**Guide to starting or becoming an athletics club**

This guide has been designed to support people that are interested in setting up a new running/athletics club (or for their jog**scotland** group to affiliate as a **scottish**athletics club).

For further information please e-mail development@scottishathletics.org.uk.

**Step 1: Initial Considerations**

1. Have you checked if there's already a similar club in your area? □ Yes □ No

2. Do you know if there is the demand for a new athletics/running club? □ Yes □ No

3. Are you clear about what you want to achieve with the club? □ Yes □ No

4. How will you access the facilities you need? □ Yes □ No

5. Do you have ideas for funding your club? □ Yes □ No

6. Do you know what your potential members want from your club? □ Yes □ No

7. Do you know where else to go for help (e.g. local partners)? □ Yes □ No

If you can tick yes to all the questions above, it sounds like you're ready to move onto step 2.

**Step 2: Vision – why are you starting the club/becoming affiliated and what are your objectives?**

Why are you starting the new club? Be clear on your reasons for establishing the club/becoming affiliated. Working with others (potential members) use this to form a vision. Where would you like the club to be in one year, five years etc?

Think about what it is you are offering and why people should join your club. Having a clear vision and offer will help you “sell” your new club to potential members and volunteers.

Be sure to consider what your potential members and participants will want from the club and build this into your vision. It's important to make your club welcoming right from the start and show that you will take their wants, needs and feedback into account.

A few good examples can be found at the following links:

https://aberdeenamateurathleticclub.wordpress.com/

[www.garscubeharriers.org.uk/our-values/](http://www.garscubeharriers.org.uk/our-values/)

[www.naathletics.co.uk/docs/mission-statement.pdf](http://www.naathletics.co.uk/docs/mission-statement.pdf)

**Step 3: How will the club be managed?**

Decide on the right committee structure that meets the needs of your club now and in the future. Will your proposed structure help you to deliver the vision you have set out?

Think about who are the right people to be on the committee. Who has the right skills and experiences for the committee roles? Ask them to get involved. Where possible make sure each committee member only has one role, so they are not overloaded.

Beyond that your committee structure depends upon your club and it is important to find a structure that will work best for you. At minimum, a committee will normally comprise of a Chair (the person in charge), Secretary (deals with administration) and a Treasurer (handles the money). However, as good practice it is recommended that a committee should have between 5 – 8 members and be representative of your membership. You may wish to form sub-committees to focus on particular areas and allow the main committee to focus on the club’s business.

**Step 4: Legal structure and governing document**

One of the most important choices you will make when forming your athletics/running club is which legal structure will you adopt.

You may decide to proceed initially as an unincorporated association until the club is established, however you can revisit the legal structure at any stage to ensure it remains the most appropriate for your club.

For more information, you can read the [Sports Development Club Governance Legal Structures Overview Guide](https://jogscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Sports-Development-Club-Governance-Legal-Structures-Overview-Guide-2016.pdf) (click the link, or visit https://jogscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Sports-Development-Club-Governance-Legal-Structures-Overview-Guide-2016.pdf)

The governing document required will depend on your legal structure. If you choose to proceed as an unincorporated association initially your club will need a set of rules and a club constitution. This is a set of documents that outlines the club functions and the rules under which it will operate.

You can download an [example constitution for an Unincorporated Association](https://jogscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Sample-constitution-sportscotland-example.doc) (click the link, or visit https://jogscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Sample-constitution-sportscotland-example.doc)

**Step 5: Getting the basics right**

Now that you have decided on your legal structure, produced a governing document and decided on your management structure it is time to ensure you set the club up with the basics to succeed and be safe.

Consider the following questions to help you identify the next steps.

1. Do you have codes of conduct in place for athletes, coaches, officials,

 athletes and volunteers? □ Yes □ No

2. Do you have a Welfare Policy and appointed Welfare Officer? □ Yes □ No

3. Do you have a disciplinary/grievance policy and procedure? □ Yes □ No

4. Are you aware of the Equality Act 2010 and do you have an equality policy? □ Yes □ No

5. Do you have enough volunteers and coaches to deliver planned activities? □ Yes □ No

6. Are your coaches suitably qualified? □ Yes □ No

7. Do you have a registered bank account for the club with a minimum

of two signatories? □ Yes □ No

8. How will you look after the health and safety of your volunteers

and members? □ Yes □ No

9. How will you manage the data you are collecting? □ Yes □ No

**Step 6: Affiliating to scottishathletics**

Many clubs or groups decide to affiliate to **scottish**athletics because of the benefits and opportunities they provide. Membership of **scottish**athletics includes:

* Dedicated support from **scottish**athletics staff;
* Access to the national club and coach development programmes and resources;
* Access to **scottish**athletics ClubServe system to support the planning and development of your club;
* Discounts on coaching courses for registered club members;
* Eligibility to apply for licenses and insurance cover for events organised under UKA rules;
* Insurance cover for your clubs ‘athletics activities’. Covering not only training and competitions, but also club/region administrative meetings, social and fundraising activities organised by the club;
* Eligibility to enter (for scottishathletics individual members) into National Championships across a wide range of event groups;
* Eligibility for club places at the Virgin Money London Marathon - allocation based upon number of registered athletes aged over 18;
* Entitled to attend, speak and vote at any **scottish**athletics General Meeting.

Adhering to the steps outlined in the ‘Getting the basics right’ section above will ensure your club/group meets the requirements for affiliation to **scottish**athletics.

More information about affiliation can be found at [www.scottishathletics.org.uk/clubs/club-affiliation/](http://www.scottishathletics.org.uk/clubs/club-affiliation/).

**Step 7: Planning your development**

Working with your committee and considering the views of your existing or potential members, this is a great point to start planning your next steps. Initially, you may want to consider actions for the first year that will help establish the club and continue forming solid foundations and then look at what the club hopes to achieve in the next 3-5 years and the steps for achieving this.

Below are some suggestions of things you may wish to consider when creating your plan that haven’t already been highlighted in this document:

* Ensure there are clear roles and responsibilities in place for all your voluntary (or employed) roles. Continue reviewing the roles you have created to ensure they remain appropriate;
* Efficient structure for day-to-day running of the club. Is the committee focussing on key business and allowing sub-groups to manage day-to-day operations?
* Risk assessments created for all relevant activities and coaches/leaders first aid trained. Appropriates procedures and practices in place for managing health & safety;
* Does the UKA insurance cover provide insurance for everything you require (e.g. it won’t cover insurance for a facility you own or manage);
* Future development of coaches and officials. Planning for growth of the club and the development of your athletes;
* Appropriate internal and external competition opportunities;
* Membership recruitment and retention. Understanding the demographics of your local community and promoting the club;
* Robust financial management procedures and budget planning;

For further information on affiliation please contact development@scottishathletics.org.uk.