

Coaching Development Programme for Ireland Review and Consultation Process.

‘Next Steps’ Consultation Statement

Introduction

This review is being undertaken so that the Coaching Development Programme for Ireland (CDPI), can continue to build on the capacity of the sports and physical activity sector, and does so with reference to national policy, sector realities and participant expectations.

This ‘Next Steps’ consultation stage of the review, is an opportunity for the sports and physical activity sector to identify where and how the CDPI, and the sector in general, might best meet the challenges and the opportunities for sports and physical activity in Ireland.

This Consultation Statement is a mid-point of the Next Steps consultation process, its purpose is to outline our understanding of the context for sports coaching and sports coaches in Ireland, so that the sports sector can discuss and comment on the issues which have emerged and raise any other topics which they understand are appropriate. These comments and observations are welcome from a high-performance, performance and participation perspective.

Document Structure

This document:

1. identifies the current context of sport and sport coaching in Ireland in particular the role responsibilities and actions of Sport Ireland Coaching, the role of the Coach Development Programme Ireland, the changing expectations for sport in Ireland, and the expectations for the coach;
2. outlines some of the key options which are available to National Governing Bodies and others for the evolution of sports coaching in Ireland;
3. poses key questions to elicit responses on how to inform and guide the future development of the CDPI model.

This document has not identified all of the issues or development opportunities in the area of coach training and education in Ireland and so observations, and recommendations outside of its specific content are also welcome.

Executive Summary

Since the inception of the Coaching Development Programme for Ireland (CDPI) in 1993 the context for sport and the sport's coach has changed and the CDPI, must similarly evolve. This review's consultation process wants feedback from the sport's sector on the training and education supports which the coach¹ requires to fulfil their role effectively.

What does the NGB need, what does the coach need?

The following categories, while not exhaustive, guide this consultation discussion:

- **Context:** The context for sport and sport coaching has become more complex and the CDPI adjusts to provide practical training and education supports for coaches. However, engagement in the CDPI and the impact of the CDPI varies across NGBs:
 - What examples do you have of the effectiveness of the CDPI to date in supporting your NGB's coaches to meet this changing context?
 - What examples or suggestions do you have regarding what else the CDPI and Sport Ireland Coaching need to do?
- **Structure:** Sport Ireland Coaching, the partnership with the National Governing Bodies and the CDPI are important parts of the sports coaching structure in Ireland.
 - Why does your sport engage in the CDPI process, what value does it bring?
 - Is your NGB able to make best use of this CDPI structure, is this structure flexible enough,
 - Are there leadership or support gaps which Sport Ireland Coaching can address?
 - What value do the quality assurance elements of this structure bring to your coaches, sport and organisation?
- **Process:** Coaches come from different backgrounds and they bring with them different skills, experiences and motivations.
 - What needs to be done to the coach training process so that coaches have the choices, opportunity and flexibility to develop and be effective?
 - What are the barriers in the CDPI process and what are the solutions to these barriers?

We also welcome comments on the CDPI options which are open to the various NGBs such as the quality assurance process in Sport Ireland Coaching (Quality and Qualifications Ireland accreditation), the Coach Developer process, the delivery of NGB training courses and other training supports and blended learning.

This consultation process also explores specific challenges such as the ***lack of progression by coaches through the levels***, the role of ***continuing professional development*** and how this can be supported, facilitating ***'blended' training*** in addition to training courses, coach training in ***behaviours and attitudes*** as well as technical skills, ***multi-sport coaching***, coach ***gender balance*** and more ***collaboration*** between clubs/NGBs and further education and training providers.

This list is not exhaustive and comments on any other topics which you understand can improve the training and education supports for coaches, are welcome. Additional written submissions can be made to humphrey@ilc.ie

¹ While different in practice, for ease of reading, the terms coach and instructor are used interchangeably in this document.

Current Context



Sport Ireland Coaching and the CDPI

Under the Sport Ireland Act 2015, Sport Ireland's statutory responsibilities include a range of coaching functions such as coach development, quality assurance, and coach award qualifications. Sport Ireland Coaching is the body within Sport Ireland with leadership responsibility for these coaching elements.

Sport Ireland Coaching, in its previous structures as the National Coaching and Training Centre and Coaching Ireland, through partnership with the Sports National Governing Bodies and others in the sports sector in Ireland, developed the Coaching Development Programme for Ireland (CDPI). The CDPI is a national and sectoral framework which supports coaches so that they can acquire the knowledge, skills and experience to realise their coaching ambition, the potential of the individuals they coach and the possibilities of their sport. The CDPI

The CDPI structure is a 'levels' based (Introduction and levels 1 - 4), structure which provides coach and tutor education supports through an internationally recognised coach education system.

The CDPI frameworks set out a series of outcomes-based coach training templates for each level which the individual NGBs adapt to and deliver according to the context of their sport. It also sets standards for assuring the quality of delivery and administration on these programmes.

THE COACHING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR IRELAND



Launched by the National
Coaching and Training
Centre in 1993



Partnership Model

60

There are currently over 60
Partner National
Governing Bodies



And various education and
commercial sports providers
engaged in the programme

Coach levels Introduction
& Levels 1 - 4.
Adventure Instructor
Levels 1 - 5



25,000

Training and certifying 25,000
coaches each year on 130
different accredited Coach and
Instructor awards



Over 222,000 people
have been trained
and certified as
coaches.

Sport & Coach Context.

In addition to the competitive and performance agenda within sport, the ***Irish National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027*** highlights the contribution of sport, through the pathways of participation,

performance and high performance, for health and wellbeing, Community Development and Social Cohesion, Economic Activity, Education and Lifelong Learning,

Furthermore, the Policy notes that Sports coaches are central to realising the national vision for sport in Ireland for 2027 so that:

People will be inspired, their lives enriched, their enjoyment enhanced, and their quality of life improved as a result of their own active or social participation in sport, and as a result of success by our top sports people in competition.

This Policy also identifies three Sport Ireland Coaching Actions:

1. A greater focus on non-sport specific physical literacy programmes for younger children.
2. An annual volunteer training budget with a focus on issues such as child welfare, disability awareness, first aid, sports administration and governance, and fundraising.
3. A new coaching plan to address the issues of greater diversity in the coaching workforce, coaching qualifications at entry level more adaptable so that coaches can work across a range of sports and physical activities, a greater focus on behaviour and attitudes rather than pure technical skills at entry level and promoting the greater use of technology in coach education, as well as coaching for people with disabilities.

The competencies required for a coach to deliver these competitive, performance and wellbeing agendas are significant. In addition to relationship management and the technical sports skills, increasingly the coach has to grapple with the science of sport in areas such as nutrition/hydration, bio-mechanics and sports psychology and they also have to operate within an administration, management and statutory system which rightly places the athlete's personal development at the centre.

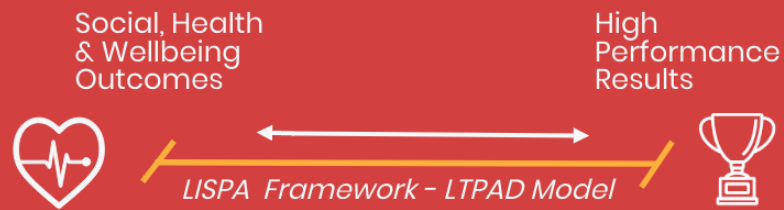
The volunteer club-based coach is the bedrock of coaching in Ireland' currently and in the future. However, there are increasing numbers of commercial, semi-commercial, further and higher education coaches emerging.

Coaches are also increasingly engaging with participants from diverse backgrounds and with different capabilities. Coaches also have different ambitions regarding the level or the focus of their coaching work.

Key Question

What are the changes required for the CDPI to meet the evolving needs of the sports coach?

Sport and Coaching Expectations



Coaching Skills & Context:

- Tactical and Technical Skills.
- Educator and Guide,
- Relationship Management.
- Sport science,
- Manager,
- Volunteer, Professional.

Coaching Philosophy:

- Athlete Centred.
- Positive Experience.
- Personal Development.
- Values, Beliefs and Ethics.



Options

The further evolution of the CDPI must be shaped by the changing context of sport and coaching in Ireland, and by the needs and resources of the sports sector. This sports sector is not homogeneous, it is comprised of different 'actors' chief amongst which are the NGBs. These NGBs have different sports, cultures, resources and ambitions. Sports providers in the commercial and education sectors are similarly varied.

Hence, while the CDPI must provide a consistent coach development structure, this structure has to allow for these varying actor needs and capabilities.

Options: Quality Assurance and Accreditation

Sports Coaching Ireland is also charged with ensuring the alignment of the coach training structure with national accreditation models and in ensuring that there is an appropriate quality assurance process in place. Sport Ireland Coaching has been approved by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), the National agency with responsibility for qualifications and quality assurance in further education and training and higher education in Ireland, as a Provider of Higher Education. Hence, Sport Ireland Coaching can run existing QQI programmes and awards up to Level 7 on the National Framework for Qualifications and submit programmes for approval under QQI.

This provides both an effective quality assurance process and it will allow Sport Ireland to offer programmes of Higher Education including Degree level awards. Furthermore, credits earned through the National Framework for Qualifications are recognised through the educational system in Ireland and Europe meaning that Learners completing relevant CDPI coaching programmes can accumulate academic credits.

Key Question

Are NGBs and other providers sufficiently aware of the quality assurance process and the opportunities of the QQI accreditation and are there barriers to pursuing this?



Options: Coach Supports

With reference to the CDPI level syllabus templates, the NGB Training Process has typically relied on the development and delivery of standardised training courses for each level via Coach Developers (Tutors) to trainee coaches. This approach is supported by NGBs, clubs and in some cases via Local Sports Partnership coach/instructor training supports.

There is tremendous value in having these 'standard' training courses as they:

- Provide an opportunity for the interaction of the trainees with each other, 'face-time' with the NGB and with the coach Tutor/Developer.
- Ensure a degree of training consistency across coach trainers, coaches and locations.
- Are relatively un-complicated to administer and roll-out nationally.



Partially in response to the various agendas for sport and the added complexity of sports coaching identified earlier in this document, there has been a shift towards a constructivist² type coach training approach in some NGBs, whereby the training process is designed according to the individual coach needs and in partnership with the trainee coach. This approach can guide the format and content of coach training and supports according to individual coach strengths, weaknesses and local context.

This approach relies on coach support measures in addition to the course delivery role of the Tutor. As a consequence, the role of the Coach Developer emerged.

The Coach Developer can both deliver the NGB course and is also trained to provide a range of coach or club specific supports. This coach developer role facilitates NGBs in developing and delivering coach supports which are responsive to the needs of the individual trainee coach and club.

Key Question

What are the barriers and opportunities for coach training supports?

² Constructivist teaching is based on the belief that learning occurs as learners are actively involved in a process of meaning and knowledge construction as opposed to passively receiving information.

Options: Course & Blended Learning



NGBs and other providers now have the option of continuing to deliver 'standard' courses solely or develop locally devised training programmes instead of or in parallel with these courses according to their local coach or club needs. Furthermore, these training and support measures have the potential to be more flexible and diverse in content and format. The Coach Developer model can also recognise and use local coaches as mentors and as part of a continuing professional development process.

These non-course training formats are open within both a course and a non-course training and support process and some of these training components are generic and relevant across multiple/all sports types.

Key Question

Given the capacity and resource variations amongst different sports, how might (should?), the NGB training course be supplemented via non-course training formats, and what is Sport Ireland Coaching's role in this?

Options: Coach Progression

Coach Progression

Level Progression

Intention

Coach award progression
Introduction & 1 – 4
Adventure
Instructor Levels 1 – 5



Actual

Progression insufficient
above award level 1

Continuing Development 1

Desired

Continuing
Professional
Development



Required

Balance Ongoing Training
Load & Volunteer Coach
Lifestyle.
Flexible, attractive
training process.

Continuing Development 2

Desired

Coach
Training +
Objectives



Required

Within 'Level' 'Pick and Mix'
Training Opportunities &
Resources

Additional Skills

Desired

Relationship
management,
administration
skills.
Coaching for
behaviours and
attitudes.
Multi-sport coaching.



Required

Broadening of Syllabus?
Instructor Awards?
Multi-sport coach awards?

Gender Balance

Desired

No Coach or
Instructor Gender
Barriers



Required

Is this a CDPI issue or a
sports specific issue?

Shared Expertise

Desired

Further blending
of grounded and
theoretical
coaching training



Required

Clarify common objectives.
Acknowledge value of a
variety of training formats.
Meeting grounds for
interaction to take place.

Challenges

Differing
NGB/Provider
Capacities.
Resource
Requirements.

There are a low number of coaches qualified at levels 2 to 4. Various explanations for this include resource limitations in some NGBs which prevent course development or delivery, lack of coach demand, pressure of training load, alternative informal in-house training processes and so on. How might this issue be addressed effectively?

Sport evolves, new agendas, different training processes emerge, equipment and infrastructure changes and so on. Regardless of their initial training process, course based or bespoke, for the coach to remain current and proficient in their role it is suggested that some form of continuing professional development or CPD is required. Some sports rely on commercial, coaching staff or self-employed coaches and they can hence require certain levels of annual CPD training. However, most sports are reliant on volunteer coaches and, mindful of coach retention, the NGB is limited in the level of additional and ongoing training which they can require from these coaches.

It can be argued that the sports and physical activity 'participation' agenda is supported through activities which are engaging, fun and well organised and where personal growth as against competitive progression is important for the participant. On this basis the 'recreation' coach needs to have good interpersonal and management/administration skills³ and requires fewer sports 'performance' capabilities.

Is the 'instructor' training focus of the Adventure Sports Framework and the Adventure Sports Leader Framework a template for other sports to develop a recreational sports coach training process?

Some coaches are motivated to train beyond their coach level award due to local context or personal interest. These coaches seeking 'Training +' opportunities may not have the resources or the inclination to train to the next coaching level but they welcome the opportunity to 'pick and mix' further training opportunities which are relevant to their needs and accessible within their lifestyle.

While not the case in all sports, in general there are far fewer female versus male coaches. Can the CDPI be altered to reverse this or is this a sport by sport issue?

Further and higher education providers are offering an increasing volume and variety of sports coach and sports science courses at Post Leaving Certificate, Degree and Masters level. There may be unrealised opportunities for collaboration and benefit between these further and higher education courses and the sports NGB/clubs. There appear to be further opportunities to integrate national and local coaching and sports development agendas with further and higher education provision and vice versa, for example:

- NGBs' clubs and athletes benefiting from the expertise and research of sport science staff and students.
- Further and higher education staff and students benefiting from the 'grounded' realities of sports and physical activity coaching in clubs and communities.
- Identifying and pursuing relevant sports and physical activity research objectives and the sharing of existing research findings.
- Collaborative access to the training and education equipment and infrastructure of further and higher education providers and sports club training facilities and participants.

Key Question

The flexible or blended learning model, with online and local training resources in addition to face to face training, and shared generic training resources appear to provide part of the answer to these various issues. Is the capacity available and are the resource costs of such an approach realistic for all NGBs?

³ It is acknowledged that performance coaches require interpersonal and management skills but ones with a competitive versus an enjoyment agenda.

Public Perception

While there is a growing range of expectations from the coach and an increasingly more diverse coaching workload, more needs to be done to recognise the role and value of the coach/instructor

in sport and society in general. Doing so is likely to reduce the unreasonable expectations on coaches, especially when they are volunteers, enhance coach motivation, improve retention and encourage new-entrants.

Furthermore, the unbalanced numbers of female coaches in the CDPI levels may in part be a reflection of public perception, a lack of visible role models or it may represent a need to promote a different local/sport culture.

Key Question

Influencing and altering public perception regarding coaching requires significant resources is this a leadership and advocacy responsibility for Sport Ireland Coaching?