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 has been written for all organisations that employ or use coaches (eg governing bodies of sport, county sports partnerships, clubs, schools, local authorities and leisure centres). The document outlines the core standards that your coaches will need to follow. We recommend adoption of these standards when you are taking on or using coaches. The standards include recommendations across the following five areas:

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

Background

In 2010, sports coach UK completed a review of minimum standards for coaches within the coaching industry. This resulted in setting and publishing the core minimum standards for deployment. The review also made the following recommendations:

• All sports coaches working in the UK should meet the core standards.
• The core standards should be enhanced with additional training appropriate to the coaching role, location, activity and type of participants involved in the coaching session.

Sports coach UK has since worked with industry experts in relevant areas such as safeguarding and insurance to update this core guidance and is working to collate additional training recommendations.

Why are Core Standards Important?

It is important that the coaches you use meet the core standards. Here are just a few reasons why:

• to raise the quality of coaching
• to ensure your coaches have the right level of coaching knowledge and skills for their role
• to help ensure your coaches are running safe sessions
• to safeguard the participants your coaches are working with
• your coaches and organisation will be insured in the event of an accident or incident.
The Core Standards

Minimum age

- **Lead coach (someone coaching independently): 18+ years**
  If your coaches are leading sessions, they will have a considerable level of responsibility and a duty of care to the participants. The minimum age is therefore 18 as this is also when they would be legally classed as an adult.

- **Assistant coach: 16+ years**
  Assistant coaches 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**
  Coaches leading a session independently are usually required to have a minimum standard of training, which is a UKCC Level 2 qualification in the sport they are coaching.

- **Assistant coach: UKCC Level 1**
  For an assistant coach, a UKCC Level 1 qualification is advisable, and this will qualify them to help a coach with a higher-level qualification. Your coaches can contact the relevant 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](http://www.sportscoachuk.org/resource/ukcc-level-1-guide)

Please note:

- It is important that their qualification is in the sport they are coaching.
- If your coaches hold any non-UKCC qualification, they should check with the relevant governing body of sport to find out which qualification or award enables them to lead a session.
- The appropriate qualification may change depending on the environment your coaches are working in. [Click here](http://www.sportscoachuk.org/resource/ukcc-level-1-guide) to see the information for coaching children and young people.
- The specific governing body of sport should be consulted on any questions concerning technical competence and the technical appropriateness of certain qualifications.
- As an entity (organisation), if you decide to use a coach with a lower level of qualification than is recommended for technical competence by the governing body of sport, the responsibility for such a decision would rest with you or your entity. In such cases, appropriate measures should be taken to support and protect the coach. In the event of an incident, it may be that your insurance would not respond.
**Appropriate insurance cover**

Your coaches need an insurance policy that covers them for the coaching duties they carry out. This is to ensure the coach, your organisation and the participants being coached are all covered for bodily injury to participants or members of the public, or accidental damage to third party property.

**What insurance do your coaches need?**

Appropriate insurance depends on the nature of the coaching role. However, the following policies would be 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 a lead coach is 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), the lead coach could be classed as an employer; in that they are responsible for the care and actions of the assistant coach.

**Public liability insurance**
Protection from 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.

**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 by your coaches following accidental bodily injury occurring during the activity or while travelling to/from the session.

**Other**

**Car**
Coaches’ activities may have an impact on car insurance premiums.

**Equipment**
Insurance cover for equipment supplied by coaches. Damage, loss or theft to sports equipment used for the activity.

Coaches can receive insurance cover for their coaching activities as part of the many benefits of being a sports coach UK Full Member. For more information, visit www.sportscoachuk.org/fullmembership
Safeguarding children and vulnerable groups

Disclosure and Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland or AccessNI

If your organisation operates in England or Wales, your coaches will need to comply with the requirements of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS – formerly the Criminal Records Bureau). In Scotland, coaches should comply with the requirements of Disclosure Scotland. Coaches in Northern Ireland 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 their coaching duties include regular or intensive contact with children or vulnerable groups, then a coach will be eligible for a disclosure. A lead coach is also able to work without supervision and is therefore also eligible for a barred list check (when eligible for a disclosure).

- **Assistant coach:** If their coaching duties include regular or intensive contact with children or vulnerable groups, then an assistant coach will be eligible for a disclosure. However, as an assistant coach will coach under supervision, they will not be eligible for a barred list check.

Please note:

Under 16s are not eligible for disclosures or barred list checks.

If a coach does 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 often.
- 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.

Where a coach is delivering for more than one organisation, the approach to criminal records checks should take account of the policies of each organisation.

The DBS will only issue disclosures to the applicant (coach). The registered body will no longer receive a copy. If you are the registered body, you will be notified if the check is clear or not (but you won’t receive the content). If the criminal records check is not clear, you will need to request to see the disclosure from the coach. Where there is content on the disclosure, your organisation will need to see it to make a risk assessment and decide if the individual can take up a coaching role based on the content disclosed.

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

As a minimum, your organisation should have in place, and require a coach to sign up to, the following policies:

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

These policies should contain information on best practice, but also guidance to help your coaches fulfil their responsibilities fairly, safely and effectively.

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

Please note:

Coaches should be encouraged to sign up to the policies relevant to the environment in which they are coaching (eg if your organisation is a club, it would be the governing body of sport’s policies).

However, if you are employing a coach, they will be required to commit to your policies as their employer. In such cases, employers’ policies and procedures would supersede those of the governing body of sport. You may, however, have to consider additional recommendations or guidance in a governing body of sport policy (eg concerning coach ratios) to ensure what you are asking a coach to do is safe in line with governing body of sport guidance.

Please note:

The core standards are just a starting point. Other training and development opportunities will always be important. Therefore, to ensure your coaches have the most appropriate knowledge and skills, sports coach UK is working with governing bodies of sport to collate training and development opportunities for the following participant groups:

• children and young people
• participation
• performance development
• high performance.

To access further guidance and additional training information, please click here.
Identifying Additional Training Requirements for Coaches

The recommended core standards have been identified for use by all sports coaches. However, there will be a need for your coaches to complete additional training.

Consider the following elements to help you and your coaches decide on the most appropriate additional training:

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<tr>
<th>Sport-specific environment</th>
<th>Participant group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What else might they need?</td>
<td>Who are the participants to be coached?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governing body of sport guidance might include additional elements a coach needs (e.g. a licence to practise, first aid training or additional technical training).</td>
<td>Your coaches might be working with children and young people, for example, and therefore, the governing body of sport might recommend suitable training relevant to this participant group.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Coach’s Status</th>
<th>Environment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is their role and what might you need them to know?</td>
<td>Where are they coaching?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaches have different roles and responsibilities and, as such, may require additional training. For example, a lead coach may be mentoring other coaches and therefore training in this would be appropriate.</td>
<td>Depending on where your coaches are working, they may need to know different things. For example, if they are working in schools in curriculum time, they should have knowledge of the national curriculum.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
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<td>Do you need the coach to meet specific objectives?</td>
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<td>Different coaching programmes will have different aims and objectives. For example, if your coaches are working on a project in disadvantaged communities, they may require additional support and training.</td>
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The other key question when considering additional training is which elements of their knowledge and capabilities your coaches want to improve, to aid their 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.

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 also have its own equivalent.
When is a Coach Ready to Start?

This quick guide will help you consider whether your coach is ready to start straight away or whether you might need to consider certain elements to ensure they meet or are working towards the core standards.

**Does your coach meet the core standards?**

**YES**
You can use the coach straight away. If they are new to your organisation, consider what else you might want to include as part of an induction and to ensure they feel supported.

Also, are there any other checks you need to carry out on behalf of your own organisation?

**NO**

**Which elements of the core standards are they missing?**

- **Appropriate qualification**
  Could they assist a more experienced and appropriately qualified coach until they obtain the required qualification?

- **Minimum age**
  If they are under 18, could they assist an adult lead coach to gain appropriate experience until they are legally classed as an adult?

- **Insurance**
  Ensure your organisation and the coach have appropriate cover in place ASAP to safeguard you and your participants should an incident arise.

- **Policies and procedures**
  It is advisable to set these from the start or ask a coach to sign up to them as soon as possible.

- **Safeguarding**
  Ensure they are working under supervision until appropriate checks have been made.