

# Get involved!

The Amateur Swimming Association West Midland Region, Sport England West Midlands and Skills Active joined forces in 2004 to find out what were the main training, skills and qualifications needs of this region's swimming workforce. The research concludes that we definitely have an opportunity between 2005 and 2010 to:

- Improve the service we offer our customers
- Develop our own skills, knowledge, abilities and competence
- Increase our swim organisation's performance
- Enhance the overall level of teaching, coaching and education skills in the region
- Develop new skills and knowledge allowing us to work with people from many different backgrounds, cultures and capability
- Make it easier for people in our workforce to find out about and take part in training or skills development activities
- Provide new qualifications that reflect our ever-changing industry and are fit for purpose
- Raise the profile of our sport with funders of training and learning in the West Midlands

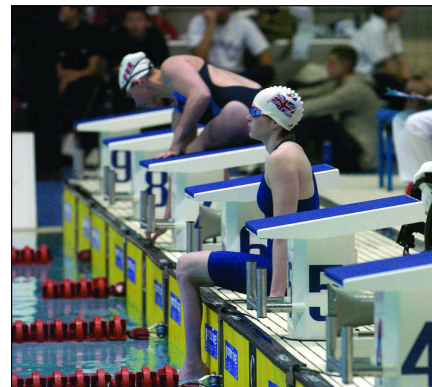
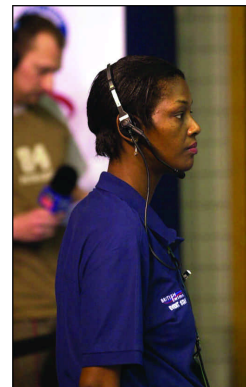
Here are ways you can get involved and make best use of this research and action plan:

If you're a funding or support agency, local authority, development agency or training provider.....	If you're a swim / aqua organisation or employee in the industry
<p>Consider ways in which our plan can help you achieve the main outcomes required by your organisation and help fund relevant parts of our action plan where there is mutual benefit. This plan for swimming points to opportunities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating new jobs</li> <li>• Creating more qualified people</li> <li>• Reducing skills gaps and deficiencies in our workforce</li> <li>• Encouraging learning amongst volunteers</li> <li>• Developing more professional organisations</li> <li>• Increasing social inclusion and opportunity</li> <li>• Achieving sporting excellence</li> <li>• Increasing the health of people in our region</li> </ul>	<p>Think about how you approach training and development currently. Do you have someone at work you can talk to about your development needs? Do you know where to go to find training? If you don't then speak to us - we can help you find what it is you need and put you in touch with relevant training providers who can discuss in more detail with you what would suit you best and how you can get it.</p> <p>Make a commitment to at least 30 minutes CPD each week - whether you are a paid worker or volunteer. Attend networking events, read about latest industry happenings and professional opportunities and share knowledge with colleagues.</p>
<p>Let us know if you have a new or existing programme or initiative that could benefit from the use of swimming or swimming professionals as a tool to improve take-up of that programme</p>	<p>If you're a swim club commit to Swim 21 and increase your focus on training and development for yourself and your workforce.</p>
<p>Include references to this plan in any of your own planning processes as evidence of a sector that has completed a thorough training needs analysis and has a plan ready for implementation with partners</p>	<p>Take advantage of the support ASA and other partners can give you - whether this be free advice or information, or helping your organisation solve a problem e.g. recruiting enough volunteers; increasing the number of qualified coaches or improving the management skills in your club</p>
<p>When deciding which training courses to deliver, contact us to talk through this research so we can share with you our sector's needs and what's more likely to be attractive to the swim workforce</p>	<p>Take time to visit the ASA website which will be developing much more content about training, education and learning opportunities in future - it can act as a gateway to helping you find what you need or what interests you <a href="http://www.westmidlandswimming.org">www.westmidlandswimming.org</a></p>

## Contact us

**Contact details for ASA West Midland Region:**

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# Swimming Workforce Development Strategy

ASA West Midland Region  
2005-2010

developed by  
 Impact Research on behalf of the Amateur  
 Swimming Association West Midland Region,  
 Sport England and SkillsActive

# The Swim Workforce

## Sport Matters in the West Midlands

Sport is being recognised in the West Midlands Region as a major contributor to health, well-being, education and the economy. And working in sport - either as a paid worker or volunteer - is increasingly seen as a worthwhile and rewarding form of employment.

But little information existed about the true range and contribution made by people working in sport until 2004 when a major research project - Sports Employment in the West Midlands - identified that over 80,000 people are directly employed or are volunteers in different types of sports organisation in this region alone. And swimming is most likely one of the largest contributors to this figure with around 5,000 people active in our own workforce.

### The Evidence\*

Our research has benefited greatly from the views and opinions of many people managing or working in our sector including:

- Schools Swimming Service
- Local Authority Personnel
- Swimming Clubs
- Commercial sector
- Independent private swimming schools
- Swimming Teachers
- Coaches
- Volunteers
- Synchronised swimming staff
- Diving staff
- Water Polo staff
- Elite performance coaches
- Other facilities (e.g. hotels, theme parks)
- Officials
- Sports Development Officers

Thank you to all of you who took the time to complete surveys during 2005 helping us to shape this action plan, which will now be implemented with energy and vigour. The consultations have allowed us to be more confident about the size of our workforce, its characteristics, its growth potential and the evidence that there is a need and demand for new training, learning and CPD opportunities.

\* Any mainstream funding partner wishing to see the full report and statistical evidence in more detail for the swim sector should contact Lesley Hill, ASA West Midlands Region - details on back cover

## Swimming Matters in the West Midlands

Directed by Amateur Swimming Association West Midlands Region, Sport England and SkillsActive, this new 5-year workforce development plan for our sector is the first complete plan of its kind for any sport in the UK. We have recognised earlier than most that at the heart of our success is our people and we need a plan to help them develop their abilities and competence continually. The plan is a massive opportunity for the swim sector to look at what it's doing well already in terms of training its staff and volunteers, and what it can improve upon.

### The main facts

- In the West Midlands Region there are just under 5,000 people in paid and volunteer jobs in the swim sector (6% of all regional sports employment).
- Around 2,000 of these people are volunteers (>40% of the workforce).
- Around 2,205 jobs in swimming are part-time (45% of the workforce).
- Three-fifths of the swim workforce is female.
- Just over a quarter of jobs in the swim workforce appear to be directly related to teaching, coaching and instruction posts, whilst operational jobs predominate in the industry.
- An exceedingly high employment growth rate of 28% is anticipated in the swim workforce between 2005 and 2008 compared to a regional all sport average of only 9%. This should be qualified further by saying that 90% of all that employment growth is likely to be from voluntary employment.
- Our survey suggests that swimming could create or need 1,221 new voluntary and 136 paid jobs between 2005 and 2008.
- The need for coaches amongst local authority employers is also expected to grow.
- There are very few managers in the workforce, rather people tend to share the management functions across their different roles especially in swimming clubs. Traditional 'management courses' for full time paid workers therefore would not meet the voluntary needs of the swim sector.
- One significant barrier to increasing training volumes in organisations is getting access to sufficient pool time at facilities.

### The challenge

- Few organisations feel they have the right skills or expertise to manage human resource issues including volunteer recruitment and retention, identifying appropriate training opportunities and getting the most out of staff. There is however interest in obtaining this expertise and getting help in these areas so we need to make that support available. (Survey finding: 84% of organisations would welcome support with training and 55% would welcome support with staff development).
- There appear to be very limited opportunities it seems for continual professional development and training in the swim workforce (e.g. four fifths of organisations in our 2005 survey said they do not provide in-house training opportunities for their staff) so we need to provide, co-ordinate and increase access to relevant training opportunities.
- The statistics point to a low culture of training within swim organisations (though there are always exceptions of course), and this will limit both the individual workers' potential and the performance of the swimming organisation overall. There is however evidence of a major demand for training and support from the workforce (see chart) in over 20 different areas. The task has to be in making sure training needs are met.
- There are over 20 training providers in the West Midlands Region wanting to get more involved with our sector and we can help ensure training is fit for purpose, and help raise awareness of what's available.
- Not discounting the needs of paid workers, there is clearly a need to plan vigorously for the introduction of a large intake of new volunteers entering the workforce in coming years.
- More and more there is a need for professionalism in sport and this impacts on everyone from the administrators to the managers, the teachers and coaches, from the club secretaries to the pool staff, from the officials to the army of volunteers making such an active contribution in our sector.

### Skills Gaps in the swimming workforce

% of swim organisations reporting skills gaps in their workforce

Coaching skills	79%
Lifesaving	45%
Communication skills	41%
First Aid	41%
Team working skills	34%
Management skills	28%
Staff management skills	28%
Personal skills	28%
IT skills	24%
Customer care skills	21%
Health and safety skills	21%
Technical skills	17%
Basic skills	10%

*NB. Differences were noticed between clubs, local authorities and private sector firms.*

### 20 Training Needs for the Swim Sector

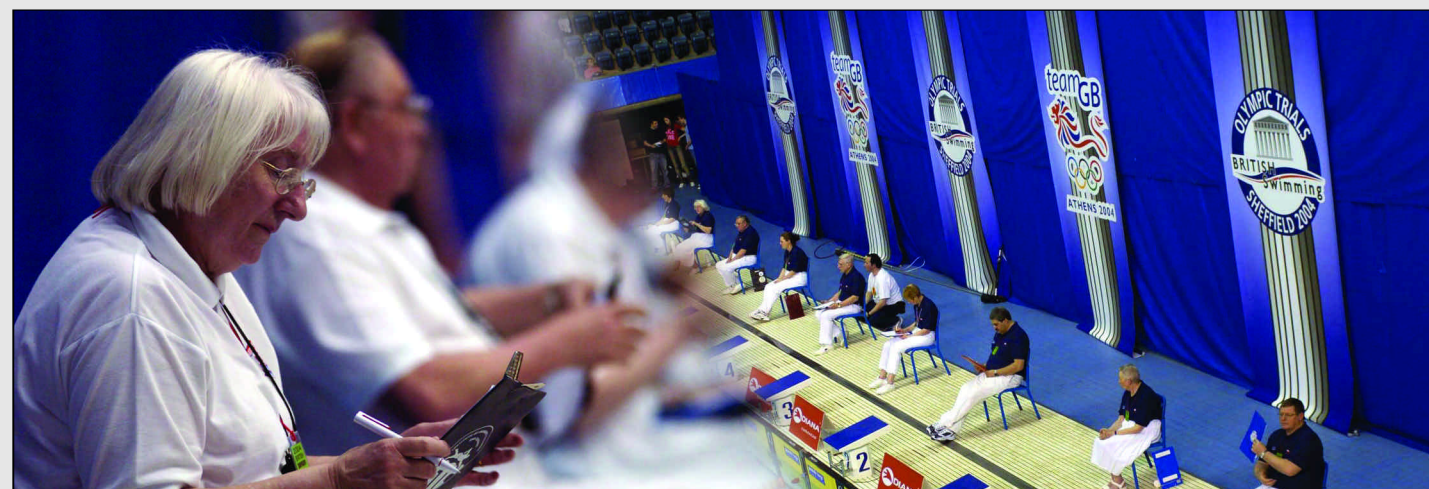
Training needs are ranked in terms of the amount of staff needing training in our sector

1 Child protection	11 Training for administrators
2 Lifesaving / lifeguard	12 Dry land training
3 Continuous Professional Development	13 Synchro teaching
4 Swimming teaching	14 Working with special groups
5 Training for officials	15 Healthy Living / Health Promotion training
6 Helper training	16 Aqua fitness
7 Equity	17 High performance / elite coaching
8 Volunteer training	18 Diving teaching
9 Teaching people with disabilities / special needs	19 Disability qualifications or classifier training
10 Coaching	20 Corporate Governance (for boards, committees)

# The Action Plan

The main outcomes of this action plan by 2010 will be:

Outcome	Suggested Measures
More organisations and individuals in the swim sector committed to active workforce development leading to greater levels of staff retention, performance and motivation	Swim 21 accreditation with greater emphasis on training and development Individual records of CPD for paid workers and volunteers
Greater number of qualified staff in the sector and increased professionalism amongst the volunteer workforce	Increase in take-up of qualifications by teachers, coaches and professional staff. Increased take-up of learning opportunities by volunteers
The provision of training opportunities that are fit for purpose and mindful of the swim sector's workforce characteristics (e.g. high proportion of part-time and volunteer workers; shared management functions across jobs)	A regional training and education centre and team that can co-ordinate, deliver and monitor workforce development advising and influencing other training providers on the most suitable content and delivery of learning



The action plan is being championed by ASA West Midlands Region, Sport England and Skills Active. The publication of this summary document, and its distribution amongst swim organisations, training providers and funders of learning, education and employment programmes is the first priority. Moving forward, the detailed action plan comprises over 50 specific recommendations to be carried out in the next 5 years across these main themes:

	Strategic Theme	Example actions
1	<b>Dialogue</b> (between ASA West Midlands Region and the swim sector)	Distribution of this plan; further workshops in 2006; better use of ASA regional website to raise awareness of training and CPD opportunities
2	<b>Workforce differences</b> (in the needs and volumes of paid staff, volunteers, private sector and voluntary sector organisations etc)	Tailored training approaches to reflect the different needs amongst coaches, officials, operational roles, volunteers and those in clubs contributing to a wider management function
3	<b>Future Growth</b> (ensuring an adequate supply of skilled labour in the sector to meet demand)	Programmes, support and promotions to ensure there is sufficient interest in local communities to meet demand for volunteers by 2010
4	<b>Recruitment and retention</b> (improving careers image of the sector and keeping our staff motivated)	Better defined, up-to-date job roles and descriptors (paid and volunteer workers) targeted at key audiences to raise awareness of the benefits of working in the swim sector
5	<b>Skills Gaps</b> (focusing resources where it is most needed)	Ensuring the detailed training needs analysis undertaken in this research leads to positive action i.e. fit for purpose training encompassing the skills, knowledge and CPD needs of workers
6	<b>Brokerage</b> (improving the sector's training culture and changing behaviours and attitudes towards training)	This is a regional sports priority about helping organisations identify needs and then securing appropriate support (Human resource expertise, sourcing relevant training, funding support etc)
7	<b>Training Supply</b> (co-ordinating providers and training offered)	Development of a Regional Education and Training Centre Network to co-ordinate activities of over 20 providers, and drive up awareness and demand for training in the swim sector
8	<b>Funding</b> (achieving greater £ leverage for the sector)	Sharing this research evidence with organisations such as the Learning and Skills Council, AWM, Sport England and Local Authorities to better inform and increase the use of resources to achieve agree outcomes e.g. a more qualified workforce; increased employment opportunities in rural areas
9	<b>Adaptability</b> (being responsive to opportunities for the sector e.g. Olympics, UKCC)	Ensuring we can act quickly as an entire sector in the West Midlands region to capitalise on opportunities for our sport, being ready to rise to any new challenge e.g. as swim participation increases having sufficient qualified personnel to cope; or in our quest for medals having elite performance programmes in place to contribute to that ambition