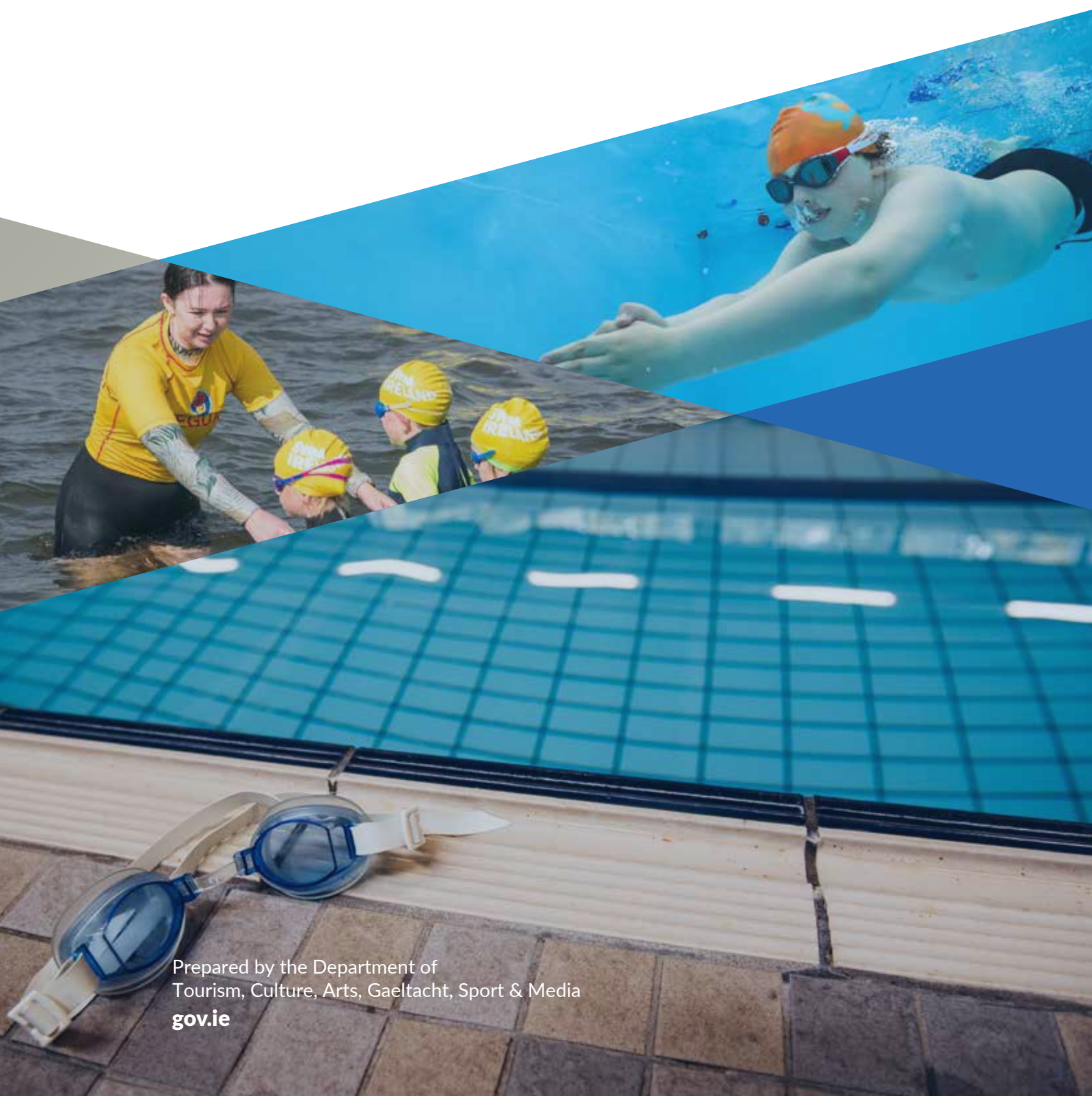


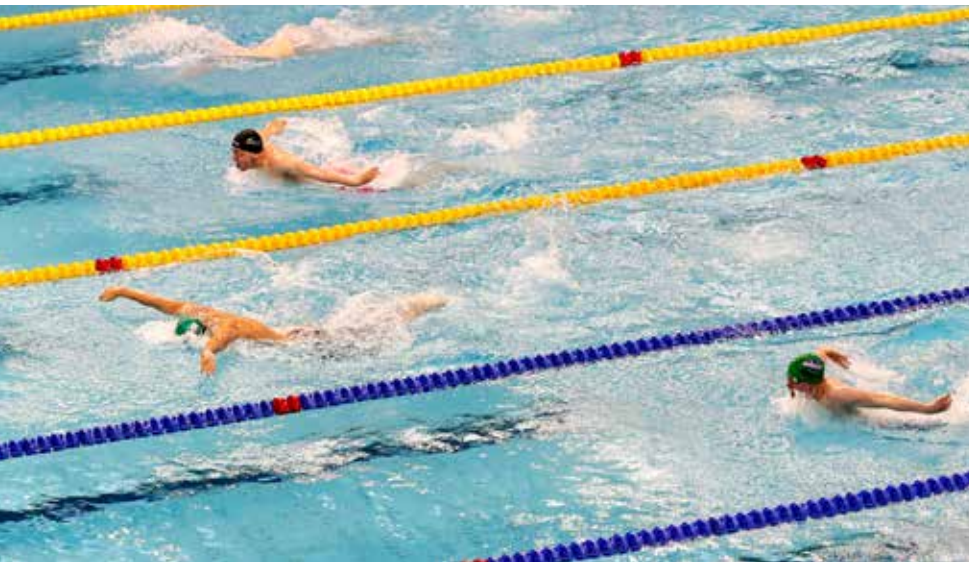


Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

National Swimming Strategy 2024–2027



Prepared by the Department of
Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media
[gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie)



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Foreword by Ministers

We are delighted to publish Ireland's first National Swimming Strategy, which sets out a vision to provide everyone in our country with an opportunity to swim.

Swimming has been identified as our second most popular participation sport and the Strategy recognises its potential to be truly inclusive for all in society. Swimming engages the young and old alike, allows for full participation including those with physical, mental or sensory considerations, and provides options for diverse communities and minority groups to participate. Almost three-quarters (72%) of Irish adults can swim.

Under the Programme for Government – Our Shared Future, swimming is prioritised in recognition of its role in promoting improved general health and wellbeing. The publication of the Strategy also fulfils the commitments made under both the *National Sports Policy 2018-2027* and the *Sports Action Plan 2021-2023*.

The Strategy covers both indoor and outdoor swimming and takes account of all ages and abilities. For the first time, under the 2023 Sports Capital and Equipment Programme, the Programme accepted applications for funding in respect of improvements to swimming pools. In addition, the Sports Energy Support Scheme was extended in 2023, to support publicly accessible swimming pools with increased energy costs. The Strategy seeks to build on those Government supports and it will underpin the policy framework through which we will continue to support and grow the sport.

The Strategy will enable more inclusive, safe and accessible opportunities to swim. It will focus on increased participation for under-represented groups, better coaching supports and improved facilities, while having due regard for safety concerns, together with our environmental and climate change responsibilities and targets.

Extensive stakeholder and public engagement has allowed for a wide range of viewpoints to be considered in shaping this Strategy. Over 5,800 submissions were received during the public consultation process, which is testament to the popularity of the sport.

We would like to thank the members of the Working Group tasked with the Strategy's development. The result is a truly collaborative strategic vision that will strengthen and support the sustainable growth and development of swimming in Ireland for years to come through the delivery of the Action Plan set out under the Strategy.



Catherine Martin
Minister for Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and
Media



Thomas Byrne
Minister of State for Sport,
Physical Education and the
Gaeltacht

Executive Summary

Our Vision:

To provide everyone in Ireland with an opportunity to swim.

In adopting a life course perspective of participation in sport, the Government recognised that certain sporting activities are likely to have more lasting benefits than others. Swimming, cycling and running were identified as offering the best chance of counteracting the likely negative impact of our ageing population profile on participation levels generally, with the result that all three have been prioritised for particular attention and support.

Given the existence of disparate State backed policy interventions and the multiplicity of stakeholders involved in the provision of swimming, the need for a collaborative and coherent national strategy was identified as being crucial to facilitating its sustainable development.

Following engagement with key stakeholders and a public consultation process, five main themes were established in framing this Strategy. A short summary of the aspirations and action points of each theme is set out hereunder.

1. Access, Inclusion and Disability

People with disabilities and those who are marginalised or disadvantaged, face barriers to participating in sport. This Strategy seeks to identify and address those barriers and encourage more inclusion and diversity, thus increasing levels of participation amongst those cohorts. Actions include developing resources to assist stakeholders to improve the culture of inclusion and increase access for people with disabilities.

2. Infrastructure and Facilities

The public consultation suggests that existing swimming pool stock is insufficient and an analysis of current provision is proposed to identify gaps. The traditional single purpose facilities model needs to be reviewed and reimagined, to incorporate modern innovations such as above ground and pop-up pools, as well as shared multipurpose facilities. Energy conservation, in addition to environmental and climate action considerations, will be central to future facilities development.

3. Education – Lessons and Coaching

Evidence confirms that early childhood is the optimal time to learn how to swim, which in turn can increase the levels of lifelong participation. This Strategy therefore endeavours to support additional opportunities for young people to access lessons, to ensure optimal use of pool times for lessons and coaching, to address challenges in recruiting and retaining swimming instructors and to further embed the provision of aquatics and water safety as components of school curriculums.

4. Open Water Swimming

Safety was the key concern raised by open water swimmers, therefore enhancing the dissemination of information to facilitate informed choices as to when and where they swim is key to encouraging greater participation. Actions include the development of suitable facilities such as changing/showering/equal access/waste and recycling and a proposal to develop a forum for stakeholders to input into the development of open water swimming.

5. Pathways and Performance

The life journey for swimming will differ between participants who swim for recreation and those who follow a more competitive path. Aquatic clubs have a critical role to play in ensuring continued participation and providing a pathway that allows for the nurturing and development of potential high performers. Actions include supports to grow participation throughout the lifecycle, grow club membership numbers, develop vibrant competition structures and strengthen relationships between facility owners/operators and clubs.

Responsibility for the delivery of the Action Plan arising from this Strategy, as detailed in Appendix 1, will be shared across Government Departments, State Agencies and other key stakeholders. Progress on the Action Plan will be reviewed by this Department on an annual basis commencing in December 2025.



Background

Both the *National Sports Policy 2018 -2027 (NSP)* and the *Sports Action Plan 2021-2023 (SAP)* commit to the development of a National Swimming Strategy.

The NSP outlines a coherent strategy towards the development of all aspects of sport and physical activity in Ireland and includes 57 action points to address issues of Participation, Infrastructure, High Performance, the development of the Sport Ireland Campus, Capacity Building, Sectoral and International Contextualisation, Integrity and Financing in sport.

The SAP outlines over 40 specific initiatives intended to ensure the sports sector's continued recovery from the impact of COVID-19 and the actions required to achieve the Government target of 60% of the population participating in sport and physical activity by 2027.

The National Swimming Strategy is the first of its kind in Ireland and its development is consistent with commitments around the promotion of sport and physical activity in the Programme for Government, with a particular emphasis on those commitments that are suitable for all generations and lifelong participation. It also compliments stated objectives in relation to a number of other plans – both the National Physical Activity Plan 2015-2022 (Get Ireland Active) and the Healthy Ireland Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2015, highlight the importance that swimming can have in the lifecycle of activity and in contributing towards wellbeing.

Overall, swimming is the second most popular participative sport behind personal exercise.

In addition, swimming is one of the three most popular sporting activities among all socio economic groups.

Irish Sports Monitor 2022

The National Swimming Strategy is being devised with the stated vision of '*providing everyone in Ireland with an opportunity to swim*'. This Strategy seeks to acknowledge areas of difficulty while identifying opportunities and areas of potential that may enhance the delivery of positive outcomes. The 2022 Irish Sports Monitor's (ISM) Annual Report indicates that 'Sports typically played in indoor leisure facilities such as personal exercise and swimming have seen increases in participation since 2021' (ISM, 2022, p. 17). Following the reopening of pools post COVID-19, swimming has regained its popularity as the second most popular activity having dropped to fourth following the closure of pools.

The National Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023-2027 (Embracing Ireland's Outdoors) highlights an objective to increase participation in outdoor or 'wild swimming'. The public consultation informing this Strategy found that over 60% of respondents participated in open water swimming on a regular basis i.e. more than once a month. Safety was a key concern raised by open water swimmers in the public consultation, with 51% of respondents identifying it as a barrier to participation.



The weekly participation rates for swimming, as outlined by *Swim Ireland's Participation Strategy (2022-2026)* (340,000 people 'swam once a week' in 2019) further emphasise the importance of this type of physical activity to a significant population segment.

This Swimming Strategy is considered a timely response to the development of an activity that has acknowledged physical, emotional and health benefits. The Action Plan which forms part of the Strategy seeks to enhance the provision of opportunities to swim, maximising supports and reinforcing safety in and about water. Particular attention is focused on swimming's ability to enhance mental wellbeing and physical activity.

Objectives

The prime objective for developing a National Swimming Strategy is to identify a coherent pathway that will lead to increased opportunities for all to have access to swimming. In doing this, the Strategy hopes to focus on areas of weakness that are in need of improvement while emphasising potential opportunities to maximise output.

The Strategy has been developed as a response to the need to clearly map out a path of development for swimming opportunities in Ireland. It has been designed around diversity, equity and inclusivity, and seeks to improve the provision, quality and opportunity of access to swimming countrywide. In doing so, there is an acknowledgement that there is also a recovery from the impact of COVID-19 to consider where many opportunities to access swim time or lessons were cancelled.

One of its prime objectives is to encourage greater participation by dismantling barriers to access and increasing the provision of opportunity so that Ireland can become a nation of competent swimmers.

In developing the Strategy, extensive consultation with stakeholders, experts in industry, participants in sport and all who have a vested interest in swimming was sought. However, this Strategy has not been developed exclusively for those that have made contributions to its findings. It has also been developed for those who do not count themselves as swimmers for whatever reason. One of its prime objectives is to encourage greater participation by dismantling barriers to access and increasing the provision of opportunity so that Ireland can become a nation of competent swimmers.

It is intended that this Strategy will be read by current swimmers, by those who strive for High Performance, by agencies and organisations who provide swimming opportunities, by those who establish and monitor quality and excellence in the industry, and by those who want to engage with swimming for the first time and who wish to be guided towards improved opportunity to do so.



Methodology

A Working Group was established in July 2022 and was tasked with developing the Strategy. The Group was chaired by the Department and comprised representatives from relevant National Governing Bodies (NGBs) for sport and stakeholders, specifically Swim Ireland, Sport Ireland, Active Disability Ireland (formerly CARA), Ireland Active and the Local Authorities. The membership of the Working Group was as follows:

Name	Organisation
Micheál Ó Conaire (Chair)	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media (D/TCAGSM)
Breda Moynihan	
Noel Sheahan	
Sean O'Connor	
Mary McMorrow	Swim Ireland
Niamh O'Sullivan	Sport Ireland
Brenda O'Donnell	Active Disability Ireland (formerly CARA)
Karl Dunne	Ireland Active
Liam Hanrahan	County & City Management Association (CCMA)

Further details in relation to the Working Group, including their Terms of Reference, are set out in Appendix 2.

An extensive consultation process across both stakeholders and the public took place during 2022 to obtain the views of all those interested in swimming, actively or otherwise, and to help inform the direction of the Strategy. Over 5,800 responses were received from the public and a detailed report on the consultation and the responses received, is available at gov.ie/nationalswimmingstrategy. The extensive consultation across relevant stakeholders took place in parallel with the public consultation process and the feedback received has been taken into account in the development of this Strategy.

The detailed analysis of qualitative responses received from both stakeholders and the public identified a number of recurrent themes that have influenced the development of this Strategy. This document also attempts to identify and develop targets and outputs that will help measure the successful delivery or otherwise, of the tasks identified in the Action Plan in Appendix 1, which will inform future iterations and developments around swimming – this Strategy is intended to be a “live” document that will respond to challenges and opportunities as they present over the lifecycle of its duration.

Finally, climate action and sustainability are key policy priorities, in line with government’s commitment to achieving a 51% reduction in Ireland’s overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and setting the path to achieve a net zero society by 2050. The National Swimming Strategy takes into account national climate policy including the Climate Action Plan, carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings as well as other relevant sustainability considerations.

1. ACCESS, INCLUSION AND DISABILITY



Vision:

That all segments of society have equal opportunity to swim and that barriers to access are dismantled.

Access, Inclusion and Disability

Swimming continues to be one of the most popular sports and recreational activities for people with a disability. In Ireland, almost 14% of the population (700,000 of 5.15 million people) identify as having a disability 'to some extent' but their participation in sport and physical activity is significantly lower than those without a disability.

For adults with a severely limiting illness/disability, a greater proportion of them take part in swimming than in all team sports combined. Of all the popular sporting activities for adults, swimming has the least significant participation gradient by disability. For the vast majority of swimmers, it is the only sporting activity (apart from recreational walking) which they undertake. This is particularly so in the case of women.

Legislation (Equal Status Acts 2000-18, Disability Act 2005) to protect against discrimination towards people with disabilities has greatly helped to progress the rights of people with disabilities in Ireland. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which has been ratified by Ireland, requires states to take appropriate measures with a view to enabling persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities.

Notwithstanding these protections, people with disabilities still face many barriers in everyday life, including participating in sport and physical activity. Insights gathered by Active Disability Ireland in 2022 highlighted that people with disabilities face barriers such as a lack of access to suitable facilities, a lack of information regarding accessible opportunities, and most commonly, a lack of disability awareness and education in the sector which contributes to less physical activity opportunities. It is imperative that every effort is made to address these barriers in order to create a fair playing field for people with disabilities.

Within the aforementioned insights, there was an acknowledgement by people with disabilities that physical activity and sport are a priority in their lives.

Dormant Accounts Fund

The Dormant Accounts Fund (DAF) enables unclaimed funds from accounts in credit institutions in Ireland to be used to support the development of persons who are economically or educationally disadvantaged, or those affected by a disability. The Department for Rural and Community Development has responsibility for the administration of the Fund, including approving the measures to be funded from the Fund which are delivered across a range of government departments.

The DAF sports programme, operated by Sport Ireland on behalf of the Department, is the primary funding stream deployed exclusively to promote increased sports participation amongst disadvantaged communities and people with a disability.

The programme provides financial supports to a wide range of locally inspired community projects undertaken by local sports clubs, associations and other interested parties generally, under the active guidance of the Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs).

A number of DAF projects specifically target participation in swimming and aquatics. Under the 2023 Dormant Account Funding allocations for Sport, the following swimming related projects received funding:

- Get Ireland Projects (Swimming)
- Local Disability Sports Fund
- Volunteer Supports
- Her Moves
- Innovation for Sports Inclusion

“Unfortunately, a lot of people don’t really get concerned with disability discourse unless it happens to them, or happens to somebody close to them.”

Both the National Sports Policy (NSP) 2018-2027 and the Sports Action Plan (SAP) 2021-2023 commit to the development of policies that are designed around inclusiveness, reducing barriers to access and encouraging the participation of all. In keeping with the ‘Sport for All’ commitments in the SAP, this Strategy seeks to encourage greater levels of participation amongst a cohort of people who are marginalised or disadvantaged because of their social, economic or cultural status. Ensuring the swimming opportunities are available for all is an important objective of this Strategy. Support via the Dormant Accounts Fund will play a key role in ensuring the availability of swimming opportunities for the marginalised and disadvantaged in particular.

“I see it as part of my life, whether it is doing gym work, swimming, playing basketball or walking.”

Mayo County Council – Beach Access

In 2022, under the Disability Awareness Fund, €40,000 was allocated for Beach Wheelchairs and Beach Matting for a number of beaches in the catchment area. This allowed five new all-terrain beach wheelchairs and matting to be purchased and it greatly enhanced accessibility on several Blue Flag Beaches. In addition to this initiative, additional improvement works were carried out to one of the slipways to facilitate the ease of access for Beach Wheelchairs at Carrowmore near Louisburgh.



The best use of beach matting is where deep sand is located and on rough terrain, stony beaches and approaches – the width of the beach ramp, the gradient onto the beach and appropriate signage and information also need to be considered to facilitate ease of access. Chairs are offered on a first come first served basis. Storage facilities need to be considered – in some instances there are lifeguard huts available – in other cases, local community groups have got involved, offering storage and booking solutions e.g. Achill Tourism.

Sport Ireland Policy on Diversity and Inclusion in Sport

“We will promote inclusion to deliver our desired outcomes with a focus on addressing social, disability, gender, ethnic and other gradients.”

By access, we mean that a person with a disability is afforded the same opportunity to engage in, and enjoy swimming, as a person without a disability, in an equally effective and integrated manner.

Access includes a wide range of associated supports, including for example, appropriate car parking and changing facilities, equipment such as swim hoists or beach wheelchairs and there will be varying and particular needs between outdoor and indoor swimming to ensure access for all.

By way of example, reception facilities at indoor swimming pools should be mindful of obstacles that may make effective communication for someone with a disability difficult. This consideration may not be relevant for outdoor facilities where ‘administration’ is not a feature. However other considerations, such as the provision of beach mats to allow for ease of movement for those in wheelchairs, with walking frames or aids and indeed buggies or beach wheelchairs, may assist in better facilitating access for all at outdoor swimming locations.

Many of the respondents to the public consultation carried out as part of the development of this Strategy weren’t sure of the availability or otherwise of facilities for people with disabilities at their nearest indoor pool. Of those who did know, the majority were positive about the provision of facilities for people with a disability. However there was a significant number of responses that indicated suitable facilities for disabled people were not available.

	Yes	No	Don't know/ not sure
Suitable facilities e.g. changing rooms	58.0%	15.1%	26.9%
Suitable equipment e.g. pool hoist	36.8%	24.0%	39.2%
Appropriate access e.g. parking	74.9%	7.9%	17.2%
Inclusive swimming activities/lessons	29.4%	14.0%	56.6%

In considering access to swimming facilities, we must be mindful of access for all. In support of the National Sports Policy 2018-27 which highlights inclusion as a core value, this Swimming Strategy will promote policies relating to increased participation and representation of women and girls in all areas of the sport, while ensuring that those groups on the margins of society are actively encouraged to participate. Proactive action that will allow disparate groups to engage and feel accepted will be promoted. This will be reinforced in the application procedure for accessing capital grants that awards projects that actively promote inclusiveness.

We can ensure that these ideals are supported by encouraging engagement with Inclusion Officers, encouraging diversity in promotional campaigns and ensuring that swimming schedule timetables and structures, are cognisant of appropriate scheduling for all.



Ireland's population has become increasingly diverse over the past two decades and Irish society has responded positively to the changes that have occurred as a result of greater migration. Sport has been identified as one of the ways in which migrants can interact and engage with their local communities. This strategy seeks to further promote and facilitate interaction between newcomers and host communities through swimming activities.

This Strategy ambition will be the guiding document for convening input from stakeholders to ensure that appropriate leadership will communicate appropriate change and active inclusiveness. It will do this by encouraging engagement and input from representative groups to ensure that opinion and considerations of need will be adopted in future planning. It will do this by ensuring that design will be representative of all in society.

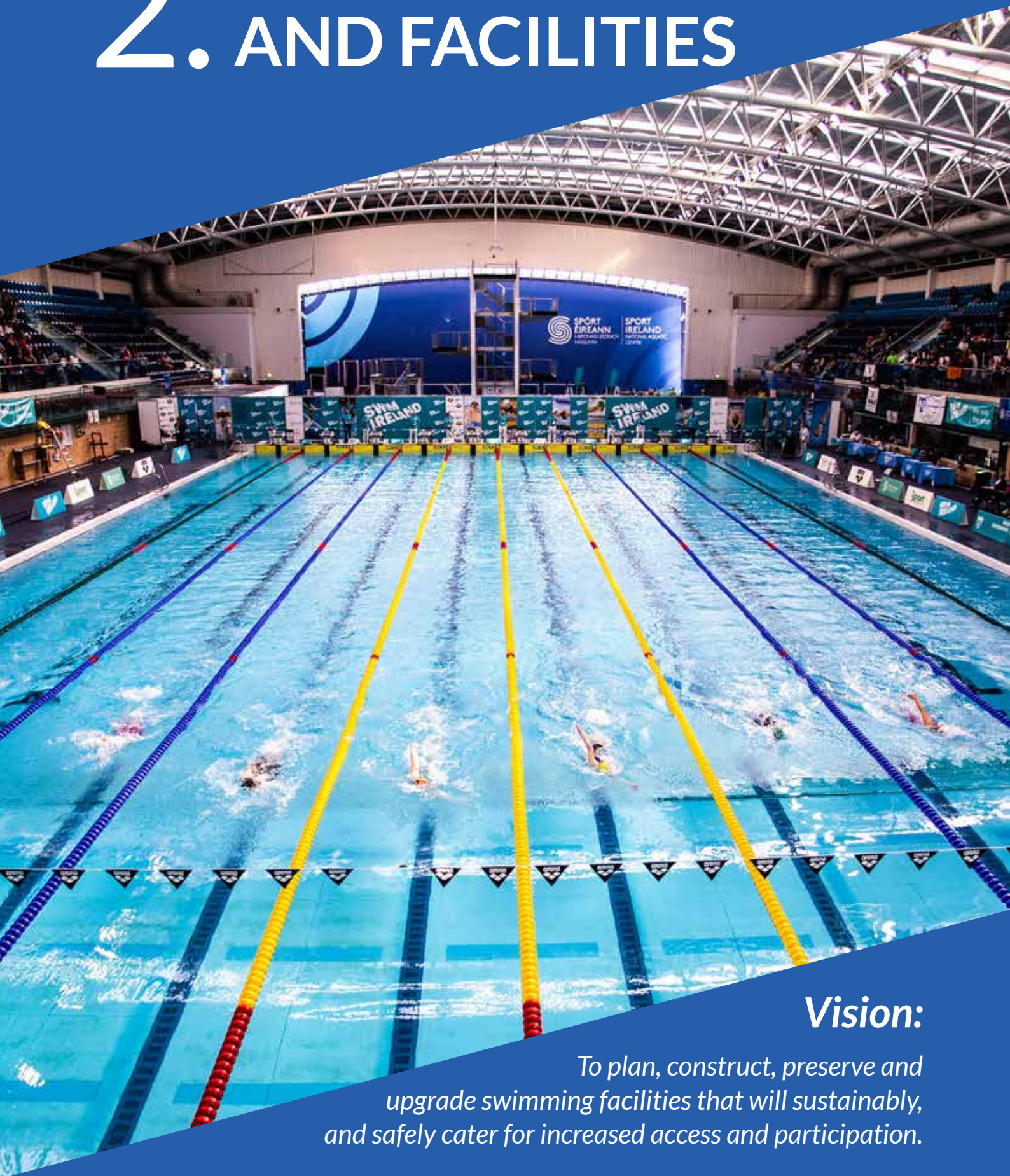
I. Actions

ACCESS, INCLUSION AND DISABILITY			
No.	Action	Lead	Stakeholders
1.1	Carry out an audit of all swimming facilities regardless of ownership to establish ease of access and use for those with a disability.	Active Disability Ireland, Ireland Active, Local Authorities, Swim Ireland	
1.2	Prioritise applications with a focus on disability under the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme including the purchase of requisite equipment to facilitate access for all at swimming facilities.	D/TCAGSM	
1.3	Explore the potential for further funding streams to support and develop swimming and aquatics projects, specifically targeted at minority and disadvantaged groups or communities, similar to the Dormant Accounts Fund.	D/TCAGSM	Relevant Government Departments and Agencies
1.4	Develop tailored resources and toolkits to assist swimming facilities, clubs, swimming coaches and volunteers and facility managers to improve the culture of inclusion and increase access for people with disabilities at all swimming sites.	Active Disability Ireland	Ireland Active, Swim Ireland
1.5	Promote the availability of funding for projects to improve access for all at beaches and/or open water sites via the purchase of appropriate equipment e.g. beach matting and wheelchairs etc. amongst Local Authorities.	D/TCAGSM	All relevant stakeholders
1.6	Ensure that the National Digital Database developed by Sport Ireland provides all information in relation to accessibility at all swimming pools.	Sport Ireland	All relevant stakeholders
1.7	Work to strengthen the relationship between LSPs, and disability specific NGBs including Paralympics Ireland, Special Olympics Ireland, Irish Wheelchair Association Sport, Deaf Sport, Vision Sport Ireland and other organisations that have a focus on specific areas of disability to ensure that a more cohesive and strategic approach is developed for establishing meaningful and measurable outcomes for those with disabilities, who wish to partake in swimming.	Active Disability Ireland	Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs), Disability Specific NGBs, Sport Ireland
1.8	Continue to develop and promote initiatives to help integrate asylum seekers and refugees into communities via open water swimming.	Swim Ireland	Water Safety Ireland, Relevant Government Departments

1.9	Promote disability awareness training workshops and resources for swimming coaches, volunteers and facility managers.	Active Disability Ireland, Swim Ireland, Ireland Active	Water Safety Ireland, All relevant stakeholders
1.10	Gather and share meaningful insights into the experiences, challenges and needs of people with disabilities in participating in swimming.	Active Disability Ireland	DPOs, Disability NGBs, Disability Services, Ireland Active, Sport Ireland
1.11	Advance gender equality by increasing women's sustained involvement as active participants, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, club members, administrators and leaders.	Swim Ireland, Sport Ireland	All relevant stakeholders



2. INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES



Vision:

To plan, construct, preserve and upgrade swimming facilities that will sustainably, and safely cater for increased access and participation.

Infrastructure and Facilities

The current landscape of swimming infrastructure and facilities in Ireland is dominated by what would be termed traditional style swimming pools with a diversity of management and operational arrangements, including local authorities, private operators and local community groups. The National Digital Database for Sport estimates there are over 400 pools in operation while Ireland Active have previously estimated there are in the region of 425 swimming pools in operation in Ireland.

Feedback from the public consultation carried out as part of the development of this Strategy suggests that this stock is insufficient and that there are gaps in provision within the swimming ecosystem, with 49% of respondents indicating that they have no access to facilities within walking or reasonable driving distance.

42% of respondents indicated that a better choice of swimming facilities would encourage them to take up swimming or swim more regularly.

The feasibility and cost effectiveness of single purpose swimming structures may need to be revised or reimaged to ensure disparate needs can be accommodated.

Contemporary design include multi-purpose facilities such as gyms, studios and other amenities to maximise footfall and may provide greater feasibility for future planning.

The Sports Capital and Equipment Programme (SCEP) and the Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF), which provide capital grant support to assist in the development or refurbishment of sports facilities, are both designed to favour projects that are multi-functional in nature and cater for a number of sports and other activities. Sustainability will be an important consideration for future swimming facility design and a distinction between construction and operational costs of facilities should feed into the decision-making processes.

Utilising the latest modern methods of construction and leveraging above ground swimming pool technology can significantly reduce the cost of swimming pools relative to traditional in-ground facilities without compromising

Exchequer Funding For Capital Swimming Pool Projects

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media continues to provide capital support for swimming pool projects.

Funding was previously provided through the Local Authority Swimming Pool Programme (LASPP) which resulted in the completion of 52 pools, some of which are now arguably in need of renovation or refurbishment.

The National Sports Policy 2018-2027 provided for the establishment of a Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF). The aim of the LSSIF is to provide Exchequer support for larger sports facility projects where the Exchequer investment would be greater than the maximum amount available under the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme (SCEP).

The first call for proposals under the LSSIF closed in 2019 with applications confined to Local Authorities and National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of Sport. New swimming pool projects and the refurbishment of existing swimming pools were eligible to apply for LSSIF grant funding, subject to published guidelines and regulations.

durability and quality. Swim Ireland is developing a Swimming Facility Planning Model with support from the Dormant Accounts Innovation Fund to support data driven decision making on the locations and types of pools needed. This could prove to be an important tool to assist funding decisions.

The use of above ground and modularly constructed pools has the potential to fast track the provision of swimming facilities. Not only are they considered more cost effective and less time consuming to build, their construction leads to a significantly lower carbon footprint than their traditional counterparts. The reduced ongoing maintenance costs associated with above ground structures (because of their steel versus concrete tanks) further enhances their attractiveness in terms of the future provision of swimming pool facilities.

The latest round of the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme (SCEP) closed for applications in September 2023 and, for the first time, permitted applications for the improvements or renovations to existing, publicly accessible swimming pools.

Prior to 2023, the SCEP did not provide funding for what was termed the 'wet' areas of swimming related capital projects. Funding is provided for 'equipment' however and under the 2020 SCEP, 41 swimming related bodies received funding totalling €997,095. Of these bodies, the majority were classed as 'Sports Clubs'. Swimming related applications accounted for 1.3% of the total applications received under the 2020 SCEP with the majority of funding being provided for diving, disability, safety, gym and access related equipment.

The purchase of pop-up, portable swimming pools was also specifically referenced as eligible expenditure under the 2023 SCEP. Furthermore, there was an increase in the maximum thresholds for grants so this should result in improvements to the existing stock of swimming facilities. Modern energy saving technologies can upgrade existing infrastructure which will deliver on government's sustainability goals.

Furthermore, as swimming achieves many of the overall objectives of the SCEP (particularly in terms of lifelong participation), the submission of applications relating to outdoor swimming, pop-up pools, above ground swimming facilities and improving access for those with a disability, will continue to be actively encouraged under future rounds of the scheme. Pop-up pools, if strategically positioned may have some impact on the backlog of swimming lesson opportunities for young learners. The flexibility offered by a pop-up pool in terms of moving easily from location to location and its relative affordability make it an attractive option in terms of addressing urgent areas of need.

Tackling The Backlog In School Based Lessons

Whilst still a relatively new concept, pop-up pools were viewed positively by respondents to the public consultation informing this Strategy. 51% of respondents to the question on pop-up pools indicated they were a good idea while 41% indicated that they would utilise such a pool if it became available in their area.



A pop-up Pool is a moveable pool, usually measuring 12m x 3.2m with a depth of 1.2m. Fully equipped with an in-built plant room and heated to 30 degrees. The pool is located within a hard sided marquee.

Temporary Measures To Tackle Access To Swimming

Over 5,000 people accessed swimming in Donabate where a pop-up pool facility was installed over a 16-week period. Taken across a year, this could have the potential to provide swimming opportunities to approx. 17,000 people in community group settings or school based lesson programmes.



LSSIF funded swimming related projects

The first allocations under the LSSIF were announced in January 2020 with €86.4 million subsequently awarded to 33 different projects. In response to delays experienced by grantees arising from the pandemic and construction inflation, additional “top-up” grant funding to existing projects was announced in December 2023 amounting to €37.6 million with 27 individual projects benefitting, bringing the total awarded to date to €124 million.

Eight swimming related projects have received total grant funding under the LSSIF of €19,950,592 as follows:

1. Sligo: Waterpoint Aqua Park – Allocated €300,000
2. Kilkenny: The Watershed Development – Allocated €2,171,875
3. Limerick: Askeaton Pool and Leisure – Allocated €1,265,750
4. Wicklow: Wicklow Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre – Allocated €1,796,600
5. Louth: Dundalk Leisure Centre – Allocated €300,000
6. Galway: Galway Regional Aquatic and Fitness Centre – Allocated €8,003,415
7. Dublin: Samuel Beckett Civic Campus Phase 2 – Allocated €5,650,000
8. Laois: Portarlinton Leisure Centre Swimming Pool – Allocated €462,952

In terms of future large capital projects, a new round of the LSSIF will open for applications in 2024

In terms of climate action and sustainability, all infrastructure projects in receipt of state support will fall under the commercial/public built environment emissions ceiling. Swimming facilities must comply with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, ensuring renovations or new builds fall in line with Nearly Zero Energy Buildings criteria. Zero Emissions Vehicles Ireland (ZEVI) charging strategies highlight a key role for swimming pools as community hubs in linking up electric vehicle charging points. ZEVI's Main Destination Charging Scheme will be open for applications for funding from leisure facilities such as municipal swimming pools. Funding opportunities may also be available for destinations with opportunities for open water swimming facilities such as beaches, lakes and rivers.



2. Actions

INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES			
No.	Action	Lead	Stakeholders
2.1	Complete an in depth analysis of swimming pool provision within Ireland with particular reference to identifying gaps in provision and the environmental sustainability of facilities.	Swim Ireland, Sport Ireland	Ireland Active, Local Authorities
2.2	Advance all remaining swimming pool projects under the LASPP and projects already approved for funding under the LSSIF.	D/TCAGSM, Local Authorities	
2.3	Develop and utilise the Swimming Facility Planning Model to identify strategic priorities for investment in swimming pools.	Swim Ireland	Ireland Active, Local Authorities, Water Safety Ireland
2.4	Review the current Local Authority operating model for swimming pools and provide guidance to Local Authorities, organisations and clubs on facility development, operating models and programming.	Swim Ireland	Ireland Active, Local Authorities
2.5	Ensure future rounds of the SCEP allows applications to renovate and/or upgrade existing pool structures and facilities including appropriate equipment for accessibility.	D/TCAGSM	
2.6	Allocate a proportion of SCEP and LSSIF funding for swimming related projects including the purchase of pop-up/container pools to seek to address the current backlog in swimming lessons.	D/TCAGSM	
2.7	Highlight in relevant guides, the swimming related projects (e.g. outdoor changing facilities, beach wheelchairs, accessibility equipment for pools) that are funded under the SCEP. Engage with relevant stakeholders including local authorities to increase these type of applications.	D/TCAGSM	Local Authorities, All relevant stakeholders
2.8	Pilot the provision of an over ground swimming pool at a suitable location utilising recent developments in swimming pool construction to deliver an energy efficient sustainable model in a timely and cost effective manner.	Swim Ireland, Local Authorities	Ireland Active
2.9	Encourage and promote the installation of electric vehicle charging points at parking facilities linked to swimming infrastructure.	Local Authorities, Ireland Active, Sport Ireland	ZEVI, D/Transport

3. EDUCATION, LESSONS AND COACHING



Vision:

To grow the number of competent swimmers, particularly children, through an enhanced framework of formal lessons and coaching supports.

Education, Lessons and Coaching

Swimming is a key life skill which acts as a foundation for other water sports and enhances safety on and near water. In the context of primary and post-primary school PE class content, swimming was the second most 'common activity offered' in 2022 according to the Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity Study (CSPPA) 2022 (p.77). Engaging children in swimming as early as possible can increase the levels of lifelong participation in the sport. In tandem with this, research indicates that there is a drop off in activity for teenage/early adult years and methods of encouraging ongoing participation need to be developed within the lesson/coaching approach.

The public consultation that informs this Strategy indicates that 79% of people who can swim, learned to do so before the age of 12 and this is in keeping with evidence that early childhood is the optimal time to learn how to swim due to motor and cognitive development.

Although aquatics is an important strand of the physical literacy programme on the primary school curriculum, 59% of respondents to the public consultation indicated that their learning took place in classes outside of the school environment, compared to 27% of respondents who indicated that the ability to swim was learned at primary school.

Closures of and/or capacity limitations at swimming pools further exacerbated by COVID-19 health restrictions greatly impacted swimming access and potentially stifled the opportunity for many to commence swimming lessons at the optimal life stage. This Strategy is cognisant of the backlog in lessons that exists for children in the junior educational cycle and will endeavour over the lifetime of this Strategy to support additional opportunities for young people to access swimming lessons.

Engaging children in swimming as early as possible can increase the levels of lifelong participation in the sport.

As part of the review of the primary school physical education curriculum, it is vital that the place of swimming is maintained to ensure that swimming and water safety competence remain a feature and that swimming opportunities will exist for young children to be able to develop comfort in the water. This is an important prerequisite to ensure competence in water safety and swimming is embedded from an early age. Water Safety Ireland, Ireland Active and Swim Ireland have developed a comprehensive Swimming Pool Safety Guidelines document which should act as a first point of reference for any safety related issues.

Additional opportunities and incentives for schools to engage pupils in Learn to Swim programmes need to be created – for example a Swimming Award of Achievement Certificate for children to work towards which will acknowledge milestones and achievements for young participants. Partnerships between stakeholders to jointly develop lesson programmes should also be encouraged.

Whilst the provision of water safety awareness and swimming competence is optimally focused on young school age children, the provision of any aquatics based educational programmes are reliant on suitably qualified staff for delivery. Consultations with stakeholders to inform the

development of this Strategy identified the retention of swimming instructors with a positive view on career progression as a pressing concern. This issue was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic whereby the exodus of trained professionals has led to labour shortages and the inability for some providers to be able to resource swimming lessons supported by the required staffing levels. This Strategy seeks to address these staffing issues so that swimming facilities can operate effectively and be resourced to provide effective educational programmes. In this regard, this Swimming Strategy supports the removal of aquatic (or water based) professionals from outside of the EU Economic Zone from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's Ineligible Occupations List.

The following two examples chart positive outcomes where coordination and collaboration between disparate agencies ensures educational opportunities and the provision of staff support.

Shannon Swimming and Leisure Centre

Since commencing the Swim Ireland Learn to Swim Programme over 6 years ago Shannon Swimming and Leisure Centre (SSLC) has grown from an average of 130 children in their swimming lessons to nearly 1,000 children participating today. Investment in Continued Professional Development for staff and technology (use of tablets on deck and the online booking and payments system) has played a critical role in this success.

- *All teachers and assistant swim teachers are suitably qualified.*
- *The pool runs 5 x 8 week sets of lessons annually with intensive lessons during school midterm and summer holidays.*
- *SSLC have a total of 30 teachers and assistant swimming teachers: 20 Level 2 Swimming Teachers and 10 Level 1 Assistant Swimming Teachers with 2 in the process of completing their training.*
- *2 Tutor Assessors.*
- *1 Swim Coordinator.*

Programmes

- *All swimmers new to Swim Academy are assessed by a Level 2 teacher so they are assigned to the correct group.*
- *The pool has swimming lessons 7 days a week, teaching approximately 1,000 children per week, not including an additional 300 school swim lessons.*
- *As part of their Swimming participation programme SSLC have held Swim for a Mile training with the support of Clare Sports Partnership and hosted a Swim for a Mile event with young swimmers from the Swim Academy participating and completing the mile.*
- *SSLC were the first pool in the country to host LGBTI+ specific swimming in partnership with Sporting Pride Ireland.*
- *Swim teachers provide lessons to members of Ennis Voices for Autism and Down Syndrome Clare, some of whom have integrated into group Swim Academy lessons.*

Wexford County Council/Swim Ireland

School Swimming

Swim Ireland, in partnership with Sports Active (Local Sports partnership and Healthy Ireland), developed a programme of funding to support the increase in participation in swimming and target areas with Delivering Equality of Opportunity in (DEIS) schools to provide swimming lessons for children. Facility hire and staffing costs were negotiated between Wexford County Council and Swim Ireland - in addition Swim Ireland would:

- *Cover swimming teacher hourly pay for delivering a block of swimming lessons in each facility in Wexford*
- *Support Wexford County Council (through Sports Active Wexford) in engaging additional schools in similar programme(s) to improve access to swimming opportunities within the county*



Five facilities were identified to link with the programme:

- *The Apex, New Ross (Community facility)*
- *Wexford Swimming Pool and Leisure Limited (Community facility)*
- *Courtown Adventure and Leisure Centre (now Active Tribe – private facility)*
- *The Waterfront Pool and Leisure Centre (private facility)*
- *Bunclody Swimming pool (Outdoor pool open between June and September each year)*

The programme ran from September 2017 to September 2019 involving 25 schools and a total of 2,368 pupils. Sports Active Wexford and Healthy Wexford are providing grant support to schools to assist with costs of transport, staff and pool hire to attract some 1,500 pupils back to swimming.

3. Actions

EDUCATION – LESSONS & COACHING			
No.	Action	Lead	Stakeholders
3.1	Develop a swimming pool programming template to ensure optimal use of all available pool times and seek to prioritise time available for swimming lessons to address current backlog.	Swim Ireland, Ireland Active	Local Authorities, Water Safety Ireland
3.2	As part of the review of the primary school curriculum, further embed the provision of aquatics and water safety as components of the curriculum.	D/Education	NCCA, Water Safety Ireland
3.3	Develop a specific resource to support schools and aquatic providers to work together in partnership in the enactment of the Wellbeing specification as part of the redeveloped primary school curriculum.	D/Education	NCCA, Oide, Swim Ireland
3.4	Develop, and roll out, specific Continuing Professional Development (CPD) support for post-primary teachers in the area of aquatic and water safety as part of Physical Education supports at Junior Cycle level.	D/Education	Oide, Water Safety Ireland
3.5	Explore the potential for a new programme of current sports funding to support schools in defraying reasonable costs (such as necessary transport and facility hire) incurred in delivering the aquatics strand of the PE curriculum.	D/TCAGSM	D/Education
3.6	Consider the role of voluntary groups in terms of swimming confidence and returned swimmers.	Swim Ireland, LSPs	Water Safety Ireland
3.7	Support the roll out of Water Safety Ireland's 'Hold Hands' programme to parents with the aim of building knowledge and confidence on water safety from an early age.	Water Safety Ireland, D/CEDIY	Early Learning and Care Providers
3.8	Consider the establishment of swimming activators or officers within local authorities to work with all stakeholders to ensure the active promotion and development of swimming opportunities.	Local Authorities, Swim Ireland	Water Safety Ireland
3.09	Advocate to increase the availability of swimming lessons for school children and older people under the Healthy Ireland Fund.	Sport Ireland, D/TCAGSM	D/Health
3.10	Develop and promote a sustainable, recognised and inclusive career pathway for those in the aquatics sector including swimming teachers, lifeguards and coach developers.	Swim Ireland, Ireland Active	Water Safety Ireland, Local Authorities, SOLAS, Relevant Governments Departments

3.11	Continue to promote sector specific workshops to ensure that staff and personnel within the sector are upskilled in the area of inclusion and diversity.	Active Disability Ireland, Ireland Active, Swim Ireland	Water Safety Ireland
3.12	Ensure teacher training workshops and qualifications include and embed information pertaining to the inclusion of people with disabilities and other minority groups into their core content/materials.	Active Disability Ireland, Ireland Active, Swim Ireland	Water Safety Ireland
3.13	Advocate for the removal of employment categories such as lifeguards, swim instructors and pool managers, from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's Ineligible Occupations List.	Ireland Active	



4. OPEN WATER SWIMMING



Vision:

To enhance Open Water Swimming facilities and promote safety measures, while having due regard for environmental impacts.

Open Water Swimming

As the name suggests, Open Water Swimming or Wild Swimming as it is sometimes known, is a discipline which generally takes place in outdoor settings such as lakes, rivers, canals, coastal and open oceans. It has experienced a surge in popularity over the last number of years, not least as a consequence of the lack of access to indoor swimming facilities resulting from health restrictions necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Safety was the key concern raised by open water swimmers as part of the public consultation which has helped inform this Strategy (51% of respondents to public consultation identified it as a barrier to participation). 58% of all drownings in Ireland occur at inland water sites according to Water Safety Ireland. In terms of addressing safety concerns of outdoor swimmers, enhancing the dissemination of information to facilitate informed choices as to when and where they swim, can play a critical role as highlighted by the World Health Organisation's Global Report on Drowning (2014). Maximising the visibility of campaigns that aim to reduce fatalities in or near water, such as the annual National Water Safety Awareness Week, is an objective of this Strategy. Increasing the profile and awareness of **Water Safety Development Officers** is also a feature of this Strategy.



There currently exists a number of resources and information points that serve to better inform the public when making choices about where and when to swim:

- *The Blue Flag awards administered by An Taisce*
- *The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) shares the latest information provided by Local Authorities in relation to its beaches on www.beaches.ie*
- *Water Safety Ireland provides a comprehensive range of safety related resources for swimmers*
- *Met Éireann issues real time updates in relation to climate and marine forecast as well as warnings and advice for open water engagement*
- *www.catchments.ie is a collaboration between the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the EPA and the Local Authority Waters Programme, which shares science and stories about Ireland's water catchment and people's connection to their water*

Water temperature, tidal behaviour and rip currents can present significant safety challenges for those swimming outdoors. Preparation and knowledge are key factors for swimmers to enable informed judgment about when and where to swim and a series of resources in the public domain can assist with better judgement.

In conjunction with the development of 'safe swim zones', which should be clearly marked by buoys or dedicated separators, promoting the aforementioned resources and widespread dissemination to all stakeholders should increase knowledge and allow for improved awareness of safety related issues.

Local Authorities are required to consult the public with regard to the identification and designation of bathing waters on an annual basis. This is to seek feedback on the existing identified bathing waters and to give opportunity to the public to propose additional areas for identification and management as regulated bathing waters. The engagement and participation of swimmers to inform and identify additional bathing locations could enhance the provision of this obligation by Local Authorities and ensure that information is relevant and up to date for the benefit of all users. The 'Be Summer Ready' campaign

In 2022 the EPA reported that the quality of bathing waters continues to improve, arguably on foot of enhanced management of bathing waters over many years combined with investment in the treatment of urban waste water. Ireland also has obligations under the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive to manage the physical condition of all natural and artificial waters in order to protect and improve their status and ensure that water is fit for purpose.



The bathing season is set out in the Bathing Water Quality Regulations from the 1st of June to the 15th of September relating to the period most popular for swimming. In recent years there has been a noted increase in popularity of Open Water swimming year round. This presents a challenge in terms of water quality as current mechanisms to monitor and improve water quality only apply during the bathing season - bathing outside of this time is not currently regulated.



also highlights the importance of being aware of the dangers that increased activity at water attractions poses to all.

The public consultation informing this Strategy endeavoured to establish the nature of additional supports and resources that could encourage greater participation in Open Water Swimming. 60% of respondents indicated that additional resources such as showering and changing facilities would encourage more engagement with outdoor swimming. In 2021 a commitment was made to develop 20 locations nationwide by providing state-of-the-art facilities to promote water based activities. Fáilte Ireland has a significant role promoting and developing these locations and the €19 million investment announced covers the provision of hot showers, changing and toilet facilities, equipment washdown space, storage and induction spaces.

Ongoing investment in facilities will do much to support the continued growth of outdoor water based activity. The provision of appropriate infrastructure at appointed locations should ensure that all users can engage with their chosen activity in a manner that promotes multiuse and consideration for all. Continued investment should cover:

- *Establishing fixed safe outdoor swimming areas by segregated and cordoned swimming zones.*
- *Providing oversight and increased lifeguarding skills for outdoor areas where possible and appropriate.*
- *Ensuring the upkeep and maintenance of lifesaving equipment – life buoys, defibrillators, and floatation devices for example.*
- *Continued investment in storage and changing facilities at outdoor locations.*
- *Further investment in showering and refreshment areas.*
- *Convening stakeholders to work together to deliver safe and quality outdoor swimming experience. For example, bodies such as Water Safety Ireland, the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS), Swim Ireland, Waterways Ireland and the Royal National Lifeboat Association (RNLI), could form a forum that would work with Local Authorities and Fáilte Ireland to ensure that a strategy for developing quality outdoor facilities could be developed.*

Given that the natural environment is the setting for open water swimming, protection of the environment must be central to all development, with a focus on minimising recreational pressure on sensitive habitats and species.



Dunmore East Swim Club

New club developed by local community group with a passion for sea swimming with the support of Swim Ireland and government grants to develop further.

Dunmore East Swim Club (DESC) was born when local enthusiastic sea swimmers thought a club was a logical move to develop sea swimming and to improve local amenities. Before this initiative, sea swimming was seen as a summer activity apart from a few hardy dippers.

The preparatory work took place in 2021 and the DESC became an affiliated member of Swim Ireland in January 2022. Club membership is approximately 100 people and the club have a committee of 12 people including a Head Coach.



DESC did not have ambitions to be competitive, and having discussed their many plans, the club developed a consensus on three pillars which they wished to focus on and develop further. DESC's emphasis is on enjoyment and the social aspect of swimming. Members can meet up at 9am on Saturday mornings for a sociable swim followed by hot drinks. The club run events throughout the year and mark minor and major occasions with a 'welcome table and goodies' on the beach. One such example was the celebration of International Men's Day in November 2022.

Another successful event was the Summer SWALK. This involved a group hike of 14km interspersed with swims in three local coves. With the help of Waterford Sports Partnership, the club were involved with Sport Ireland's HER Outdoors Week. Working with the Waterford Integration Centre and the Sports Partnership they introduced two migrant workers into the 2022 programme. One delighted participant reported "I am 47 years of age and this is my first ever time in the sea!"



Another milestone for the club in 2022 was being awarded €25,200 from the Department of Rural and Community Development under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme. This will make a good start to the improvement of local amenities and the Council are project leading this for the club. The Harbour Board have also given great support and provided buoys to delineate the swim zone.

In 2023 the club rolled out a full programme for international protection applicants.

4. Actions

OPEN WATER SWIMMING			
No.	Action	Lead	Stakeholders
4.1	Engage with all relevant stakeholders in terms of the opportunities available under SCEPT and LSSIF for funding for outdoor swimming projects.	D/TCAGSM	Local Authorities, Water Safety Ireland
4.2	Complete the development of suitable facilities (such as changing/showering/equal access/waste and recycling facilities) at outdoor water-based activity locations (20 in total) to provide all participants with an enhanced visitor engagement.	Local Authorities, Fáilte Ireland	
4.3	Review the suitability/success of the facilities developed under action 4.2, in terms of a further phase of investment and/or an alternative model.	Fáilte Ireland, Local Authorities	
4.4	Dissemination and promotion of all available resources to enhance knowledge of suitability of swimming locations, water quality, safety arrangements, weather etc. (e.g. the beaches.ie website).	Water Safety Ireland, EPA, Met Éireann, Swim Ireland,	
4.5	Provision of additional information to open water swimmers to ensure that choices are better informed and that all year round participation can be safely accommodated.	Water Safety Ireland, Swim Ireland	Local Authorities, National Bathing Water Expert Group, EPA
4.6	Develop an outdoor swimming forum for all stakeholders to input into the development of open water swimming and associated issues.	Swim Ireland, Local Authorities, Water Safety Ireland	All relevant stakeholders
4.7	Promote programmes such as “Leave no Trace” and “Clean Coasts” and ensure swimmers are informed about how to minimise their impact on the surrounding environment.	D/RCD, D/HLGH, D/TCAGSM, Fáilte Ireland, Sport Ireland, Swim Ireland	Water Safety Ireland
4.8	Progress a proposal to provide support for the development of open water swimming facilities and infrastructure, under the Healthy Ireland Fund.	Sport Ireland, Swim Ireland, D/TCAGSM, D/Health	Local Sports Partnerships, Local Authorities, Water Safety Ireland



5. PATHWAYS AND PERFORMANCE



Vision:

To grow participation throughout the lifecycle, grow club membership numbers, develop vibrant competition structures, and pathways that allow for the development of potential high performers.

Pathways and Performance

Engagement with water should commence at the earliest possible age so that basic comfort and confidence can be learned. Exposure to playful interaction in a supporting and guided environment may allay the development of fear in water. Swimming for toddlers provides a gentle introduction to exercise and assists with building muscle strength as well as strengthening the heart, lungs, blood vessels and general cardiovascular functioning.



The life journey for swimming will differ between participants who swim for recreation and those who follow a more competitive path. The time commitment for those that follow a recreational path will be considerably less than those engaging on a more competitive basis, but the need to develop competence, confidence and awareness of safety in and around water is an important goal for every individual.

Irrespective of the level of engagement by the participant, the role that clubs play in providing structure, coaching, and guidance is a fundamental feature of how swimming is organised and developed in Ireland.



Swimming clubs are the bedrock of swimming in Ireland, offering Learn to Swim programmes, competitive programmes, fitness programmes and masters' programmes. Without swimming clubs there would be far less child and adult swimmers in Ireland and their key role must be both protected and developed. Clubs must be able to access sufficient and appropriate pool time to accommodate all of their members' needs, with a particular emphasis on the transition from Learn to Swim programmes. They must be able to provide quality coaching experiences through professional coaches and teachers while also adhering to Ireland Active's National Quality Standard Awards. The maintenance and development of strong and sustainable relationships between facilities operators and clubs is critical in this regard and can do much to strengthen the support that can be provided to both high performing individuals and lifelong swimmers.

All clubs have a role to play in attracting marginalised communities and groups who find access to swimming time difficult. Promoting and encouraging integration and unity in the context of sports participation is an inherent part of the Sport for All approach that is central to the ongoing implementation of the National Sports Policy. The Sports Action Plan 2021-2023 is heavily orientated towards increasing inclusion, diversity and equality across all sport, including swimming.



Swimming Clubs have traditionally been located in/affiliated with indoor swimming facilities. With the growth in popularity of outdoor swimming, there is arguably a role for clubs in developing, supporting and providing for outdoor facilities to enhance safety and comfort in a manner that complements the levels of activity for indoor pool facilities. Wellbeing and inclusivity, a feature of Swim Ireland's Swimming for All strategy can be equally promoted via indoor and/or outdoor swimming.

Excellence is the foundation of the pathway to performance swimming across all abilities. Athletes with the potential to compete at Performance level must be nurtured and developed as they emerge from Learn to Swim Programmes, and aquatic clubs have a critical role to play in establishing enablers which support the pathway to excellence.

Athletes with the potential to compete at Performance level must be nurtured and developed as they emerge from Learn to Swim Programmes

Swimming as a Performance sport operates a centralised model in Ireland. It has Performance training centres (known as National Centres) in Limerick (UL Sport Arena), Dublin (National Aquatic Centre), and Ulster (Bangor Aurora Leisure Complex). These Centres provide athletes with an opportunity to live and train in Ireland whilst aspiring for international success. They are supported by expert coaches and sports science/sports medicine practitioners from the Sport Ireland Institute and Sport Northern Ireland Sports Institute, with oversight provided by Swim Ireland's National Performance Director.

To support the physical environment and high level facilities, athletes have access to over 25 hours of dedicated pool coaching per week. Financial support is provided through the Carding Scheme which aims to assist athletes for their training and competition programmes. This support is designed to maximise the potential outcomes for swimmers preparing for international competitions and events.

In relation to the participation of swimmers in international competition and events, it is recommended that swimmers participate in competitions and events that:

- *Ensure respect for human rights in line with Ireland's legal obligations under domestic, EU and international law;*
- *Maintain public support and confidence in the integrity of sport and swimming; and*
- *Adhere to best practices on the prevention of corruption in sport and demonstrate respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.*

Competence in water can act as a gateway to other water based activities such as water polo, diving, synchronised swimming, para swimming and lifeguard training. The provision of suitable child-centred access to pool time will promote the development of confidence in water and allow for enquiry and engagement into other water based activities. Relationship building between facility owners and operators needs to be developed so that the needs of specialised activities can be accommodated and understood.

Higher Education Institutions are an important contributor to the delivery of this Strategy. Engaging in swimming activities during an individuals' time in a higher education setting contributes positively to supporting participation in later years. In addition, instances of 'drop-out' from competitive swimming are most prevalent in this age demographic, and providing an opportunity to engage in swimming in a non-competitive environment should be maximised. Several Higher Education Institutions throughout Ireland have access to swimming pool facilities and play an important role in the swimming pathway from adolescent to adulthood.





LIMERICK SWIM CLUB

History

Limerick Swimming Club was founded in 1986 when the need to combine local clubs into one larger one became necessary. This would allow the best swimmers in the region to compete under the same banner. Having one main team in the region also allowed for several Learn to Swim programmes in the city to feed into the club and create a pathway for young swimmers to continue their athletic journey beyond Learn to Swim. The success of this pathway is evident in past Limerick Club swimmer Fiona Doyle who represented Ireland at the Rio Olympics in 2016.

Learn to Swim

Limerick Swimming Club itself does not provide Learn to Swim lessons within the overall club structure. Instead, it relies on other Learn to Swim programmes throughout the city. The main programme that supplies swimmers to the club is Seal, working directly out of University of Limerick (UL). Seal has had ties to the club for many years and as such, the relationship between the club and the Learn to Swim programme is strong. The club also has current coaches that teach in the programme so they have a hands-on approach to any swimmers that show promise within the lessons. Some former and current swimmers of the club also teach within the programme so the link back to Limerick Swimming Club is strong.

Transition to Performance

Limerick Swimming Club has the fortunate position to be located in one of the few 50m pools in Ireland which also hosts one of Ireland's three National Centres for Swimming. As such the pathway to a suitable performance environment is clear and easily accessible. The Head Coach of Limerick Swimming Club is also the Assistant Head Coach within the Centre and one of the lead coaches for the club's competitive squads also coaches with the Centre. As such the relationship between club and Centre is strong.

Swimmers who are performing to an exceptional standard and who are exhibiting all the behaviours necessary to become a performance level athlete are given one or two sessions with the centre, that complement their own sessions during the week. In some cases they are also integrated into land based sessions. This allows the coaches to see how they handle training with a higher standard squad. If their performances in racing continue to improve, there is enough room within the squad and once they are culturally aligned to the centre, then they are transitioned into the performance squad.

5. Actions

PATHWAYS AND PERFORMANCE			
No.	Action	Lead	Stakeholders
5.1	Continue to ensure that the highest safeguarding standards are ingrained throughout the sport, from grassroots to performance level.	Swim Ireland	Sport Ireland
5.2	Continue to support swimmers across Olympic and Paralympic disciplines via the International Carding Scheme.	Sport Ireland, Swim Ireland, Paralympics Ireland	
5.3	Support appropriate pathways to allow the emergence and development of potential high performance swimmers, with a particular emphasis on ensuring availability of pool time via effective programming.	Swim Ireland, Sport Ireland, Ireland Active, Paralympics Ireland	
5.4	Develop pathways to promote and support clubs in their key role of ensuring continued participation and engagement of amateur swimmers throughout the lifecycle, with a particular emphasis on transition from Learn to Swim programmes.	Sport Ireland, Swim Ireland, Ireland Active	
5.5	Continue to promote the hosting of domestic swimming events in Ireland across all abilities and stages of the pathway.	Sport Ireland, Swim Ireland	
5.6	Local Activators will promote and foster positive working relationships between swimming clubs and pool operators, regardless of type of facility e.g. private or public, with a view to improving access and increasing opening hours.	Swim Ireland, Ireland Active, Local Authorities	
5.7	Continue to provide training and financial support for clubs and their volunteers to encourage and include participants with a disability, marginalised groups, and new communities.	Swim Ireland, Active Disability Ireland, Special Olympics Ireland, Paralympics Ireland	
5.8	Promote the National Aquatic Centre (NAC) as a venue for international training and competition by high performance athletes and teams.	Sport Ireland	
5.9	Ensure that aquatics is a priority in the future development of the Sport Ireland Campus Masterplan.	Sport Ireland	D/TCAGSM
5.10	Promote, enable and highlight the benefits of swimming to the higher education student experience and inspire more third level students to be more active more often.	Student Sport Ireland	Sport Ireland

Sustainability and Climate Actions

The development and refurbishment of swimming infrastructure/facilities is a key focus of this National Swimming Strategy. This is reflected in the latest round of the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme (2023) which includes improvements or renovations to existing publicly accessible swimming pools for the first time. An important consideration for capital funding applications that may determine the level of funding awarded to prospective projects will relate to sustainable and climate focused parameters.

Development or refurbishments of swimming infrastructure will need to be cognisant of our energy reduction and efficiency targets. A first step will be to encourage facilities to assess their energy or potential energy usage. This can be supported by using Climate Toolkits rolled out by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Other assessments, such as energy audits may fall under the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) Support Scheme. The range of actions that can be taken to reduce energy consumption can be as simple as turning off lights when not in use to more considered planning such as the installation of solar panelling and/or the installation of more energy efficient power generation.

In the case of indoor water facilities, the management of water temperature is a key consideration. This Strategy will encourage, in the development or redevelopment of swimming pools, the insulation of water tanks and interior and exterior pipes to ensure efficiency is maximised.

Swimming pools are by their nature, considerable energy users and in the design stage or future planning, energy action plans will be an important guidance tool for how facilities will contribute to energy reduction.

Energy action planning may involve:

- *Assessing current practices for how waste is managed is the first step for updating management systems. Ensuring a process for recycling products and discouraging the use of single use plastics and other such consumables should fit into a coherent waste management system. For swimming facilities, an important consideration will be the management of spent chemicals or water filtration systems.*
- *Timing systems on showering units and water outlets.*
- *Collection of rain water for biodiversity needs.*
- *Ensuring that drainage systems are cognisant of environment considerations.*
- *Ensuring storage facilities for chemicals is secure and does not lead to hazard or leakage.*
- *The provision and installation of electric vehicle charging points for users as well as the local community.*

In the case of outdoor swimming, all future proposals for facilities development will need to include biodiversity and ecological impact assessments, ensuring that due regard is afforded to the preservation of sensitive aquatic habitats.



Safeguarding

Safeguarding and supporting the welfare of all those who participate in aquatics, in particular children and young people, is an overarching priority of this Strategy.

The Swim Ireland Safeguarding Policies set out the rules and mandatory requirements for clubs and members - where involved with young people. Swim Ireland Safeguarding Policies are in compliance with *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* and with Sport Ireland guidelines.

Water Safety Ireland (WSI) recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that all children have a positive and enjoyable experience while in its care and are protected from any harm or abuse whilst participating in all activities, as outlined in its Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children and its Members and Volunteers Policy documents.

Review

Progress on the Action Plan arising from the National Swimming Strategy, as detailed in Appendix 1, will fall to be reviewed by the Department on an annual basis commencing in December 2025. The following suite of defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) includes both medium and long-term outcomes and will be used to monitor the overarching priorities of the Strategy. An evidenced based approach will assist in understanding the issues related to the effects of public investment in swimming. Outcome metrics will be based on a variety of issues, such as infrastructure and facilities, open water swimming, education, paths and performance, and access and inclusiveness. These metrics will be produced for areas, such as organisational development and support, the number of swimming instructors certified, the number of swimming lessons delivered, and particular programmes for which a practical assessment process will enable measurement. These KPIs are preliminary and will be reviewed by the Department during the lifetime of the Strategy.



Key Performance Indicators

Access, Inclusion and Disability						
Key Performance indicators	Baseline	Year of baseline	Targets 2025	Targets 2027	Source	Measurement timeframe
Decrease the participation gap of those with a disability	3%	2023	2.75%	2.5%	Sport Ireland's ISM	Annually
Decrease the participation gap of those of disadvantaged socio-economic status	3%	2023	2.75%	2.5%	Sport Ireland's ISM	Annually
Decrease the participation gap of ethnic minorities	5%	2023	4.75%	4.5%	Sport Ireland's ISM	Annually
Infrastructure and Facilities						
Key Performance indicators	Baseline	Year of baseline	Targets 2025	Targets 2027	Source	Measurement timeframe
Increase the number of swimming related applications under future rounds of the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme	67	2023	80	100	D/ TCAGSM	In line with SCEP rounds
Increase the number of swimming related applications under future rounds of the Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund	14	2018	18	18	D/ TCAGSM	In line with LSSIF rounds
Utilise Pop-Up Pools to increase the number of swimming experiences in areas that are underserved by permanent facilities	17,000	2023	25,000	40,000	Swim Ireland	

Education - Lessons and Coaching						
Key Performance Indicators	Baseline	Year of baseline	Targets 2025	Targets 2027	Source	Measurement Timeframe
Increase the number of certificates issued to children under the Primary Aquatics Water Safety (PAWs) Programme	38,046	2023	40,000	50,000	Water Safety Ireland	Yearly
Increase the number of qualified swimming teachers maintaining annual accreditation on Swim Ireland's Register of Aquatic Professionals	500	2024	650	800	Swim Ireland	Yearly
Increase the number of qualified coaches* maintaining annual accreditation on Swim Ireland's Register of Aquatic Professionals <i>(*Includes swimming, diving, water polo and artistic swimming)</i>	600	2024	750	900	Swim Ireland	Yearly
Increase participation rate of primary school students in aquatics strand of the PE curriculum	28%	2022	35%	40%	CSPPA	Biennially
Increase participation rate of post-primary school students in aquatics strand of the PE curriculum	14%	2022	17%	20%	CSPPA	Biennially
Open Water Swimming						
Key Performance Indicators	Baseline	Year of baseline	Targets 2025	Targets 2027	Source	Measurement Timeframe
Increase the number of applications for outdoor swimming equipment under future rounds of the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme	14	2023	20	25	D/ TCAGSM	In line with SCEP rounds
Changing, showering, access and recycling facilities developed at designated outdoor activity locations	0	2022	10	20	Local Authorities/ Fáilte Ireland	Yearly

Pathways and Performance						
Key Performance indicators	Baseline	Year of baseline	Targets 2025	Targets 2027	Source	Measurement timeframe
Increase the overall weekly participation rates of adults for swimming i.e. people who swim once a week	330,000	2019	350,000	370,000	Sport Ireland	Yearly
Increase Swimming Club membership numbers	13,500 (Excluding Ulster)	2023	14,000	14,500	Swim Ireland	Yearly
Key Performance indicators	Baseline	Year of baseline	Targets 2024*	Targets 2028*	Source	Measurement timeframe
Support Irish aquatic athletes across Olympic and Paralympic disciplines, through the Sport Ireland International Carding Scheme	12	2024	12	15	Sport Ireland	Annually
Irish swimmers progress to finals (top 8) at the Olympic Games	1	2021	2	3	Sport Ireland	Quadrennially
Irish swimmers achieve medals at the Paralympic Games	2	2021	3	4	Sport Ireland	Quadrennially
Irish swimmers in Olympic and Paralympic disciplines consistently achieve medals at major international events, across senior and non-senior	17	2023	18	20	Sport Ireland	Annually

*Olympic/Paralympic years



Appendix 1 – Table of Actions

ACCESS, INCLUSION AND DISABILITY			
No.	Action	Lead	Stakeholders
1.1	Carry out an audit of all swimming facilities regardless of ownership to establish ease of access and use for those with a disability.	Active Disability Ireland, Ireland Active, Local Authorities, Swim Ireland	
1.2	Prioritise applications with a focus on disability under the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme including the purchase of requisite equipment to facilitate access for all at swimming facilities.	D/TCAGSM	
1.3	Explore the potential for further funding streams to support and develop swimming and aquatics projects, specifically targeted at minority and disadvantaged groups or communities, similar to the Dormant Accounts Fund.	D/TCAGSM	Relevant Government Departments and Agencies
1.4	Develop tailored resources and toolkits to assist swimming facilities, clubs, swimming coaches and volunteers and facility managers to improve the culture of inclusion and increase access for people with disabilities at all swimming sites.	Active Disability Ireland	Ireland Active, Swim Ireland
1.5	Promote the availability of funding for projects to improve access for all at beaches and/or open water sites via the purchase of appropriate equipment e.g. beach matting and wheelchairs etc. amongst Local Authorities.	D/TCAGSM	All relevant stakeholders
1.6	Ensure that the National Digital Database developed by Sport Ireland provides all information in relation to accessibility at all swimming pools.	Sport Ireland	All relevant stakeholders
1.7	Work to strengthen the relationship between LSPs, and disability specific NGBs including Paralympics Ireland, Special Olympics Ireland, Irish Wheelchair Association Sport, Deaf Sport, Vision Sport Ireland and other organisations that have a focus on specific areas of disability to ensure that a more cohesive and strategic approach is developed for establishing meaningful and measurable outcomes for those with disabilities who wish to partake in swimming.	Active Disability Ireland	Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs), Disability Specific NGBs, Sport Ireland
1.8	Continue to develop and promote initiatives to help integrate asylum seekers and refugees into communities via open water swimming.	Swim Ireland	Water Safety Ireland, Relevant Government Departments

1.9	Promote disability awareness training workshops and resources for swimming coaches, volunteers and facility managers.	Active Disability Ireland, Swim Ireland, Ireland Active	Water Safety Ireland, All relevant stakeholders
1.10	Gather and share meaningful insights into the experiences, challenges and needs of people with disabilities in participating in swimming.	Active Disability Ireland	DPOs, Disability NGBs, Disability Services, Ireland Active, Sport Ireland
1.11	Advance gender equality by increasing women's sustained involvement as active participants, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, club members, administrators and leaders.	Swim Ireland, Sport Ireland	All relevant stakeholders
INFRASTRUCTURE & FACILITIES			
No.	Action	Lead	Stakeholders
2.1	Complete an in depth analysis of swimming pool provision within Ireland with particular reference to identifying gaps in provision and the environmental sustainability of facilities.	Swim Ireland, Sport Ireland	Ireland Active, Local Authorities
2.2	Advance all remaining swimming pool projects under the LASPP and projects already approved for funding under the LSSIF.	D/TCAGSM, Local Authorities	
2.3	Develop and utilise the Swimming Facility Planning Model to identify strategic priorities for investment in swimming pools.	Swim Ireland	Ireland Active, Local Authorities, Water Safety Ireland
2.4	Review the current Local Authority operating model for swimming pools and provide guidance to Local Authorities, organisations and clubs on facility development, operating models and programming.	Swim Ireland	Ireland Active, Local Authorities
2.5	Ensure future rounds of the SCEP allow applications to renovate and/or upgrade existing pool structures and facilities including appropriate equipment for accessibility.	D/TCAGSM	
2.6	Allocate a proportion of SCEP and LSSIF funding for swimming related projects including the purchase of pop-up/container pools to seek to address the current backlog in swimming lessons	D/TCAGSM	
2.7	Highlight in relevant guides, the swimming related projects (e.g. outdoor changing facilities, beach wheelchairs, accessibility equipment for pools) that are funded under the SCEP. Engage with relevant stakeholders including local authorities to increase these type of applications.	D/TCAGSM	Local Authorities, All relevant stakeholders

2.8	Pilot the provision of an over ground swimming pool at a suitable location utilising recent developments in swimming pool construction to deliver an energy efficient sustainable model in a timely and cost effective manner.	Swim Ireland, Local Authorities	Ireland Active
2.9	Encourage and promote the installation of electric vehicle charging points at parking facilities linked to swimming infrastructure.	Local Authorities, Ireland Active, Sport Ireland	ZEVI, D/Transport

EDUCATION – LESSONS & COACHING

No.	Action	Lead	Stakeholders
3.1	Develop a swimming pool programming template to ensure optimal use of all available pool times and seek to prioritise time available for swimming lessons to address current backlog.	Swim Ireland, Ireland Active	Local Authorities, Water Safety Ireland
3.2	As part of the review of the primary school curriculum, further embed the provision of aquatics and water safety as components of the curriculum.	D/Education	NCCA, Water Safety Ireland
3.3	Develop a specific resource to support schools and aquatic providers to work together in partnership in the enactment of the Wellbeing specification as part of the redeveloped primary school curriculum.	D/Education	NCCA, Oide, Swim Ireland
3.4	Develop, and roll out, specific Continuing Professional Development (CPD) support for post-primary teachers in the area of aquatic and water safety as part of Physical Education supports at Junior Cycle level.	D/Education	Oide, Water Safety Ireland
3.5	Explore the potential for a new programme of current sports funding to support schools in defraying reasonable costs (such as necessary transport and facility hire) incurred in delivering the aquatics strand of the PE curriculum.	D/TCAGSM	D/Education
3.6	Consider the role of voluntary groups in terms of swimming confidence and returned swimmers.	Swim Ireland, LSPs	Water Safety Ireland
3.7	Support the roll out of Water Safety Ireland's 'Hold Hands' programme to parents with the aim of building knowledge and confidence on water safety from an early age.	Water Safety Ireland, D/CEDIY	Early Learning and Care Providers
3.8	Consider the establishment of swimming activators or officers within local authorities to work with all stakeholders to ensure the active promotion and development of swimming opportunities.	Local Authorities, Swim Ireland	Water Safety Ireland

3.09	Advocate to increase the availability of swimming lessons for school children and older people under the Healthy Ireland Fund.	Sport Ireland, D/TCAGSM	D/Health
3.10	Develop and promote a sustainable, recognised and inclusive career pathway for those in the aquatics sector including swimming teachers, lifeguards and coach developers.	Swim Ireland, Ireland Active	Water Safety Ireland, Local Authorities, SOLAS, Relevant Governments Departments
3.11	Continue to promote sector specific workshops to ensure that staff and personnel within the sector are upskilled in the area of inclusion and diversity.	Active Disability Ireland, Ireland Active, Swim Ireland	Water Safety Ireland
3.12	Ensure teacher training workshops and qualifications include and embed information pertaining to the inclusion of people with disabilities and other minority groups into their core content/materials.	Active Disability Ireland, Ireland Active, Swim Ireland	Water Safety Ireland
3.13	Advocate for the removal of employment categories such as lifeguards, swim instructors and pool managers, from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's Ineligible Occupations List.	Ireland Active	

OPEN WATER SWIMMING

No.	Action	Lead	Stakeholders
4.1	Engage with all relevant stakeholders in terms of the opportunities available under SCEP and LSSIF for funding for outdoor swimming projects.	D/TCAGSM	Local Authorities, Water Safety Ireland
4.2	Complete the development of suitable facilities (such as changing/showering/equal access/waste and recycling facilities) at outdoor water-based activity locations (20 in total) to provide all participants with an enhanced visitor engagement.	Local Authorities, Fáilte Ireland	
4.3	Review the suitability/success of the facilities developed under action 4.2, in terms of a further phase of investment and/or an alternative model.	Fáilte Ireland, Local Authorities	
4.4	Dissemination and promotion of all available resources to enhance knowledge of suitability of swimming locations, water quality, safety arrangements, weather etc. (e.g. the beaches.ie website).	Water Safety Ireland, EPA, Met Éireann, Swim Ireland,	
4.5	Provision of additional information to open water swimmers to ensure that choices are better informed and that all year round participation can be safely accommodated.	Water Safety Ireland, Swim Ireland	Local Authorities, National Bathing Water Expert Group, EPA

4.6	Develop an outdoor swimming forum for all stakeholders to input into the development of open water swimming and associated issues.	Swim Ireland, Local Authorities, Water Safety Ireland	All relevant stakeholders
4.7	Promote programmes such as “Leave no Trace” and “Clean Coasts” and ensure swimmers are informed about how to minimise their impact on the surrounding environment.	D/RCD, D/HLGH, D/TCAGSM, Fáilte Ireland, Sport Ireland, Swim Ireland	Water Safety Ireland
4.8	Progress a proposal to provide support for the development of open water swimming facilities and infrastructure, under the Healthy Ireland Fund.	Sport Ireland, Swim Ireland, D/TCAGSM, D/Health	



PATHWAYS AND PERFORMANCE

No.	Action	Lead	Stakeholders
5.1	Continue to ensure that the highest safeguarding standards are ingrained throughout the sport, from grassroots to performance level.	Swim Ireland	Sport Ireland
5.2	Continue to support swimmers across Olympic and Paralympic disciplines via the International Carding Scheme.	Sport Ireland, Swim Ireland, Paralympics Ireland	
5.3	Support appropriate pathways to allow the emergence and development of potential high performance swimmers, with a particular emphasis on ensuring availability of pool time via effective programming.	Swim Ireland, Sport Ireland, Ireland Active, Paralympics Ireland	
5.4	Develop pathways to promote and support clubs in their key role of ensuring continued participation and engagement of amateur swimmers throughout the lifecycle, with a particular emphasis on transition from Learn to Swim programmes.	Sport Ireland, Swim Ireland, Ireland Active	
5.5	Continue to promote the hosting of domestic swimming events in Ireland across all abilities and stages of the pathway.	Sport Ireland, Swim Ireland	
5.6	Local Activators will promote and foster positive working relationships between swimming clubs and pool operators, regardless of type of facility e.g. private or public, with a view to improving access and increasing opening hours.	Swim Ireland, Ireland Active, Local Authorities	
5.7	Continue to provide training and financial support for clubs and their volunteers to encourage and include participants with a disability, marginalised groups, and new communities.	Swim Ireland, Active Disability Ireland, Special Olympics Ireland, Paralympics Ireland	
5.8	Promote the National Aquatic Centre (NAC) as a venue for international training and competition by high performance athletes and teams.	Sport Ireland	
5.9	Ensure that aquatics is a priority in the future development of the Sport Ireland Campus Masterplan.	Sport Ireland	D/TCAGSM
5.10	Promote, enable and highlight the benefits of swimming to the higher education student experience and inspire more third level students to be more active more often.	Student Sport Ireland	Sport Ireland

Appendix 2 – Working Group

Objective:

The objective of the Working Group was to develop a strategy for indoor and outdoor swimming, suited to all ages and abilities, while also recognising swimming as a life skill and physical activity operating within an industry, as well as a sport.

Guiding Principles:

The Group's Guiding Principles were that the strategy should be based on a vision to 'provide everyone in Ireland with an opportunity to swim', while taking into consideration that:

- Swimming is a part of physical literacy
- Swimming is a life skill that contributes to water safety
- Every child should be given the opportunity to learn how to swim
- Swimming can be for everyone for:
 - o Fitness & Health
 - o Safety
 - o Fun
 - o Social outlet
 - o Engagement with nature
 - o Entry point to other aquatic sports
 - o Performance



Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Working Group were as follows:

- Set out the targets to be achieved by a National Swimming Strategy and the mechanisms that can be used to measure the delivery of same;
- Identify the resources required to deliver on outputs and outcomes;
- Review the economic activity associated with swimming, indoor and outdoor;
- Review the barriers to accessing existing infrastructure and consider what is necessary to improve access to swimming for all ages and abilities but with particular regard to people with a disability;
- Maximise the use of existing facilities through efficient programming of pools;
- Review swimming pool provision and identify where gaps exist and how these might be met;
- Review the delivery of the aquatics strand of the PE Curriculum and consider how schools could be supported to defray costs of transport and facility hire and consider what is necessary to provide that all children leaving primary school are able to swim;
- Review Quality Standards for the industry for the teaching of swimming and delivery of aquatic programmes and the facilities in which they are delivered;
- In the context of Open Water Swimming, review the list of identified bathing waters in terms of usage, monitoring, access and provision of facilities;
- Consider the resources necessary to increase the number of identified bathing waters and, in particular, in areas where regular bathing already takes place.

Key Roles and Responsibilities

These are indicated in Chapters 4 and 5 of the National Sports Policy and include the following:

- Sport Ireland as the authority tasked with the development of sport in Ireland;
- Swim Ireland as the National Governing Body with responsibility for increasing participation in swimming;
- Ireland Active as the representative body for leisure facilities in Ireland;
- Local Authorities are key stakeholders in the context of public spaces which are widely used for swimming and other aquatic activity;
- Local Sports Partnerships as the drivers of Local Sports Plans consistent with the overall vision and objectives of NSP;
- Government Departments with specific roles in setting policy and providing resources to deliver on a National Swimming Strategy including: the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media; the Department of Health; the Department of Education; the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications.

Consultation:

In addition to the public consultation process, the Working Group undertook wider consultation with other bodies, including:

- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- Department of Transport
- Department of Rural and Community Development
- The Federation of Irish Sport
- Local Sports Partnerships
- The Environmental Protection Agency
- Olympic Federation of Ireland
- Paralympics Ireland
- Water Safety Ireland
- RLSS
- Fáilte Ireland
- Irish Hotels Federation
- Special Olympics Ireland
- Student Sport Ireland



Appendix 3 – Abbreviations and Acronyms

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSPPA	Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity Study
D/CEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
D/HLG	Department of Housing and Local Government
D/RCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
D/TCAGSM	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
DAF	Dormant Accounts Fund
DESC	Dunmore East Swim Club
DPO	Disabled Persons' Organisations
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ISM	Irish Sports Monitor
LASPP	Local Authority Swimming Pool Programme
LSP	Local Sports Partnerships
LSSIF	Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund
NAC	National Aquatic Centre
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
NGB	National Governing Bodies
NSP	National Sports Policy
SAP	Sports Action Plan
SCEP	Sports Capital and Equipment Programme
SSLC	Shannon Swimming and Leisure Centre
ZEVI	Zero Emissions Vehicles Ireland

