BRITISH BLIND SPORT

A VISIBLE DIFFERENCE THROUGH SPORT

Visually Impaired (VI) Friendly Swimming

A Guide for Supporting Visually Impaired Adults and Children in the Pool

Action for blind people

Part of RNIB Group

ncw

Section Two

Making Swimming Accessible for the Visually Impaired

4. Visually impaired friendly swimming - before getting into the swimming pool

There are a number of factors to consider when offering swimming sessions to people with a visual impairment that will help in the planning and ensure that the swimmer has a good experience.

Environment

- If staff receive a phone call from a person with a visual impairment do they have the knowledge or information regarding the facility and what is available at hand to advise?
- Arriving at the venue – is the entrance/ reception area accessible? Does the VI swimmer have a guide dog that they need to bring to the centre? Is there somewhere it can stay during the session?
- If you are giving out any information, is this in the correct format? Braille, large print, audio, etc.
- Have the centre staff and lifeguards been made aware there are VI swimmers accessing their facilities?
- Are the coaches trained in Disability Swimming Awareness?
  For further details see http://www.swimming.org/ios/news/coaching/develop-your-disability-awareness/13519/

Users

- Can they get around the centre independently?
- Can they access the changing facilities – changing cubicles, lockers, showers, toilets?
- Do they need support in the changing area? To overcome safety issues with young children, you should discuss options with the child's parents, guardians or carers beforehand. It could be a good idea for parents, guardians or carers to offer support in the changing rooms. Alternatively, the VI swimmer could have a buddy or could use the group or disabled changing cubicles.
- VI Swimmers may need longer to get ready both before and after swimming.
- Do they need support getting to the pool side, they may get disorientated, and can they get into the water unaided?
- Where do the changing rooms exit onto - deep end or shallow end?
- What is the poolside lighting like? Be aware that the sight of a VI swimmer may be affected by a change in lighting/being in the water.

Example of sunlight shining into pool area that may cause restrictive vision to VI Swimmers

- Do they need support in the water? Do they need a tapper? (see point 8 in this section for details).
- What are the acoustics in the pool area like? Is it easy for instructions/explanations to be heard?
- Lane swimming – are other users going in the wrong direction or are they messing around/ standing around chatting at the end of the lane and in the way?

- Have you considered a way to prevent VI swimmers from having collisions with pool ends/sides, lane ropes, other swimmers?

Most of these questions can be answered simply by talking to the swimmer or their parent/guardian.

Adult swimmers and the parents/guardians/carers of children with a visual impairment should be encouraged to visit the pool during quieter periods, where orientation can take place without the time constraints of getting to their lesson. This will help maintain the person's confidence towards coming to lessons.

5. Guide dog users

Some VI swimmers may have a guide dog. Find out if there is anywhere in the centre the dog can be left whilst its owner goes swimming.

This is often in the reception or offices where the dog can lie down and be supervised. The temperature of this area needs to be considered and water should be made available for the dog to drink.

If there is more than one VI swimmer with a guide dog, can the centre cater for more than one dog?

If you have any questions about having a guide dog at your centre, speak to the dog's owner or contact Guide Dogs www.guidedogs.org.uk

6. Guiding

Unfamiliar surroundings can sometimes prove challenging for someone who is visually impaired so there may be occasions where they require assistance.

Hannah Russell case study

Hannah Russell is a British Paralympic swimmer competing in S12 classification events. At the London 2012 Games, in the 400m freestyle she swam a personal best of 4:38.60 to take the silver, her first Paralympic medal. She won two further medals (both bronze) in the 100 m butterfly and the 100 m backstroke.

"Both my parents are sporty and they wanted to get me into a sport at a young age. With my vision, they thought swimming would be good for me, as there's no contact, so that's how I started.

Leading on from there, I joined Woking Swimming Cub at the age of five. I remember watching the 2008 Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games and it really inspired me to do more with my swimming.

I started off in National Age Groups where my coaches adapted to my needs really well - for example I have my own poolside clock and they make sure it's ready to go. Everybody else reads off the white board and I have my own print out.

I really enjoy the whole training atmosphere and also it's great that I have made a lot of friends.

As well as a really strong relationship with the coaches, I have a lot of support from friends and family and that makes a massive difference. If I did not have that I would not be able to do what I'm doing"

Paralympics 2012: Hannah Russell: (pictured with bronze) silver – 400m freestyle (S12) and two bronze: 100m Backstroke (S12) and 100m Butterfly (S12)

- Identify yourself and ask the VI swimmer if they would like some assistance; don't just presume that they do.

- Offer your elbow or shoulder to the VI swimmer for them to take hold of. Ask them which side they prefer to be guided on. If guiding a child, they may want to hold your hand instead of your arm, or may just want to touch your arm. Ask them the technique they are used to.

- Ensure you are always one step in front of the person that you are guiding, don't walk too fast or too slowly, ask if they are happy with the pace.

- Communicate at all times e.g. steps (up or down), handrails. Describe what is around them e.g. where the pool is, etc. and explain any changes in ground surface.

- When guiding a VI swimmer to a seat, place their hand on the back of the chair/bench. Do not back them into the seat.

- When walking through doorways ensure that the VI swimmer steps behind you and ensure that they do not get struck by the door or catch their fingers, etc.

- Do explain any loud noises e.g. the pool alarm.

- Do keep your guiding arm still and relaxed. Don't start waving it about or pointing at things.

- Do remember to give the person you are guiding adequate room round obstacles.

7. Making swimming sessions accessible

All people working with children, young people and vulnerable adults must be Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked or in Scotland checked by the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme.

Other than the necessary DBS or PVG check, there are no compulsory rules for working with a VI swimmer, the following are guidelines only. Like any interaction between people, it is about assessing a situation and behaving appropriately. Remember that just as we are all different, so each person with a visual impairment you meet will be different too – personality, ability, culture, fitness levels.

- When approaching a person or a group, always say who you are by name. You may have to do this more than once to allow them to become familiar with the sound of your voice.

- Where does the swimming lesson group meet at the start of the lesson? Each time there is a change, the adult or child and/or their parent/guardian/carer will need to be informed. Is there a physical feature for the swimmer to use for reference e.g. next to the lifeguards tower. How does the VI person get from the meeting point to the pool entry point e.g. steps?

- If you're taking a VI person over to the poolside, use the walk as an opportunity to practise your sighted guiding and for them to get familiar with your voice.

- Try and verbalise body language. Some VI swimmers may not be able to read facial expressions or make eye contact. You should address the person by name or lightly touch them on the side of the arm to indicate you are talking to them specifically. This is something to particularly bear in mind if people are talking in a group, to make sure someone with sight problems is included in the conversation or knows that you are referring to them.

- Treat all people with a visual impairment as people first, not people who are blind. For instance, feel free to use the words "see," "look" or "read."

- When providing initial instructions prior to a session, remember to make the most of your language – you may need to explain things with more words than you do with a sighted group. Don't be afraid to refer to colour – remember that some VI people can see colours.

- If you know you have VI swimmer coming into your class, prepare yourself. If possible listen to lessons given by someone else with your eyes closed. How much detail is given in the description and instructions? How did each swimmer know when it was their turn? Did they know exactly what they should be doing each time? What information is needed to create a mental image of the stroke? Practise using this detail with your other classes. They will also benefit.

- Where possible, share notes with other coaches about the VI swimmer and their progress, especially if they are moving up to the next level or group. This is beneficial for all swimmers, but particularly useful for passing on tips to teachers working with swimmers with a visual impairment.

During the session

- Positioning of the swimming coach is important during a session. Avoid having your back to a window as the reflection will make it more difficult for a VI person to see. While coaching move along the poolside so instructions can be reinforced as required.

- Good clear communication is vital – give detailed explanations of drills, etc. and when demonstrating it may be necessary to do manual demonstrations with the swimmer with a visual impairment.

- Some VI swimmers, particularly beginners or nervous swimmers, may require additional support in the swimming pool. This may be to provide hands-on support or to provide communication support, including the reinforcement of skill repetition of instructions along with reassurance. Ideally, the additional support would be a Level 1 swimming coach, although they could be a learning support assistant or a volunteer who is familiar to the young person and able to communicate with them. Some swim schools now have helpers or volunteers to help with this.

- Positioning a VI swimmer within the lane is important. Swimmers should be grouped based on their ability; however a VI swimmer may benefit from swimming in the lane nearest the wall so that they can feel where they are and help them to swim straight. If the swimming pool is really busy then try moving your group to a quieter area to give instruction or, if appropriate, bring the group poolside so they can gather close while you explain.

- Ensure you involve a VI swimmer in all parts of the club or team including social activities.

- Keep poolside clear of obstacles such as equipment that could cause someone to trip or fall. Keep it in a well-defined area and clearly inform the group of where that area is and what is contained there.

- Do give precise instructions to help VI swimmers find their way, for example, “the steps are to your left hand side”. It’s no use saying “it’s over there” and pointing.

- If you do need to help them with an activity, such as showing them the correct arm action for breaststroke, always tell them in advance what you’re going to do.

- People with sight problems often miss out on prior visual warnings e.g. if a coach moves from one side of the pool to the other without speaking this can be disorienting for the VI swimmer.

- If you need to leave a VI swimmer, tell them you’re going and position them with something as an anchor – the handrail. This offers a great deal of security.

- When possible, think about colour contrast – if you’re using sinkers on a white/blue floor, use a red or black one.

- Some VI swimmers will have difficulty distinguishing the end of the pool. The use of a tapper may be needed to prevent the VI swimmer crashing into the wall.

- 'Squaring off' – this term refers to using the back and shoulders against a wall or a known fixed structure to ensure the direction of travel is correct for the next movement. This can be useful for all swimmers to ensure they push off the wall in the correct direction i.e. straight across the pool, not on an angle.

Make sure all activities in the session are accessible including the fun activities! There's nothing worse than taking part in the swimming drills and then being unable to take part in the fun game at the end with their friends.

Depending on the person's eye condition, their level of vision may change from one day to the next depending on lighting, tiredness, general health etc. Someone may be able to do a task one day, but then find it more difficult the next.

General orientation in the pool can be a problem when the acoustics of the pool environment make it difficult to focus on the origin of the noise e.g. the coach. This is especially so when there is more than one class taking place, or a public session in another part of the pool.

VI swimmers may experience disorientation when diving, jumping in or going under water.

Be aware that some VI swimmers take longer to learn the technique of putting their face/head under water. This may prove disorienting for them as all of their senses are lost i.e. hearing is likely to be lost under water.

8. Technology and swimming

Prescriptive goggles are the most common form of technology available to people with a visual impairment.

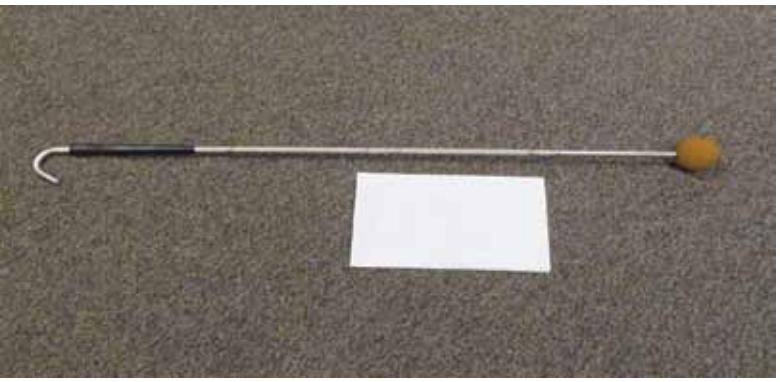
Prescriptive goggles are expensive pieces of equipment and unfortunately young people tend to forget them when getting changed or leave them on the poolside. In addition, some leisure providers do not allow the use of goggles in swimming lessons on grounds of safety. We advise that you give safety briefings to the swimmers and obtain a letter of permission to wear goggles from the parent/guardian/carer.

If you want to review a session or discuss a technical move with a VI swimmer, try doing this

dry side so that you can manually demonstrate the skill with the swimmer. However it is important to keep this as brief as possible to prevent the swimmer getting cold.

Tappers

A tapper is a person that taps a VI swimmer on the head or shoulder when they are approaching the wall. This is generally done one stroke before the swimmer reaches the wall. It is a skill and requires practising before entering competitive events. Tappers may assist swimmers by running from one end of the pool to the other or the preferred option is to have a tapper at each end. A tapper may also refer to the device used to reach the swimmer that consists of a long pole with a foam end or stick with a foam tennis ball attached to the end. In competition S11 (B1) swimmers must be tapped. These swimmers are also required to wear blackened goggles in all competitions. It should be noted that S12 (B2) swimmers have the option to be tapped. For explanation of B1, B2 and B3 refer to section 12.



Picture of a white cane with a foam end attached (A4 piece of paper for reference cane size).

Blackened goggles

Blackened goggles are regular swimming goggles that the swimmer must then blacken. There are various methods of blacking out goggles and this will be a swimmers' choice- the most popular method is to apply electrical tape to the inside of the goggles. At the end of each race the referee will ask to see the goggles to ensure that no light can pass through them.

For more information on how to apply for funding support towards the cost of specialist equipment; see below:

Caudwell Children provide family support services and equipment for disabled children and their families across the UK http://www.caudwellchildren.com/index.php/how-we-help/apply-for-support

VICTA supports blind and partially sighted children and young people up to 29. They provide grants for equipment and services such as family weekends and day trips, have a youth programme which includes UK weekends and international trips and a family support service in many areas of the country. If you would like to apply for funding to help with the cost of specialist equipment please visit the grants page http://www.victa.org.uk/grants/

9. Recreational swimming including swimming parties

A lot of public swimming pools run recreational swimming programmes throughout the week, as well as additional sessions during school holidays and weekends. Many run swimming parties which may include the use of inflatables. Lifeguards are employed to look after the safety of swimmers and will ensure that swimmers follow the swimming pool code of conduct.

There are age restrictions for recreational swimming, which are usually as follows (please check with your local swimming pool about their age requirements):

- Children aged 8+ can swim unaccompanied.
- Under 8s must be accompanied by an adult aged 18+ (some pools operate from 16+).
- A maximum of two children can be supported in the water per adult.
- It is good practice to inform the lifeguards that there is a VI swimmer in the pool, and explain that they may not understand when the whistle or verbal instructions are used. This alerts the lifeguard to pay additional attention to the young person with a visual impairment

in the case of an emergency/evacuation and use extra assistance techniques.

- If a child is 8 years or over, they should be encouraged to inform the lifeguards of their needs before entering the pool.

- It is important that young people are familiar with their swimming environment. If young VI swimmers are swimming unaccompanied in a new environment for the first time then ask a member of staff to give them a tour of the pool and facilities. It is particularly important to make them aware of emergency arrangements and things such as wave machines and how certain cues are used to make people aware of it starting.

- If attending a swimming party, the organiser should be informed that a child has a visual impairment, along with the lifeguards. A clear system should be agreed in the event of an emergency. This could be an audible cue or by adopting a 'buddying' system.

10. Health & safety

There are a number of health and safety concerns that parents/carers and coaches have about taking a VI person swimming;

- Lifeguards and coaches should be notified in advance that a VI swimmer is participating in the sessions. This will alert them to pay extra attention to the person and to make them aware that they may not understand auditory or visual cues such as the lifeguards whistle, hand signals or the instruction to leave the swimming pool.

- Time should be built in for coaches to consult with parents, teaching assistants and adults and children with a visual impairment themselves as to the best way to communicate with them. Risk assessments should reflect the needs of people with a visual impairment and should stipulate what controls are being put in place to ensure their safety.

- Safety messages should be agreed with the group beforehand as it is particularly important to include stop, wait, jump, don't jump, get out of the water, etc.

- Group size/ratios – a VI swimmer may benefit from being in a smaller group or for there to be additional coaches or helpers to help meet their communication/support needs.

- Remember a VI swimmer may:

- Range from not being able to see enough to make sense of what is being said, to having some vision.

- Think that they have understood fully and not realise that they have missed out on important information (such as how to do a particular stroke or turn correctly).

- Lack confidence or self-esteem.

There are health and safety issues relating to visual impairments but these must never be a reason to exclude VI swimmers from mainstream swimming sessions.

Top tips

- Good, clear communication is vital.
- Detailed descriptions/explanations of drills etc. less demonstration.
- Tactile demonstration where appropriate.
- Ask the swimmer to count the number of strokes they do in a length, so they know when the end of the pool is coming up – be aware that this is not always ideal though as they may concentrate on this too much rather than their technique
- Have someone at the end of the pool to gently tap them on the head when they are approaching the wall e.g. using a woggle. Tapping on the shoulder should be used for swimmers with unstable eye conditions or for those whose eye conditions are the result of a brain injury.
- Use anti-turbulence lane ropes, rather than just roped ones so they stand out more.
- Orientation/familiarisation around the pool and swimming area – shallow/deep end, the position of the steps to and from the pool.
- Make sure the VI swimmer goes in the correct direction by getting them to start with their back to the wall ready to push off in the correct direction – 'squaring off' starting position.
- Be aware that the water can affect their hearing particularly when they may rely solely on verbal communication.
- Make lifeguards aware that some participants are visually impaired.
- Have a sighted guide to swim beside them where appropriate.
- Use contrasting coloured lane markings on the floor.
- Use contrasting colours to mark the pool end, red is often a good colour or if possible attach a float or woggle to the end.
- Think about the colour of equipment used, and use audible balls where possible.
- Make all activities accessible including the fun session.

Do

- **Let the VI swimmers know you are there by speaking to them.**
- **Use clear communication and vary the tone of your voice.**
- **Ensure the pool is well lit.**
- **Ask the participant what they can see and what support they require.**
- **Use contrasting 5 metre backstroke flags.**
- **Verbalise actions.**
- **Think safety first!**
- **Think BIG, BRIGHT and BOLD!!**
- **Remember everyone is different and every eye condition is individual.**
- **Be aware that every situation or person will be different with different needs.**
- **Ask the young person to repeat what you have said to check they have understood.**

Don't

- **Presume all people with a visual impairment can't see anything.**
- **Rely on demonstration – it may not be seen.**
- **Single out the young person with a visual impairment.**

Tiri case study

Tiri Hughes is a 15 year old VI swimmer from Devon who competes in the S13 category. She has competed regionally, nationally and internationally for both her club and her region winning medals at both regional and national level.

"I started swimming when I was 5 but mostly for fun as I could see better then and was playing netball at school. As my sight deteriorated (when I was about 11) it became apparent that I couldn't continue with this. About 6 months later, at a Playground to Podium Sports Day, I was picked out to join the regional team for swimming! I started training more often, and within a few months of being on the team I had won two silvers and a bronze at the Regional Championships, and competed at Nationals.

That was 2 years ago! Now I have a whole hoard of medals from many competitions. I really enjoy swimming as it's a sport that (unlike netball) I can actually do properly. I love training and my coach is brilliant. I have a tapper – somebody who uses a stick with a soft ball on the end to tap my head when I have to turn because I can't see the flags or tell how far away the wall is.

I also really love going to competitions because as well as getting to compete with lots of excellent swimmers, I have made many friends all over the country!

I think that swimming has really improved my confidence and self-esteem and my goal would be to compete in the Paralympics one day."

Section Three

Competitive Swimming for the Visually Impaired

11. Classifications

Classification is the grouping of swimmers with a specific impairment in swimming to ensure that there is a fair playing field. Swimmers will first obtain a national classification and then if they show potential and are going to be competing overseas they will then obtain an international classification. Sight classifications are recorded by British Blind Sport as B1, B2 and B3. However the classification terminology for swimming starts with the letter S.

It is important to note any sight classification/ testing is done with best correction in best eye i.e. whilst wearing corrective equipment such as glasses or lenses

- (B1) – S11, SB11, SM11 – These swimmers are unable to see at all and are considered totally blind. They must wear blackened goggles in this class and will require someone to tap them when they are approaching the wall.
- (B2) - S12, SB12, SM12 – These swimmers can recognise shapes and have some ability to see. There is a large range of vision ability within this class.
- (B3) - S13, SB13, SM13 – Swimmers who have the most sight but legally are still considered to have a vision impairment problem.

For more information on sight classifications visit:

British Blind Sport
www.britishblindsport.org.uk

International Blind Sports Association (IBSA)
http://www.ibsa-sports.org/classification/

International Paralympic Committee (IPC) http://www.paralympic.org/Classification/Introduction

12. Club and competitive swimming

In addition to the 'Top tips' section you should consider the following in a club swimming or competitive environment

- Verbalising the sessions.
- Try to enable the VI swimmer with a visual impairment to be in a lane protected a lane rope on each side of them.
- Coach stroke counting from early on to help with orientation.
- Most VI swimmers do not need a lane of their own.
- Teach lane etiquette.
- Teaching diving may take longer due to time taken to build correct timing and body position.

Competitions

It is important to notify organisers of competitions when completing the competition entry form:

i) That the swimmer has a visual impairment.

ii) What adaptations may be required for them to participate i.e. tapper?

iii) The referee should also be informed that there is a VI swimmer participating.

Starting races

Dependent upon the level of the swimmer and competition, some VI swimmers will be confident to start a race by diving in. However others may prefer to start in the water. It is important that the swimmer informs the referee of how they will start.

Be aware dive starts may not be possible for swimmers with unstable eye condition e.g. a detached retina.

We recommend that swimming championships of a county standard and above should all use the following to start a race:

i) whistle.
ii) electronic beeper.

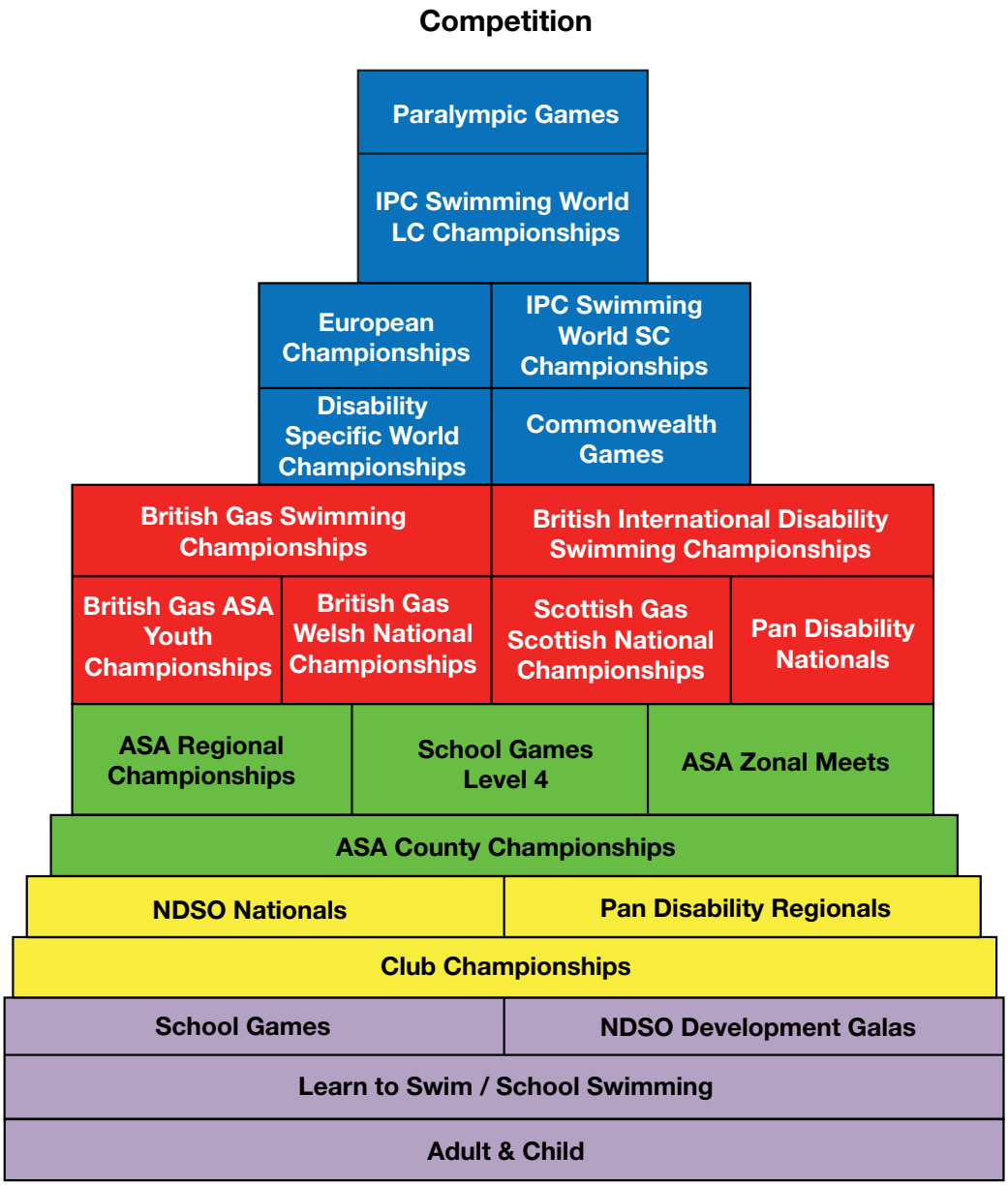
For further information please contact your National Governing Body (NGB). See the 'Useful contacts' section later on.

13. Pathways for swimmers with a visual impairment

VI swimmers are eligible to compete at the Paralympic Games and the IPC World and European Swimming Championships provided that they have a valid international swimming classification.

There are many other swimming competitions that VI swimmers can compete in:

- Mainstream competitions e.g. county, regional and national championships.
- Pan-disability competitions e.g. regional and national championships.
- Visually impaired specific competitions e.g. BBS National Schools VI swimming gala and BBS National Open swimming gala.



James Clegg case study

James Clegg is a British Paralympic swimmer. He competes in S12 events and qualified for the 2012 Summer Paralympics, winning the bronze in the men's 100 m butterfly event.

"I started swimming when I went to a disability club with a friend and took it from there. I've built up slowly over a few years and I now do nine training sessions a week in a mainstream swimming club.

I heard about the disability swimming club through the blind school I was at, so I went along. I did football and running at school but I wasn't hugely into sports at school. Swimming soon became my main sport, I think it just takes over; you have to put your whole life into it as it just takes so much time.

There were not really a lot of provisions for visually impaired swimmers at my disability club. We had the tappers to help with turns but sometimes they're not available, so you just have to get on with it.

I hope a new resource will help youngsters coming through and encourage them to get in the pool and try it out."

What he won at the Paralympics 2012:
James Clegg: Bronze – 100m Butterfly (S12)

Section Four
Further Information

14. Additional aquatic disciplines

Here are some tips for including VI swimmers in the additional aquatic disciplines:

Synchronised swimming

- Counting is a great way to keep the beat. This can be practised dry side as well as in the water.
- It is important that the swimmer memorises the song. This will help them with counting and learning the routine.
- Practice is important for all synchronised swimmers, but in particular for VI swimmers with a visual impairment.
- VI swimmers should start in solo routines or duets and work up to being part of a larger team.
- Team mates can help each other out to make sure that nobody loses their place during a routine.
- The use of an artists miniature model or Barbie doll may help for tactile demonstration purposes.

Diving

- It may not be possible for some VI swimmers to dive due to unstable eye conditions e.g. a detached retina. Ask the swimmers first.
- Flip n' Fun is a great way to teach all children the skills for diving.
- The use of an artists miniature model or Barbie Doll may help for tactile demonstration purposes.

Water Polo

- There is a variety of balls that can be used for VI swimmers to help them to be included into water polo games such as balls with bells in, brightly coloured balls.
- Help the VI swimmer by calling out their name before throwing the ball to them.
- As water polo is a team sport, it is essential as a team they decide how to best include the VI swimmer with a visual impairment.

15. Useful contacts

British Blind Sport (BBS)
British Blind Sport Head Office, Pure Offices, Plato Close, Tachbrook Park, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV34 6WE
Tel: 01926 424247
Email: info@britishblindsport.org.uk
Website: www.britishblindsport.org.uk

Action for Blind People (Action)
Action for Blind People is a national charity with local reach, providing practical help and support to blind and partially sighted people of all ages. We listen, we understand, we act.
Tel: 0303 123999 (helpline)
Website: www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk

Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)
Tel: 0303 123999 (helpline)
Website: www.rnib.org.uk

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
Tel: 0845 3727416
Website: www.guidedogs.org.uk

Amateur Swimming Association (ASA)
The Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) has been in existence since 1869. It was the first governing body of swimming to be established in the world and today remains the English national governing body for swimming, diving,

water polo, open water and synchronised swimming

ASA, SportPark, Pavilion 3, 3 Oakwood Drive, Loughborough University LE11 3QF
Tel: 01509 618700
Email: disability@swimming.org
Website: www.swimming.org

Scottish Amateur Swimming Association (SASA)
The Scottish Amateur Swimming Association Limited (known as Scottish Swimming) is the national governing body for swimming, masters, diving, water polo, open water and synchronised swimming in Scotland.
Scottish Swimming, National Swimming Academy, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA
Tel: 01786 466520 Fax: 01786 466521
Email: info@scottishswimming.com
Website: www.scottishswimming.com

Welsh Amateur Swimming Association (WASA)
The Welsh Amateur Swimming Association (known as Swim Wales) is the governing body for swimming, diving, water polo, open water and synchronised swimming in Wales, working across three regions: South West Wales, West Wales and North Wales.
Swim Wales, WNPS, Sketty Lane, Swansea SA2 8QG
Tel: 01792 513636
Website: www.welshasa.co.uk

English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS)
The Loughborough contact details are (Head Office):
SportPark- Loughborough University, 3 Oakwood Drive, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3QF
Tel: 01509 227750 Fax: 01509 227777
Email: federation@efds.co.uk
Website: http://www.efds.net

Scottish Disability Sport
Head Office, Caledonia House, South Gyle, Edinburgh EH12 9DQ
Tel: 0131 3171130
Email: admin@Scottishdisabilitysport.com
Website: www.scottishdisabilitysport.com

16. Further Information about British Blind Sport

British Blind Sport is a registered charity (No 271500) and the leading voice in sport for the blind and partially sighted in the UK. The charity was set up in 1975 by visually impaired people, to enable them to have a controlling interest in various sports.

People with a visual impairment want to and can, participate in a full range of sporting activities; the degree of adaptation needed varies greatly and may centre on the use of audible or tactile aids.

BBS believe in the many benefits that sport can offer people with a visual impairment, including improved health and mobility, broadening horizons, making new friends, and becoming more independent. BBS encourage blind and partially sighted children and adults to participate in sport at all levels, from 'grassroots' to Paralympic representation.

In addition BBS provide help and support to the many professionals working with people with a visual impairment, particularly within leisure and recreation, sports development, education and social services.

Through connectivity and engagement with key stakeholders and partners such as National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport BBS aim to:

- Raise numbers of people with a visual impairment participating in sport.
- Achieve sustainable outcomes through partnership working.
- Engage the VI community into a variety of sporting opportunities and events.
- Establish long-term support structures to sustain BBS Specialist Sport Sections to drive and deliver provision locally, regionally and nationally.

BBS offer the following products and services:

- Sight Classification.
- Membership – for entry to BBS events plus other benefits.
- Signposting and advocacy.
- Expert knowledge of visual impairment in sport and recreational activities.
- National Database of VI organisations and groups.
- Educational resources.
- Links to local support structures (County Sport Partnerships, Local Authority Sport Development Officers, Disability People Organisations, National Governing Bodies, Statutory, Services, VI Clubs, Funding Organisations).

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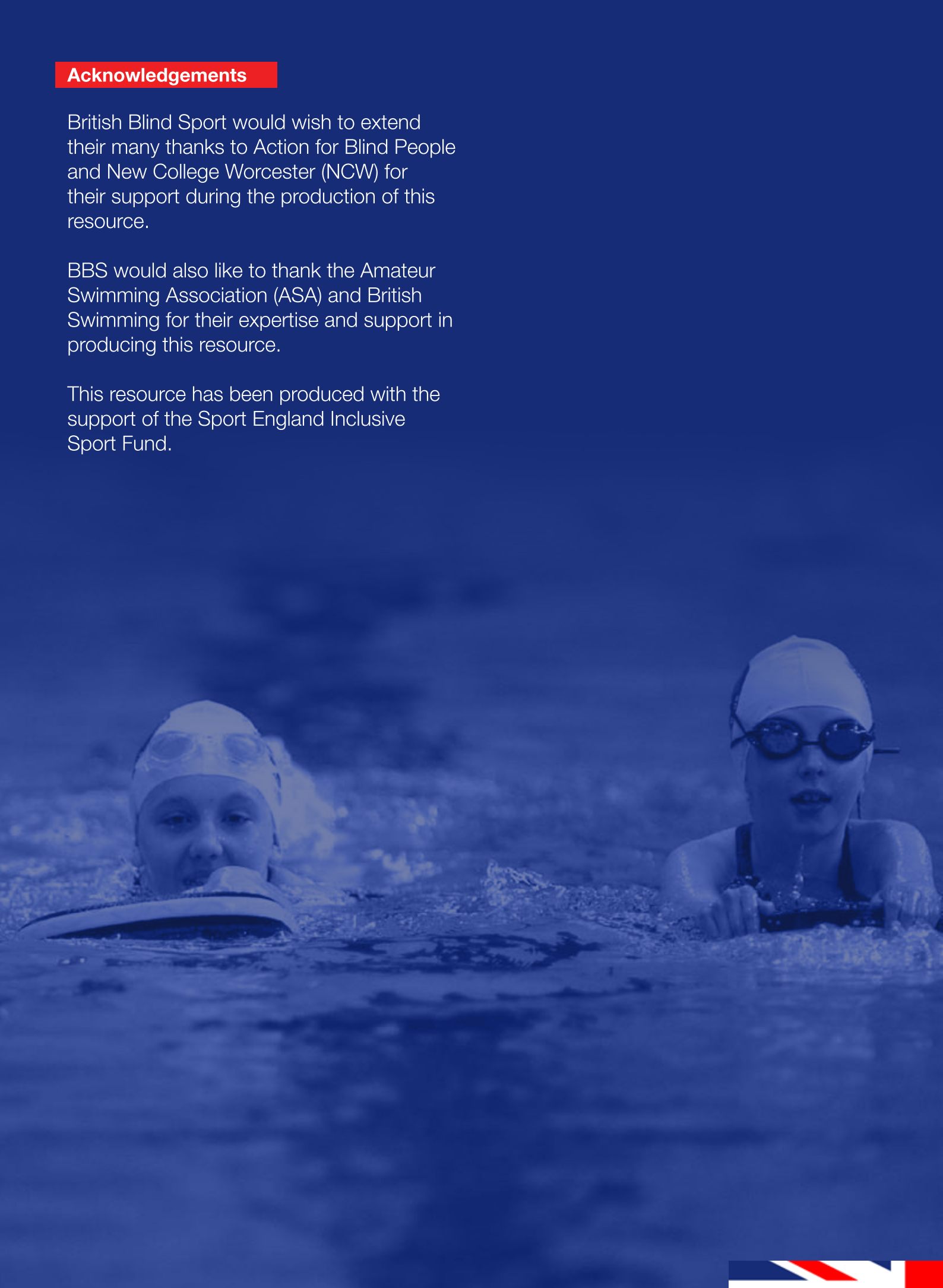

BRITISH BLIND SPORT

A VISIBLE DIFFERENCE THROUGH SPORT

British Blind Sport is the leading voice for the blind and visually impaired community in sport and recreation in Great Britain

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