

Swim England Hertfordshire Event Team Statement on the 16 Year Old Age Group

In the January 2025 County Championships debrief with clubs the 16 year old age group issue was discussed. It was agreed at that meeting that a separate 16 year old group was not needed. The Event Team started planning for 2026 accordingly.

In October 2025 the issue was raised again and discussed, confirmation was also received from Swim England that the Pathway Document was still a live document.

That Pathway Document states:

Age Bandings

The specific Age Bandings are to be 10/11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 & over. Age groups are classified based on age as at the 31st December in the year of competition. This is particularly relevant in the events with finals, where the oldest age group final permitted is "16 and over".

Event Programming

All Championship events (individual and relays) for all age groups must be contested within the 'County Window'. See table 1 below which outlines the events that should be contested within each age group category. Bagcats are no longer included.

Essential Criteria:

- 50m and 100m events: Heats and Finals
- 200m events as Heat Declared Winner as a minimum
- 400m + events as Heat Declared Winner
- Para Swimming Multi – Classification competition to be included

Desirable Criteria:

- 200m events: Heats and Finals
- Consideration to be given to individual or sub groups of age groups in heats, e.g. separate events for 10/ 11 years, 12 years, 13 – 15 years, 16+ years rather than placing 10 and 12 year old swimmers in the same heats, which would not be considered the optimal format.

Considerations for the 16+ years Age Group Category:

- Where Counties wish to give more swimmers the opportunity to swim in heats and finals, "B", "C", etc., finals are permitted, but all at the same upper age group of 16 and over. Separate finals at, for example, 17 to 19 years, are not permitted. However, Counties are permitted to make additional Awards, such as to the top 17/18 year old or 19 year old and over, based on the swimming to the Pathway programme.

The philosophy behind the Pathway is one of progression to senior swimming, hence the age group structure from county championships through to Nationals

County Championships have 10/11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16+

Regional Championships have 11/12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17+

Swim England Summer Nationals have 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18+

Aquatics GB Summer Championships have 13/14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19+

Swim England Hertfordshire have swum to the age groups within that document since 2017 with the exception of the years immediately after Covid.

Swim England are currently undertaking a competition review.

Given that this review is underway it was stated by the Event Team in October that the issue of a separate 16 year old age group would not be revisited until that review is completed.

The Swim England Hertfordshire Event Team have agreed to stand by that statement from October and will not be revisiting the 16 year old age group until we get the results of the competition review from Swim England.

The Event Team will then make decisions on future County Championships based on the outcomes of that review.