

Development Plan

2017 – 2021

A plan to develop and grow water polo in Ulster



"Mini Water Polo at Andersonstown LC" - Picture Courtesy of Donal McCann Photography



INTRODUCTION

The Ireland Water Polo Development Plan sets out a vision for the development of water polo in Ireland...

“OUR VISION IS FOR WATER POLO TO BE A VIBRANT, GROWING SPORT PLAYED BY YOUTHS AND ADULTS COMPETING IN WELL ORGANISED, ENJOYABLE EVENTS OVERSEEN BY STRONG NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND CLUB MODELS”

In addition, the new 2017 – 2021 Swim Ireland Strategic Plan supports, as a key priority, the implementation of the Ireland Water Polo Development Plan.

Therefore, Ulster Water Polo, in partnership with our friends in Swim Ulster, will do our part in helping to deliver this vision within our Province; our UWP Development Plan will guide us towards achievement of this goal.



THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Critical to the successful implementation of this plan will be a co-ordinated strategic approach to delivery of agreed objectives through all Ulster Water Polo Clubs and via Ulster Water Polo; which in turn will support the goals set out within the Ireland Water Polo Development Plan.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

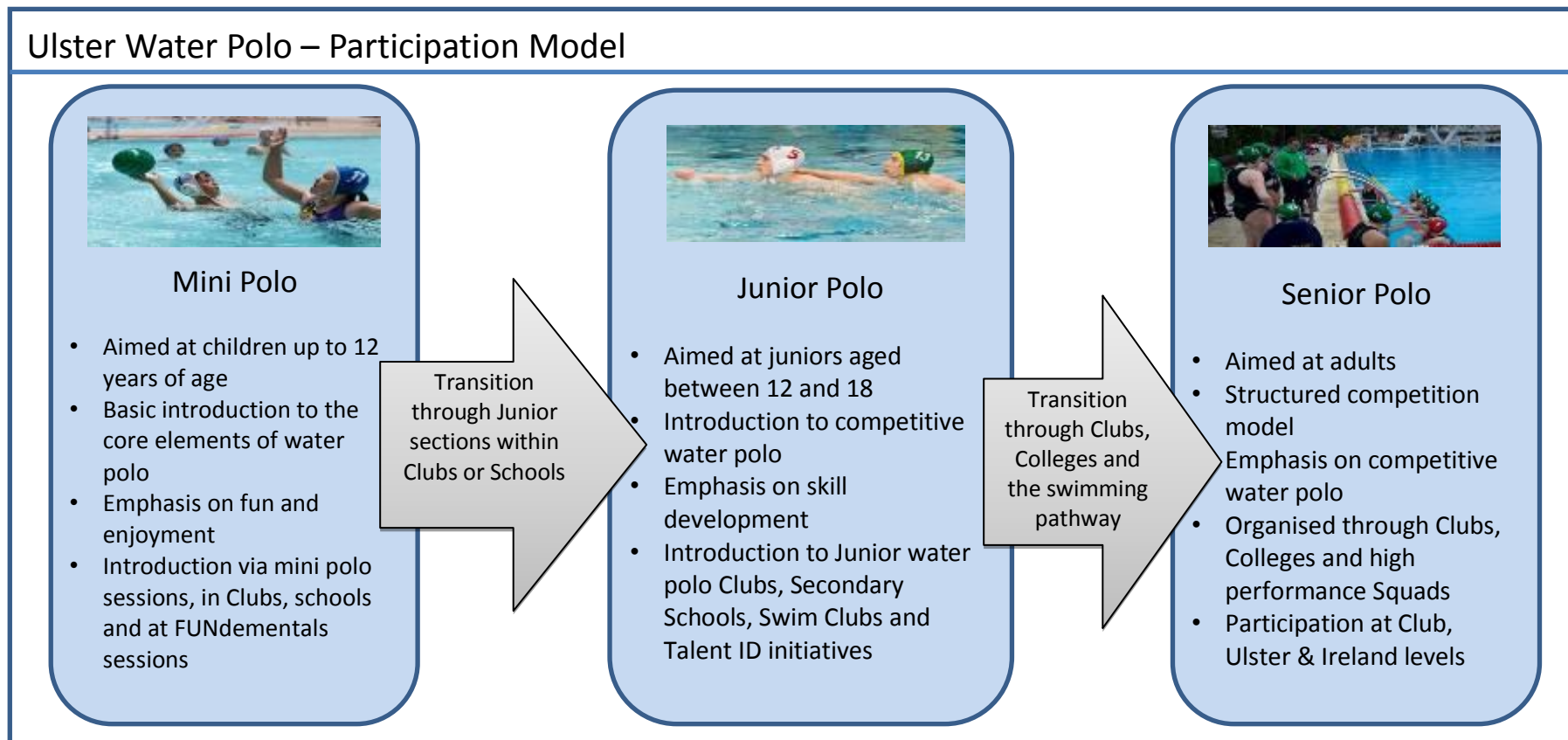
Ireland Water Polo has identified three core strategic pillars within which specific objectives and targets are to be established.



Under each pillar, specific targets have been developed for delivery by Ulster Water Polo by 2021; along with a series of actions which will help achieve these targets. Together, these targets and associated actions will provide a clear pathway for the future of water polo in Ulster.

PARTICIPATION

The model below (based upon Long Term Athlete Development principals) lays out the standard pathway for developing water polo players in Ulster, although it should be borne in mind that players may be introduced to water polo during any of these three stages of Mini Water Polo, Junior Water Polo and Senior Water Polo; dependent upon their skills and attributes.



PARTICIPATION: Club Membership – Age Profile

The most recent survey of Ulster Water Polo Clubs, which details current levels of Club Members registered with Swim Ireland, was conducted in the 2014/15 season. Clubs participating in this survey were Cathal Brugha, Clonard, Newry, Donegall Diamonds, Setanta, Bangor Barracuda's and Grads.

In 2017, Setanta and Grads merged to form the new Cú Chulainn Water Polo Club.

In order to have an accurate water polo Club membership baseline, against which future progress may be measured, it is essential that UWP updates these survey results as an early priority within the delivery period of this plan.

UWP Club Membership Survey - 2014/15

All Clubs		Unregistered with Swim Ireland	Numbers of Members Registered with Swim Ireland Last Season				Totals
			Aged 12-14	Aged 15-18	Aged 19-25	Aged Over 25	
		'New' Members Under 12 years old					
	Male	111	68	69	38	87	373
	Female	89	38	24	17	34	202
	Sub-Totals	200	106	93	55	121	575
		Capacity Clubs may have for new members <i>(How many new Members could Clubs accommodate within these age bands)</i>					Totals
		'New' Members Under 12 years old					
	Male	115	73	73	45	40	316
	Female	85	77	62	30	25	249
	Sub-Totals	200	150	135	75	65	565

PARTICIPATION.... Targets & Objectives



Mini Polo is..

- Aimed at children up to 12 years of age
- Basic introduction to the core elements of water polo
- Emphasis on fun and enjoyment
- Introduction via mini polo sessions, in Clubs, schools and at FUNdamentals sessions

Mini Water Polo Targets

- FUNdamentals session established in each Ulster Water Polo Club by 2018
- Mini Water Polo established in each Ulster Water Polo Club by 2019
- 50% increase in mini polo water polo participation levels in Ulster by 2020
- Primary Schools Mini Polo Projects established by 2019
- Mini Polo featured within an Ulster Water Polo Academy by 2018
- Mini water polo event program established by 2018
- Fundamentals & Mini Polo introduced to new Schools & Swim Clubs, outside Belfast, by 2019



Junior Polo is..

- Aimed at juniors aged between 12 and 18
- Introduction to competitive water polo
- Emphasis on skill development
- Introduction to Junior water polo Clubs, Secondary Schools, Swim Clubs and Talent ID initiatives

Junior Water Polo Targets

- Program of Junior water polo competitions established by 2018 and built upon in subsequent years
- 25% increase in junior water polo registrations by 2020
- All Ulster Water Polo Clubs have a junior section and are competing in National junior competitions
- Partnership established with schools sector to promote participation in junior water polo
- Additional two schools participating in junior water polo by 2020
- Junior water polo featured within an Ulster Water Polo Academy by 2018
- Regional Academy to be held outside of Belfast by 2020





Senior Polo is..



- Aimed at adults
- Structured competition model
- Emphasis on competitive water polo
- Organised through Clubs, Colleges and high performance Squads
- Participation at Club, Ulster and Ireland levels



Senior Water Polo Targets

- Program of senior water polo competitions established by 2018 and built upon in subsequent years
- Number of former competitive swimmers transitioning to water polo increased significantly by 2020
- Water polo established as a regular activity at new leisure centre facilities
- Partnership established with pool providers to ensure regular access for water polo
- Inter-Provincial Programme re-established by 2019 (Senior & Junior)

PARTICIPATION ACTION LEVELS – What needs to be done!

	Ulster Clubs 	Ulster Region 	National Level
Mini Polo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote FUNdamentals as the first step on an LTAD water polo pathway Work with others to create a sustainable Mini Polo section within the Club Ensure our Coaches are trained and appropriately qualified to oversee a Mini Polo programme Meaningfully contribute to the organising and promotion of Mini Polo events in Ulster Provide coaching or other resources necessary to support delivery of an Ulster Water Polo Academy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FUNdamentals training opportunity will be provided to Coaches across all UWP Clubs All UWP Clubs will be assisted in the establishment and promotion of sustainable FUNdamentals and Mini Polo sections within each Club UWP will develop and deliver a programme of cost effective/low fee Water Polo Academy's in Ulster, with an initial focus on junior player participation UWP will target Local Authorities & Schools to encourage participation in Mini Polo Ensure all Ulster Clubs have sufficient access to mini polo equipment FUNdamentals & Mini Polo introduced to new Schools & Clubs outside of Belfast by 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will target schools to ensure a mini polo programme is running in as many schools as possible We will encourage Water Polo Clubs to introduce Mini Polo We will introduce a Mini Polo segment into SI Learn to Swim and Tutor Programmes We will encourage Swim Teachers to incorporate Mini Polo into Swim Classes We will work closely with local Councils, sports partnerships, schools authorities and school water polo representatives to develop a Regional schools competition We will work with the organisers of the Community Games to get Mini Polo as a sport in the games

	Ulster Clubs 	Ulster Region 	National Level
Junior Polo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with others to create a sustainable Junior Water Polo section within the Club • Ensure that the Junior Polo section of the Club is adequately resourced in terms of pool access, coaching and equipment • Compete in Junior Polo competitions promoted by UWP and seek opportunities to develop Club driven Junior Polo events • Develop opportunities for the recognition of achievement by the Clubs Junior Polo players and their coaches • Build robust communication networks within the Club, involving coaches, parents and players 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Polo Academy program established in Ulster, with an initial focus on mini/junior water polo player participation • Regional Academy in West of Province by 2020 • Build relationship with Ulster Schools Water Polo with a view to establishing a sustainable and productive partnership arrangement for the development of Junior polo • Develop a Talent Identification process with Ulster Schools • Work with Clubs to ensure they have adequate resources to enable delivery of junior polo • Develop an annual program of junior polo competitions in Ulster • Work with Swim Ulster to develop opportunities for promotion of water polo within the swimming community • Utilize all complimentary pool hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will encourage all water polo Clubs to have junior sections within their Clubs • We will work to identify, promote and encourage water polo as an option for swimmers • We will target secondary schools with access to pools and look to establish a water polo programme for these schools • We will establish structured and vibrant schools and under age competitions in each region • We will ensure that all schools are linked to a water polo Club • We will establish a Talent Identification programme – to source new participants to the sport.

	Ulster Clubs 	Ulster Region 	National Level
Senior Polo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support senior polo initiatives promoted by UWP ● Develop a relationship with a Swimming Club and look for opportunities for mutual benefit ● Encourage former players to re-engage with the Club in areas such as coaching, team management etc. ● Ensure senior water polo is adequately resourced within the Club in terms of pool time, equipment etc. ● Look for opportunities to promote senior players as role models for juniors ● Explore opportunities for innovation in relation to training methods and skills development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop an annual program of senior water polo competitions in Ulster ● Promote water polo as a viable option for swimmers ● Creative promotion and delivery of an Inter-Provincial Championships ● Build a relationship with pool providers to ensure regular affordable access to water polo activities ● Explore opportunities for development of water polo at 'new' facilities e.g. Bangor Aurora, The Robinson Centre and the South Lake Leisure Centre ● Utilize all complimentary pool hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will target third level colleges to introduce or strengthen water polo programmes for students ● We will work to identify, promote and encourage water polo as an option for swimmers ● We will introduce a revised competition model for water polo ● We will ensure that there is a water polo club within every swim club or at least every swim club is linked directly to a water polo club and that where possible we synergise registration of players ● We will establish smart effective partnerships with other bodies, including schools, leisure centres, pool providers, local authorities, local sports partnership bodies to develop initiatives promoting water polo

PEOPLE..... Targets & Objectives



Coach Development

The actions and targets for increasing coaching and tutoring resources in Ulster are stretching and ambitious, however they are critical to supporting an overall improvement in standards across the sport and the targeted increase in participation outlined within this plan.

Coaching Targets

- Ulster will host a Level '0' (Club Helper) Course by 2018
- By 2018, every Ulster Water Polo Club has an adequate number of Level 1 qualified Coaches
- By 2019, every Ulster Water Polo Club has at least two Level 2 qualified coaches
- By 2020, every Ulster Water Polo Club has at least one Level 2 coach per team within the Club
- Affiliated Ulster Water Polo Clubs will have the required coaches in place to meet the Clubs competitive needs and Swim Ireland regulations
- Ulster will have at least two qualified Tutors by 2019
- Coaching Courses organised annually
- Coaching Course scheduled outside of Belfast by 2019



Administration & Structures

Every sport requires a strong and sustainable administrative infrastructure to support its continued development. Water Polo in Ulster must be led by a strong and committed administration to oversee the implementation of plans for the development of the sport and to ensure that it is well run at every level.

Admin & Structures

Targets

- UWP Committee and all affiliated Ulster water polo Clubs committed to supporting the delivery of our Development Plan by Jan 2018
- All UWP Clubs to have an adequate governance structure in place, compliant with SI regulations, by 2018 e.g. Constitution, Development Plan, Committee, etc.
- Audit undertaken to update Club Membership baseline figures by end 2017.
- All Clubs fully compliant with AccessNI and Safeguarding Children & Young People in Sport regulations by early 2018
- Funding sourced to support the timely delivery of the UWP Development Plan
- Agree water polo access to new Ulster pools e.g. Robinson Centre, Craigavon etc., by 2019





Officials



Officials (referees, table officials, team managers and other officials) are a crucial part of the game and the quality of Officials affects the experience of all involved. Therefore, it is imperative that appropriate attention is invested in the development of water polo Officials.



Officials Targets

- Audit taken to establish a baseline of qualified match officials available in Ulster 2018
- Match Officials development pathway is designed by 2018 and implemented by 2019
- Significantly increase number of qualified match officials available in Ulster
- Every Club to have qualified coaches and referees to reflect the Clubs participation level by 2020

PEOPLE ACTIONS LEVELS – What needs to be done!

	Ulster Clubs 	Ulster Region 	National Level
Coach Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate coaching resource is in place within the Club to meet demands • Target a minimum of one Level 2 coach per team in the Club (long term) • Target a minimum of one Level 1 coach per team in the Club (short term) • Support and encourage coaches upskilling through CPD programmes • Meaningfully support UWP coaching development activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish a baseline of swimming/water polo coaching qualifications held within UWP Clubs • Establish a planned programme of coaching courses to help deliver coaching targets • Endeavour to make coaching courses held in Ulster as affordable and accessible as possible • UWP Academy's will host new and aspiring coaches, mentored by senior qualified coaches • Encourage Clubs to involve 'new people' in helping out on the pool side and to provide participants on a Level '0' (Club Helper) course, organised by UWP • Support and encourage coaches upskilling through CPD programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will design a process to make it easier for coaches to step up from Level 1 to Level 2 water polo coaching qualification • We will introduce a Level '0' introductory programme providing a basic foundation level qualification • We will establish a regionally based coach mentoring programme to get senior coaches mentoring junior coaches • We will identify new tutor candidates and provide support to them to become qualified tutors

	Ulster Clubs 	Ulster Region 	National Level
Administration & Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the Club has proper administration structures in place including a Club Constitution, functioning Club Committee, annual budget and Club Development Plan • Use available Swim Ireland templates to support development of key documents • Provide representatives to UWP committee and other structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All affiliated Clubs formally support and commit to help deliver the UWP Development Plan • Provide guidance and support to UWP Clubs to help ensure adequate governance arrangements are in place at each Club • Facilitate delivery Safeguarding Courses as per the demand from Clubs • Liaise with governing bodies to ensure adequate resources and information is available to support compliance with Swim Ireland regulations by UWP Clubs • Ensure clear lines of communication are in place in order to keep all affiliated Clubs and other stakeholders informed and by which they may interact with the UWP Committee • Encourage all UWP Clubs to adopt Clubmark principals and to consider application for Clubmark accreditation • Agree water polo access to new Pools, including complimentary access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure that the structure for water polo works well through a National Water Polo Committee • Regional water polo sub-committees will integrate into Regional Swim Ireland bodies • Each Region to have an agreed Development Plan • Each Region to have 'fit for purpose' governance structures • All Clubs to have a Development Plan in place

	Ulster Clubs 	Ulster Region 	National Level
Officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage members to take up role as Officials • Ensure sufficient number of Officials to reflect Clubs size and number of teams • Support the upskilling of Officials through CPD programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint an appropriate person to oversee the development of Officials in Ulster and to report to UWP on the progress of this project • Survey all UWP Clubs in order to establish baseline information as to current levels of qualification for Referees, Table Officials and Team Managers • Plan delivery of courses as part of a development pathway for Officials • Every Club to have qualified coaches and referees, reflective of the Cubs participation level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will review officials pathways in other countries and develop an agreed Ireland Water Polo officials pathway, with criteria for progression along the pathway • We will provide adequate training and mentoring to officials in line with the new pathway to increase the capability of our officials • We will promote the officials pathway more positively and encourage an uptake in more officials

PATHWAYS

The Ulster Water Polo player pathway should provide a structured development route for participants from FUNdamentals/Mini Polo to senior competitive water polo. Ideally, this pathway should be supported through a competency framework relating to water polo skills which would provide a guide as to the graduated progression of skills required for a player to progress on the pathway.

Ulster Water Polo – Player Pathway



Competitions to support Player Pathway



DEVELOPMENT PLAN – FIVE YEAR VIEW

Ulster Water Polo Development Plan – General Overview of Where We Want To Be

2017 (Oct-Dec)	2018	2019	2020	2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ulster Water Polo Development Plan approved by UWP Committee & Clubs • UWP Plan supported by SU Board & IWP • Funding sourced to enable delivery of the UWP Plan • Individuals and/or Clubs accept responsibility to 'lead' on ensuring delivery of key priority items within the plan. • Priority actions list developed for 2018 to enable delivery e.g. Courses to be organised, Mini/Maxi Tournament, Academy delivered etc. • Communications link to/from Clubs to be reviewed to ensure it is as required. • 'Scoping' meeting with Schools to agree priorities • Liaison with Ulster Water Polo Development Officer regarding delivery of Plan • Club membership audit updated, as baseline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FUNdamentals session established in each Club • Mini Polo at UWP Academy • Program of mini, junior & senior water polo competitions established and built upon in subsequent years • Partnership established with Schools Water Polo • Ulster will host a Level '0' (Club Helper) Course • Every UWP Club has an adequate number of Level 1 qualified Coaches • UWP Committee and all affiliated Ulster water polo Clubs commit to supporting the delivery of our Development Plan • All Clubs to have an adequate governance structure in place • All Clubs AccessNI & Safeguarding compliant • Funding sourced to implement UWP plan • Coaching/Officials audit • UWP Clubs adopt Clubmark principals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini Water Polo established in each Ulster Water Polo Club by 2019 • Primary Schools Mini Polo Project established by 2019 • By 2019, every Ulster Water Polo Club has at least two Level 2 qualified coaches • Ulster will have at least two qualified Tutors by 2019 • Match Officials development pathway is designed by 2018 and implemented by 2019 • Agree water polo access to new Robinson Centre • Explore water polo access to other new pools • Inter-Provincial Programme re-established • FUNdamentals & Mini Polo introduced to new Schools & Clubs outside of Belfast • Coaching Course outside Belfast by 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% increase in mini polo water polo participation levels in Ulster by 2020 • 25% increase in junior water polo registrations by 2020 • Additional two schools participating in junior water polo • Number of former competitive swimmers transitioning to water polo increased significantly • Every Ulster Water Polo Club has at least one Level 2 coach per team within the Club • Every Club to have qualified coaches and referees reflective of the Clubs participation level • Regional Academy to be held outside of Belfast by 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Ulster Water Polo Clubs have a junior section and are regularly competing in National junior competitions • Partnership established with schools sector to promote participation in junior water polo • Water polo established as a regular activity at new leisure centre facilities • Partnership established with pool providers to ensure regular access for water polo • Affiliated Ulster Water Polo Clubs will have the required coaches in place to meet the Clubs competitive needs and Swim Ireland regulations • Significantly increase number of qualified match officials available in Ulster

SUMMARY

Despite obvious successes such as Mini Water Polo and the re-instated relationship with Swim Ulster, Water Polo in Ulster has stood still over the past decade or so.

Clubs have to work very hard to maintain player numbers and most struggle to maintain Swim Ireland compliance regulations due to limited administrative capacity. Gone are the days when Clubs could successfully be run by 2 or 3 well-meaning individuals, when a level of finance wasn't the necessity it is today and when schools provided a well of available water polo talent.

At the time of writing this plan, we await the appointment of a Part Time Water Polo Development Officer to be available on a fixed term basis through Swim Ulster supported funding; this development resource should provide the impetus needed to help facilitate the growth of water polo in Ulster.

Nowadays, within all Clubs and sports organisations, there is an absolute necessity to commit to higher standards of organisation to help ensure sustainable growth and also to be in a position to 'compete' against other sports & spare time activities which attract the attention of our young people.

In this regard, it is critical that Clubs, Ulster Water Polo and Swim Ulster jointly commit to delivering an improvement plan, targeted towards deliverable objectives and providing a pathway leading to the progress we all desire.

This plan was designed with the clear purpose of pointing the way towards the sustainable growth of water polo in Ulster.

FUNDING THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN *(conservative estimate due to anticipated constraints on available finance)*

Delivery Strand	2018	2019	2020	2021
Part Time Ulster Water Polo Development Officer	Funding in place via Swim Ulster & SportNI	Funding in place via Swim Ulster & SportNI	Funding in place via Swim Ulster & SportNI	Funding in place via Swim Ulster & SportNI <i>(Ends 31 March 2021)</i>
FUNdamentals & Mini Polo at Clubs and Regionally	£3,000 <i>(4 x Mini Polo Packs & Pool Hire)</i>	£1,500 <i>(2 x Mini Polo packs & Pool Hire)</i>	£1,500 <i>(2 x Mini Polo packs & Pool Hire)</i>	£1,500 <i>(2 x Mini Polo packs & Pool Hire)</i>
Education - Coaching Development	£4,000 <i>20 x £200pp)</i>	£3,000 <i>(15 x £200pp)</i>	£3,000 <i>(15 x £200pp)</i>	£3,000 <i>(15 x £200pp)</i>
Education - Officials Development	£1,000 <i>(10 x £100pp)</i>	£1,000 <i>(10 x £100pp)</i>	£1,000 <i>(10 x £100pp)</i>	£1,000 <i>(10 x £100pp)</i>
UWP Academy's	£2,0 00 <i>(2 x Academy's – venue costs etc.)</i>	£2,000 <i>(2 x Academy's – venue costs etc.)</i>	£2,000 <i>(2 x Academy's – venue costs etc.)</i>	£2,0 00 <i>(2 x Academy's – venue costs etc.)</i>
Schools partnership	£2,500 <i>(equipment & pool hire – to kick start new partnership)</i>	£750 <i>(Pool Hire)</i>	£750 <i>(Pool Hire)</i>	£1000 <i>(Pool Hire)</i>
Leagues, Cups & Blitz events	£1,500 <i>(equipment & facility hire)</i>	£1,500 <i>(equipment & facility hire)</i>	£1,500 <i>(equipment & facility hire)</i>	£1,500 <i>(equipment & facility hire)</i>
Totals	£14,000	£9,750	£9,750	£10,000

Note:

- *Level 1 Water Polo Coaching Courses cost around £400pp, at time of writing this plan. Our proposal is to part subsidise course attendance.*
- *Mini Water Polo Equipment Pack costs £500 per pack (balls, nets, hats) at time of writing this plan*