

coached

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2021

NEWS FROM THE COACH DEVELOPMENT TEAM

COACHING STRATEGY LAUNCHED - Statement from Jackie Newton Head of Coach Development

“The future success of GB&NI athletes and the whole sport depends on having an effective coaching system that meets the needs of athletes, the motivations of coaches and the expectations of our clubs. The new system is being built to match the athlete development model and support coaches in their specific roles and environments so that they develop the expertise required to coach the athlete in front of them and at their respective stage on the pathway.”

We already have a superbly committed coaching workforce, the majority of whom give their time, skill and effort as volunteers. Another of our key priorities is to show how much we value and appreciate their work. Our new structure includes Advisory Groups (inc external coaching expertise from the NGBs) to provide expertise in each of the Event Groups plus Communities of Practice that will provide practical insight and feedback as well as shared learning.

Our new Learning Development Framework, that will replace the existing qualifications, will allow coaches to individualise their learning journey towards the role that they will or already fulfil and to enter at a point that is appropriate according to their background. There will be an emphasis on experiential learning with coach developers out on the ground. We believe this will make the learning journey more exciting, relevant, and fulfilling. We are excited about the future and very much looking forward to going on this journey with our coaches.”

STRATEGY OVERVIEW- INTRODUCTION

The strategy has been created in consultation with the athletics coaching community across the UK through a combination of surveys, focus groups and numerous individual conversations. It also incorporates and builds on the review work conducted through the performance and coaching reviews from 2019-20 led by Dr Malcolm Brown MBE. This strategy sets out a clear plan to 2032 and supports the delivery of the goals within *Athletics Unified*, the high-level strategy for the sport in the UK. There will also be an annual progress update with a detailed review within every four-year cycle to ensure it remains time relevant and fit for purpose.

BACKGROUND

Athletics in the UK has a rich history and tradition of great coaches and great coaching. This has also been evidenced most recently by home grown coaches delivering medal winning performances at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Coaching is not an easy task, particularly as athletes progress into the talent and performance environments, where coaches must dedicate significant numbers of hours. As such, the national governing bodies must recognise the value of a coach-focused approach and understand coaches, where one coach impacts the development of multiple athletes, and where we must learn to be more supportive of coaches in respect of the rigours and challenges they face on a regular basis.

We want UK coaches to be the best in the world, working in roles across the pathway with expertise in as many events as possible. There must be the provision of a flexible, role-driven learning and development programme, where coaches will be able to develop their own pathway of development through to expertise within their chosen role. The new approach respects what worked well in the past but must be new and modern whilst learning from what has gone before.

This coaching strategy cannot be delivered in isolation. It must work alongside and in parallel with wider development work across the UK, particularly across club development, competition planning and development, as well as talent and performance programmes.



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KEY THEMES

Event Discipline Specific Strategies: Working with event experts, coach developers and educationalists, through discipline specific advisory panels to create and implement event specific strategies that will inform coaching work and education at each stage of the athlete pathway. This will include clear communication on indicators for What It Takes To Win (WITTW) at Olympic/Paralympic level as well as age and stage appropriate development for athletes (inc. competition recommendations) as part of the What It Takes To Develop (WITTD) work being undertaken by the Talent team.

Visibility of Coaches: Increasing visibility and recognising the value of coaches across all areas of the coaching pathway and redefine what great coaching at each stage of the pathway looks like.

Wellbeing of Coaches: Treating coaches with dignity, respect, and recognition, and creating a safe and supportive working environment for coaches to connect, share and develop behaviours, language and practices that will improve them as both people and professionals. Coaches also need to be advised and supported in areas such as performance environments, so they fully understand the system, processes and challenges and are better equipped to succeed.

Regulation of the current coaching system: Maintaining a balance between a volunteer and paid coaching workforce whilst transforming coaching into a true profession of the highest integrity and competence. Enabling coaching as a career or paid opportunities is important and is an expectation of the next generation of coaches

OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

OUR VISION

A shared vision for coaching, created by coaches, with exceptional coaching for all athletes¹ at every stage of their athletics experience.

OUR MISSION

To put coaches at the heart of the athletics community through a shared vision for coaching, with open and transparent communication, high levels of engagement and support, that is coach-focused and develops strong networks and great learning environments for coaches across the UK.

LIVING OUR VALUES

- Coach-Focused.
- Athlete First.
- Valuing Coaches as People.
- Positive Behaviours and Language that express an inclusive and supportive culture.
- Engagement & Transparency.
- Equity of Opportunity.
- Excellence.
- Respect.
- Inclusive.
- Collaborative.



OUR GUIDING PHILOSOPHY, OBJECTIVES AND RATIONALE

OUR GUIDING PHILOSOPHY

We believe in a philosophy where we work together collaboratively, with all coaches operating at every level being respected and recognised as a core part in the athlete development journey.

We also aim to build a network of expert coaches working in all environments across all the ages and stages of the athlete journey. We believe positive athlete experiences are provided through great coaches focused on “coaching the person in front of them”. Coaching is athlete centred and focused on the processes to deliver exceptional experiences by supporting the whole person to enjoy and fulfil their potential at whatever level that may be. To achieve this, we should all promote an Athlete-First philosophy, developing an understanding of the athlete’s diverse, emotional, psycho-social, biological and physiological needs alongside technical athletic skills.

We must support our coaching community to consider the importance of being self-aware and having an emotional awareness to their own needs and those of the athletes within their care. This will ensure that coaches and athletes feel valued and have a positive experience within the sport, no matter the level that they are participating or performing.

OUR OBJECTIVES

1. Growth in the active coaching base with appropriate skills and expertise to support the development of athletes and a growth in numbers, particularly within track and field events where an overall decline in athlete participation and active coaches has been identified.
2. Increase in the proportion of all active coaches with a specific expertise within Children, Youth, Talent or High Performance (including running fitness and para coaches).
3. Improvement in the overall quality of the coaching system, recognised as such by athletes and coaches, particularly in terms of coaching experiences and coach effectiveness

THE RATIONALE

During this review process we have learned what we must do to deliver against the objectives set within. We see this strategy as a positive opportunity for the sport with an inclusive approach where we treat coaches with dignity, respect and recognition, and provide clear lines of communication and support. There is a significant amount of work to be done together and it is crucial that this work is carried out collaboratively with all coaches operating at all levels being recognised as a core part in the athlete development journey. It is also vital that we create safe training, learning and competition environments for athletes and coaches where a zero-tolerance approach exists towards unacceptable behaviour for which we all have a responsibility – the individual – the coach – the coaching community - the club – UK Athletics and Home Country Athletics Federations (HCAFs).

The consultation told us that there is a need and commitment to build a respected, expert, coach-focused workforce that is central to increasing and retaining athletes, alongside our ongoing medal ambitions across all disciplines. The achievements and medals won will be celebrated with recognition and reward for the athlete and the coach, as well as the coaching chain that includes coaches that have contributed along the athlete’s journey, from grass roots to the medal winning performance.



OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES, CORE PILLARS AND KEY SUCCESS MEASURES

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. **Coach-focused philosophy:** Recognising the coach as the 'lynch pin' in delivering an Athlete First approach, aligned to the Athlete Development Model across the UK.
2. **Inclusive, valued coaching workforce:** A diverse, highly skilled, blended (professional/volunteers), connected coaching workforce within clubs that is valued at each stage of the athlete pathway.
3. **Coach Learning and Development:** Empowered coaches and run leaders engaged in a role-based coaching system accessing comprehensive, measured and flexible modular learning and development programme across the UK.
4. **Expert High Performance and Talent Coaches:** A diverse network of educated, experienced, highly skilled coaches with performance and talent skills and experience, capable of guiding athletes to deliver consistently in global finals.

OUR CORE PILLARS

- **Insight:** Building a thorough understanding of the needs of athlete and coaches.
- **People:** Investing in the development of skilled and diverse people to support the coaching system.
- **Inclusion:** At the heart of all we do.
- **Sustainability:** Ensuring a durable coaching system is financially sustainable.

OUR KEY MEASURES OF SUCCESS

1. Increased levels of satisfaction of coaches experiences within the 'coaching system'.
2. Increased levels of athlete satisfaction of coaching experiences in the sport.
3. An improvement in agreed athlete standards, and numbers of retained athletes from U17 age groups to senior based on Power of 10 rankings, UK championship performances, global championship performances and athletes retained in clubs.
4. An annual review of Power of 10 targets utilising external expertise, with the goal for Power of 10 to support as an accurate measure of progress.
5. Increased number, and diversity, of coaches supporting athletes delivering world class athletes regularly on the global stage.
6. A targeted programme identifying specific groups of people with existing skills and knowledge who could work towards gaining talent or performance expertise.
7. A clearly communicated coaching plan delivered and linked directly to the World Class Performance Talent, Participation plans and the UK competition plan.
8. Expert discipline specific advisory panels (inc external experts) in place providing leadership and learning support, with clear plans in place for each discipline.
9. More clubs across the UK developing coaching structures that connect directly to the athlete development model and the coach learning and development framework, with appropriate support for continued learning of their coaches.
10. Measurable adoption of the new learning and development framework with expert coaches being developed and recognised, at each stage of the athlete pathway. A blended workforce with an increase and balance in the number of paid/career coaches in the UK benchmarked against agreed standards.
11. The number of coaching hours and time spent in coaching activity logged by active coaches.



MANAGEMENT, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The UK Coaching strategy will be overseen and reviewed by the UK Coaching Working Group, chaired by UKA with membership from each HCAF and co-opted external experts. The Steering group will report into the Chief Executive Officers (CEO) Forum. Event discipline advisory panels will also be established to provide leadership, direction, support and facilitation of communities of practice forums for each discipline.

SPEAK TO THE TEAM

The Strategy was launched on 27th October and can be viewed in full [here](#).

Key members of the team will be holding a series of webinars to present the strategy and answer your questions. To book your place on one of these please [book here](#).

Home Country Coach Education web page links



For any Coach Education enquires please contact the team on:
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