

## **Everyday Swim – an Introduction**

### **Getting the nation active through swimming**

There are lots of great projects all around the country trying to encourage people to become active, including through swimming.

So how is Everyday Swim (ES) different?

### **More swimmers**

Its aim is to increase participation. This doesn't mean the number of *swims* (numbers through the till which tell us nothing about whether we have engaged anyone new), but the number of *swimmers*.

That means attracting non users, non swimmers, returning or nervous swimmers, swimmers who cannot currently access pools, swimmers who currently choose not to access pools.

And keeping them swimming on a regular basis.

Swimming participation has been static for 20 years. To have the impact we need to leave a genuine legacy for 2012, we need new thinking, and fundamental, sustained improvements across the swimming industry.

### **Business case**

The research undertaken so far by the project, and secondary analysis of the national **Active People** survey, demonstrate a strong business case for getting new people swimming. And the cost of teaching someone to swim can be recouped in under a year. Not to mention the social and health dividends.

### **Culture change**

ES is about bringing about a culture change in the way swimming is delivered and perceived to make it something people want to do and want to keep doing.

Are the pools accessible to the whole community? well known? appealing? fun!? well staffed and managed? Are people given accurate, useful information about the benefits of swimming and opportunities near to them? Is that information given to non users as well as advertised at the pool?! Is swimming playing its part in GP referral schemes, and linking into other existing mechanisms for behaviour change? and yes, do the lockers work? It matters!

### **Scale & National Network**

Everyday Swim is funded through Sport England (£3Million currently until December 2008) and local projects are matched by local partners (mostly local authorities) to over £1M.

There are currently eight projects across the country, each with a different focus. Each has a project coordinator locally and critically a national network to bring the projects together to share learning and good practice. The network meets regularly. Information gathered is used by the ASA and its partners nationally to lobby relevant influencers to remove barriers to swimming.

**A National Everyday Swim Steering Group** (members include **Sport England, Dept of Health, Institute of Sport & Recreation Management, Local Govt Assoc, British Heart Foundation**) meets quarterly to give a national and policy steer.

### **Challenging the industry**

As well as getting started on providing some new swimming sessions, the projects locally are challenging the pool providers for example:

- **Woking** - reviewing 'appropriate swimwear' policies to enable people who wish to be more covered to swim in comfort AND safety.
- **Islington** - looking at pool programming to free up additional pool time
- **Kirklees** - opening learner pools to parents and siblings during squad training to keep them active as well as entertained
- **Suffolk** – open-days managed sensitively (rather than the usual open doors free for all) to encourage nervous swimmers - 'no obligation to swim' approach, tour of site, discussion with instructors.
- **Various** - rota-ing on female lifeguards to ensure women-only swims are just that.
- **Various** - challenging pool programmes that are 'the way we've always done it'
- **Various** - carving up the pool space to allow multi use at peak times
- **Suffolk & Woking** - opening up school pools for public use (great for learners and for shallow-water aquafit, as well as a more private environment for eg women only swims) and critically providing info to others on the legal and industry requirements. 'How I did it' info in one place.
- **Telford** - training staff to be confident in dealing with and teaching people with disabilities
- **Easington** - developing the local 'free swim' programme to ensure that current non participants are included and there are efforts made to link children into regular opportunities
- **All** - piloting and implementing new workforce qualifications to provide a much more varied pool programme
- **All** - tackling concerns over cleanliness - potential 'blue flag' scheme for pools
- **All** - outreach work to communities - do the people who pass the end of the road every day even know the pool is there?

### **Robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E)**

Provided by the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University, the M&E team have been involved in the project from the time the first project coordinators were in post. This means M&E is built in to everything we do – outcomes AND processes so when we find things that work, we know why.

### **A household name as the Everyday Swim Ambassador**

Duncan Goodhew is a fantastic ambassador – a real household name in swimming, an inspiration to those delivering swimming and a great entertainer for all ages.

### **And when it's all over?**

Everyday Swim aims to provide a blueprint for increasing participation that can be used in other areas and for other sports. There is good information already out there but it has not been brought together in this structured and robust way before. Everyday Swim is keen to share the learning as we go along. To this end we have:

*Everyday Swim News*

*[www.everydayswim.org](http://www.everydayswim.org)*

Everyday Swim conferences – the first planned for 11 October this year at the Barbican in London full details at [www.everydayswim.org/events](http://www.everydayswim.org/events)

A culture of information sharing – we are keen to share good practice and learn from others, locally and nationally  
Part of the national role is to look at other dissemination ideas such as ‘loaning’  
Everyday Swim Coordinators to other areas to run development days

#### **A bit about swimming.....**

- Swimming is top participation sport and the second most popular activity after walking. 20 Million people in England swim every year.
- There is a latent demand for swimming – it’s the top activity sedentary people say they would like to try.
- More women swim than men (17% of women compared to 10% of men bucking the trend for national physical activity levels).
- The participation profile for aquafit is completely different to other sports – with a peak age of 60 – 69 and more people will a long standing illness than without.
- Swimming provides something for everyone - not just lane swimming but whole range of existing and new activities such as mini polo (no rules water polo), aqua circuits, flip and fun (introductory level diving for kids - legitimate bombing!), aquafit classes, swimfit (programmes and equipment for recreational lane swimmers to make the lengths a bit more interesting!).
- Can swim at any age - a few months to 95+, families can swim together, all abilities can enjoy being in the pool
- The water itself provides a gym and a play ground
- One in five adults in England cannot swim
- Swimming can save your life