Introduction

As the lead agency for coaching in the UK, our vision is to create an active nation inspired by great coaching.

Over three million people dedicate over 200 million hours each year to help others achieve their sport and physical activity goals. They range from coaches in sports clubs, PE teachers in schools, activators and helpers in local communities, and exercise and fitness professionals in leisure centres and health clubs. All play a vital role in supporting an active nation, helping people to get active and to stay active.

Coach learning and development is at the heart of our vision. We want to encourage lifelong learning habits, to empower coaches to take ownership of their own learning and to develop independent and reflective coaches that are responsive to the needs of their participants. We want to support coaches to be the very best that they can be, wherever they work or volunteer, and whatever their goals or aspirations. We believe that we can only achieve this through adopting a truly person-centred approach to learning.

In the spring of 2017, we embarked on a journey to transform learning within UK Coaching. We created a new “Learning and Development” team, which signalled more than simply a change in a name (formerly Coach Education), but a change of focus and a shift in our approach. We realised that we needed to do things differently to attract new people into coaching, to retain and grow those already involved in coaching, and to meet the needs of a new generation. So we took a step back. We reviewed our existing provision, we collected lots of insight, we looked at what works in other sectors, and we thought, “what do the coaches, employers and participants of the future actually want and need?”

If we can transform learning for coaches, we believe that we will improve the quality of coaching practice and the participant experience, thereby benefiting and transforming the lives of individuals and communities.

This document will set out our new approach to coach learning and development. It is based on a model of connectivity and presents our primary aims (or key dimensions of learning) that we believe are essential for the future of coach learning and development.

“We want to support coaches to be the very best that they can be.”
Our primary aims:

- **Connected Experiences**: to develop confident, independent and reflective coaches, with a thirst for learning and a desire for personal and professional growth.
- **Connected Communities**: to develop strong learning connections between coaches and the participants and the communities that they serve.
- **Connected People**: to build a strong social learning community, where coaches connect and learn from each other through co-operation and supportive peer relationships.
- **Connected Content**: to provide engaging learning content that is connected and relevant to the individual, as well as to the environment and practice.
- **Connected Organisations**: to develop deep connections with partners and to support them to create learning and improvement cultures within their own organisations.
Our first aim is to develop confident, independent and reflective coaches, with a thirst for learning and a desire for personal and professional growth.

We will achieve this by providing person-centred and connected learning experiences.

- To provide a great experience for each and every learner, so that they feel inspired and want to continue their learning journey.
- To develop learning with coaches, for coaches, and to put the learner at the heart of our approach.
- To encourage coaches to be proactive partners and help them to shape and co-create their own learning.
- To empower coaches to take ownership of their own development, providing the necessary support and guidance throughout their learning journey.
- To ensure that our learning offers reflect individual needs and differences, and that learning is contextualised, relevant and connected to the individual.
- To provide engaging, thought-provoking and challenging learning offers.
- To provide active and experiential learning opportunities, built around collaboration, discussion, negotiation and reflection.
How will we achieve this?

- We will adopt a person-centred approach and develop new standards for learning, which set out our expectations for learner experience.

- We will implement a new learning and development programme for our tutor workforce, providing training and guidance to ensure they are equipped to deliver great experiences for each and every learner.

- We will embed a process of evaluation and provide greater opportunities for learners to feedback about their experience.

- We will introduce new quality assurance procedures and assess tutors for their ability to provide a great experience and respond to their learner needs.

- We will introduce an improvement cycle, review learning on a regular basis, and make improvements based on learner and tutor feedback.

- We will establish a “user panel” and involve coaches in the design and development of learning.

- We will thoroughly test and pilot learning content with coaches prior to wider roll out.

- We will provide “in-learning” opportunities for learners to construct their own learning, by providing a menu of learning options and activities.

- We will measure and monitor the impact of coach learning on coach practice and experience.
Our second aim is to develop strong learning connections between coaches, the participants and the communities that they serve.

*We recognise the role that coaches play in supporting an active nation, and we want to maximise their impact within their local communities.*
We will recruit Learning Champions at a local level to build linkages within communities.

**Our goals**
- To embed a participant and community focus within all learning to ensure that coaches can meet the needs of their participants, now and in the future.
- To create flexible and agile learning opportunities that can adapt and respond quickly – not only to the changing needs of coaches, but also to the changing needs of participants and communities.
- To create, foster and spread learning and innovative practice at a local level.
- To reduce some of the barriers to learning by building linkages and collaborating with local communities.
- To develop more localised learning provision, at the right time and in the right place.
- To raise the profile of coaches by rewarding and recognising their learning, and by celebrating their achievements within local communities.

**How will we achieve this?**
- We will seek feedback from participants on a regular basis, to inform our learning design and content.
- We will introduce an improvement cycle, review learning on a regular basis, and make improvements based on participant feedback.
- We will develop bite-sized, digital learning content that can easily be adapted to meet changing needs.
- We will recruit “Learning Champions” at a local level to build linkages within communities, deliver more opportunities at a local level, and spread learning and innovative practice.
- We will reward and recognise coach learning, through a UK Coaching badging scheme.
- We will measure and monitor the impact of coach learning on participants and communities.
Our third aim is to build a strong social learning community, where coaches connect and learn from each other through co-operation and supportive peer relationships.

*We want to create a real sense of belonging, where coaches feel connected to one another and to UK Coaching.*

**Our goals**

- To recognise and value the social nature of learning.
- To foster the development of relationships between coaches, through both digital technology and more traditional methods.
- To provide more opportunities for coaches to connect with, and access support from, mentors and coach developers.
- To share excellent practices amongst the coaching community and stimulate new creative ideas for improvement.
- To foster connections with coaches across different disciplines and out into the wider world.

**How will we achieve this?**

- We will provide greater opportunities for social learning, through Communities of Practice, online forums and co-working opportunities.
- We will bring people together through an annual learning event.
- We will establish Learning Hubs to connect people at a local level, providing regular learning events, networking opportunities and other social activities.
- We will establish a Young Coaches Forum, and provide learning and networking opportunities to connect and inspire the next generation of coaches.
We will establish Learning Hubs to connect people at a local level.
Our fourth aim is to provide engaging learning content that is connected and relevant to the individual, as well as to environment and practice. 

We will empower learners with the necessary content to thrive as a coach in a rapidly changing world.
Our goals

• To recognise and value all learning, including qualifications, informal and social learning.
• To ensure that learning content is insight-driven and evidence-based.
• To create learning content that is suitable, and connects, with all coaches, from the volunteer parent to the high-performance coach, providing clear and aspirational pathways.
• To encourage learners to build their own learning content, based on their own individual needs.

How will we achieve this?

• Through our learning standards we will set out our expectations for learning content and ensure that content is built on robust, empirical research.
• We will capture the views of coaches and stakeholders every step of the way, through formal evaluation processes and informal feedback loops.
• We will provide a menu of accessible, bite-sized and micro learning content that will enable learners to build their own learning content based on their own specific needs.
• We will provide learning content in multiple formats of delivery, including face-to-face, digital and blended methods, and enable learners to choose the format they prefer.

• To provide greater choice and flexibility, with accessible and micro learning content in multiple formats of delivery.
• To develop learning content that is enhanced by technology, and provide more online opportunities.
• To ensure high standards of learning, that can stand up to external scrutiny.

• We will provide more online learning opportunities, through the development of eLearning courses and other digital learning resources.
• Through our learning standards, we will adopt an “inclusive by design” approach, ensuring that learning is accessible to all.
• We will seek to endorse informal and social learning, as well as learning in more formal environments.
• We will align all of our learning content to recognised standards for coaching.
• We will work with subject matter experts to develop and review content on a regular basis.
Connected Organisations

As the lead agency for coaching in the UK, our final aim is to develop deep connections with partners and to support them to create learning and improvement cultures within their own organisations.

We want to create a shift within organisations, with cultures that promote learning and development, openness, creativity, and experimentation.

Our goals

• To embed our approach to learning and development within partner organisations.
• To develop a shared understanding and commitment to learning.
• To support our partners to develop learning organisations, not simply learning departments.
• To encourage our partners to embed insight, data and evaluation into their learning design.
• To work in close collaboration with partners to co-design and co-create learning, sharing resources, aligning content, CPD and other learning opportunities.
• To value the coach development workforce and recognise them as the key agents of learning.
• To work with partners to provide better support and secure greater investment for coaches and those who educate and develop coaches.
• Through our relationship management team, we will work with our partners to share our approach to coach learning and development.
• We will provide support and guidance to partners on developing great learning experiences and content.
• We will develop Learning Hubs and Communities of Practice, to engage, share and co-create learning with professionals working in partner organisations.
• We will invest in our own coach development workforce and implement a new learning and development programme, to support their ongoing personal development.
• We will work with partners to explore how we can work together to share resources.
This document has set out our approach to coach learning and development.

Coaching is all about people and at the heart of our approach to coach learning and development is people and the connections that they make. It is based on the fundamental principle that people know best about themselves, about their own capacities and capabilities, and about what learning and support they might require.

The approach considers the needs of the individual and involves them in the design and co-creation of learning, but it also considers the environment and the community in which they operate, so that learning is contextualised and relevant to the individual. If people are involved in shaping and creating their own learning, they are much more likely to feel empowered, valued, motivated and supported. Learning is more likely to become “sticky”. This approach emphasises the role of human relationships in the facilitation of learning, viewing the role of the tutor or trainer as an enabler, to support people “to learn how to learn”, and not to dictate or direct learning.

At UK Coaching, we have already started to embed this approach across the organisation. Over the last twelve months we have worked on a number of pilot projects to test this approach, from the re-development of a multi-skills qualification, to the launch of an inclusive eLearning course for coaching people with a visual impairment.

We recognise that we still have a very long way to go and this is just the start of the journey. By creating person-centred learning and connecting individual experiences, communities, people, content and organisations, we hope to provide the basis for a truly unique and transformative learning experience.
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