



SWIM WALES
NOFIO CYMRU

SWIM WALES NATIONAL SQUAD PROGRAMME

SWIMMING & PARA-SWIMMING



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INTRODUCTION

The Swim Wales National Squad Programme is designed to provide appropriate levels of support to talented swimmers and para-swimmers as they progress through the sport.

The underlying principle is that it should support systematic and not accidental success. Swim Wales's performance objective is the key driver; putting swimmers on the Aquatics GB pathway and achieving medal success at Commonwealth, European, World and Olympic level /Paralympic level.

It is important to recognise that the Swim Wales National Squad Programme forms part of a wider UK performance pathway that includes multiple tiers of support.

As a Home Nation programme we work closely and collaborate with Aquatics GB to ensure that the Swim Wales Performance Pathway links to and supports the World Class programmes. The programme is therefore designed to align to the principles of Aquatics GB's World Class programme and the Optimal Athlete Development Framework (OADF).



EVOLVING THE SWIM WALES NATIONAL SQUAD PROGRAMME

The Swim Wales National Squad Programme is an inclusive and progressive pathway for swimmers and para-swimmers designed to holistically develop the *athlete, person and performer*. Specifically the programme aims to provide appropriate and progressive training and education in relation to the development of key performance skills, knowledge and behaviours including:

- World Class stroke technique and race skills
- Swimming specific physical and physiological development
- Race preparation, execution and tactics
- Winning behaviours
- Athlete well-being
- Performance lifestyle
- Performance nutrition, anti-doping and safe supplementation

The existing 4 tiered Swim Wales National Squad structure, introduced in 2015, will undergo a fairly significant evolution from January 2022 as Swim Wales looks to ensure that the pathway continues to serve the athletes in the best possible way in line with our performance objective and the principles of OADF.

The evolved structure and programme will look to build on the excellent work of the last 6 years while also specifically ensuring that there is an even greater focus on:

- Providing an effective and efficient transition of athletes from junior to senior elite level
- Providing a focused 'Elite Pathway', linked to relevant levels of international performance, that ensures the highest performing athletes gain access to the necessary levels of international experience and support.
- Providing a 'Performance Pathway' that ensures a wider cohort of athletes are able to access the necessary educational and practical support to help them progress towards senior swimming and/or the elite pathway (specifically supporting late developing athletes).
- Ensuring each progression in the pathway provides a challenging but realistic step in performance.
- Ensuring athlete welfare and well-being is at the forefront and that the athlete journey is an enjoyable and enriching experience.
- Empowering coaches across the Performance and Development club network to deliver National Skills Academy content through their existing club programmes or regional initiatives to reach an ever greater cohort of young swimmers and para-swimmers (supported by Swim Wales Skills Academy resource hub).

THE EVOLVED SWIM WALES NATIONAL SQUAD STRUCTURE AND PROGRAMME

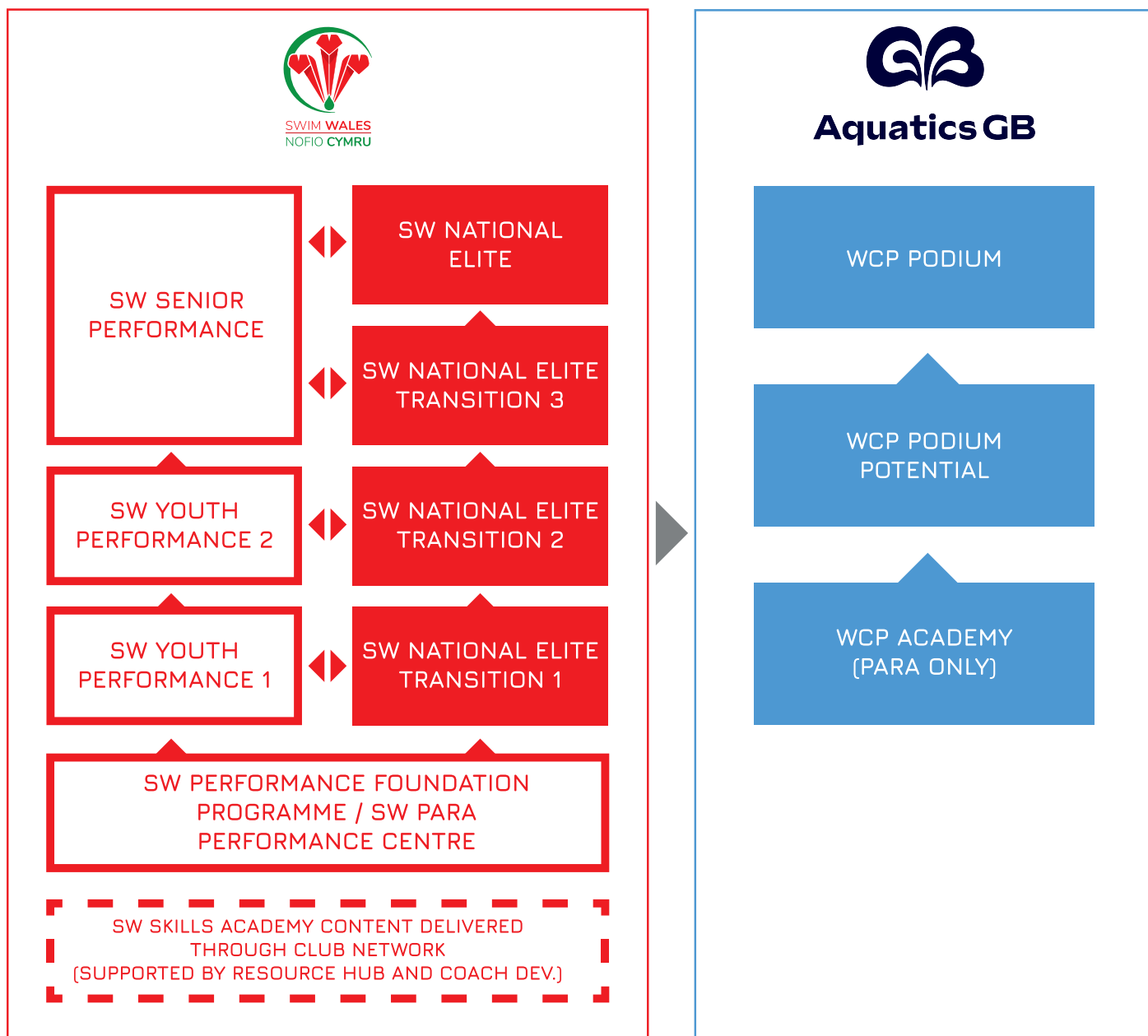
The evolved National Squad structure is formed by two interconnecting pathways:

- The National Elite Pathway – consisting of the National Elite and National Elite Transition squads
- The National Performance Pathway – consisting of the Senior Performance and Youth Performance squads

These two pathways are supported and underpinned by National Foundation Level programmes:

- Performance Foundation Programme
- Para Performance Centre.

The evolved structure is designed to be fluid by nature meaning the whole structure interconnects and overlaps. In essence this means that each squad will not always operate as a separate entity - specific programme activity will often incorporate two or more squads within the structure to ensure all of the athletes gain the greatest opportunities to access the development activity available.



NATIONAL ELITE PATHWAY

	PROGRAMME OVERVIEW	PROGRAMME SUPPORT / ACTIVITY
NATIONAL ELITE	The National Elite programme aims to support Wales' very best swimmers and para swimmers to achieve their full potential and gain success at senior level on the World stage through a combination of World Class coaching and SSSM support, financial assistance, and international competition and training experience. This squad aims to support swimmers / para swimmers possessing genuine potential to (1) Graduate (or re-graduate) onto the Aquatics GB WCP within a 1-3 year period (2) Represent GB at the Olympic/ Paralympic Games, World or European Championships and/or (3) win a Commonwealth Games Medal.	<p>Athletes selected for this programme will be eligible to receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Swim Wales Elite Athlete Support Grant • International training opportunities • International competition opportunities • Domestic training and competition opportunities • Bespoke SSSM support provided by Swim Wales and Sport Wales
NATIONAL ELITE TRANSITION 3	The National Elite Transition 3 programme aims to support swimmers and para swimmers whose performances indicate that they have realistic capabilities of progressing to the National Elite squad (and senior international success) within 1-2 years. The squad aims to provide appropriate opportunities and support to help athletes transition to senior international level from success at youth/junior level.	<p>Athletes selected for this programme will be eligible to receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Swim Wales Elite Athlete Support Grant • Selected International training and competition opportunities • Domestic training and competition opportunities • Selected bespoke SSSM support provided by Swim Wales • Educational SSSM support provided by Swim Wales and Sport Wales
NATIONAL ELITE TRANSITION 2	The National Elite Transition 2 programme aims to support swimmers and para swimmers whose performances indicate that they have realistic capabilities of progressing to the National Elite squad (and senior international success) within 1-4 years, and realistic capabilities of gaining selection to represent Great Britain at European/ World Junior level. The Squad specifically aims to provide appropriate support before and during the transition into the daily high performance training environment, while also providing high level international competition exposure and experience.	<p>Athletes selected for this programme will be eligible to receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Swim Wales Elite Athlete Support Grant • Selected International training and competition opportunities • Domestic training and competition opportunities • Selected bespoke SSSM support provided by Swim Wales • Educational SSSM support provided by Swim Wales and Sport Wales • National High Performance Centre training opportunities
NATIONAL ELITE TRANSITION 1	The National Elite Transition 1 programme aims to provide a positive introduction into the Swim Wales National Elite pathway, high performance training environments and international competition. It aims to provide holistic development, training and competition opportunities related to the long term development towards senior international success. The Elite Transition 1 Squad specifically aims to support athletes with and realistic capabilities of gaining selection to represent Great Britain at European/World Junior level within 2-3 years.	<p>Athletes selected for this programme will be eligible to receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected International competition opportunities • Domestic training and competition opportunities • Selected bespoke SSSM support provided by Swim Wales • Educational SSSM support provided by Swim Wales and Sport Wales • National High Performance Centre training opportunities

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE PATHWAY

	PROGRAMME OVERVIEW	PROGRAMME SUPPORT / ACTIVITY
SENIOR PERFORMANCE	The Swim Wales Senior Performance squad aims to provide positive training and educational opportunities for senior swimmers whose performance sits just outside of the Elite standards. In particular the squads aims to support late developing senior athletes with the potential to progress onto the National Elite Transition 2 and National Elite squads.	<p>Athletes selected for this programme will be eligible to receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic training opportunities • Domestic competition and race simulation opportunities • Educational SSSM support provided by Swim Wales and Sport Wales • Selected bespoke SSSM support provided by Swim Wales
YOUTH PERFORMANCE 1 & 2	The Swim Wales Youth Performance squads aim to support a wider cohort of performance swimmers and para swimmers in their long term development through positive engagement and targeted development programmes. The squad aims to help develop holistic knowledge and key skills to assist these swimmers and para swimmers in making the progression onto the elite pathway and/or senior swimming.	<p>Athletes selected for this programme will be eligible to receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic training opportunities • Domestic competition and race simulation opportunities • Educational SSSM support provided by Swim Wales and Sport Wales



NATIONAL FOUNDATION LEVEL PROGRAMMES

	PROGRAMME OVERVIEW	PROGRAMME SUPPORT / ACTIVITY
PERFORMANCE FOUNDATION PROGRAMME	<p>The Performance Foundation Programme is the first step for swimmers entering the Swim Wales national Squad programme. It aims to provide a Swim Wales led foundation programme for talented young Welsh swimmers in relation to the development of key performance skills. The Performance Foundation Programme supports the identification and development of swimmers who show potential to progress onto the Swim Wales Elite or Performance Pathways.</p>	<p>Athletes selected for this programme will be eligible to receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic training opportunities • Domestic competition and race simulation opportunities • Educational SSSM support provided by Swim Wales and Sport Wales
PARA PERFORMANCE CENTRE	<p>The Swim Wales National Para Performance Centre is a development programme that aims to provide positive training opportunities related to the long term development of Welsh para-swimmers. The National Para Performance Centre supports the identification and development of para swimmers who show potential to progress onto or through Swim Wales National squad pathway with a view to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Populating the British Para-Swimming World Class Programme with more Welsh para-swimmers • Developing para-swimmers with potential to represent Wales and win medals at the Commonwealth Games 	<p>Athletes selected for this programme will be eligible to receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic training opportunities • Domestic competition and race simulation opportunities • Educational SSSM support provided by Swim Wales and Sport Wales



PROGRAMME/SQUAD ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible for selection to the Swim Wales National Squad Programme, athletes must satisfy specific eligibility criteria. Eligibility criteria fall under four categories, namely Welsh representation eligibility, age eligibility, performance eligibility and Para specific eligibility. A summary of the eligibility guidelines to gain selection to each specific squad within the National Programme structure is shown below.

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR EACH SQUAD WITHIN THE SWIM WALES NATIONAL SQUAD STRUCTURE

SQUAD	WELSH REPRESENTATION ELIGIBILITY	AGE ELIGIBILITY*	PERFORMANCE ELIGIBILITY	PARA SPECIFIC ELIGIBILITY	
NATIONAL ELITE	<p>Swimmers/ Para-swimmers will only be considered for selection if their country of representation is registered as Wales, and they are eligible and committed to represent Wales at the Commonwealth Games. To be eligible to represent Wales at the Commonwealth Games an athlete must satisfy one or more of the following criteria:</p> <p>A. Be born in Wales</p> <p>OR</p> <p>B. Have at least one parent who was born in Wales</p> <p>OR</p> <p>C. Have at least one grandparent who was born in Wales</p> <p>OR</p> <p>D. Have completed a minimum period of three years continuous residency in Wales immediately prior to the Commonwealth Games.</p>	Age 17 years & over	Progression towards World Top 16 performance standard	Para Swimmers will only be eligible for selection if they hold a current World Para Swimming (WSP) classification, British Para Swimming classification (S1-S13 inclusive) or VIRTUS Classification (S14).	
NATIONAL ELITE TRANSITION 3		Age 19-20 years & over			
NATIONAL ELITE TRANSITION 2		Age 17-18 years & over	Progression towards European Junior Top 8 performance standard		
NATIONAL ELITE TRANSITION 1		Age 15-16 years & over			
SENIOR PERFORMANCE		Age 19 years & over	Progression towards Swim Wales National Elite and Elite Transition 3 performance standards		
YOUTH PERFORMANCE 2		Age 17-18 years & over	Progression towards Swim Wales National Elite Transition 2 performance standards		
YOUTH PERFORMANCE 1		Age 15-16 years & over	Progression towards Swim Wales National Elite Transition 1 performance standards		
PERFORMANCE FOUNDATION		Age 13-14 years & over	Progression towards Swim Wales Youth Performance 1 Squad.		Not applicable
PARA PERFORMANCE CENTRE		Age 10 years +	Para-swimmers are identified through the Swim Wales Para talent identification and screening process whereby they demonstrate potential to progress through to the Swim Wales Performance or Elite pathways, and/or the British Para-swimming WCP.		Talent ID applications are accepted from potential para swimmers who have eligible impairments defined by World Para Swimming. For more information please contact Swim Wales National Para Pathway Manager Matt.kendrick@swimming.org

*Age is as 31st December in year of selection

Specific Performance criteria will be published on an annual basis in the associated National Squad programme Selection Procedures. Generally speaking however, Performance standards for the Elite Pathway are based on progressions towards either World Top 16 (19 and over age bands) or European Junior Top 8 standards (18 and under age bands), and are calculated on the average of the preceding 3 years of data from official FINA rankings and LEN results. Performance standards for the Performance Pathway are based on progressions towards the age relevant Swim Wales National Elite or Elite Transition Squads and performance standards for the Performance Foundation Squad are based on progressions towards the Swim Wales Youth Performance Squad.



NATIONAL SQUAD PROGRAMME - ACTIVITY AND SUPPORT

National Squad programme activity is scheduled on an annual basis and is driven through a series of identified camps, initiatives and projects that are relevant to the age and performance level of each athlete. These camps, initiatives and project's look to holistically develop the key performance skills of the athletes as they progress through the pathway in line with the principles of the OADF framework. Activity is therefore designed to develop the person, athlete and performer in an appropriate and progressive manner, and generally fall under two main categories:

- Training, competition and race simulation
- Sports science and medicine (SSSM) support, development and education

Training, competition and race simulation opportunities run throughout the season and provide appropriate opportunities relevant to age, experience and performance level. The programme is designed to improve technical, tactical, physical and physiological standards through relevant training days and/or camps, and improve race specific skills and strategy in challenging environments through exposure to a variety of competition experiences and simulations.

SSSM support, development and education is provided in a progressive manner throughout the Swim Wales National Squad Pathway. The effective integration of SSSM staff and coaching staff is the key to an effective service and the Swim Wales SSSM team work side by side with the coaches to ensure expertise from a variety of specialist areas and practitioners (such as strength and conditioning, physiotherapy, psychology, nutrition and performance lifestyle) is utilised to impact positively on performance and potential in the pool.

Sports Science and Medicine is primarily delivered through educational workshops at the Performance Foundation, Para Performance Centre and Youth Performance levels and focuses on providing swimmers / para swimmers at these levels with a great foundation of knowledge, skills and strategies that will help them progress as performance athletes.

At National Elite Transition and Senior Performance level the delivery of sports science and medicine remains primarily educational but with a greater individual focus to help aid swimmers / para swimmers transitioning into senior elite swimming.

At National Elite level, the delivery of sports science and medicine shifts from educational to bespoke one to one to enable each athlete to get the support they require to achieve success at the highest level of international competition.



SWIM WALES NATIONAL PROGRAMME CULTURE AND EXPECTATIONS

At Swim Wales we pride ourselves on creating a National Squad culture where athletes can thrive, develop and achieve their full potential. We ensure that safeguarding, athlete welfare and well-being is at the forefront of the programme and encourage the development of 'winning behaviours' including independence, resilience, self-awareness and self-reflection.

Selected athletes will be expected to sign an athlete agreement that includes their adherence to a code of conduct and outlines the expectation of them as an athlete on a National Squad programme. Additionally athletes will be asked to agree process and performance goals with their home coach, and submit these at the start of each season. Evaluation and self-reflection will be an integral part of the National Squad programme and athletes (and their coaches) will be expected to complete review surveys related to progress against their agreed goals throughout the season.

The Swim Wales National Squad Programme will provide a World Class environment that is both challenging and supportive, however it is important to recognise that this only forms a part of the athlete journey and their development. The large majority of an athlete's development comes from their home training programme. It is essential that each athlete ensures that they are in the right training daily environment for them to best develop as a performance / elite athlete and that they show a full committed to these programmes on a daily basis. The following guidelines show the recommended training environments and training hours for Swim Wales National Programme athletes.

HOME TRAINING PROGRAMME EXPECTATIONS / GUIDELINES

SQUAD	RECOMMENDED HOME TRAINING PROGRAMME	RECOMMENDED TRAINING HOURS (POOL BASED)	RECOMMENDED PRE/POST POOL TRAINING (PER POOL SESSION)	RECOMMENDED TRAINING HOURS (SPECIFIC STRENGTH & CONDITIONING)
NATIONAL ELITE	High Performance Centre	16-20 hours per week	20-30 minutes pre 20-30 minutes post	3-5 hours per week
SENIOR PERFORMANCE				
NATIONAL ELITE TRANSITION 3				
NATIONAL ELITE TRANSITION 2	Performance Club with transition sessions in a High performance Centre	14-18 hours per week	15-20 minutes pre 15-20 minutes post	2-4 hours per week
NATIONAL ELITE TRANSITION 1				1-3 hours per week
YOUTH PERFORMANCE 2	Performance Club	14-18 hours per week	15-20 minutes pre 15-20 minutes post	1-3 hours per week
YOUTH PERFORMANCE 1				
PERFORMANCE FOUNDATION PROGRAMME	Performance Club and/or Development Club	12-16 hours per week	15-20 minutes pre 15-20 minutes post	1-2 hours per week
PARA PERFORMANCE CENTRE		To be determined based on level of impairment, age and stage of development		

Please note that these are guidelines only. Home programme training programmes should be agreed with the home programme coach based on the individual needs of each athlete. Consideration should be given to the following factors:

- Biological age / physical maturity vs chronological age
- Stage of training development and background of training
- Technical competence and event specificity
- Current performance level vs goal performance level
- Injury and/or illness
- Level of impairment (para swimmers)



SWIM WALES
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CONTACT US

For general enquires relating to the Swim Wales National Squad Programme
please contact swimwales-performance@swimming.org

For Para Specific enquires please contact the Swim Wales
National Para Pathway Manager at Matt.kendrick@swimming.org