



Open Water

NATIONAL AGE GROUP CHAMPIONSHIPS

CONFIRMATION PACK

25 JULY | ROTHER VALLEY COUNTRY PARK



Funding Partner



Official Kit Partner



WILL JOHNSTON
PHOTOGRAPHY



Contents

Contacts.....	3
Key Deadlines & Timings	3
Schedule*	3
Important Course Update – Race Starts/Course Layout.....	3
Pre-event Information (online briefing)	4
Privacy Policy and Photography Consent.....	4
Travel Insurance	4
Competition Information	5
Conditions	5
Entries	5
Detailed Schedule and Waves*	5
Registration	5
Athlete Declaration	6
Safety Briefing	6
Changing	6
Mobile Phones.....	6
Warm up.....	6
Swimwear.....	7
Medical	7
Location of Defibrillators:	7
Race Instructions*	8
Important Course – Race Starts/Course Layout	8
Race Course	8
7.5km Race Course.....	8
Feeding Station (7.5km race only)	9
5km & 3km Race Course.....	9
Waves	10
Timing and Results	10
Presentations.....	10
Safety Information	11
Accreditation	11
General Information	12
Venue.....	12
The Park	12
Travel.....	12
Parking	13
Food and Drink.....	13
Spectator entry	13
Event Merchandise.....	15
Event Hoodies and T-Shirts pre-orders	15
Event Hoodies and T-Shirts venue sales	15
Swim England Merchandise	15
Event Photography	15
Join the Conversation	16



Contacts

Swim England	Venue
Events Officer	Rother Valley Country Park Mansfield Road, Wales Bar Sheffield S26 5PQ Tel: 01709 334455
Jade Williams Email: NationalEvents@swimming.org	
Designated Welfare Officer	
Email: safeguarding@swimming.org	
Championships Website	
Swim England Open Water National Age Group Championships 2026	



Key Deadlines & Timings

Pre-Event Information (Online Briefing)	12 noon OR 18:00, Tuesday 21 July 2026
Mandatory Event Day Safety Briefing	Saturday 25 July See Detailed Schedule and Waves on p.5

Schedule*

NOTE: Take careful note of the age group and race distance, as race distances may differ from those at the regional qualifiers.

Age Group*	Race Distance	Registration	Race
16 years 17/18 years 19+ years	7.5km	07:30	09:30
14 years 15 years	5km	11:30	13:30
13 years	3km	14:15	16:15

**Please note, the above timings are subject to change depending on the number of entries received. Timings will be confirmed in Issue 2 which is due to be published no later than 19 July 2026 (but will still be subject to change before the event). For detailed schedule see [p.5](#).*

Important Course– Race Starts/Course Layout

Due to the current prolonged dry weather conditions, we have been monitoring, and will continue to do so, water depths in the lead up to the Championships. All race starts may change, at short notice, to an in-water start and the course revised accordingly. The course layout changes will be minimal, but the starting position will be adjusted.

Updates, when available, will be published on the Championships online hub here; communicated to all competitors via email; in the pre-event online briefing and mandatory race day safety briefing.

Pre-event Information (online briefing)

One representative from every club due to participate in the Championships (this can be a coach or team manager) is encouraged to attend an online pre-event briefing to hear all the key event information.

Pre-event Information (online briefing)		Tuesday 21 July 2026
Option 1	12 noon	JOIN HERE
Option 2	18:00	JOIN HERE

Although the online briefing is not mandatory, we strongly encourage participation. **Only one** of the above meetings needs to be attended, as the same information will be conveyed. There is no requirement to sign up in advance.

Coaches and Team Managers are encouraged to attend this meeting to receive a comprehensive brief on the latest information and timelines from the Event Management Team.

The usual race day mandatory safety briefing will take place as detailed in the schedule on page [p.5](#).



Privacy Policy and Photography Consent

All individuals attending Swim England events are asked to complete the photo consent form below, prior to attending the event:

[PHOTOGRAPHY CONSENT FORM](#)

To view further details about how Swim England manages your data, please refer to Swim England Privacy Policy (Policy: [SE1046 Privacy Policy](#)).



Travel Insurance

Affiliated Swim England clubs and members thereof have the benefit of third party and personal accident insurance effected by Swim England. However, this does not include travel insurance for trips in the UK or abroad, in particular, there is no cover for travel or accommodation costs for the cancellation of an event.

Some clubs and members may already have the benefit of their own group or personal travel insurance. For those that do not have travel insurance for this event and wish to get a Sport Travel Insurance quote please contact Howden directly on 0121 698 8052. Alternatively, you can seek cover from another insurance provider.

Unfortunately, non-Swim England members do not have the benefit of third party and personal accident insurance effected by Swim England and would therefore need to seek insurance coverage separately.



Competition Information

Conditions

The Swim England National Open Water National Age Group Championships 2026 Conditions can be on the [Competitor Information](#) page of the event website.

Entries

All submitted entries for the Swim England Open Water National Age Group Championships 2026 can be viewed online via the [Confirmed Entries List](#). All entries should be checked to ensure they are correct. If there are any entry errors, please contact NationalEvents@swimming.org as soon as possible.

Detailed Schedule and Waves*

Swim England National Age Group Championships – 7.5k					
	Reg. time	Briefing	Warm up	Start	Cap Colour
Wave 1: Open/male 16 yrs	07:30 - 08:15	08:30	09:00	09:30	Blue
Wave 2: Female 16 yrs	07:45 - 08:30	08:45	09:15	09:45	Yellow
Wave 3: Open/male 17/18 yrs	08:00 - 08:45	09:00	09:30	10:00	Pink
Wave 4: Female 17/18 years	08:15 - 09:00	09:15	09:45	10:15	White
Wave 5: Open/male & Female 19+ yrs	08:30 - 09:15	09:30	10:00	10:30	Green
Swim England National Age Group Championships – 5k					
	Reg. time	Briefing	Warm up	Start	Cap Colour
Wave 1: Open/male 14 yrs	11:30 - 12:15	12:30	13:00	13:30	Blue
Wave 2: Female 14 yrs	11:45 - 12:30	12:45	13:15	13:45	Green
Wave 3: Open/male 15 yrs	12:00 - 12:45	13:00	13:30	14:00	Pink
Wave 4: Female 15 yrs	12:15 - 13:00	13:15	13:45	14:15	White
Swim England National Age Group Championships – 3k					
	Reg. time	Briefing	Warm up	Start	Cap Colour
Wave 1: Open/male 13 yrs	14:15 - 15:00	15:15	15:45	16:15	White
Wave 2: Female 13 yrs	14:30 - 15:15	15:30	16:00	16:30	Orange

***NOTE:** Event schedule and waves are subject to last minute changes and the timings are estimates.



Registration

Upon arrival, please ensure you report to the Registration desk which will be located inside the Registration marquee between the times in the schedule for your specific race.

Here you will check in for your race and collect your race pack which will include:

- Race specific coloured swimming cap;
- Race numbers;
- Timing chips;
- Athlete Declaration Form submitted at the time of entry.

Competitors are responsible for ensuring that all timing chips and wristbands are securely fastened before the event. Please note that a fee of £56.00 will be charged for any lost timing chips. Your cooperation in helping us minimise losses is greatly appreciated.



Athlete Declaration

On registration you will also be asked to check, reconfirm and sign your previously submitted **Athlete Declaration Form** – without this you will not be able to participate in the competition. Please ensure you have flagged any medical points of note on the athlete declaration form.



Safety Briefing

The Safety Briefing will take place in the Briefing marquee which will be clearly signposted. It is essential that every competitor and their coaches are present at the briefing as important information will be provided about the race and safety procedures will be explained. All competitors will be marked in and out of briefings to ensure everyone has received the information.

Competitors and their coaches must attend the briefing specific to their wave, at the time listed in the schedule (see [p.5](#)). Any swimmer who has not attended the briefing will not be able to swim.

Changing

Group changing facilities, toilets and 50p lockers for personal belongings are available at the Water Sports and Activity Centre. Boxes for footwear will be provided before entry on to the pontoon.

Mobile Phones

Swim England members are reminded that the use of mobile phones or devices in changing rooms is prohibited throughout the Championships.

This follows an update to Swim England's safeguarding policy and procedures document, [Wavepower](#).



Swim England's Keep it in Your Locker campaign raises awareness of the change, which has been introduced to help protect members from instances of inappropriate photos or video footage being taken.

To find out more, and watch a video, please scan the QR code above or click [here](#).



Warm up

Warm up will be available to competitors in the warm up pod at the time specified within the schedule (see [p.5](#)).

Swim England recommend that swimmers spend at least 5 minutes in the water prior to the start of their race to help acclimatise to the water temperature.



Water temperature and Swimwear

As per World Aquatics Rules Part Three 7.2 and 9.1.6.3:

- i. Water Temperature 16 – 17.9°C degrees: the use of wetsuits is compulsory
- ii. Water Temperature 18.0 – 31°C degrees: wetsuits are not permitted, except when conditions are hazardous for the competitors, the Event Management may, upon recommendation from the Safety Officer and Medical Officer, declare wetsuits as mandatory in temperatures up to 20.0°C.

Swimwear

As detailed in the Event Conditions, which can be viewed/downloaded [here](#):

24. Wetsuits and swimsuits must comply with World Aquatics Open Water Rules (see Part One 7 and Part Three 7.1 – 7.3 [here](#)):

- i. Water temperature below 18°C: wetsuits are compulsory and shall completely cover torso, back and thighs. They shall not extend beyond the neck, wrists and ankles. The body parts, after the shoulder and/or below the thigh do not necessarily need to be covered.
- ii. Water temperature from 18.0°C and above: swimsuits shall not cover the neck, nor extend past the shoulder, nor extend below the ankle. Subject to these specific shape specifications, swimsuits for open water swimming competitions shall further comply with all other requirements applicable to swimsuits for swimming-pool competition. Wetsuits are not permitted in Open Water Swimming competitions in water with temperature 18.0°C and above, except when conditions are hazardous for the competitors, the Event Management may, upon recommendation from the Safety Officer & Medical Officer declare wetsuits as mandatory in temperatures up to 20.0°C.

It is expected that officials will apply common sense when dealing with references to neck, wrists and ankles. As in all Open Water events held in the home counties of England Scotland and Wales, the Chief Referee will have responsibility for the overall management of the rules.

25: Swim gear: no competitor shall be permitted to use or wear any device, which may be an aid to their speed, endurance or buoyancy. Goggles, cap, nose clip and earplugs may be used. Only one costume is allowed.

26: Grease: competitors shall be allowed to use grease or other substances providing these are not deemed as excessive, in the opinion of the Referee.

Swimwear should be of a textile material, as pool rules apply. Our guidance is: *The material used for swimsuits can be only "textile fabric" defined as material consisting of natural and/or synthetic, individual and non-consolidated yarns used to constitute a fabric by weaving, knitting, and/or braiding.*



Medical

The course will be marshalled by safety boats and kayaks.

There will be a Paramedic Ambulance and crew in attendance to assist in an emergency and first responders to administer first aid where necessary. If medical assistance is required, please approach the nearest Swim England staff member, volunteer or venue staff.

Rotherham Hospital

Moorgate Road
Rotherham
S60 2UD

It is 6.6 miles away, approx. 13-minute drive.

Location of Defibrillators:

Echo Fire & Medical Event Team
Swim England Events Office
Park Office (located in the Café Courtyard)



Race Instructions*

Important Course – Race Starts/Course Layout

Due to the current prolonged dry weather conditions, we have been monitoring, and will continue to do so, water depths in the lead up to the Championships. All race starts may change, at short notice, to an in-water start and the course revised accordingly. The course layout changes will be minimal, but the starting position will be adjusted.

Updates, when available, will be published on the Championships online hub here; communicated to all competitors via email; in the pre-event online briefing and mandatory race day safety briefing.

Race Course

***NEW for 2026:** please note different race course layouts for the 2026 Championships (to previous years). Due to exciting development at the Country Park, with the build of a new café overlooking the lake, this year's Championships course has been updated to enable best participation and spectator experience.

7.5km Race course

Access to the swim start will be via the slipway located at the left hand side of the pontoon, adjacent to the 7.5km start.

Prior to accessing the start funnel, for safety reasons, it is competitors' responsibility to ensure that the race numbers provided in competitor race packs are clearly displayed on competitor's hat, shoulders, arms and back of hands throughout the race, if wetsuits are worn then numbers will be on the back of hands and hats. Competitors will also be checked by the chip timing company and must ensure their timing chips are on both wrists, with the additional safety tally band either on the wrist or ankle.



- Start is in the water
 - Course is run clockwise:
 - 1 lap = 1.5 km (1500 metres):
 - 7.5km swim 5 laps
- Do not enter the finish funnel until final lap

- On turning at T2, for final time, head directly towards and into finish funnel.
- The finish is "swim through" and competitors MUST reach up and touch the finish banner. This is essential to determine place and to ensure your timing chip is read.

Feeding Station (7.5km race only)

As detailed in the Event Conditions, which can be viewed/downloaded [here](#):

22. A feeding platform will be available for 7.5k races only and, if used by a competitor, coaches are to provide the feeding poles and sustenance abiding by the following:
- i. Feeding poles are not to exceed 5m in length when extended.
 - ii. Coaching and the giving of instructions by the competitor's coach on the feeding platform is permitted. No whistle shall be allowed.
 - iii. No objects can be thrown from the feeding platform to the competitors, including sustenance. The competitors shall receive their feeding in biodegradable containers directly from their coach by a feeding pole.

Protocol

The following protocols must be followed to ensure the safety of everyone:

- Feeding poles are to be provided by the coach / athlete representative.
- Poles will be checked at the mark up station and you'll be issued your swimmer number(s)
- Swim England will provide an identifying label (athlete number) to attach to the pole.
- Entry to the pontoon will be controlled by a Pontoon Official
- Please leave the pontoon as soon as possible after feeding and re-enter the holding area
- Feeding will be available on laps 1-4.
- Feeding from any other place than the feeding pontoon will not be permitted
- One representative per swimmer will be allowed
- Coaches must wear a buoyancy aid and appropriate non-slip footwear when on the pontoon
- Instructions from the technical officials and safety team must be followed at all times.
- Feeding will be permitted with the use of feeding poles only – feeding by hand will not be permitted for safety reasons.

Further details will be provided at the online briefing which will take place as detailed on [p.3](#) and in the mandatory safety briefing on the day of the event ([p.5](#)).

5km & 3km Race Course

Access to the swim start will be through the gate by the right-hand side of the Water Sports Centre and onto the start pontoon.

Prior to accessing the pontoon, for safety reasons, it is competitors' responsibility to ensure that the race numbers provided in competitor race packs are clearly displayed on competitor's hat, shoulders, arms and back of hands throughout the race. Competitors will also be checked by the chip timing company and must ensure their timing chip is on the wrist, with the additional safety wristband either on the wrist or ankle.

The event will start with a dive start from the pontoon. Competitors may start in the water if they inform the Referee at the briefing.



- Start with a dive from the pontoon / in the water at the pontoon from allocated position
- Repeat number of times to achieve race distance. Do not enter the finish until final lap
- 1 lap = 1 km (1000 metres):
 - 3km swim 3 laps
 - 5km swim 5 laps
- On turning at T2, for final time, head directly towards and into the finish funnel.
- The finish is "swim through" and competitors **MUST** reach up and touch the finish banner. This is essential to determine place and to ensure your timing chip is read.



Waves

Races will be conducted in the waves as instructed at registration. Each age group will swim in its own wave. Female and open/male will swim in separate waves other than the 19+ age which may be combined.

Further details regarding the race procedure will be given at the competitors' briefing.



Timing and Results

The race will be electronically timed by Race Timing Solutions.

It is important that you wear the two timing chips you have been provided with, with one fastened to the wrist, and that you reach up and touch the finish banner to ensure your timing and place is registered.

Unofficial results will be available to view online and onsite. Confirmed results will be posted on the [Swim England National Open Water Hub](#).



Presentations

Medal presentations will take place as soon as possible after results for each race have been confirmed and after everyone in the wave featuring that age group has finished. Competitors who have achieved medal positions should report to the presentation podium as soon as possible dressed in full club tracksuit.



Safety Information

- Safety boats will be on the water and course officials patrolling the edge of the lake. If a competitor gets into difficulties, they should lie on their back in the water with their arm in the air. A rescue boat, equipped with blankets, will come and collect the swimmer. Water marshals, kayaks and land marshals with throw ropes will all be on hand should a swimmer experience any difficulties.
- Competitors are never far from the lake bank, and the turn sections of the course are indicated by large fluorescent buoys.
- Please use sun block whatever the weather; always apply after numbering or an hour before numbering to allow time for it to soak in.
- Wear mirrored goggles to prevent glare and wear goggles underneath the swim cap. This will avoid goggles being knocked off the head at the start and around the turn buoys.
- Stay relaxed at the start of the race and don't panic. Cold water can make competitors breathe rapidly. If this happens, try to stay calm and concentrate on breathing deeply until the body adjusts to the water temperature.



Accreditation

Athletes

Accreditation for athletes **will not** be in force at this event.

Coach, Team Manager and Chaperone

New for the 2026 event, coaches can purchase accreditation to gain access to the race finish area, allowing entry into the accredited zone close to the finish.

Accreditation Pass Charge	£7.50
	Available from Monday 8 June 2026
Overseas Accreditation Applications:	No later than 12 noon, Monday 6 July 2026
Swim England Accreditation Queries:	No later than 12 noon, Wednesday 8 July 2026

Coaches, team managers and chaperones requiring access to the finish area must purchase an accreditation pass in advance of the event. Clubs/teams must follow the guidance as set out in the current version of [Wavepower](#) and individuals may only act in one role at the event and fulfil the following criteria:

To obtain an accreditation pass, coaches, team managers and chaperones must fulfil the following criteria, as required by their role, when applying to attend a Swim England National event:

1. DBS

You must have a valid Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) with Barred List check.

2. Safeguarding Certificate

All coaches, team managers and chaperones are required to have an approved and in date safeguarding certificate recorded with the Swim England's Membership department.

3. Minimum Qualification/Requirements (specific to the role)

Coaches must have a qualification in line with the Swim England [Coaching Policy](#). Team Managers must have the appropriate Team Manager module for the competition and Chaperones must only be in attendance on a 1:1 support basis for an athlete as per the [Team Manager, Coach and Chaperone Policy](#).

Membership Check	MEMBERSHIP CHECK
Further info and How to Guide	Accreditation Information
Apply for Accreditation - England	Apply for Accreditation
Apply for Accreditation – Scottish, Welsh & Overseas submitted no later than 12 noon, Wednesday 8 July 2026	Apply for Accreditation

Misplaced Accreditation Passes

A £10 charge will be applied on all lost or forgotten passes if a coach etc arrives at the event without their accreditation. Accreditation checks will be carried out to enter the finish area and entry will not be allowed into this area without a pass.

Misplaced Accreditation Passes

A £10 charge will be applied on all lost or forgotten passes if a coach etc arrives at the event without their accreditation. Accreditation checks will be carried out to enter the finish area and entry will not be allowed into this area without a pass.



General Information

All updates and additional information will be uploaded to [the Swim England Open Water National Age Group pages](#).

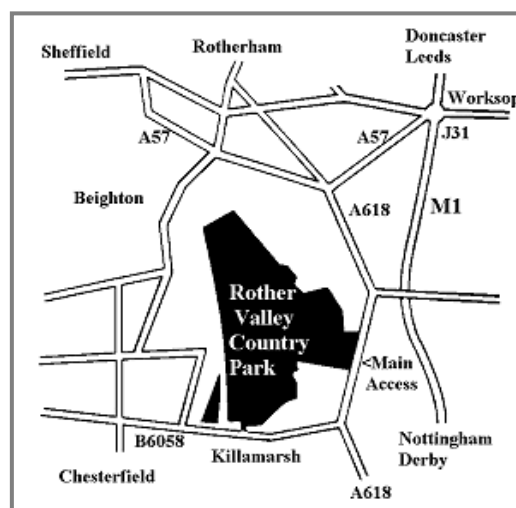
Venue

[Rother Valley Country Park](#)

Mansfield Road,
Wales Bar
Sheffield
S26 5PQ
Tel: 01709 334455

The Park

The 750 acre park hosts a number of walking and cycling routes which link into the Transpennine Trail and Sustrans Route 6. Bicycles are available to hire from the Water Sports and Activity Centre. Photographic ID will be required to hire a bicycle.



There are 5 lakes within the park, with the competition being held in the Main Lake which is 1 mile long. The Nature Reserve offers fantastic bird watching with over 260 different varieties of birds recorded over the past two years.



Travel

Car

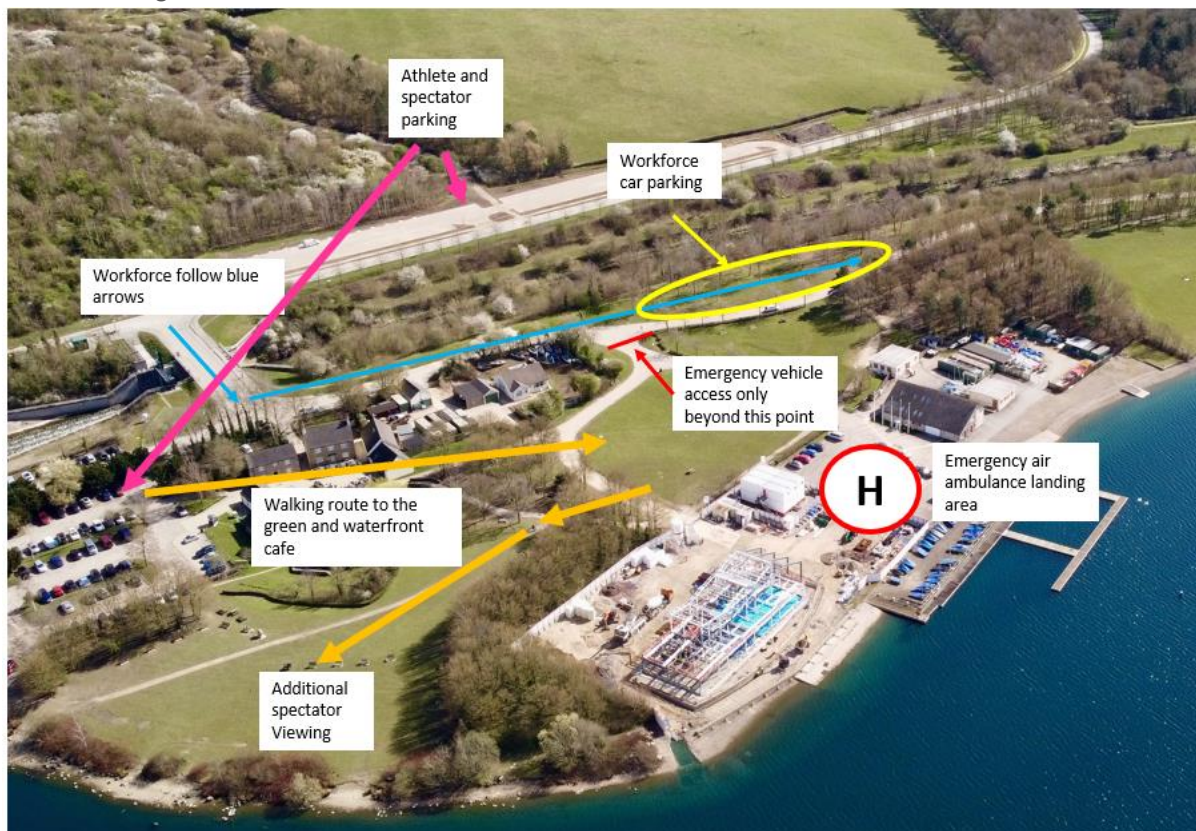
We advise you to not use the above postcode in your Sat Nav to find the venue, as it takes you to an industrial estate nearby.

From Junction 31 of M1, take A57 towards Sheffield. At the roundabout take A618 towards Mansfield, Wales Bar and Clowne. At the traffic lights go straight on and the park entrance is at the bottom of the hill on the right.

Parking

Parking is available onsite. Once past the gatehouse please follow the Swim England Event signage and the signage to the Water Sports and Activity Centre.

Athlete/spectator car parking is different to previous years as shown below. Please follow the signs and the directions of the marshals.



NOTE: the speed limit reduces along the access road, please adhere to the speed limit signs at all times.

Pay on exit:*

- £1.70 for the first hour
- and then an extra £1 per hour up to a maximum of £6.50 charged per car or motorcycle per day.

Payments can be made by cash or card at the payment machines located in the park for a speedier exit or by contactless card only at the exit barriers.

*Car parking cost may be subject to change by the park.



Food and Drink

NEW: The Waterfront cafe sells a range of hot and cold food alongside beverages. There is ample indoor and outdoor seating.

The Stables café will also be open throughout the day selling a range of hot and cold food and beverages. There will also be mobile outlets serving hot and cold food, snacks and drinks.



Spectator entry

General spectator entry into the Park is free of charge, so feel free to bring as many supporters with you as you like!

New for 2026 - Premier Spectator Viewing

The new [Waterfront Cafe](#) is now open right next to where the main action will take place.

Enjoy a **Premier Viewing Ticket for just £5**, granting exclusive access to a viewing platform above the waterfront cafe, offering the perfect vantage point of both the race start and finish. They will also include refreshments.

Tickets are on sale now and are valid for one distance racing only, and are subject to availability.



Premier Spectator Viewing

On sale now

[Purchase HERE](#)

Safety and Security

Everyone is asked to be extra vigilant and take care not to leave their belongings unattended.

Please remain aware of your surroundings throughout the event and report anything unusual, suspicious or unattended to event staff.

In the unlikely event of a security incident, follow the Run, Hide, Tell guidance and any instructions provided by event staff, stewards or emergency services.

If you see a suspicious or unattended item, do not approach it. Report it immediately to event staff. In an emergency, call 999.

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe, secure and enjoyable event for everyone.

Should any issues arise whereby it is necessary to evacuate the venue, this will be managed under the direction of venue staff. The event Security team will assist with the evacuation of the venue. Venue staff will direct all persons to an appropriate evacuation assembly point in case of evacuation.

UNATTENDED ITEMS: LOST... or SUSPICIOUS?



H Hidden?

- Has it been concealed or hidden from view?
- Bombs are unlikely to be left in locations such as this – where any unattended item will be noticed quickly.



O Obviously suspicious?

- Does it have wires, circuit boards, batteries, tape or putty-like substances?
- Do you think the item poses an immediate threat to life?



T Typical?

- Is the item typical of what you would expect to find in this location?
- Most lost property is found in locations where people congregate.

If after applying the HOT protocols you still believe the item to be suspicious, call 999.



NATIONAL
COUNTER TERRORISM
SECURITY OFFICE



BRITISH
TRANSPORT
POLICE



Event Merchandise

Event Hoodies and T-Shirts pre-orders

Pre-orders are now closed. Pre-orders will be available to collect from Front of House.

Event Hoodies and T-Shirts venue sales

Subject to availability, event specific merchandise will be available to purchase from 11:00.

Swim England Merchandise

Swim England merchandise will also be available to purchase from the Front of House Desk.



Event Photography

Official event photography will be provided by Will Johnston Photography
www.willjohnstonphotograph.com.



WILL JOHNSTON PHOTOGRAPHY

Will Johnston Photography is proud to be the official photography provider for this event.

We'll be taking hundreds of photos but can't guarantee capturing every participant. If you'd like us to focus on a specific competitor, text us on **07777 764684** with their details and we'll focus on them, giving you a great selection of shots to choose from!

Photographs are available at willjohnstonphotography.com

3 downloads for £50 and 20% off
for 48 hours after each event

email: pictures@willjohnstonphotography.com telephone: 07777 764684  [whljohnston](https://www.instagram.com/whljohnston)
www.willjohnstonphotography.com



Join the Conversation

Swim England's members are being encouraged to 'join the conversation' and be at the heart of the national governing body's decision-making.

The member-driven will give hundreds the chance to have their say and help shape future opportunities and experiences.

It is open to all members aged 16 and over from every aquatic discipline.

Parents with children aged under 16 who are Swim England members can also join as there may be opportunities to complete some activities together.

To sign up for the Swim England Online Community, [please click here](#).

