

Swim England receives legacy project cash to help people develop love for aquatics

Swim England has received a share of £6.5m to help diverse and disadvantaged communities learn to swim as part of a Commonwealth Games legacy project.

The recognised national governing body for aquatics will use the National Lottery funding to work with a range of partner organisations in Birmingham and the Black Country.

The cash injection is part of Sport England's £35m package of investment to make this summer's Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games a success and create a lasting national impact.

Swim England is one of 20 national governing bodies involved in the Games that will use innovative and accessible opportunities to help people from all kinds of backgrounds take part in sport and activity.

It will use digital and community engagement to tackle issues of water safety and help youngsters learn to swim – as well as recruiting swimming teachers from diverse backgrounds.

Swim England will also pilot innovations in 'swim lesson gamification' and use a digital campaign and toolkit to upskill and educate swimming clubs on inclusion.

Jane Nickerson, Swim England chief executive, said: "A home Commonwealth Games offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to inspire a huge audience and this funding will be a vital starting point to help us tackle inequalities. More importantly, it will also mean we can further reach out to diverse and disadvantaged communities and help them learn a vital life skill. Our vision is to use the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games as a catalyst for sustainable change, improving pathways and opportunities for people to try out and develop a love for aquatics.

Drive meaningful change

"We are determined that our Inspire 2022 plan helps the area to not just raise levels of activity but also to address challenges such as unemployment, skills and training deficits and an ageing leisure facility stock. We thank the National Lottery and Sport England for this funding which we will use to drive meaningful change in the largest participation Commonwealth Games sport."

Tim Hollingsworth, CEO of Sport England, said: "One mission for the Commonwealth Games is creating new ways to include those who face the most barriers to playing sport and getting active. So to deliver long-term community impact, we have to listen to what people need, try out new and different ideas, and support partners who know what works at a grassroots level for their community."

"Lasting impact from the Games will depend on the creation of long-term, inclusive and local opportunities for people to get active, and tackling the inequalities that make it harder for some groups now. Today's funding is an opportunity for us to work innovatively with sports to target the people and areas who need support the most."

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries added: "We want Birmingham 2022 to be the Games for everyone and this fund will help make that a reality across the country. By reaching into new communities with fun, creative and accessible introductions to Commonwealth sports, this investment will help increase participation and secure a strong legacy from Birmingham 2022."

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Published

14.05.2022

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