

# Invite for proposals for West Midlands Club Culture Insight Project

## Who we are

Swim England is the national governing body for swimming in England. We help people learn how to swim, enjoy the water safely, and compete in all our sports.

Swim England has eight semi-autonomous regions who the clubs affiliate to and who oversee the compliance of clubs in meeting the national Swim Mark standard. In addition regions organise regional and sub-regional competition as an essential part of the athlete pathway. Swim England West Midlands will be leading this project, supported by Swim England.

Our vision is of a nation swimming and we strive to inspire everyone to enjoy the water in the way that suits them. We work with our partners to create engaging programmes that enable everyone to be active, have fun and stay healthy through swimming.

At our heart Swim England is a membership organisation dedicated to supporting our clubs and members to develop and succeed. We maintain the laws of the sport and run world-class national events that are open to all.

Central to our operation as a national governing body is the safeguarding of members and promoting an athlete centred coaching philosophy. We want to our coaches and clubs to support athletes to develop the skills and characteristics that enable them to thrive in the sport. Throughout the pathway, our aim is that activity aligns to the British Swimming Optimal Athlete Development Framework (OADF).

## The Project Purpose

We want to understand the current position in a group of our clubs around key areas of:-

1. Knowledge and delivery of the principles of OADF.
2. Knowledge of and use of reporting and profiling mechanisms aimed at supporting athletes.
3. Are the partnerships between clubs at different stages of the pathways working effectively and what is the role of local authorities and schools in this process?
4. The concerns and barriers to an effective pathway
5. What is working well and what do we need to do better?

This will focus on swimming clubs only on the basis that comparable frameworks do not exist in other disciplines. However, it is intended that this work will influence the development of future frameworks.

This insight will give the opportunity to:

- Consult on the application of the OADF model in clubs.
- Consult with athletes about their experience within clubs.
- Consult with parents about their perspective of the culture within swimming clubs.
- Consult with clubs about what we need to do better.
- Provide direction on future work in the area of performance planning, culture, welfare and safeguarding.

We expect that the critical issues are likely to include:

- The perception of coaches from an athlete / club / parent perspective.
- The impact of coaching practice on the athlete experience.
- The awareness, understanding and application of OADF and its principles.
- The barriers to reporting concerns, how these are managed, how should they be managed and what the outcomes should be.

Feedback should be provided as follows:-

1. Sport Development regionally – the regional board and its clubs
2. Sport Development nationally – internal feedback to inform the direction of development in the areas of club culture and coaching culture.
3. Safeguarding and Legal teams – to inform future communications and developments.

To ensure the insight is independent and anonymous, we are seeking an external organisation to gather the insight, check and challenge thinking and provide transparency on the outcomes. Communication to gather the insight will be managed by the Region supported by Swim England.

There will be a Project Steering Group to oversee the delivery of the project.

The insight will be developed in five phases:

1. **Assumptions base** – we recognise that the Region and Swim England are working from an initial viewpoint which needs to be tested. To gain clarity on this, those assumptions need to be set out and checked and challenged.
2. **Initial Communication** - this project will be perceived in many ways. It is essential its purpose is communicated widely and positively from the outset to encourage engagement and to avoid any incorrect assumptions or negative reactions within the aquatic community.
3. **Quantitative insight** – a survey sent to members / parents in the Region to gain insight into their club experience.
4. **Qualitative insight** – based on a project plan created by the lead organisation, the qualitative element of the project takes place over a pre-defined period and seeks to delve further into attitudes and experiences through a series of focus groups.
5. **Communication and Implementation** – communicating the findings of the insight and setting out what this means for Swim England ensuring there is alignment across teams.

Ideally, an interim report will be available by September 2022 with a finalised report by November 2022. The timelines are open to discussion with the agreed facilitator. The quality of the insight is the utmost importance based on the potential impact of this project.

## The Organisation

In order to understand the culture in clubs and to understand the what more needs to be done, we will utilise an external organisation with significant experience in sport centred insight and working with young people.

It should be noted that we expect the organisation to provide check and challenge to the process outlined in order to add maximum value.

The organisation will:

- Have significant experience in leading sport based insight with athletes, parents, coaches and club volunteers. This should include quantitative and qualitative approaches.
- Have a significant experience in safeguarding processes, procedures and legislation
- Have the credibility and skill to facilitate and engage in such a way as to get 'under the skin' of the issues.
- Be able to present a strong insight report with recommendations appropriate to the organisations.

The following are the expected activities:

- Present progress against an agreed plan via meetings in a timely manner.
- Be part of the Steering Group to offer advice and thoughts to the Group throughout the process.
- Meet with key stakeholders:
  - The Region – Board and officer level
  - Sport Development Directorate – key leads
  - Safeguarding Team – key strategic lead
- Produce a scoping document for the project with target audiences, realistic timelines and reporting points.
- Prepare and deliver a plan to gather qualitative and quantitative insight at club level
- Present interim report of findings to Steering Group for feedback.
- Support the Steering Group to identify critical issues / focus areas through appropriate check and challenge.
- Present full report with recommendations.
- Present the report, the results and the plan to other key stakeholders.

## The Proposal

We are inviting proposals for an organisation to deliver the work outlined above. If you would like to submit a proposal please do so by May 27<sup>th</sup> 5pm in word to Chad Ehlertsen (email below) setting out:

- Your approach to the project
- Who will be delivering the project and their relevant skills and experience
- The proposed price of the project
- Any other relevant information

The maximum spend on this project will be £15,000 inclusive of VAT  
If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact  
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