key to any relationship.

- Regular meetings, which always include the head coach or representative from the coaching team.
- Clear roles and responsibilities.
- Transparent information sharing.
- Use of effective channels, e.g. emails, shared documents.
- Respectful and professional tone.

Example internal club communication plan

Purpose	Frequency	Method	Responsibility
Monthly coaching update	Monthly	In person or online meeting	Head coach and chair
Training schedule changes	As needed	Email and shared calendar	Head coach
Club policy updates	Quarterly or as needed	Email and PDF	Club secretary
Competition planning	Before each event	Email and planning meeting	Competition coordinator/head coach

Feedback and or concerns	Ongoing	One to one meeting or anonymous database	Welfare officer
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Line managers / volunteer coordinators

Volunteers, including committee members and board of directors/trustees (if applicable), typically have volunteer coordinators rather than line managers. They provide support, guidance and training opportunities. It's a good idea to have a volunteer policy in place to outline how volunteers are supported and treated. For more info, check out ncvo.org.uk. In most industries, each paid employee has a line manager who plays an important role in their development and communication. Line managers play a key role in supporting well-being, providing guidance, regular check-ins and helping with personal development.

Who is the line manager for coaches?

Usually, the head coach is the line manager for the rest of the coaching team. Depending on your club's size and structure, coaches might be divided by discipline or have more levels of hierarchy. But what about the head coach's line manager? There's no one correct answer, but it's common for the club chair to take on this role. It's important to assess the skills of your club leaders and decide who is best suited for this responsibility. This role is key – if it's a strong relationship, it can lead to excellent training, open communication and mutual respect. If it's not a good fit, it could create challenges.

Here are some essential skills for a good line manager:

- Excellent communication
- Strong organisation
- Ability to delegate tasks effectively
- Good at prioritising
- Objective decision-making
- Motivating others
- Analytical skills

Communication with parents and athletes

There are many ways to communicate with parents and athletes but never forget the power of conversation. Rather than a lengthy new parent's email, could you host a new parents/participants meeting with an opportunity to ask questions with both committee members and coaches present.

City of Coventry Swimming Club

The club has parent representatives to help support and strengthen the relationship between parents, coaches, and the committee

“Our parent reps embody our club values and help us bring them to life by assisting sharing key messages, two way regular and effective communication without over burdening the coaches.”

*Link to City of Coventry case study.

For written communication it is important to choose the right channels to share messages with members. Think about which method works best for your audience.

Here are a few other top tips:

- Be concise, consider using titles and subheadings to make the information easy to digest.
- Who's in charge of each communication channel?
- How often are you communicating? Be mindful of not overwhelming your audience.

- Have you got an automated reply set on messaging or emails to help set response time expectations and protect coach and committee working times?

Social media (Facebook, Instagram, X)	Suitable for general announcements applicable to all audiences	Are your members active and engaged with your social media? If you're using more than one platform to connect with your club, it's important to keep your messages consistent across all of them. This way, everyone gets the same clear information, no matter where they're following you.
Club website	Your website is the perfect place to share all the important updates and good news about your club. It's a great spot to highlight your club culture, vision and values, introduce the team, and provide contact details for any questions.	Your website might be the first place a new member visits, so make sure it's fresh and up to date. Regular updates help create a welcoming and professional impression right from the start. It's a great way to show your club is active, organised, and ready to connect with new members.
Email	Suitable for personalised / essential content for the individual.	Do you have a club email address? If so, who's in charge of checking and replying to it? It's also a good idea to set up an automated response to let people know when they can expect a reply. This helps manage expectations and keeps things running smoothly.
Group messaging platforms (such as WhatsApp or SwimManager)	Suitable for urgent and/or quick generic updates to a large group.	Use with caution. While WhatsApp groups are great for sending a message to a lot of people at once, they can quickly become overwhelming – especially if the group is large and responses start flooding in. Have you thought about using broadcast messaging instead? It's a fantastic alternative if you just want to send a message without the chatter.

IMPORTANT

Make sure all your communication with members follows the Swim England Wavepower policy.

[*Link to Wavepower.](#)

Keep data protection in mind

- When emailing a large group, always use BCC to protect everyone's email addresses. If you need people to reply to each other, you can use CC instead.
- Avoid sending Excel spreadsheets with personal data through email, as emails aren't always secure and can be intercepted.
- Don't send marketing or sales messages unless you have the proper permissions to do so.
- If you need more guidance, check out the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) step-by-step guide on direct marketing for small businesses. It has helpful tips on best practices and how to collect data the right way.

Effective communication in action

Picture this - the coaching team has identified a training meet as a great chance for swimmers to focus on competition process and development, rather than times. They've communicated this to the swimmers and committee members multiple times in person and reinforced this in training sessions.

Consider what might occur if parents aren't on the same page? How can parents be kept up to speed with plans and keep the message consistent?

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Section 3: Defining Key Club Roles

How key individuals can work together to build a strong, unified team

A successful club thrives when its leadership team is united and working towards the same goals. Achieving this unity, or cohesion, means that the day-to-day operations of the club are in sync with its long-term vision. Cohesion touches every part of the club but it's especially important when it comes to the club's culture and values (see section one).

In this section, we'll focus on how the club chair and head coach can work together to ensure the club's strategic goals align with the daily coaching and activities. Both the chair and the head coach play key roles in creating a cohesive club. And like any successful partnership, understanding each other's role is essential.

Swim England encourages including the head coach in club committees whenever possible. This helps the club's leadership make informed decisions and ensures the coach's expertise is part of the conversation. Without a coach's input, the club risks losing alignment between its vision and day-to-day operations, which can lead to feelings of exclusion or confusion among the team and the messages passed onto members. On the other hand, when the coach is involved, it strengthens communication and improves decision-making across the club.

We understand that this can be tricky and that there's no one-size-fits-all approach. So here are a few things to keep in mind when deciding how the coach can contribute effectively.

When it's a good idea to include the coach:

- **Advisory role:** If the committee is discussing long-term strategies, the coach's insights can make a big difference.
- **Collaboration:** For discussions on practical issues like resources or facilities, having the coach's perspective can lead to better decisions. Plus, it's crucial for the coach to understand why decisions are made.

When it may not be appropriate:

- **Conflict of interest:** If the committee is dealing with sensitive topics, like salaries or work distribution, having the coach involved could create bias or even give the impression of unfairness.
- **Accountability issues:** Coaches often follow the committee's policies, so bringing them into decision-making might blur accountability lines.

By keeping these considerations in mind, the relationship between the chair and head coach can remain strong, balanced and focused on what's best for the entire club.

Role of a head coach

Being an aquatics coach isn't just about knowing the techniques – it's about blending a wide range of skills to make sure athletes succeed both in and out of the pool. Here's a closer look at what it takes to be a coach:

- **Strong knowledge base:** Coaches need to stay informed and make decisions based on evidence to ensure their actions benefit athletes in the long run.
- **People skills and emotional intelligence:** Coaches work with many different people, so being able to connect, support and relate to athletes, parents and workforce is key.
- **Understanding athlete development:** Coaches need to be aware of both short-term goals (like improving technique) and long-term growth (such as building strong foundations for future success).
- **Training and competition planning:** Great coaches plan, execute and review training sessions and competition strategies to keep athletes progressing.
- **Technical expertise:** Coaches must be able to deliver high-quality training sessions that help athletes to improve while making sure they're safe and well-prepared.
- **Mentorship:** Guiding and managing other coaches and assistants to help everyone work together effectively is a big part of the job.
- **Team collaboration:** Regular team meetings with coaching staff are essential to manage the aquatic pathway, squad assignments and even team selection for competitions.
- **Competition presence:** Coaches need to be at the heart of the action, attending galas, competitions, internal trials, open meets and even regional or national championships to support their athletes.

What it's really like to be a coach

Coaching isn't just a job – it's a passion. Coaches love the sport and get immense satisfaction from seeing athletes grow, improve and succeed. But it's also a role that requires dedication, hard work and a lot of energy.

The challenges? Long hours, often at unsociable times of the day, working in hot and sometimes isolated environments. There's a lot of personal sacrifice and the stress can be high. Coaching involves a lot of emotional labour, as it can be tough to balance the highs and lows of the sport. On top of that, coaches know they're always being watched – whether it's by athletes, parents, or people outside of the aquatics world. That kind of pressure can bring its own set of emotions.

Still, for many coaches, the rewards far outweigh the challenges and the opportunity to make a real difference in an athlete's life makes it all worth it.

What does a club chair do?

The club chair plays a key role in keeping everything running smoothly and guiding the club's future direction. Here's what's involved:

- **Providing direction and leadership:** The chair leads the club, stepping in to handle any issues that come up and making sure the club stays on track.
- **Managing different sports:** The chair has to oversee various disciplines within the club, balancing the needs of each sport to keep everything running smoothly.
- **Chairing meetings:** The chair leads meetings, setting the agenda to help drive the club's development forward.
- **Overseeing decisions:** The chair is responsible for ensuring decisions made by management, sub-committees and other club members align with the club's goals.
- **Annual report:** The chair works closely with the secretary to prepare and present the club's annual report (if necessary).
- **Ensuring smooth operations:** The chair makes sure that all aspects of the club run according to its rules, Swim England regulations and UK laws.
- **Delegating and motivating volunteers:** The chair delegates tasks, leads and inspires volunteers to help the club reach its goals.
- **Knowledge of clubs and sports:** A good chair has solid knowledge of how sports clubs work, aquatics, or leading an organisation.
- **Strong leadership:** A club chair must have great leadership skills to unite a group of like-minded individuals working towards the same objectives.
- **Great interpersonal skills:** The chair needs to be approachable, diplomatic, and maintain harmony among the club members.

What it's really like to be a club chair

The club chair is the backbone of the club, providing leadership and ensuring everything is running as it should. It's a role that comes with great opportunities for personal growth, making new connections and the satisfaction of leading a team toward shared goals. But, as rewarding as it is, the chair role also requires a significant time commitment.

The chair often attends regular club meetings, and may also need to meet with local authorities, pool operators, or Swim England representatives. While this role is usually voluntary, it can take up a lot of time – often alongside paid work and family life. It's a big responsibility but for those who are passionate about the club's vision, it's also incredibly fulfilling.

Working together for a stronger, effective club

The relationship between the head coach and the club chair is the key to a club running smoothly. When communication is clear, there's a shared vision and both people are working together toward the same goals, everything clicks. It's all about respecting and appreciating each other's strengths and weaknesses to make the relationship – and the club – more effective.

Here are some simple, practical ideas to help build a strong working relationship:

- **Weekly check-ins:** Set aside time each week to catch up on projects, share updates, discuss any concerns and give or receive feedback.
- **Build trust:** Be reliable, meet deadlines and be honest about mistakes. After all, we're all human!
- **Active listening:** Really listen to understand, not just to respond. Show empathy and be fully present in conversations.
- **Respect differences:** Embrace the diversity of perspectives, backgrounds and opinions – different viewpoints can lead to great ideas!
- **Develop self-awareness:** Recognise how your emotions impact others. By understanding yourself, you can better manage your reactions, especially when things get stressful.
- **Social activities:** Attend social events or informal gatherings to get to know each other outside of work and the sport. It helps build trust and camaraderie.

- **Acknowledge existing knowledge:** Recognise and appreciate the experience and understanding each person already has about the club and its workings.

To keep things running smoothly, it's helpful to outline areas of responsibility and decision-making. This adds clarity to day-to-day tasks and prevents duplicated efforts. For example, finances might fall under the committee's responsibilities but a fundraising event like an open meet could involve both coaching and competition teams. Similarly, a growth in membership might look good financially but could put pressure on pool time and require changes to scheduling.

A strong relationship between the head coach and club chair thrives on collaboration and seamless teamwork. By understanding each other's roles and working closely together, the club will continue to grow and succeed.

Clarifying roles and responsibilities in your club

It's important to think about the different roles within your club and make sure everyone knows what they're responsible for. Who oversees each area? Where do roles overlap? And if something needs to change, how do you go about it? It's also worth considering whether there's room for fresh ideas and innovation – if so, who decides how to move forward and how can those changes be agreed upon?

Support and professional development

Beyond strategy and decision-making, the relationship between the head coach and club chair should also be about supporting each other and growing professionally. The club chair can offer valuable insights and advice that help the head coach develop in their role. In turn, the head coach's experience and knowledge can boost the club chair's confidence when making decisions for the club. This mutual support helps both individuals grow and strengthens the overall leadership of the club.

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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.

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Alastair Roberts	Worthing SC Water Polo
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John Adye	Derby Excel
Sara Todd	Regional Chair Swim England South East