

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The UK Sport funded World Class Swimming Programme (WCSP) aims to identify, develop and support talented athletes in winning medals on the world stage in 2015 and beyond. Through its World Class Performance Programme UK Sport is seeking to maximise the chances of athletes winning medals at major sporting events globally, culminating every four years in Olympic and Paralympic Games. Winning medals on the international sporting stage requires significant resources. To ensure the UK's most talented athletes maximise their chances UK Sport has devised a two-level World Class Performance Programme of Athlete Investment – Podium and Podium Potential. British Swimming receives a finite amount of money each quadrennial to invest in the WCSP and uses its discretion as to where and when the money is allocated. Direct Athlete Investment is a part of the wider WCSP investment provided by UK Sport.

- 1.2 The WCSP is overseen by a National Performance Director (NPD) who provides overall strategic leadership, inclusive of the performance structures and systems to ensure it achieves maximum medal potential for the current Olympic cycle and beyond. This paper outlines the background, guiding principles, eligibility and criteria for investment in targeted swimmers via the World Class Programme for the period 1st November 2015 – 31st October 2016. It also provides an overview of the support and benefits available to those athletes receiving support. Attaining the selection criteria listed in section 4.3, 4.8 and 4.9 of this document does not mean automatic qualification for any financial Athlete Investment support. Selected athletes will be invited to join the WCSP and must commit fully to the programme of activities before becoming eligible for WCSP membership.

2. ATHLETE NUMBERS – PODIUM AND PODIUM POTENTIAL LEVEL INVESTMENT

- 2.1. British Swimming has a maximum of 22 places available at Podium level and a maximum of 45 places available at Podium Potential level for the Rio Olympic cycle (April 2013 – March 2017). The National Performance Director has absolute discretion as to how many places are nominated to UK Sport each year. These numbers cover both Pool and Open Water swimmers and are based on funding levels agreed with UK Sport.

3. OVERARCHING INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES

- 3.1. Up to 67 athletes will be recommended to UK Sport according to the principles, investment criteria and processes detailed in this paper for support for the period 1st November 2015 – 31st October 2016. Ongoing membership of the programme beyond this period will be determined by the World Class Programme Athlete Investment Guidelines covering 2016/17 and the subsequently revised guidelines covering future years.

- 3.2. A Podium level athlete is defined as an athlete possessing genuine and strong medal potential at the next (Rio 2016) Olympic Games. However, athletes should note that being the best in Britain, meeting all performance targets set, qualifying for an Olympic team, possessing a high world ranking or regularly repeating a 4-8th finish at World or Olympic level would not confer by right, inclusion of any athletes on British Swimming's World Class Programme at Podium level.
- 3.3. A Podium Potential level athlete is defined as an athlete possessing genuine potential to make the team at the 2016 Rio Games, and/or to medal at either these Games or the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games.
- 3.4. Any athlete targeted for investment must clearly demonstrate that they are capable of bridging the gap from their current performance status to the medal rostrum, or remain at Podium level if they have already achieved medal success in Olympic events at World Championships or the Olympic Games themselves.
- 3.5. By accepting membership to the World Class Programme athletes are committing to British Swimming performance plans, reviews and attendance at all compulsory British Swimming National Programme activity as determined by the GB Head Coach for Podium athletes and the Head of Performance Pathway for Podium Potential athletes.

4. ATHLETE NOMINATION

- 4.1 A British Swimming Nomination Panel consisting of the National Performance Director (NPD), GB Head Coach, Head of Performance Pathway and any other relevant personnel directed by the NPD will recommend to UK Sport up to 67 athletes for investment through the World Class Performance Programme.
- 4.2 Once selected onto the programme, athletes will be nominated for investment at one of six (6) levels (A, B, and C levels for Podium athletes, and D, E and F for Podium Potential athletes).

PODIUM LEVEL INVESTMENT – POOL (A, B, C levels)

- 4.3 Up to 22 nominations for investment at Podium level will be made on the basis of the following three criteria:
 - A review of the athlete's British Swimming Performance Dashboard¹
 - A review of performance at the athlete's respective 2015 Benchmark Meet²
 - A review of the commitment by both athlete and coach to the National Programme

¹ The British Swimming Performance Dashboard is comprised of 7 components that provide a combination of objective and subjective measures. This currently includes - performance history, ranking against world level performance indicators, demographic data, AIMS ratings, annual targets and plans. Athletes will be notified during the year if any additional components are added to the Performance Dashboard

² The athlete's identified main meet of the season – i.e. World Championships, European Games, European Junior Open Water

- 4.4 Once nominated for the Podium Programme (according to 4.3 above), to be considered for inclusion at A level athletes must be a 2015 World Long Course Championship medallist in a current Olympic event.
- 4.5 Once nominated for the Podium Programme (according to 4.3 above), to be considered for inclusion at B level athletes must achieve a top 8 finish in a current Olympic event at the 2015 World Long Course Championships.
- 4.6 Once nominated for the Podium Programme (according to 4.3 above), inclusion at C level will be at the discretion of the NPD in consultation with the GB Head Coach. Nominated athletes will have an evidenced-based performance profile which clearly demonstrates their capacity to improve and achieve a medal-winning result at the 2016 Rio Olympics.
- 4.7 If the number of athletes meeting the nomination criteria for A and B level exceeds the number of places available, prioritisation for inclusion will be made on the basis of their Performance Dashboard¹, which will be determined by the British Swimming Nomination Panel.

PODIUM POTENTIAL LEVEL INVESTMENT – POOL (D, E, F levels)

- 4.8 An initial profiling exercise will be conducted to develop a long list of up to 100 athletes for review and consideration for investment. This list will be compiled to include athletes who have the closest percentage deviation from their event's performance funnel³. All long listed athletes will be contacted and required to complete an online AIMS⁴ questionnaire (available for completion from 1st – 20th September, and all long listed athletes will be provided with a link / access instructions). **Failure to complete the online questionnaire by 20th September 2015 will result in an athlete no longer being eligible for World Class Programme membership.**
- 4.9 Up to 40 nominations for investment at Podium Potential level will be on the basis of the following four criteria:
- A review of the athlete's British Swimming Performance Dashboard¹
 - A review of performance at the athlete's respective 2015 Benchmark Meet²
 - A review of the athlete's AIMS⁴ targets
 - Demonstrated commitment by both athlete and coach to the National Programme

³ The performance funnel forms part of an athlete's individual Performance Dashboard

⁴ AIMS (Athlete Improvement Monitoring System) is an assessment tool that forms part of the Performance Dashboard accessed via the Apollo database system.

- 4.10 In addition to 4.9 up to 5 discretionary nominations may be made to the British Swimming Nomination Panel by the Head of Performance Pathway for inclusion on the Podium Potential Programme.

PODIUM AND PODIUM POTENTIAL LEVEL INVESTMENT – OPEN WATER

- 4.11 A number of Open Water places will be reserved on the World Class Performance Programme each year. The number of Open Water places at Podium and Podium Potential level will be determined by the NPD at his absolute discretion. The Open Water Lead will recommend to the British Swimming Nomination Panel athletes that he considers are eligible for consideration of investment support in the World Class Performance Programme. In making these recommendations consideration will be given to:

- Performances at the 2015 Benchmark meet i.e. (World Open Water Senior Championships, European Open Water Junior Championships)
- Performances at selected FINA 10km races and benchmark meet selection process races
- Demonstrated support and commitment to Open Water swimming by both athlete and their coach
- A review of future Open Water medal potential

- 4.12 Open Water athletes on the programme will be expected to prioritise their training and competition programmes to ensure peak performance at their Open Water benchmark meet as designated by the Open Water Lead.

NOTIFICATION

- 4.13 Nominations will be finalised by 9th October 2015 and all athletes being nominated for investment through the World Class Programme will be notified in writing by 19th October 2015. The National Performance Director (Welsh Swimming), National Performance Director (Scottish Swimming), and the England Programmes Team Leader will be invited to contribute to discussions as determined by the British Swimming Nomination Panel.

ADDITION / WITHDRAWAL/SUSPENSION

- 4.14 The British Swimming NPD may recommend to UK Sport that an athlete is added, suspended or withdrawn from the Programme at any time during the investment period. Recommendations to withdraw athletes from the Programme and to terminate membership of the Programme and the associated funding and programme benefits will be made if, at the discretion of the NPD, the athlete is no longer seen as a strong genuine medal prospect at Olympic level and the gap to the podium is deemed to not be bridgeable looking forwards. In addition, circumstances that warrant withdrawal or suspension from the programme could be, including but not limited to: failure to make the required commitment to training; failure to engage fully in National Programme activities; failure to engage fully in British Swimming review meetings and monitoring procedures; or in the opinion the NPD, a failure to optimise

their current training environment. Athletes may be assessed at anytime during the funding period to demonstrate full engagement with prescribed training programmes, protocols and support services.

5. ATHLETE SUPPORT

5.1 Athletes nominated for investment are eligible to receive a range of support services and financial support (an Athlete Performance Award). Ongoing World Class programme membership is subject to full engagement in the National Programme, engaging fully in British Swimming reviews and monitoring procedures, full commitment to agreed performance targets, and strict compliance with the Athlete Code of Conduct.

Support Services and activity

5.2 Investment in Podium and Podium Potential athletes will include the following activity and services:

- **Review meetings by British Swimming technical staff** – the GB Head Coach, Head of Performance Pathway and/or other national coaches or staff will consult with all Podium and Podium Potential swimmers and their home coach, to discuss annual targets, areas of development and performance progression over the season.
- **National Programme** – athletes will be required to attend British Swimming national programme activities which are designated as compulsory by the GB Head Coach or Head of Performance Pathway. These will include but are not limited to National Event Camps, National Team Camps, National Relay Camps, National Head 2 Head programme and other designated competitions or events.
- **Access to the UK Sport Athlete Medical Scheme** - provides medical insurance to athletes to ensure that they have speedy and effective access to medical consultations, investigations and treatment. This is through referral by the British Swimming Chief Medical Officer or another British Swimming appointed medical practitioner.
- **Access to Physiotherapy and Sports Medicine services** – all WCP athletes will be directed to their nearest National Centre as the first option for physiotherapy, screening and sports medicine support. At the discretion of the Head of Sports Science & Sports Medicine or other British Swimming appointed personnel, athletes may be provided with access to support services through programme partners in particular the home country sports institutes in England, Scotland and Wales.
- **Performance Lifestyle Support** - this is a tiered support service for WCP athletes which includes education and training advice, career development guidance, financial advice, and specific lifestyle coaching and mentoring. The support will be provided through practitioners operating in National Centres and from time to time at other locations or institutes.

- **Other tailored Sports Science and Sports Medicine (SSSM) Services** – these will be scoped and quantified on the basis of need and may include but are not limited to Strength and Conditioning, Performance Science, Performance Nutrition, and Performance Psychology. Any British Swimming national protocols or prescribed SSSM service/programme, including providing self-monitoring data, must be adhered to by all World Class Podium and Podium Potential athletes. This is an investment condition.
- **Podium Potential Top-Up Funding** – targeted athletes may be recommended for additional funding from UK Sport. This will be for services and activities beyond the core programme offer to help accelerate development and progression towards the standards required for the Podium programme.
- **Priority consideration for membership to British Swimming National Centres (NC)** for those athletes not currently training there. This will be in the context of consultation with the NPD, GB Head Coach, Head of Performance Pathway, Open Water Lead (where applicable) and NC Coach to ensure ‘best fit’ regarding the current composition and capacity of the respective NC training groups.

All of the above support is subject to funding and availability. Where demand for a service exceeds capacity, prioritisation for access will be determined by the NPD at his sole discretion.

Athlete Performance Award (APA)

5.3 Athlete investment will include personal financial support on a tiered basis. Athletes will be entitled to one of six bands of financial support based on their current performance levels as outlined in Table 1 (pool) and Table 2 (Open Water) below and overleaf. Athletes will be nominated for investment as **either** a Pool swimmer or Open Water swimmer, **but not both**.

TABLE 1 – APA levels – Pool consideration standards

BAND / LEVEL	TOTAL APA ANNUAL AWARD	AMOUNT OF APA FOR LIVING COSTS	AMOUNT OF APA FOR SPORTING COSTS	CONSIDERATION STANDARDS
				POOL
PODIUM				
A	£28,000	<i>£12,142</i>	<i>£15,858</i>	Current World Long Course Championship medalist in an Olympic event (see 4.4)
B	£21,500	<i>£9,323</i>	<i>£12,177</i>	Top 8 finish in an Olympic event at the 2015 World Long Course Championships (see 4.5)
C	£15,000	<i>£6,504</i>	<i>£8,496</i>	A review of an athlete's profile in relation to 4.6. Consideration of performance in Olympic events at benchmark meets, performance dashboard and programme commitment. Olympic relay medal potential will also be considered.
PODIUM POTENTIAL				
D	£7,000	-	-	In consideration of the measures outlined in 3.3 and 4.9. Typically, but not limited to, athletes who have been selected for the World Class Podium Potential Programme for 3 or more consecutive years.
E	£5,000	-	-	In consideration of the measures outlined in 3.3 and 4.9. Typically, but not limited to, athletes who have been selected for the World Class Podium Potential Programme for their second consecutive year.
F	£3,500	-	-	In consideration of the measures outlined in 3.3 and 4.9. Typically, but not limited to a new addition athlete who has been selected for the World Class Podium Potential Programme for their first year.

TABLE 2 – APA levels – Open Water consideration standards

BAND / LEVEL	TOTAL APA ANNUAL AWARD	AMOUNT OF APA FOR LIVING COSTS	AMOUNT OF APA FOR SPORTING COSTS	CONSIDERATION STANDARDS
				OPEN WATER
PODIUM				
A	£28,000	<i>£12,142</i>	<i>£15,858</i>	Recommendations to the British Swimming Nomination Panel are based on 4.11 and will be made at the absolute discretion of the Open Water Lead in consideration to performances at benchmark meets
B	£21,500	<i>£9,323</i>	<i>£12,177</i>	
C	£15,000	<i>£6,504</i>	<i>£8,496</i>	
PODIUM POTENTIAL				
D	£7,000	-	-	Recommendations to the British Swimming Nomination Panel are based on 4.11 and will be made at the absolute discretion of the Open Water Lead in consideration to performances at benchmark meets
E	£5,000	-	-	
F	£3,500	-	-	

- 5.6 Athlete Performance Awards (APAs) are a contribution from UK Sport to the living (Podium) and sporting costs (Podium and Podium Potential) incurred whilst competing and training as an elite athlete. They are offered for a maximum of 12 months and subject to UK Sport's Athlete Performance Awards' Terms and Conditions. General information about APAs is available on the UK Sport website – [click here](#)
- 5.7 Athletes in receipt of an APA will be required to demonstrate appropriate use of their funding in supporting an appropriate performance lifestyle. Athletes in receipt of a Podium level APA may be required to use some of their APA sporting costs allocation to contribute towards essential National Programme activities and services beyond the core programme offer, such as specialist training camps and competition opportunities, where these are identified through the athlete reviews as being critical to an athlete's further development and progress.
- 5.8 It is the athlete's individual responsibility to manage the Personal Taxation, National Insurance and Pension aspects and it is highly recommended that swimmers receiving APAs seek appropriate expert advice from an accountant or financial advisor. Further information, including guidance notes and a list of recommended accountants, can be found on the British Athletes Commission website www.britishathletes.org/advice

Overseas Athletes

- 5.9 British Swimming will not ordinarily fund athletes based overseas. In exceptional circumstances the GB Head Coach and Head of Performance Pathway may nominate overseas athletes to the

British Swimming Nominations Panel if their programme is key to their further development and progression towards podium performances at World Senior Championship and Olympic level. In such cases athletes will not be eligible to access the UK Sport Athlete Medical Scheme. All World Class programme athletes will be expected to complete National Programme activity, attend review meetings and complete monitoring procedures irrespective of their location.

Programme Choice

5.10 If a swimmer opts to move to, or attends a club programme that is viewed as detrimental to their performance development by the NPD, GB Head Coach or Head of Performance Pathway, then British Swimming reserves the right not to support the individual's nomination for investment moving forward, regardless of previous levels of funding. An athlete's current programme must be deemed suitable by the GB Head Coach and Head of Performance Pathway for world class preparation, monitoring and performance. Membership of the World Class Programme may in some cases also be conditional upon an athlete moving to a programme advised by the NPD, GB Head Coach or Head of Performance Pathway.

Pregnancy

5.11 To continue to receive funding during pregnancy (and post childbirth), an athlete would be required to agree an appropriate training and competition programme with the NPD that would clearly map the return of the athlete post childbirth to full competitive level. At the end of the three-month period following the childbirth, the NPD will undertake a review with the athlete to assess the commitment and progress of the athlete against agreed performance targets. If this commitment is not demonstrated by the time of the three-month review, the athlete would be given a three-month notice period before being removed from APA support.

Retirement Transition Support

5.12 Athletes at Podium level who are retiring from the sport **may** be offered transitional support (e.g. SSSM, Performance Lifestyle support etc) and funding at their current Award level. Athletes on the programme for 3 years or more may receive up to 3 months transitional support and athletes with 2 years membership may receive up to 2 months transitional support. These decisions are entirely at the absolute discretion of the NPD.

5.13 Funding for all other athletes will be ceased immediately following notification of their retirement, although athletes will continue to receive the following transitional service support:

- If an athlete is receiving medical treatment via the Athlete Medical Scheme, cover will be maintained for the completion of that particular course of treatment for up to 3 months.
- EIS Medical and physiotherapy support will continue for two months only if the athlete is currently under treatment for an existing condition. EIS Strength and Conditioning and Performance Lifestyle support will continue for one month.

Major injury / illness transition support

- 5.14 Continued funding for those athletes suffering major injury or illness (and subsequently unable to compete at the season's benchmark meet) will be considered by the NPD, GB Head Coach and/or Head of Performance Pathway in consultation with the British Swimming Chief Medical Officer (CMO). Medical prognosis provided by the CMO and previous performances will be reviewed to assess whether or not the swimmer is likely to return to the podium pathway and desired level of performance in the following season. There will be no automatic extension to athlete investment beyond the 12 month annual award.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION

- 7.1 Please direct any queries or requests for further information to Adam Clarke, Head of Performance Services on 07825 768858 or via email at adam.clarke@swimming.org