



POSITION STATEMENT

Our expected workforce standards for Coach Developers

Authored by:

Laurie Marsden, Chair of the Performance Sport Professional Development Committee and Chair of the Coach Developer Specialist Expert Working Group (CD-SEG), and fellow CD-SEG members.

April 2026

PUBLISHED BY

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity
Incorporated by Royal Charter Charity Registration No. 1144545 www.cimspa.co.uk

© The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity

Purpose

To clearly outline the Coach Developer Specialist Expert Group (CD-SEG) position regarding the standards we expect of those aspiring to be employed or deployed¹ in the sport and physical activity sector as a Coach Developer.

The need for a position statement

Sport and physical activity should be inclusive, accessible, supportive and beneficial for all. People working in the sector must be able to include, inspire, understand and support the people they work with. The sector must also be welcoming for everyone to participate, work and volunteer. Quality learning and development provision and a diverse workforce help to create environments where everyone belongs.

The sector faces significant challenges with declining activity levels, exacerbated for those with protected characteristics and children.

- Only 49.1% of children² meet the chief medical officers' guidelines of being active for 60 minutes per day.
- Significant inequalities remain in activity levels with Black, Asian, and those from less affluent families still less likely to be physically active than the national average.
- Women and girls are also less likely to be active than boys and men.
- Disabled people are nearly twice as likely to be inactive than non-disabled people.
- Likewise, disabled children are less active than their peers, and experience significant barriers to participation.

Delivering quality inclusive activity requires important knowledge, skills and strategies to adapt sessions, communicate effectively and deliver a person-centred approach. Appropriate and proportionate training, development, and supervision ensures that professionals can develop safe, appropriate, and effective practices, tailored to individual needs.

The profession of coach development and the role of Coach Developers has emerged over the last decade, and we see growing numbers of organisations employing Coach Developers and providing tailored support for coaches.

This said, the expectations of someone wishing to pursue a career as a Coach Developer, and the opportunities for them to do so, are not clear. There is no established career pathway or adopted definition of what a Coach Developer is or does, leading to confusion about training and ongoing development requirements.

People use the title of Coach Developer in different ways to describe a range of different activity in support of coaches. These include but are not limited to:

- Delivery of formal learning and development opportunities
- Facilitation of non-formal CPD events and experiences with groups of people
- Provision of 1:1 individualised support remotely and/or in-situ.

This lack of clarity and consistency makes it difficult both for coaches seeking support individually and organisations looking to employ or deploy Coach Developers. There is currently no mechanism to determine whether a Coach Developer has the requisite knowledge, skills and experience to offer the support the coach or the organisation requires beyond personal experience of working with individuals, understanding of their biography and perceived impact via previous work completed.

The role of a Coach Developer is critical to tackling the inequality challenges and enabling us to create extraordinary moments that enrich lives.

What we would like to see...

The CD-SEG commit to supporting the sport and physical activity sector stakeholders, employers, deployers, education providers and workforce to receive proportionate training, development, and supervision in their role as a Coach Developer.

We believe everyone working as a Coach Developer, or who aspires to do so should:

- understand the career pathway for Coach Developers
- advocate the development of the Coach Developer profession
- have access to meaningful development experiences supported by other professionals within the profession
- complete endorsed learning and development opportunities that meet their needs, aligned with the Coach Developer professional standard
- aspire to hold a level of accreditation that reflects this such as holding professional status awarded by CIMSPA or a sports governing body
- use the professional status they have been awarded
- gain the knowledge and confidence to create welcoming and inclusive environments and support people from all backgrounds, ages, ethnicities and those with protected characteristics.

We aim for everyone who develops, employs and/or deploys Coach Developers to:

- understand and support the employment and ongoing development of the profession.
- situate learning and development provision within the Coach Developer professional standard.
- encourage and support current and future Coach Developers to achieve accreditation as a Practitioner, Chartered Coach Developer or, Senior Chartered Coach Developer.
- have inclusive, proactive practices to support and create a welcoming work environment.

How do we intend to support this movement?

We will:

- work with organisations such as CIMSPA, UK Sport, NGBs and others to create guidance that clearly outlines the appropriate training for different roles and contexts in the Coach Developer profession
- provide opportunities for robust and meaningful accreditation of Coach Developers that are sustainable and financially viable for all involved
- protect the terms:
 - Coach Developer Practitioner
 - Chartered Coach Developer
 - Senior Chartered Coach Developer
- support and encourage employers and deployers to ensure their workforce is involved in appropriate training, and development activities, and are achieving professional recognition from CIMSPA or a sports governing body to verify their credentials
- signpost employers, deployers and education providers to good practice guidance on coach development
- encourage and support education providers to ensure their learning and development is endorsed to cover all or part of the Working Inclusively suite of professional standards.

Members of the Coach Developer Specialist Expert Working Group (CD-SEG)

Chair: Laurie Marsden, UK Sport

Members

Dr. Andrew Mark Gillott, University of Stirling

Colin Huffen, CIMSPA

Dr Dan Clements, The English Football Association

Derek O’Riordan, UK Sport and sportscotland

Diccon Edwards, The England and Wales Cricket Board

Dr Vinny Webb, CIMSPA

Emily Handyside, UK Coaching

Dr. Jamie Taylor, Grey Matters and Dublin City University

Jay Roper, British Gymnastics

Matt Wenn, Sport Wales

Dr. Ollie Runswick, CASES

Scott McNeill, The Premier League

Stuart Armstrong, Future Coach

Further information

For questions regarding this position statement or to learn more about the work of the Coach Developer Specialist Expert Working Group:

- visit the [UK Sport and Physical Activity Sector Workforce Professional Development Board](#)
- [contact us](#) via CIMSPA.

References

-
- 1 The Coach Developer Professional standard can be accessed here – [CIMSPA professional standards library](#).
 - 2 [Active Lives Children and Young People Survey Report](#), Sport England, 2025
-



Shaping a recognised, valued and inclusive sport and physical activity sector that everyone can be a part of.

www.cimspa.co.uk