



MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ACTIVE COACHES – CORE GUIDANCE

for Coaches



Introduction

In order to ensure *Excellent Coaching Every Time for Everyone*, sports coach UK, along with key industry Partners, has agreed core standards that all coaches in the UK should adhere to (previously referred to as core minimum standards for deployment).

This document outlines the core standards that you need to know and meet as a coach. They include recommendations across the following five areas:

- minimum age
- appropriate qualifications
- appropriate insurance cover
- safeguarding children and vulnerable groups
- policies and procedures.

Why are These Important?

As an active coach, it is important for you to meet the core standards. Here are just a few reasons why:

- to ensure you have the right level of qualification, knowledge and skills for your coaching role
- to safeguard you and the participants you coach
- to ensure you have the right level of insurance
- to improve the coaching opportunities you can access.

Please note:

The core standards are just a starting point. To help you be the best coach and have the most appropriate knowledge and skills, governing bodies of sport and sports coach UK recommend additional training relevant to the participants you are coaching.

sports coach UK is working with governing bodies of sport to collate training and development opportunities for coaches working with the following participant groups:

- children and young people (including coaches working in schools)
- participation
- performance development
- high performance.

To access further guidance and additional training information, please [click here](#).



The Core Standards

Minimum age

- **Lead coach (someone coaching independently): 18+ years**
As a lead coach, you will have a considerable level of responsibility and a duty of care to your participants. The minimum age is therefore 18 as this is also when you legally become an adult.
- **Assistant coach: 16+ years**
As an assistant coach, you will work under the direction or supervision of a lead coach. As such, the minimum age recommendation is 16. This age recommendation is also in line with the entry requirements for most UKCC Level 1 qualifications.

Appropriate qualifications

- **Lead coach: UKCC Level 2 or above**
To coach independently, clubs, schools and governing bodies of sport usually require you to have a minimum standard of training, which is a UKCC Level 2 qualification in the sport you are coaching.
- **Assistant coach: UKCC Level 1**
To be an assistant coach, a UKCC level 1 qualification is advisable and will qualify you to assist a coach with a higher-level qualification. Contact your governing body of sport to find out what the best starting qualification is. The following guide may also help:
www.sportscoachuk.org/resource/ukcc-level-1-guide

Please note:

- It is important that your qualification is in the sport you are coaching.
- If you hold any non-UKCC qualification, you should check with your governing body of sport to find out which qualification or award enables you to lead a session.
- The appropriate qualification may change depending on the environment you are working in. **Click here** to see the information for coaching children and young people.
- If you are coaching without the appropriate level of qualification, in the event of an incident, you may not be insured.

Appropriate insurance cover

As a coach, you will need an insurance policy that covers you for the coaching duties you carry out. This is to ensure both you and the participants you are coaching are covered for bodily injury to participants or members of the public, or accidental damage to third party property.

What insurance do you need?

This depends on the nature of your coaching role. However, the following policies are recommended as best practice:

Statutory

Employer's liability cover

Cover for legal liability for injuries to employees (permanent/temporary/contracted for services) arising in the course of employment.

If, as a lead coach, you are working with an assistant coach and therefore directing what the assistant does and how it should be delivered for reward (wages, fee or benefit in kind), you could be classed an employer, in that you are responsible for the care and actions of the assistant coach.

Essential

Public liability insurance

Protection from your legal liability for third party claims in respect of bodily injury to participants or members of the general public in respect of the activities coached and legal occupation of premises whether owned or hired.

A minimum of £5million indemnity any one occurrence is recommended, although some governing bodies of sport and facility operators are increasing the minimum requirement to £10million, and it is anticipated that this will become the standard limit in the future.

Desirable

Professional indemnity

Legal cover against claims of breaches of professional duty by coaches while acting in the scope of their employment (eg for giving poor advice, errors/omissions in advice or libel and slander). Professional indemnity is slightly more extensive in its coverage than public liability in that it will also provide indemnity for claims brought for financial loss that does not involve death, injury, illness or disease.

A minimum of £5million indemnity is recommended.

Optional

Personal accident cover

Arranged by the individual or employer:

Personal accident claims could be made against you as a coach following accidental bodily injury occurring during the activity or while travelling to/from the session.

Other

Car

Your coaching activities may have an impact on car insurance premiums.

Equipment

Insurance cover for equipment supplied by you as a coach. Damage, loss or theft to sports equipment used for the activity.

You can receive insurance cover for your coaching activities as part of the many benefits of sports coach UK Full Membership. For more information, visit www.sportscoachuk.org/fullmembership

You may have insurance through affiliation to your governing body of sport membership or licence scheme. Check if you are unsure if you have cover in place.

Safeguarding children and vulnerable groups

Disclosure and Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland or AccessNI

If you are coaching in England or Wales, you will need to comply with the requirements of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS – formerly the Criminal Records Bureau). As a coach in Scotland, you should comply with the requirements of Disclosure Scotland. As a coach in Northern Ireland, you will need to comply with the requirements of AccessNI.

For the DBS, the level of checks that should be undertaken are usually as follows (however, the decision lies with each governing body of sport):

- **Lead coach:** If your coaching duties include regular or intensive contact with children or vulnerable groups, then you will be eligible for a disclosure. As a lead coach, you are also able to work without supervision and are therefore also eligible for a barred list check (when eligible for a disclosure).
- **Assistant coach:** If your coaching duties include regular or intensive contact with children or vulnerable groups as an assistant coach, you will be eligible for a disclosure. However, as an assistant coach, you will coach under supervision and will not be eligible for a barred list check.

Please note:

You need to be 16 or over to be eligible for disclosure or barred list checks.

If you do not come into regular or intensive contact with children or vulnerable adults, then a governing body of sport will not be able to request a disclosure or barred list check:

- Regular contact is defined as once a week or more.
- Intensive contact is defined as four or more days in a 30-day period, or overnight.

There are now two barred lists – one for working with children and one for working with vulnerable groups.

Supervision will be defined separately by each governing body of sport to fit with the unique requirements of each sport. Please contact your governing body of sport for more information.

If you are coaching in different settings, the approach to criminal records checks should take account of the policies of each organisation.

The criminal record certificate will be sent directly to you, not the organisation that has asked you to apply (eg your sports club or governing body). They will be informed if the check is clear or not (but not the detail of it). You may be asked to show your disclosure.

More information is available on the websites of the **DBS, Disclosure Scotland** and **AccessNI**.

The NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) and sports coach UK recommend that anyone eligible for a criminal records check should be checked at three-yearly intervals.



Policies and procedures

When coaching in any setting, you should be aware of and sign up to specific policies, the most important being:

- code of practice
- equality
- participant welfare
- health and safety.

These policies should contain information on best practice, but also guidance to help you fulfil the responsibilities of your coaching role fairly, safely and effectively.

The sports coach UK *Code of Practice for Sports Coaches* can be downloaded free from the website by Network Members. To sign up for free, visit www.sportscoachuk.org/user/register

Please note:

Your governing body of sport policies should be the principle policies that you adhere to. However, if you are coaching in a different setting (eg a school), you may also be required to commit to its policies and procedures.

If you are employed as a coach, you will be required to sign up to your employer's policies and procedures. If you have a concern about any policy or procedure in relation to safe coaching practice, you should inform the relevant organisation (eg your governing body of sport and/or employer).

Identifying Your Additional Training Requirements

The recommended core standards have been identified as a starting point for use by all sports coaches. However, you might need to access additional qualifications, training or development opportunities to support you in your coaching role.

Consider the following elements to help you decide on appropriate additional training:

Sport-specific environment

What else might you need?

Governing body of sport guidance might include additional elements you need (eg a licence to practise, first aid training or additional technical training).

Participant group

Who are you coaching?

You might be working with children and young people, for example, and therefore, your governing body of sport might recommend suitable training relevant to this participant group.

Coach's Status

What is your role and what might you need to know?

You may have different responsibilities depending on your role. For example, as a lead coach, you may be mentoring other coaches and therefore training in this would be advisable.

Environment

Where are you coaching?

Depending on where you are coaching, you may need to know different things. For example, if you coach in schools in curriculum time, it would be advisable to have knowledge of the national curriculum.

Programme

Do you need to meet specific objectives?

Different coaching programmes will have different aims and objectives. For example, if you are coaching in disadvantaged communities, you may require additional support and training.

The other key question when considering additional training is which elements of your coaching knowledge and capabilities you want to improve, to aid your own development. To access the additional training information sports coach UK has been collating, please [click here](#).

sports coach UK and the CPSU strongly recommend that all coaches undertake the sports coach UK 'Safeguarding and Protecting Children' workshop (or equivalent face-to-face training) and renew this training at three-yearly intervals. 'Safeguarding and Protecting Children 2' is available from sports coach UK as a refresher. Your governing body of sport may also have its own equivalent.

sports coach UK also advocates training in equity and working with disabled people. Two face-to-face workshops are available from sports coach UK:

- 'Equity in Your Coaching'
- 'How to Coach Disabled People in Sport'.

More information on all these workshops can be found [here](#). Your governing body of sport may have its own equivalent.



For information about sports coach UK, and further support and training available, contact:

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