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# Infrastructure and encouraging people to become coaches: Research summary

## Introduction

This document is based on the findings of the evaluation of **sportscotland**'s support for coaches and coaching. It highlights the key findings and offers examples of what works and why in terms of **sportscotland**'s coaching infrastructure. There is a large coaching workforce in Scotland, working in different settings, at different levels and across a wide range of sports. Encouraging people to become coaches, and retaining experienced coaches is central to the delivery of a world class sporting system.

## Objective

People in Scotland should be encouraged and enabled to become coaches. Once in the coaching workforce, coaches should be supported to have the key skills and behaviours to provide quality coaching, at the level that they choose to coach at. There should be clear and accessible pathways to develop their skills and progress in coaching, where progression is their aspiration.

## The evidence

- **sportscotland** plays a valuable strategic role in shaping policy and strategic direction in coach development.
- It provides a comprehensive range of CPD opportunities for coaches that help to develop their skills.
- There is a lack of comprehensive data on the number of coaches operating at each of the UKCC levels which makes workforce planning difficult.
- The Coaching Scorecard is useful in helping SGBs plan and align their support. It allows **sportscotland** to understand what SGBs are delivering. However, there is scope for the Scorecard to capture more detail on the quality of SGB support.
- The Coaching Network makes a significant contribution to workforce planning, support and strategy development. However, it is under-used and could be drawn on more to help shape policy; facilitate peer learning and enable knowledge transfer.
- The current UKCC education subsidy model is well structured, but there are some weaknesses in the administration and monitoring of subsidies.
- It can be difficult for coaches and some partners to have a clear understanding of the range of opportunities in the **sportscotland** support offer.
- Some SGBs deliver their own CPD to coaches and there are instances of overlap with **sportscotland**'s offer.

## What works

- Collaboration on developing and delivering support makes the best use of the expertise and strengths of partners.
- Workforce planning is most effective when it is evidence based, drawing on information and intelligence held by all partners.

- Using technology to communicate with coaches, SGBs and others to support coach development is effective. It is important to keep abreast of and harness developments in technology.
- Keeping coaches motivated and inspired helps to retain them in the coaching workforce. It is also important to ensure a smooth pathway for coaches who drop out to return to coaching.
- Managing the entry and progression of coaches through UKCC levels increases the supply of coaches and improves the quality of coaching.
- The UKCC Education subsidy works well as a lever to reduce barriers of cost to coach education.

### Points to consider

- **Workforce planning**  
Accurate data and intelligence about the current, active coaching workforce helps to make sure that there are enough coaches, in the right places and at the right levels to deliver coaching across sports in Scotland. The information can be used to address any gaps and allow for succession planning, to make sure there is a pipeline of coaches coming through into the workforce.
- **Using technology**  
Technology is an effective mechanism for communicating with coaches, encouraging them to take part in CPD and supporting them to apply what they have learnt. It can also be useful for building and enabling peer networking. It should be part of delivery mechanisms, used in conjunction with more traditional methods. It is important to continue to review and update technology as it is so fast changing.
- **Capitalising on expertise**  
Collaborative approaches that recognise and draw on the expertise of all relevant organisations and networks, can lead to a better quality of solutions and also build ownership and buy in. Effective collaboration can also deliver joined-up solutions.
- **Encouraging participation**  
Accessible, clear information about the support that is available and who can benefit helps coaches to take part in the support that meets their needs. It has the greatest impact on quality of coaching where coaches base their choice of support on an accurate understanding of their own development needs. Using the results of an individual Training Needs Analysis is the most effective way of doing this.
- **Recruitment and retention**  
Clear pathways that attend to the barriers we know some groups currently experience, will enable new groups to enter and progress in coaching. Investing in their skills and development, then supporting them to apply their new learning in the workplace, keeps coaches motivated and so more likely to continue to coach.