

## **Special Olympics Great Britain Athlete Membership Process and Forms**

In a bid to try and streamline and clarify Special Olympics GB's current athlete membership processes alongside clarity in eligibility, a new 3 phase process from provisional to full membership, was introduced in 2012 for all clubs.

We are acutely aware that provisional membership needs to be pitched at such a level as to encourage people to join the organisation but demanding enough to be clear what the eligibility criteria are. It also needs to be 'light enough touch' in terms of administration, whilst having a good level of quality assurance.

It is hoped that the provisional registration gives the club and athlete time to get to know each other and fully confirm their membership status before being asked to complete the full SAM (Special Olympics Athlete Membership) registration form.

We feel that the knowledge to sign off on someone's eligibility lies at the local level and with the people who work with the athlete on a day to day or regular basis through the club. We would therefore propose that each new potential athlete coming into a club is met by the Eligibility Officer who completes the provisional membership form.

There is then a 12 week period within which, with support from the Club Eligibility Officer, each athlete will be required to provide an letter of endorsement by a professional associated with the individual personally in an appropriate position to understand what the definition of intellectual disability means and within the letter, outline evidence supporting the conclusion that the athletes has intellectual disabilities.

We may need to be quite flexible about who this person is as cultures vary in terms of the services, the professionals available and/or the job titles used. We also need to be aware of what evidence someone under 18 can provide versus someone who is over 18.

**Unified Partners:** A Unified Partner is someone without a learning disability who is participating in a recognised Unified Sport ®. Unified Sports opportunities are in the main team sports such as Football, Basketball – we cannot accept Unified Partner applications for individual sports this includes swimming, gymnastics, athletics etc.

Unified Partners should proceed direct to SAM registration following initial 12 week training period

**UPDATE JANUARY 2014 (and communicated to all clubs via the Jan edition of the Sports & Development Newsletter):** The National Executive Council recently changed the policy on athlete registration – **athletes must be SAM registered to compete at ALL levels of Special Olympics competition rather than just national level and above as before.** Clubs can still apply for sanction to invite non-registered athletes to competitions, but they can compete as a 'guest' on one occasion only.

## What next?

### Phase 1- All Clubs appoint a Club Eligibility Officer

- Each Special Olympics GB Club (Branch or Associate) to seek and appoint an eligibility officer to oversee the new athlete registration process.
- The Eligibility Officer can be someone from within the club but they will need to have sufficient knowledge and understanding of SOGB's eligibility criteria and will meet and work with the athlete over the 12 week provisional membership period.
- Each club registers their Eligibility Officer with Special Olympics GB on the Eligibility Form provided
- Where required, further training can be organised and provided by SOGB
- A member of the health and wellbeing committee is available to discuss any individual cases with you on request.

### Phase 2: 12 week provisional membership

- All new athletes wishing to join club commence (up to) a 12 week provisional membership period
- During this time the athlete can participate in training ONLY
- With support from the Club's Eligibility Officer, each athlete will be required to provide copies (where possible/appropriate) of eligibility evidence such as an letter of endorsement from a professional associated with the individual personally and in an appropriate position to understand what the definition of intellectual disability means
- The letter must point to evidence supporting the conclusion that the athletes has intellectual disabilities.

#### **Letter of Endorsement**

- A psychologist
- A doctor
- A head teacher
- A local learning disability team advisor (local authority)
- A manager of a care home
- A Social Worker

**For athletes over 18** that cannot provide a letter of recommendation or a person with no history of formal care services in place please refer to the guidance on page 6 and the key indicators which may help support their application.

People who do NOT meet the eligibility criteria to become Special Olympics Athletes **can and should** be offered where appropriate and required, an in training only status or opportunities as a unified partner, volunteer or coach.

### **Phase 3: Proceed to SAM membership form completion**

- Once eligibility officer is happy to sign off the athlete's eligibility for membership a full SAM form is completed and sent to HQ along with the copy evidence.
- **PLEASE DO NOT** send SAM forms to Head Office without first checking that there is a photo attached (with name & club on the back), signed release form, copy evidence and blue carbon copy is attached as this causes delays!
- **If you have sent a photo electronically** please mark this on the form with date of when sent.
- Once received at HQ the form will be logged and evidence checked. If accepted the athlete will be added to the main SOGB Database (GMS) and given a SAM number which will be written on the blue carbon copy which is then returned to the Main Club Contact.
- To request SAM forms please email [peju.oriunuta@sogb.org.uk](mailto:peju.oriunuta@sogb.org.uk) or [info@sogb.org.uk](mailto:info@sogb.org.uk)

**PLEASE NOTE** we do not expect to receive the provisional forms with the SAM form only attach relevant copy eligibility evidence which has been collated. The provisional form cannot be accepted as evidence information.

## Special Olympics GB Athlete Provisional Registration Form

**This form is to be used by a Special Olympics Club Eligibility Officer only for the processing of potential NEW Special Olympics athletes. Each new athlete registering needs to supply the information outlined below to start training with a club and before they can complete full SAM membership with the organisation.**

### Athlete Contact Information

First Name:	Surname:
Date of Birth:	M/F
Address:	
Postcode	Tel (day)
Tel (Eve)	Email

Athlete age at registration (under/over 18): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please refer to additional guidance notes as to evidence requirements if the athlete is over 18.

### Parent/Guardian Contact Information

First Name:	Surname:
Address:	
Postcode	Tel (day)
Tel (Eve)	Email:

1. Eligibility evidence received to support membership of this application:

<b>Letter of endorsement</b>	<b>Dated</b>	<b>Comments</b>
A psychologist		
A doctor		
A head teacher		
A local learning disability team advisor (local authority)		
A manager of a care home		
A Social Worker		
Other		

**NB ONLY copies of evidence seen should be sent with SAM form. Please do not return this provisional form. It should be destroyed once SAM membership No is received from SOGB. It is advisable that you also keep a copy of any evidence that you send with the SAM form in case of any loss in the postal system!**

Eligibility Officer notes:

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## Identifying People with an Intellectual (learning) Disability

A learning disability is defined as 'a condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind, which is characterized by impairment of skills manifested during the developmental period, which contribute to the overall level of intelligence, ie. Cognitive, language, motor and social abilities' (ICD-10 – specifically Blocks F06.7-F06.9 (Mental Disorder due to brain damage) F70-F79 (WHO terminology; mental retardation) F80-F89 (disorders of psychological development) and F90-F98 (behavioural and emotional disorders with onset usually occurring in childhood and adolescence) for full guidance refer <http://www.who.int/classifications/icd/en/bluebook.pdf>

In other words:

'A significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information, to learn new skills (impaired intelligence) with a reduced ability to cope independently (impaired social functioning) which started before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development' (Department of Health (2001) Valuing People)

In the UK a person is deemed to have a learning disability if they have an IQ lower than 75. IQ tests are acknowledged to be limited. In addition the individual is usually expected to have significant difficulties with self-care, adaptive behaviour and self-organisational skills. This definition covers adults with autism who also have learning disabilities, **but not those** with a higher level of autistic spectrum disorder who may be of average, or above average intelligence, such as people with Asperger's Syndrome.

### Some indicators that suggest someone may have a learning disability

The person:

- Did not go to a main stream school
- Finds it hard to answer questions
- Is unable to read, write, interpret and process new information
- Finds recalling information difficult
- Finds it hard to maintain their own self care
- Needs significant assistance to carry out their daily lives

### People who DO NOT have a learning disability

People with conditions such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Attention Deficit Disorder, Asperger's Syndrome or challenging behaviour. Similarly people with a physical or sensory impairment do not qualify as having a learning disability unless they ALSO have a learning disability.

Partner organisation Mencap can provide key information and support on all aspects of learning disabilities

<http://www.mencap.org.uk/all-about-learning-disability>