



**SURFING
ENGLAND**

SURF INSTRUCTOR LEARNER MANUAL



Introduction

This manual is a condensed version of the original 140-page Instructor theory manual, reduced to under 70 pages to provide a focused reference for experienced instructors. It is intended for those holding existing instructor certifications from other awarding bodies who are undertaking the **Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) route** to gain the Surfing England Instructor Award.

The content is designed to support professional transition into the Surfing England framework by consolidating key information, confirming required knowledge, and outlining current expectations. It is not intended to re-teach core instructional principles, but to align prior learning and experience with Surfing England standards.

Some material will already be familiar to you. These sections are included as professional reminders and points of reference, particularly where national requirements, operating expectations, or best practice guidance apply. Much of the content is now mandatory for activity instructors working in England.

Other topic areas are specific to surf instruction within the British Isles. These sections reflect the practical demands placed on instructors operating across a wide range of environments, conditions, and participant groups, and are intended to support informed, professional decision-making.

Foundational elements of surf instructor theory—such as rips, lesson planning, and practical instructing methods—are not included in this manual. These are assumed competencies, having been addressed through your previous certified training and applied through instructional experience.

Should you require clarification on any additional theory within the Surfing England Instructor Award (Level 1 scope), please contact a Surfing England Trainer Assessor <https://www.surfingengland.org/coaching-hub/> or email info@surfingengland.org to request access to the full manual in PDF format.

If you haven't already, please familiarise yourself with all of the information found here, for steps how to attain your Surfing England surf coach certificate for this award

<https://www.surfingengland.org/2026/03/19/surfing-england-alignment-with-cimspa-coach-project/>

If you haven't recently done a safeguarding course, you can do ours, found here

<https://surfingengland.accelerate.sport/courses/safeguarding-in-sport/>

The ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius expressed his belief in the importance of learning from experience when he wrote: “**I hear and I forget/I see and I remember/I do and I understand**[.]” Confucius related the acquisition of understanding and knowledge directly to living and experiencing. “I do and I understand.”

Note: Most new instructors take this award in full as online learning theory; while photographs are included, of course it is not possible to reproduce the interactive learning pieces, infographics or videos. Surfing England Trainer Assessors can access this to lead your learning in the workshop/classroom environment. Much photo and infographic has been removed from this 'hard copy' document.

Surfing England Instructor Award (recreational)

This award will allow you to work at surf schools to instruct beginner surfers how to catch waves, get to their feet, be able to start to safely manoeuvre the board and take the first steps towards paddling out the back.

Once a surfer begins to surf independently in waves of around 1-1.5m (~ 3-5ft) they will become an intermediate surfer and coaching at this level will require you to hold a Surfing England Coach Progression Award.

Surfing England Progression Coach Award (intermediate)

Coaching beyond the whitewater (ratio 1:4) teaching basic manoeuvres on the green wave from trimming to S turns, bottom and top turns, cutbacks. Improving surf zone awareness, including good etiquette and safety of self and others, and paddling skills including eskimo rolls and duck dives.

The surfer will have progressed to being reasonably proficient at standing and riding white water waves and practising taking off on unbroken waves (green face) and traversing left and right. They will have a reasonable understanding of the best waves to take off on (wave selection) and have surf awareness, surf survival and paddling skills for reasonable self-sufficiency in the surf zone. At the top end of the award surfers under this coach will have developed high proficiency and consistency of skill in the above.

Surfing England Performance Coach Award (advanced)

Coaching advanced manoeuvres in more challenging waves to improve speed, power and flow, potentially with a competitive element. Developing intermediate fundamentals to an advanced level, on the most appropriate equipment. To develop bottom turns and variety of top turns, and effective use of the body in rail to rail speed generation.

This is for surfers also requiring coaching of advanced manoeuvres, and may include developing vertical surfing, top turns off the lip, reo (re-entry), roundhouse cutbacks, nose rides, barrel riding and aerial manoeuvres. The coach will have an understanding and experience of competitive surfing formats.

The surfing customer ready to receive coaching under this award will have reached the top intermediate level, surfing independently in breaking waves of at least around 1.5m (~ 4-5ft), be proficient at the fundamental manoeuvres on the wave face and will demonstrate these with consistency.

Prerequisite info

All further info about this **Surfing England Instructor – Recreation Award** training and prerequisites for attaining this can be found here <https://www.surfingengland.org/surfing-england-surf-instructor-recreation-award/>

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Module 1

Surfing England Code of Ethics

The Surfing England code of ethics for instructors and coaches provides guidance for creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for learning to surf.

<https://www.surfingengland.org/surf-and-sup-safety/>

Qualities of a Surfing England Instructor

Good instruction requires the **flexibility** to adapt your teaching methods to suit the people and the environment that you are presented with on a given day. There will be times when you will need to be **patient** as well as times you need to act **assertively**.

Instructors are often good at giving information but **listening** to and responding to the needs of the participants in your group is equally important. Be **open-minded** and willing to modify your techniques as required to help people get the best out of their lesson. This will require a level of **confidence** in your own knowledge and abilities but also an awareness that we can all continue to learn and develop new teaching techniques.

We should aim to collaborate with other coaches, take part in CPD (continuing professional development) to learn new skills and develop our knowledge, and strive to improve what we do by adopting a **growth mindset**.

Communication

Communication will make up the majority of what you do as an instructor. You will need to know when to be clear and concise and when to elaborate. You can gauge how effective your communication has been by checking understanding throughout the lesson with regular questioning, and remember - communication is a two way process.

You may be working with people that do not speak English well, or have a hearing impairment so it is important to consider all aspects of communication.

Planning

You will need to plan your lessons based on the needs of the group and the conditions available. Have a backup plan if things change e.g. it goes flat.

You should develop a series of lesson plans that you can draw upon and refer to.

You will also need to be confident to change plans and adapt during the lesson if something changes or isn't working.

Professionalism

Upon completion of this Surfing England Instructor Award, you will be a qualified professional and it is expected that you will take pride in demonstrating this. You will be interacting with a range of people including customers, parents, carers and other professionals. Depending on your role, you may also be required to do business administration tasks such as writing reports, emails and record keeping. You need to be enthusiastic, passionate about our sport, and always follow the Surfer's code of conduct.

Organisation

Being organised demonstrates professionalism and will help people get the most out of your lessons. Allow adequate time for planning and preparing your lessons. This will include checking forecasts and tides, observing the conditions on the beach, seeking guidance from and collaborating with fellow coaches, preparing and checking equipment and finding out about your group.

Knowledge of surf history and culture

Surfing has a rich culture and fascinating history. New surfers will often be thirsty for knowledge about surfing and will entrust instructors to give them reliable answers. You aren't expected to know everything about surfing but some knowledge of the history and culture of our sport will be advantageous.

Check out the Museum of British Surfing's interactive timeline on the history of british surfing here: [UK Surf History – Interactive Timeline – Museum of British Surfing](https://www.museumofbritishsurfing.org.uk/)

Q-Can you find out where the first recorded surfing in England took place?

If you are able to, we recommend a visit to the British museum of surfing.

<https://www.museumofbritishsurfing.org.uk/>

This article by Sam Bleakley provides a British perspective on the shortboard revolution.

<https://www.thewave.com/the-shortboard-revolution/>

For further reading try:

- A History of Surf Culture by Bruce Brown and Drew Kampion
- History of Surfing by Matt Warshaw (2010)

Module 1

Surf Knowledge

Surf instructors have an important role in educating beginner surfers to help ensure safe line-ups. It will not be possible to cover all aspects of surf safety in one lesson so these rules and guidance should be introduced progressively, as necessary for the session and participants.

Before entering the surf, the instructor must help the participants gain an understanding of the line up. Remember we are preparing people to be able to surf without supervision, so we need to pass on information to allow them to surf safely. The participants can be directed to Surfing England Website for information as well as a code of conduct for surfers found here:

<https://www.surfingengland.org/surf-safe/>

Always recommend the use of a lifeguarded beach for beginners. If operating on a non-lifeguarded beach, explain that as an instructor, you must be lifesaving qualified. Know where your nearest lifeguarded beach is.

If you are lucky enough to be instructing on a lifeguarded beach you should aim to develop a good working relationship with the lifeguards. They can provide valuable advice about conditions as well as support in an emergency situation. Where possible, discuss with the lifeguards about the best location for your lesson. During busy times they may request you use areas outside the black and white flags for your lesson if safe to do so.

Remember lifeguards should not be relied upon by surf instructors and the instructor holds ultimate responsibility for the safety of the lesson.



Ensure all participants are aware of the areas and meaning of flags.

Module 1

Theories of learning (metacognition)

Introduction

There are a number of theories of learning we need to be aware of as an instructor. Having awareness of the way people learn will help us maximise what we do to lead learning of new skills in our lessons.

Remember, as instructors we should always be striving to get better at what we do and how we instruct.

Plan, Do, Review – The Experiential Learning Cycle.

There are a number of theories of learning we need to be aware of as an instructor. Having awareness of the way people learn will help us to facilitate participants to learn new skills in our lessons.

Remember, as instructors we should always be striving to get better at what we do and how we instruct.



Planning

When approaching any task for the first time we must first think about what to do. If this appears to be an easy task we may give the planning very little consideration. However, as we are aware, surfing is complex so the more knowledge and understanding we have of the task the more likely we are to create a good plan and to carry it out successfully. The instructor must give clear demonstrations and explanations of what the participants in the lesson are aiming to achieve.

Doing

This is where we lead the participants' learning of the skills we are teaching/coaching. In a beginner surf lesson the first 'doing' may occur on land then skills are practised on the beach.

When you start instructing, your first 'doing' will be co-instructing together with a qualified instructor.

Review

The review part of the cycle is the key to improvement. Firstly, we must ascertain if the 'doing' was successful or not and to what degree. This requires **feedback**. A surfing client may get some feedback from the outcome of their action. E.g. Did the surfer catch the wave they paddled for? If yes it was successful.

If not, why not? A key role of the instructor is to provide quality feedback. We will look at how to give quality feedback more in module 7.

Re-Plan

On the next attempt of a task, we will have some feedback. This will input to our planning of the next attempt.

E.g., if the surfer did not catch the wave they may need to adjust their position on the board and / or paddle harder. Good instruction can help participants to interpret their own performance through intrinsic feedback and make improvements themselves. The instructor will also provide further extrinsic feedback and help the participant to identify the most important action(s) through coaching.

As you can see **feedback** is the key to this cycle and without it the cycle is broken and there is no improvement. The instructor will help the participant understand intrinsic feedback (physical feel of the movement) and provide extrinsic feedback (provided by external sources) in the form of coaching. Combining intrinsic and extrinsic feedback together with quality coaching points will expedite the learning process for the participant.

In Module 2 Lesson 6 we cover intrinsic and extrinsic feedback in detail.

Intrinsic feedback is about the physical feel of the movement (what the body is doing). Extrinsic feedback is provided by external sources (references outside of the body).

Experiential Learning - Your instructor journey

The Surfing England Surf Instructor – Recreation Award course is designed to help you understand and effectively apply the experiential learning cycle to your own instruction. You will develop your own instruction skills through planning, doing, and reviewing the outcomes before re-planning. This cycle should continue once you are qualified, and we hope you will continue to use it and strive for continual improvement as an instructor. This may mean taking the Surfing England progression coach award or seeking to improve your practice in other ways.

During your surf school work placement you will receive feedback from a senior coach on your own instruction. The trainer assessor will work with you to help you plan your supervised sessions, provide you with the opportunities to deliver them and help you to reflect and review the sessions by identifying areas of good practice as well as areas to improve upon.

This is valuable information and should be used to set action targets to improve future session planning and delivery. **Where possible try to work with a variety of coaches and instructors.** Collaboration will allow you to see different coaching styles and to take different viewpoints of your own delivery.

Instructors should seek feedback from their participants during and at the end of sessions.

Feedback during the session can help you to ensure understanding and learning is happening.

Post session feedback can be gathered verbally or using surveys and can help to show good customer care.

Getting feedback from participants and other instructors will allow for reflection on our own instruction and then we can re-plan to make improvements.

Gaining quality feedback on your own coaching is a skill. If you ask a group “did you enjoy the session?” and they all respond “yes” you may have agreed it was an enjoyable session however you do not have any useful information to allow you to improve. Skilful questioning can help participants reflect on their own performance and provide you with information to help both them and you improve further.

Try asking open ended questions such as;

- What was the best bit of the session for you?
- What aspect of the session did you find the most difficult?

Open ended questioning is a fundamental communication and coaching skill.

Q- Write an open ended question you could ask a participant following a surf session .

Stress and Motor Skill Acquisition

There are many benefits to being in the ocean, but we need to be aware that it can also induce physical and mental (cognitive) stresses on a person. Some participants may be apprehensive about taking part in a lesson and this can increase mental stress levels. We are able to learn skills more effectively when we are in a relaxed state. The instructor can help to reduce anxieties of participants by letting participants know what to expect in the lesson and being reassuring and understanding throughout.

Stages of Motor Skill Learning

As we develop motor skills there are different stages of learning based on the concentration and attention given to the movement. Understanding the stages can help an instructor to accelerate the learning of skills. The stages are: ‘Cognitive, Associative and Autonomous’.

Cognitive

Much of the learning within a beginner surf lesson will be cognitive. A participant may arrive with little prior knowledge of surfing. The surfing they have seen, and their expectations may be different to the activities in a beginner lesson.

The participants first task will be understanding what they are required to do. The instructor will explain and demonstrate what is required. The participant can then start to process that verbal and visual information to form a motor program. A motor program is the organisation of signals between the brain and the muscles controlling a skill. Practice and use of the feedback helps to refine the motor programme. During this cognitive stage, mistakes are common but also valuable as they provide feedback for the learning cycle. The participant will be focusing a lot of their attention on attempting skills e.g., they may be thinking about their body positioning on the board and paddling correctly before popping up. This can take attention away from the wave. The movements may be inefficient or mis-timed.

Learning a pop-up in the whitewater is preferable for beginners. This can limit the variability of the wave as there can be a more consistent push. Most of the beginner surfer’s attention will be on executing the pop up and therefore they may not be able to fully focus on how the wave is breaking. At this stage drills and coaching points should be kept simple and repetition encouraged to refine the skills.

Associative

With time and practice aspects of a skill will require less conscious attention. For example, once a surfer can get to their feet with some consistency, they may then be able to focus more attention on what the wave is doing as they paddle into it and begin progressing to green waves.

During the associative stage there may still be some variability in the outcome of the skill, and it will not be as efficient or fluid as elite surfers. They may still have unsuccessful pop ups but will be able to consider the wave and other surfers around them as they surf.

Many recreational surfers may not move out of the associative stage.

When coaching at this stage the instructor may focus on improving a certain skill or technique and try to remove recurring mistakes such as using a knee when popping up.

Autonomous

Once a skill becomes autonomous it will appear fluid and even effortless. There will be very few mistakes and performing the skill will require little conscious attention from the performer. Where skills have become autonomous, the surfer will be able to focus on the wave, analyse approaching sections and concentrate on what manoeuvres to execute rather than how to do them.

As an instructor we need to be aware of all these stages. Regressing back through certain stages to relearn or progress techniques if bad habits are developed, may be required. New techniques and fault corrections will have to be learnt and applied successfully through the cognitive and associative stages.

Module 1

Environmental Stewardship

As surf instructors we are guardians of the beach environment. We need to help to protect, maintain and actively improve the beach and guide others to do the same.

For some participants we will be guiding them through their first experience of the beach, and they will be looking to you for guidance on how to behave and conduct themselves.

As the climate and other environmental issues become ever more apparent, demonstrating environmental awareness will support surf school business as well improve the wider perception of the sport and lifestyle of surfing.

Some key behaviours that are expected of instructors and to encourage with your participants:

- Ensure that your participants stick to marked paths between dunes to limit erosion and protect ecosystems.
- Where safe to, pick up litter and remove it from the beach. Recycle where you can.
- Leave no trace of your surf lesson on the beach (other than footprints and paddle marks in the sand!)
- Never disturb wildlife, many will be naturally curious of any beach wildlife you come across on the beach.
- Be knowledgeable about environmental action and signpost people toward initiatives that help protect our environment.

There are several organisations that help to champion and protect the environment, some international, some national and some local ones specific to an area. If we are aware of these organisations, we can support their work and encourage others to do the same. Below are some examples.

Surfrider Foundation

Surfrider Foundation is an international group of activists dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's ocean, waves and beaches, for all people.

Find out more about their work here: <https://www.surfrider.org/>

Q- Can you find out the 5 things they fight for?

Surfers Against Sewage SAS

Surfers Against Sewage are one of the UK's most active and successful environmental charities. Initially a single-issue campaign group, their work now encompasses far more than just tackling sewage and water quality. They can support you to organise beach cleans and work towards plastic free communities.

Unfortunately, despite their work there are still water quality issues at UK Beaches, particularly after rainfall. SAS can support you to act and we can encourage surf school customers to do the same. Explore what you can do to take action on their website.

<https://www.sas.org.uk/take-action/>

Q- What action will you take?

North Devon World Surfing Reserve

North Devon World Surfing Reserve is a community-led organisation that protects local surf breaks and their related ecosystems to conserve the surfing experience and make sure there are **waves for all forever**. The Reserve is the first of its kind in the UK and organisers intend that the successful implementation of this model in North Devon could be replicated by other coastal areas of the UK to protect their own waves and beaches.

Find out more about what they do here: <https://www.northdevonsurfreserve.org/about>

2-Minute Beach Clean

The 2-Minute Foundation is a registered charity devoted to cleaning up our planet two minutes at a time.

Simple, achievable acts can add up to make a great difference and change our world for the better. You can incorporate a 2-minute beach clean into a surf lesson, and is an integral part of the Surfing England Grom Squad scheme **(Module 8)**.

Find out more about what they do here:

<https://www.beachclean.net/>

Module 2

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

What is Equality, Diversity and Inclusion?

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in surfing is about ensuring fair treatment; challenging and removing barriers to participation; and tackling prejudice and discrimination on the basis of an individual or group's protected and non-protected characteristics.

Equality: This means ensuring there is fairness in our work and challenging discrimination and barriers to provide equality of opportunity within surfing.

Diversity: Recognising, respecting and celebrating our differences. Promoting an environment and culture within the surfing community that welcomes and values diversity in backgrounds, mindsets and experience.

Inclusion: Creating an environment where people are valued and have equal access to opportunities and resources. This may include making reasonable adjustments to enable people's participation in a surf lesson or club.

Barriers to surfing and inclusivity

Q. What is inclusive instruction?

1. Ensuring everyone joins in all parts of the session even if they have a disability
2. Being able to work effectively with people with different needs
3. Treating everyone equally so they feel included
4. Making sure everyone has suitable equipment

A- Being able to work effectively with people with different needs

What is Equality?

Equality is not about treating people the same



Sometimes you need to treat people differently to ensure they have the same access and opportunities.



By proactively reflecting the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within your coaching practice you can deliver inclusive coaching and be an EDI champion, helping our amazing sport to welcome and embrace people from all backgrounds.

Being inclusive is not just about not discriminating, we need to promote inclusion with our actions. People regardless of background should be able to participate in the same way as everyone else. When delivering a lesson this means:

1. Being welcoming, treating everyone with respect and engaging with all participants regardless of their backgrounds or experience
2. Not jumping to assumptions about people's ability to contribute or whether they will like surfing based on their looks, language, culture or disability
3. Giving everyone opportunity to contribute, celebrating and encouraging the sharing of different backgrounds, approaches, ideas, experience and enthusiasm for surfing
4. Being flexible with your approach to encourage participation, recognising adaptations and assistance may be necessary to maintain safety

Having information about the needs of your group will help you to plan activities that will accommodate them. Some needs will be identified in the booking process, through discussions with individuals or parents however most will not be forthcoming, and you may notice them as you deliver the session. As you will see in this module your attitude and actions will play a huge part in making surfing a safe and welcoming sport for all.

Barriers to surfing

In England 20% of the population live with disability, but what percentage of the surfing population live with a disability?

1. 10%
2. 5%
3. 1%
4. 7%

Ans c) 1%

(Sport England, 2021)

Sport England, 2021 Active lives survey available at; <https://www.sportengland.org/research-and-data/data/active-lives>

Surfing is good for the soul. It's good for our physical and mental wellbeing, it provides us with endless challenges, a creative outlet, connection with nature and so much more. It is not too grand a statement to say surfing can and does transform lives. The benefits are perhaps even more pronounced for those living with different levels of mental and physical ability.

When the benefits seem so clear, why do we have such a gap? The reasons are complex and collated in this [report](#). Surfing England is working towards a vision to create regional centres for adaptive surfing. These are set to be hubs around the country at which coaches and volunteers can be trained, the adaptive surfing knowledge base deepened and more adaptive surfers able to access the kit and expertise needed to get them surfing. E.g. <https://www.surfsouthwest.com/adaptive-surfing-devon/>

People with different abilities should be able to participate in your session provided it is safe to do so. It is important to state that providing surf lessons for individuals with significant physical or mental impairment requires specific skills and equipment as well as much increased instructor and supporter to surfer ratios. Only surf schools with the specific capability, training and equipment should deliver these lessons.

Where an individual has specific needs, discuss with the individual and your surf school head coach to ensure you can safely meet the needs of all individuals before the session. This may require a risk assessment for the individual(s) to ensure it is safe for them to participate.

If their needs are beyond the capabilities of your surf school, it's really important to give them the information or introductions they need to start their surfing journey. Your specific school may not be the right starting point for them, but we can still welcome them to the surfing community and put them in touch with the best school to suit their needs.

There are some specific organisations in the UK that specialise in inclusive and adaptive surfing that you can introduce surfers to. Watch the video on this page about the work they do.

Surfability UK CIC

If you would like to enquire about ISA Adaptive Surf Instructor Courses in the UK these are presented by Benjamin Clifford in Wales info@surfabilityukcic.org

In the near future Surfing England plans to launch its own Adaptive Surf Instructor Award.

'Amazing Humans' video BBC iplayer

As you can see, depending on the needs of the individual, you may need specialist equipment, specific training and increased instructor ratios to be able to safely offer adaptive surfing. If you have an enquiry for adaptive surfing that you are not able to fulfil please ensure you refer or signpost them so that they have the opportunity to experience surfing.

The Wave project [Contact Us – Wave Project](#) also specialise in providing surf lessons for people with additional needs. They can provide surf schools with specialist help and advice and you can refer people to

them if you do not have the equipment or knowledge to meet their needs. They offer opportunities to volunteer where you can gain experience working with people with different abilities.

Surf South West – Surfing England Adaptive Surf Hub. Located in Croyde, North Devon this surf school has a partnership with The Wave Project and Surfing England offering adaptive surf lessons from beginner to advanced competitive training.

The Wave, Bristol – Designed with accessibility and inclusion at its heart, this man made surfing facility runs monthly adaptive surfing sessions

Physical accessibility and disabled people

Beaches are not always easily accessible places, particularly for people with mobility needs. Make sure you are aware of;

- The nearest blue badge parking or accessible parking or drop off point
- The nearest accessible toilet facilities
- If there is a beach wheelchair available locally
- If you are unable to meet the needs of someone with different abilities, where can you refer them to?

Every Surfing England accredited surf school is expected to have a process of taking medical information and if there are any physical needs or questions about accessibility. Car parking and terrain can vary massively across the country and often surf schools don't have control over many aspects of accessibility so it is important that they show on their websites or advertising what the water/beach access is like.

But it's not for you to say who you can cater for because of this. The needs around physical access to the beach or into the water will vary from impairment to impairment and each individual will be looking for different things.

Surf schools can often work with RNLI for use of Sand chairs. Some schools do excellent work with local charities to attain use of accessible equipment. Schools and instructors should be generally familiar with this, what specific accessibility options they have, and to be able to communicate this if asked or on any publications or websites.

It is also important for surf schools to advertise if you run Adaptive surfing or if instructors and staff have undertaken any disability and special educational needs training. Activity Alliance offers [Delivering an excellent service for disabled customers](#), or [Inclusive Activity Programme](#) you or your school might want to check out.

Competitive Adaptive Surfing

Surfing England has a strong team of adaptive surfers that it proudly supports to compete internationally. A great way to get involved with our adaptive surfing programme is via our Adaptive Championships, whether to just come and meet the crew, or as a volunteer to help with water safety. Could you volunteer as a coach or support staff for the Surfing England Adaptive Team?

[Surfing England Adaptive Open 2021](#)

This is another fantastic professional development opportunity for instructors and coaches to expand your experience.

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity is the concept that all humans vary in terms of our neurocognitive ability. The below statistics demonstrate the prevalence of neurodiversity in our society.

- 90% of Impairments are invisible
- 5% of the population have ADHD
- 1-2% of the population is Autistic
- 10% of the population are dyslexic
- 5% of the population are dyspraxic
- 1-2% of the population have Tourette Syndrome
- 7 % of the population have mental health needs
- 5% of the population have an acquired brain injury

Everyone has both talents and things they struggle with and we are all neurodiverse to some extent. The needs are wide ranging but if we are aware of neurodiversity we can adapt our sessions using the STEP tool (explained below) to make surfing one of the most neurodiverse-friendly learning environments on the planet.

Neurodiversity in Sports Coaching – Adrenaline Solutions

Top tip

Don't be afraid to ask people about their needs within a surf lesson. It is good practice to do this privately or discreetly where possible. They will often be glad you asked and this will help you to assess how you can best support them to participate independently.

You will learn about the STEP model (useful to implement with all individuals as well as disabled people, in an upcoming lesson)

Ten Principles (activityalliance.org.uk) This video and resource expertly guides activity providers and their instructors.

Infographic next page

Activity Alliance has developed these 10 principles to support providers to deliver more appealing opportunities for disabled people.

The 10 principles

During research published in our **Talk to me report**, disabled people told us:

Principle 1

My channels

Use communication channels that I already trust e.g. social media, local media.



Principle 2

My locality

Travelling to get to activities can be a significant barrier for disabled people. I would much prefer opportunities to be closer to home.



Principle 3

Me, not my impairment

Many people do not identify with being disabled and are put off by advertising that focuses on disability.



Principle 4

My values

Everyone has values. Understanding what my values are and linking an activity to these can make taking part more appealing.



Principle 5

My life story

As people grow older our values change. Keep me interested over time through new ideas.



Principle 6

Reassure me

Some disabled people fear standing out and need to be reassured that any activity we attend will be welcoming and suitable for our needs.



Principle 7

Include me

Some disabled people need to know we are good enough to take part. Providers should make sure that people with varying ability levels feel included in sessions.



Principle 8

Listen to me

Disabled people can be limited by our impairment and should be able to discuss our needs in a safe and private environment before starting an activity.



Principle 9

Welcome me

An unpleasant first experience can prevent anyone from taking part again. Ensure my first experience is enjoyable so I'm likely to return.



Principle 10

Show me

Engage disabled people who are already involved in your activity to promote it to others.



activityalliance.org.uk



AllForActivity



ActivityAlliance

Module 2

Barriers to surfing

Barriers are the reasons people may not participate in a sport or physical activity. Every sport has barriers to participation, these barriers may be physical or perceived. Any barrier can create an element of exclusion, ranging from impacting a single person or an entire group of people. Surfing England works to identify and, where possible, remove or minimise barriers to surfing. Whilst it is not possible to remove all barriers for everyone, by being aware of the issues that prevent people surfing and possible solutions, we can challenge stereotypes to help make surfing as inclusive as possible.

Surfing England wholeheartedly believes that a more diverse and inclusive line up and a richer mix of people in the waves makes for a better surfing experience for us all. Within the context of a surf lesson your attitude and actions will play a huge part in promoting surfing to new people and groups during their first experiences of surfing.

We are going to examine some of the groups that are underrepresented in surfing and sport in general, some of the reasons for this. We will then look at what you can do as an instructor to promote inclusion.

The Gender Gap

Women are statistically less likely to participate in sport and physical activity than men. Research has shown this can be due to a fear of judgement (perceived barrier) – this might be about the way they look when they exercise, that they're not good enough to join in or they should be spending more time on their families, studies or other priorities.

This Girl Can

A promotional campaign by Sport England aims to increase the participation of women in sport and physical activity.

Globally the World surf league (WSL) have been world leaders in sports equality and fairness offering equal pay since the 2019 season. Surfing England also offers gender equality through its surf competitions and elite teams. Despite this, women are still significantly underrepresented in English line-ups and in a recent survey (surf census 2019) of 1321 UK surfers just 15% were female.

UK survey points to growth in surfer populations outside of coastal areas

There are also lots of club and community groups offering female surf sessions, including:

Wave Wahines Saunton Surf Sisters, Newquay Women's Surf Club, Women and Waves, Whitby Women's Surf Club and many more.

Tips to promote gender equality in your sessions and surf school environment.

- Create a safe, positive and welcoming environment
- Emphasise the fun and social aspects in your sessions, this is as important as progression and performance. Surfing is fun whatever your level!
- **Challenge** any discrimination in a positive and encouraging manner
- Have a separate female changing area

- If possible offer specific, women only sessions with female coaches as an option

Ethnically diverse communities

Ethnically diverse communities are significantly under-represented in surfing and watersports in general. Research by the Black Swimming association shows:

- 95% of Black adults and 80% of Black children in England do not swim.
- 93% of Asian adults and 78% of Asian children in England do not swim.

As a result there are a lack of role models for people from ethnic groups in surfing and watersports. The reasons for this are complex and there isn't a single easy answer, but this doesn't mean we shouldn't be asking the questions and seeking ideas and solutions to help encourage more people from ethnically diverse communities to engage with swimming and watersports.

Surfing England has formed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Panel

<https://www.surfingengland.org/inclusive-line-ups-jan-2023/> to help develop and then implement a Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan which will set our ambitions for enhancing diversity and the actions to be taken.

Faith groups

People within faith groups cannot be thought of as one homogenous group of people. This explains why there isn't a single reason for their under representation in sports.

Faiths can be interpreted differently by individuals. As an example, Muslim women are expected to dress modestly. For some a wetsuit hood may be sufficient as a head covering but this may not be sufficient for others. Here is a fantastic example of people using creative solutions to break down barriers and promote inclusion.

Q. Whilst the seasuit was designed to address barriers related to cultural dress codes, what other issues could the seasuit be used to address?

1. Body confidence
2. Gender identity
3. Those recovering from cancer treatments
4. All of the above

You can read more on the seasuit and its development here:

[Into the Sea: The Seasuit Project | Finisterre](#)

Christian Surfers UK is a branch of the international Christian Surfers Association. They are a group of passionate surfers whose members are also committed to their faith. They play an active role in supporting the UK surf community by running competitions and providing support.

[About Christian Surfers UK](#)

[LGTBQ+](#)

A YouGov survey of 2,000 British adults in June 2019 found that around 9% of those surveyed across all age groups identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

Specifically, 21% of 18-24 year olds identified with these three categories, while the figure was only 5% of those 55+.

It is important to note that this data only refers to those identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, rather than encompassing the whole LGBTQ+ community. One particular limitation is that currently there is insufficient research to put an accurate figure on the number of people who are trans or non-binary.

The 2021 Census across England and Wales was the first to ask people about their gender identity and sexual orientation. The data published Jan 2023, shows:

- 44.9 million people answered the census questions on sexual orientation. 7.47% didn't answer.
- 45.7 million people answered questions on gender identity.
- 1.5 million people aged 16 and over identify as LGB+
- 43.4 million people aged 16 and over identify as heterosexual
- 262,000 people say gender identity different to their assigned sex at birth
- 48,000 people aged 16 and over identified as a trans woman
- 48,000 people aged 16 and over also identified as a trans man
- 30,000 people aged 16 and over also identified as non-binary

Source BBC news 6th January 2022

When we consider how many people identify as LGBTQ+, it becomes clear why inclusion matters. Everyone deserves to feel valued and supported while experiencing surfing.

Be aware that the LGBTQ+ community forms an increasingly large part of our society and provides much needed diversity within surfing.

The queersurfclub is a community of LGBTQ+ surfers (and allies) from across the globe – connected by our identities and a love of the oceans. They provide a supportive community and advocacy for LGBTQ+ surfers, underrepresented communities and environmental issues.

Rainbow Laces is a campaign by UK Charity Stonewall to show solidarity for LGBT people in sport.

Lower socio-economic classes

What percentage of surfers are from professional, managerial or business owning socioeconomic classes?

1. 20 %
2. 50%
3. 66%
4. 79%

Ans d) 79% (SAS, 2013) <https://www.sas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/SAS-Economic-Impact-of-domestic-surfing-on-the-UK-med-2.pdf>

If we compare this to the national average of 54% we can see that people of lower socioeconomic classes are under-represented in surfing. In 2013 a study by SAS found the average annual spend of a UK surfer on taking part in surfing to be approximately £3000 (£2976).

Surfing and surf lessons can be expensive. Commercial surf schools are seasonal businesses and need to charge for the value of the lessons/ programmes, however there may be ways you can help reduce the cost to the participant. Some surf schools may offer discounts for multiple sessions to encourage regular participation.

Unfortunately, not everyone has regular access to a beach and children will rely on parents transporting them. For many in the UK surfing is an activity children only experience whilst on holiday. Instructors can advise on where and when to go surfing meaning that when they do have the opportunity to surf they are able to make the most of it. Wave pools are bringing surfing opportunities closer to many people, with new centres planned for Birmingham, Edinburgh and London.

Schools have to deliver outdoor activity as part of the national curriculum. Can you reach out to a local school to work with them to develop regular surf lessons?

There may be specific campaigns, drives or initiatives to help reduce barriers to participating and encourage participation by underrepresented groups. You may be able to advertise and access funding through regional sport development organisations such as;

<https://www.activeyorkshirecoast.co.uk/>

<https://www.activecornwall.org/>

<https://www.activedevon.org/>

<https://www.activedorset.org/>

If your local area is not listed can you find it?

For high level surfers with competitive potential [Sports Aid](#) can provide grants to help with fees.

Collectively we are working to ensure surfing will become an even more safe, welcoming and inclusive sport for all. In the unlikely event you experience or observe any form of verbal abuse, threats or physical attacks you can report it here https://www.report-it.org.uk/your_police_force

Module 2

Putting inclusive instruction into practice

During a surf lesson a brother, Sam 11 years old and sister Jess 12 years old are bickering. You overhear Sam 'say girls are rubbish at surfing anyway'. How would you address this situation?

It is important to challenge stereotypes when we come across them. If we allow what may be seen as low level stereotyping to go unchallenged it sets a precedent for these attitudes to continue. Challenge them with positive examples. You could point out that female surfers charge the biggest waves on the planet, earn as much as men in competition and that one of the UK's most successful surfers ever is a woman, Melissa Reid the x3 visually impaired world champion. Encourage them to check out positive female role models like [Sierra Kerr](#), [Lucy Campbell](#) or [Carissa Moore](#) online. Promoting positive role models will help to challenge the stereotypes and change attitudes both within surfing and society.

Adapting Activities to Promote Inclusion

Instructors need to ensure that people can learn safely and their experiences of surfing are as fun and positive as possible. You can make adaptations to your session as it runs, change things to make sure everyone is safe, involved and having fun.

The STEP acronym © 2002, Youth Sport Trust. All rights reserved. can help you identify aspects of your session you can adapt to make it inclusive. We will look at what each of these mean and how we apply it to beginner surf lessons.

S – Space

T – Task

E – Equipment

P – People

Space

This is the area the activity takes place. Below are two examples of how we can utilise the space within a session to make it inclusive.

Within a session you may direct different people to different areas of the surf zone to help them have more success. An adult will need to go further out in the whitewater than a small child in order to catch a suitable wave. Someone who is nervous may benefit from catching small waves in knee deep water to develop their confidence.

Although we can't control the waves within a session, you may be able to schedule a session for a time when the forecast is most favourable for the participants. Also if you have someone with a mobility issue a session at high tide may be much easier for them to access. You may use a flat water location such as a tidal pool.

Task

This is what you are asking the person to do. Remember surfing is the act of riding waves so it is not a necessity to get someone to stand on a surfboard. Many people will have the goal of standing and we should work with people to ensure they are able to meet their goal. At times it may be more appropriate to get people to explore different ways to ride and enjoy waves. You can set appropriate tasks, challenges or drills for individuals based on their needs. This may be to practise lying on the board in a prone position or riding waves on their knees. You may set appropriate goals or milestones for people within a lesson such as riding 5 waves.

Equipment

Consider the size and type of board you assign to each person. Also consider the wetsuit choice. As we know changing board sizes can have a huge effect on the difficulty level of surfing. Giving someone that is less able a larger board may help them as it will be more stable however they must be able to manage it safely in the water as larger boards are heavier and require more effort to manoeuvre.

Certain people, in particular small children, will get colder more quickly. If possible, you may equip them with thicker wetsuits, and use boots, gloves and hoods as appropriate. In Module 5 we will look at equipment in more detail.

People

You might group people of similar ability together or create subgroups within a lesson. You may task half of the group with practising a full pop-up, whilst others may be learning to stand using their knees. Your school may run specific sessions for certain groups e.g. women only, older surfers or sessions for groups with similar needs such as autism. Some people with particular neurodiversities may struggle with a busy beach environment so early or late sessions may help them to access the beach when it's less crowded. This can help them to feel more comfortable allowing them to learn more effectively.

Implementing STEP

STEP can be used to help you think about how you can adapt sessions for all individuals, not just disabled people.

This is Sophie. She is 9 years old and has had one surf lesson before with her dad. She found it difficult to carry and handle the board and didn't manage to stand up. She also got out after 30 minutes as she was cold. She said she just got washed around by the waves trying to get out.

Use the STEP model to suggest ways you can adapt the session to meet Sophie's needs.

- Space
- Task
- Equipment
- People

Space

Start in very small waves in shallow water, build success and confidence.

Task

- Ensure a full warm up before entering the water.
- Ask Sophie to catch a number of waves in the shallows riding prone and practising turning prone.
- Use the knees or step through method to get initial success standing on the board.
- Set them fun challenges such as catch the longest wave, catch a wave with a partner, 'high-5' someone on a wave.

Equipment

Ensure Sophie has a thicker 4 or 5 mm wetsuit. Offer boots and other accessories if available. Offer a smaller softboard if available. 6-7'

People

Group Sophie with other children in the group. You can buddy them up with people of a similar age when setting tasks and challenges.

Module 2

Unconscious Bias

Unconscious Bias Task:



Write down your initial thoughts on the surfer above. You could consider their skill level, what kind of boards and waves they surf.

Are you biased?

1. No
2. Yes

If you made some assumptions from the picture and you answered no, your biases are likely to still be unconscious and you are not yet aware of them.

If you answered yes, you may already be aware that we all hold some form of unconscious bias. As we will see, this awareness is the first step in being able to challenge the way we think and be able to grow.

The equality act 2010 provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. The act makes it illegal to discriminate against anyone due to their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

These terms are known as the protected characteristics. As instructors we have legal duty to ensure we are inclusive and do not discriminate against any of the 'protected characteristics'

Despite this many biases and inequalities still exist. Prejudice and stereotyping can present barriers to participation.

Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias can be as simple as making assumptions about a person based on the board they ride or the clothes they wear. It is perfectly natural to make these assumptions, but we need to accept that they may not be correct.

Your brain receives and processes vast amounts of information every minute. It is not possible for us to consciously think about every aspect of this information so much of it is processed unconsciously. The brain will recognize patterns in information and then process or filter it according to certain 'rules'. It is these 'rules' where the potential for bias exists. The 'rules' you have developed are a result of a huge number of factors you have been exposed to and the influence that society and culture has had on you. Certain choices and opinions come to us in ways that may seem natural and logical, but they are a result of social structures and habits, not nature. Making assessments based on these biases can often lead to people or groups being disadvantaged in some way.

Some examples of Unconscious Bias

Often we compare or contrast someone against another person. People may have similar attributes however unbiased thinking involves judging each person on their own merits.

The 'affinity' effect makes us favour people that we feel like we have a connection to. It could be people of a similar age, from the same home town or with similar interests e.g. surf the same spot or support the same football team. This happens quite often. It makes us value people we share a simple connection with more than those who we do not.

- The first step to reducing the impact of our bias is acknowledging it and being willing to take steps to change
- Be aware of any negative or positive stereotypes you may hold
- Notice when other people's biases are likely to be influencing decision-making and choices
- Challenge stereotypes in others
- Spend time with people of different backgrounds or experiences to yourself
- During surf lessons notice who you're naturally less instinctively drawn to personally or comfortable with and aim to ensure you're inputting equal time and effort with those people
- Consider alternative points of view



Now review your thoughts (notes) on the surfer picture above.

Did you make any assumptions about them based on appearance?

Remember it is natural to make assumptions and in this task you were actively encouraged to however, we need to be aware that these assumptions will not always be correct and our assumptions may be based on stereotypes.

Did this help to identify any unconscious bias or stereotypes you have?

What steps will you take to challenge your own unconscious bias?

Check out this infographic [Understanding Unconscious Bias - UK Coaching](#)

Informed by:

[Strategies for Reducing the Impact of Unconscious Bias – UK Coaching](#)

[Understanding unconscious bias | Basketball England](#)

Module 3 Safe surfing and your Duty of Care

This module will cover the laws and terms you need to be aware of and your legal responsibilities whilst delivering beginner surf lessons.

Duty of Care in Surfing

What is 'duty of care?'

In the eyes of the law we all have a duty of care (responsibility) to 'behave as a reasonable person would behave in the circumstances.'

The term **duty of care** originates from **tort** law which is a branch of civil law that imposes **liability** (blame) for breach of obligations.

In practice this means that if someone has suffered a loss (injury or financial) as a result of someone's actions they may be able to make a claim against them for compensation as a result of **negligence**. Negligence occurs when a person has failed in their **duty of care** to others or to behave as a reasonable person would behave in the circumstances.

Duty of care means that everyone adheres to a standard of reasonable care while performing any acts that could potentially harm others, this includes surfing.

Here is an example in surfing:

Mike Donovan, a local Newport, Oregon surfer 2007.

Donovan was surfing at a popular beach when he was seriously injured by a lost board from another surfer who chose not to secure his board with a leash. As we know, wearing a leash is an important safety precaution (recommended by Surfing England). Donovan needed stitches to his head and shoulder, as well as fourteen external staples to his skull to "keep everything together."

Participants involved in recreational activities such as surfing generally owe a duty of care to other participants. By neglecting to wear a leash, the owner of the board that hit Donovan had not fulfilled their duty of care to others and therefore could be considered liable for the injuries suffered by Donovan. When an individual neglects this duty of care, and injury or loss results, there is the possibility for **tort liability**.

This case not only highlights the need for all surfers to follow Surf Safety advice but also demonstrates why all surfers should have insurance as provided with your Surfing England membership.

Your Duty of Care as a Surf Instructor

When instructing we are in a position of responsibility and therefore we have a **legal** duty of care to the beginner surfers we are instructing as well as a **moral** duty of care to other beach users. Remember, beginner surfers may have little or no knowledge of the hazards of surfing and the beach environment.

Firstly we need to ensure that we protect our participants from **foreseeable** dangers. This will involve identifying potential hazards such as rocks or rips and then taking steps to minimise them by choosing appropriate areas to surf. It will also involve teaching safety measures, such as action for wipeout, so

participants can protect themselves. Following safeguarding policies and procedures is also part of an instructor's duty of care.

Secondly we need to ensure beginner surfers are aware of their own duty of care to others in the surf. We do this by teaching them how to surf safely, following surfing etiquette and advice to avoid collisions.

These are examples of your duty of care responsibilities as surf instructor:

- Making sure the equipment for the day is all in good working order
- You are following the school operating procedures



There is an amber weather warning in place for strong winds and an instructor runs a surf lesson. One of the participants is injured by a board that has been picked up and blown by the wind.

In all sports and outdoor activities there is a degree of risk involved. It is acknowledged that accidents can and do happen, however in this case the risk is **foreseeable** and therefore the instructor must take steps to manage the risk.

The instructor and surf school are potentially liable for any injuries caused to the participant because the high winds were forecast and there was a warning in place. The instructor has failed in their duty of care to manage the foreseeable risk.

Q – What should the surf school have done in this case?

A- Cancel and rearrange the lesson to a time with more suitable conditions

We will learn more about hazards and risk management in module 4.

Higher Duty of Care and Loco Parentis

Children, young people (anyone under 18) and vulnerable adults are owed a **higher duty of care** as it is expected that they may be more susceptible to harm than adults in a similar situation.

This consideration should be even greater if a child is known to have learning difficulties or a medical condition which may make them more vulnerable to foreseeable risk of harm. The responsibility of an instructor working with children is the same as that of a teacher in charge of a class of children.

Here are some examples that help demonstrate the need for a higher duty of care when working with children:

- Not paying attention or following instructions
- Not able to judge distance or speed accurately
- Overly ambitious on expected capability
- Not aware of conditions or changing conditions
- Less developed risk perception skills
- Smaller, lighter, so more effect of wave power, current or other elements like cold or hot weather on them
- Shorter, so will be at waist/ head depth sooner
- Less coordinated if inexperienced; could lose footing in shorebreak, impact zone /surf zone sooner

Instructors in charge of children have to act in '**loco parentis**'. This term is best described as requiring the instructor to act as a reasonable parent/carer.

There may be a difference in what the parent/carer and instructor may permit because the instructor has a better understanding of the risks involved.

Example:

A parent/carer may say that their child can take part in a surf lesson without a wetsuit, however a responsible instructor would not allow this.

You should ensure that everyone is equipped appropriately with a wetsuit as per your training and the surf school risk assessment.

Question: What things can you do to demonstrate a higher duty of care?

Answers:

- More detailed risk assessment which may mean changing factors such as instructor ratios to help mitigate risk
- Ask regular questions to confirm they understand your instruction.
- Use more sheltered areas of beach and work to their waist depths
- More regular head counts
- Use simple language and clear gestures and hand signals
- Increase instructor ratios

Under 8 years old

For children under 8 the law means that the parent must stay on site with the child. In practice this means that a parent or guardian should be with the child during the surf lesson in the water or close by on the beach.

As a result some surf schools have a minimum age to participate in lessons.

Coaching ages younger than 8 will depend on the policies and insurance cover of your surf school. A dynamic risk assessment must have taken place specific to the session and customers in the session.

Safeguarding and Protection from Abuse

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding in sport is the process of protecting children and adults from harm by providing a safe space in which to play sport and be active. Everyone involved in delivering sport has safeguarding responsibility as part of their duty of care.

The aim of effective safeguarding is to create a culture of always acting in the best interest of all children and adults to protect them from harm and abuse.

How do we effectively safeguard ?

Effective safeguarding involves being vigilant for the signs, symptoms and effects of abuse and reporting any concerns you come across promptly using the correct channels.

What is abuse?

Abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. Children and young people can also be harmed through bullying behaviour and poor practice.

What are the signs of child abuse?

Signs that there may be something concerning happening in a child's life include:

- Becoming withdrawn or seeming anxious
- Becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- Lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- Poor bond or relationship with a parent
- Knowledge of adult issues (e.g. sexual or drug references) inappropriate for their age
- Running away or going missing
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- Always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body.

You may also notice some concerning behaviour from adults who you know have children in their care, which makes you concerned for the child/children's safety and wellbeing.

Many of these signs involve looking for **changes in behaviour**. It can be more difficult to spot the signs if you do not have regular contact with a person and do not know their usual character but you should still be vigilant and report anything that does not seem right. It is much better to report something

If a child reveals abuse to you, it's important to take it seriously, listen and report it. It is vital you take the next steps to keep them safe.

Who to report to:

If you think a child is in **immediate danger or is injured as a result of abuse** you must **call the police** and report your concerns.

Disclosures or suspicions of abuse, must to be responded to and reported in line with your surf school safeguarding procedures. This applies even if the abuse happens in another setting such as at home or school, if it is brought to your attention, you have a **duty of care** for that child and must report your concerns.

If you have concerns about a child, suspect abuse or have been told about abuse you should follow surf school safeguarding policy and report your concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Ensure concerns are recorded accurately and promptly. Every surf school should have an equivalent of a DSL. This could be the head coach, manager, owner or someone else. This should be clearly displayed and outlined in a safeguarding policy so anyone can see who this is and how to contact them.

You can also seek support, advise and report concerns to the NSPCC directly, if for any reason you are not able to share them internally. It's normal to be anxious or nervous if you have a safeguarding concern and a call with the NSPCC can help and provide reassurance you are doing the right thing.

You can contact the NSPCC:

By phone on 0808 800 5000 / email help@nspcc.org.uk / [Online](#)

You can also speak to Surfing England, in particular if you have a safeguarding concern regarding the surf school management team and it's not appropriate to report through the internal channels. We, alongside the NSPCC, are here to help.

All Surfing England surf instructors are required to complete either the Surfing England Safeguarding for Surfing online training or the NSPCC Safeguarding in Sport online training. These courses will give you a more detailed understanding of why safeguarding is so important. They will also equip you with the basic knowledge and tools to help spot issues, have conversations with young people that may want to disclose something to you, and then take the most appropriate course of action.

Module 3

Health & Safety, Accidents, Insurance and more

Health and Safety

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety in Great Britain. Health and safety is enforced and regulated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). There are other regulations that compliment this act that we will also examine in this section.

The Health and Safety at Work Act sets out in law what employers, employees and the public must do to ensure safety.

Employers must:

- Identify hazards and take steps to minimise them to acceptable levels (risk assessment).
- Provide training and equipment (including PPE) and advice to keep employees (and surf school participants) safe.
- Provide first aid and safety equipment and report incidents.
- Hold adequate insurance for their business operations and employees.

Employees (including self employed) must:

- Follow any safety training you have been given including Normal Operating Procedures. (NOP's).
- Be careful about your own and other people's health and safety.
- Tell someone if you think you or others are at risk at work. You should tell your employer, trainer assessor or Surfing England if there are any problems with health and safety at a surf school.

PPE – Personal protective Equipment

PPE stands for Personal Protective Equipment. Employers must provide it for employees and participants (although they may choose to provide their own). Employees have a duty to wear it to protect themselves.

Question: What PPE may be required for a Surf Lesson ?

Answers:

- Appropriate wetsuit and accessories
- Rash vest
- Sunscreen
- Hat
- Leash

Accident Recording and RIDDOR

RIDDOR is the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013. These Regulations require employers, the self-employed and those in control of premises to report certain incidents to the Health and Safety executive (HSE).

All UK workplaces must have an accident book. This is an essential document for employers and employees, who are required by law to record and report details of specified injuries and incidents. This can help to identify hazards and inform risk assessments.

What injuries should be reported?

- The death of any person
- Fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes
- Amputations
- Any injury likely to lead to permanent loss of sight or reduction in sight
- Any crush injury to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs
- Serious burns (including scalding) which: covers more than 10% of the body causes significant damage to the eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs
- Any scalping requiring hospital treatment
- Any loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia
- Hypothermia or heat-induced illness requiring resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.

Any accidents or dangerous incidents should be recorded in the **surf school accident book** and reported to the HSE (if required) as soon as possible after the incident.

Insurance

All Surfing England members receive insurance that protects against public liability risks and provides limited personal accident benefits for surfing accidents.

Surfing England [enhanced coaching membership](#) provides cover for coaching with an affiliated surf club plus independent coaching activity providing turnover from independent coaching doesn't exceed £35,000 per annum.

Cover is not provided for any limited companies or if a coach employs any additional coaches. It is a legal requirement for all employers including surf schools and activity centres to hold employers' liability insurance, which Surfing England recommends should be for £10 million or more. Surf Schools take out their own insurance for the cover they need for their operations. This may include:

Public liability insurance:

Provides cover if someone makes a claim against you because they were injured through your negligence whilst under your duty of care. With Public Liability, you're covered for compensation, court fees, and solicitor fees; however, policies may stipulate a requirement to follow recognised safety guidelines or training.

Professional indemnity insurance:

Provides cover if your advice causes injury to another person, i.e., if the person you've instructed suffers a serious injury or illness outside of a lesson and they claim against you.

Equipment or premises insurance:

Provides cover in the event of theft, loss or damage caused to insured articles.

Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs will invalidate any insurance policy. Policies also do not cover acts of physical assault.

If an accident happens and a coach is not found negligent, insurance is likely to cover costs, and Surfing England and the surf school can support. If a coach is found negligent and not working within the framework of the level of insurance cover, RAs, NOPs, EAPs and the scope of their qualifications, then insurance may not be able to provide cover. RAs and NOPs written by the surf school should reflect this.

When taking a role as a new instructor with a Surf School, the school should have a copy of their insurance policy visible for employees and customers to inspect. If you can't see the insurance on display, you can ask for a copy of their certificate.

You can check out the details of the Surfing England insurance benefits [here](#).

Whistle blowing

What is a whistleblower?

A whistleblower is someone that reports certain types of wrongdoing. This will usually be something you've seen at work – though not always. The wrongdoing you disclose must be in the public interest. This means it must affect others, for example the general public.

As a whistleblower you're protected by law – you should not be treated unfairly or lose your job because you 'blow the whistle'.

You can raise your concern at any time about an incident that happened in the past, is happening now, or you believe will happen in the near future.

Whistle blowing is an important part of maintaining safety in sport. Whistle blowing can be **internal** or **external**.

Internal whistleblowing occurs when concerns are raised about individual(s) within an organisation.

External whistleblowing may occur when an individual highlights the wrongdoing of an organisation.

Here are some examples of situations where whistleblowing may be appropriate:

- Theft
- Fraud
- Inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour

If you come across wrongdoing you have a moral duty to report it to the appropriate authority. This may mean the surf school, Surfing England, the police or others.

DBS Checks

The Disclosure and Barring Service process and issue DBS checks to help employers make safer recruitment decisions. A DBS check informs employers of a person's criminal record and if the person is on the Adults' and Children's Barred Lists from engaging in **regulated activity**.

Regulated activity is any activity that involves teaching, training or instruction, care or supervision of children. Instructing surfing is a regulated activity therefore having a valid DBS check is a requirement for a

surf instructor in the UK. Ensuring that all employees and volunteers have DBS checks is a key aspect of any surf school safeguarding policy. For safeguarding reasons you will be supervised at all times during your practical work placement unless you hold a valid DBS check for that school.

Adventure Activities Licensing Scheme (AALS)

The adventure activities licensing scheme (AALS) aims to ensure good safety management practice is being followed so that young people can experience exciting and stimulating activities outdoors while not being exposed to avoidable risks of death or disabling injury.

It is a legal requirement for a centre to hold a licence if they provide licensable activities to children. Although surfing is not specified as a licensable activity in the legislation, many surf schools and centres offer licensable activities such as canoeing, kayaking and coasteering (sea level traversing).

To obtain a licence centres will need to apply and be inspected by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) to ensure they have good safety management practices in place including;

- Appropriately qualified staff
- Assessment of risks to participants
- Measures identified as necessary to reduce risks

Module 4 Venue Analysis

Identifying and assessing risk

All sports and outdoor activities will have a degree of risk. It is the job of the instructor to take steps to manage those risks to an acceptable level. Risk assessment is an essential, ongoing process that must happen formally before any surf lessons take place as well as dynamically throughout the lesson. Your surf school will have a risk assessment document that identifies risks and how you will manage them. The risk assessment (RA) will inform the normal operating procedures (NOP) and the emergency action plan (EAP) for the surf school. During your in-person training, you will receive training on the surf school RA, NOP and EAP. Following these plans is part of our **duty of care** to surf school clients.

Risk assessment

There are 4 steps to producing a risk assessment set out below.

1. What are the hazards?
2. Who might be harmed and how?
3. What is the likelihood and potential severity of the hazard?
4. What control measures are needed to manage the hazard to acceptable levels?

Let's look at an example

1. Drowning is an inherent risk in all water sports
2. The people at risk are the participants and the instructors. Members of the public may also be at risk of this but are not directly under your **duty of care**
3. The severity of drowning is death therefore we need adequate control measures to reduce the likelihood

Question: What control measures can be used in a surf lesson to prevent drowning?

Answer: Most beginner lessons take place in the whitewater therefore people are within their depth, and this can reduce their risk of drowning to an acceptable level. More danger occurs if they are caught in a rip or injured.

Here are some example control measures:

- All instructors to be surf lifesaving/beach lifeguard trained & certified
- Rescue board available
- Maximum clients : instructor ratio of 8:1
- All participants wear a leash, coloured rash vest and are taught how to wipe out and what to do if caught in a rip
- Swimming ability of participant is confirmed prior to lesson

Normal Operating Procedures

The NOP Sets out how the surf school will run. It should consider the hazards and control measures identified in the Risk Assessment. The NOP will vary depending on the surf school set up. It may include logistics of how to get clients and equipment to and from the beach or daily equipment checks. You will receive training on the NOP in your in-person training at the surf school.

Emergency Action plan

An emergency plan may include reference to the following items

- The actions required of the instructor, the participants and other surf school staff in the event of an emergency
- Approximate response time for emergency vehicle and details of the closest hospital
- Precise location details of the venue including any special directions that need to be conveyed to emergency response personnel
- The person designated to take the lead responsibility in the plan (usually the instructor in charge of the session)
- The location of first-aid, emergency equipment (rescue board, fins), nearest lifeguard and defibrillator
- Contact details for parents, legal guardians or next of kin
- Incident / accident report forms

Emergency Processes and Responses

If you notice someone in difficulty you should initiate the surf school's Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and rescue as per your beach lifeguard training.

Here is a generic example:

- Surf Coach removes the rest of the group from the water (using recall signal or whistle) and informs them of the situation
- Effect rescue of patient(s) after Surf Coach assesses the situation, informing and seeking assistance from lifeguard / other instructors as necessary, and calls for appropriate emergency support personnel or equipment (ambulance etc).
- Surf Coach and/or Lifeguard to remove patient to a safe area
- Surf Coach and/or Lifeguard to diagnose extent of injury and/or shock
- Surf Coach and/or Lifeguard initiate first aid procedures and report to ambulance staff
- Surf Coach and/or Lifeguard/Ambulance Staff (as appropriate) to remove patient to centre or hospital as appropriate
- Patient is to be taken to hospital with emergency services or if necessary, by the Surf Coach in charge or other appropriate person by car (i.e. parent / guardian / carer) dependent on the nature of the injury
- Under 18 patients: parent / guardian / carer are to be informed as soon as possible (parent / guardian / carer may then take responsibility)
- Surf Coach will make a decision to continue the lesson, delay or cancel as appropriate
- Surf Coach to complete incident report form in triplicate: One for casualty; one for the surf school records; one for Surfing England
- Surf Coach to complete official accident report book
- Surf Coach to discuss incident and report with Head Coach

- Head Coach to Inform R.I.D.D.O.R. (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013) if necessary

Question: Why is it important to recall your group before affecting a rescue?

Answer: Remember you have responsibility for the safety of the whole group, so you need to ensure no one else gets into difficulty as you make the rescue.

You will receive in-person training on your Site-specific Emergency Action Plan at your surf school placement.



Dynamic Risk Assessment

The formal risk assessment will identify potential hazards but, as we know, the conditions at sea are constantly changing so we need to be able to monitor them and make changes if things change or become unsafe. We will monitor the group by doing regular head counts and observing.

Head counts and observations will be more frequent in busy and more challenging conditions.

Be especially vigilant during building swells, after large sets and during changes in the tide as banks can change and channelise and flash rips can appear.

A skilful coach will be able to foresee when conditions are changing and take action to manage the risk. This is an opportunity to educate the group and prevent the need for emergency action. As with lifeguarding, most of an instructor's safety work should be preventative and not emergency action.

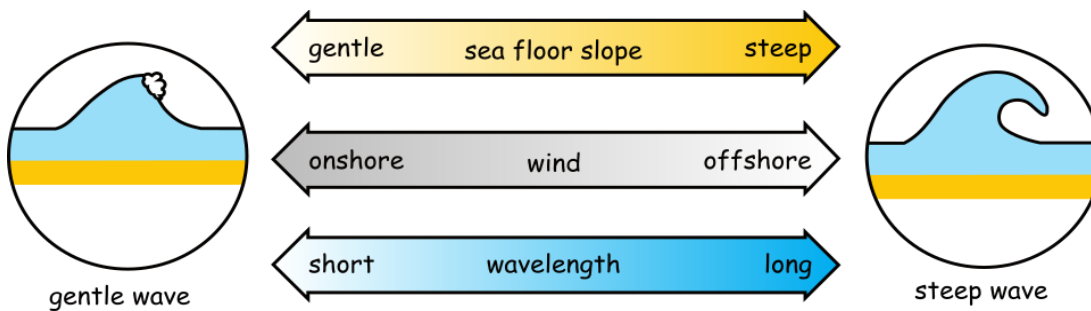
Module 4

Venue analysis

Bathymetry is the topography of the ocean (or wave pool!) floor, and can give us the measurement of depth from the water surface. The change in depth or slope of the ocean floor / beach / pool determines the way the waves will break. Generally, the greater the change in depth (steeper gradient), the more powerfully the wave will break.

Therefore, gently sloping beaches are often more suitable for surf lessons as they are more likely to produce **spilling waves**.

A continuum of wave type, with factors affecting wave shape and power



Surf Science: an introduction to waves for surfing. Tony Butt, 2014

Wind strength and direction

As we have seen, wind creates waves. Local wind will directly affect the sea state, currents, and surf conditions, the stronger the wind the more effect it will have on the surf conditions.

Onshore winds can make conditions choppy and make the waves more likely to be **spilling**. These conditions can be harder to read and more random.

Offshore winds make for clean conditions but make plunging waves more likely.

The waves will be easier to read and predict. Conditions may appear calm but strong offshores can blow surfers out to sea.

Cross Shore winds can create chop and generate longshore current.

Strong winds are common in the UK and can often be the most dangerous factor in a surf lesson.

What dangers can be associated with strong winds?

- Large waves created
- Strong currents created
- Surfboards and other debris including sand blown
- Wind-chill
- Communication becomes difficult

If the wind makes the conditions too dangerous you should look to reschedule the lesson.

Module 4

Tides

Tides are created by the gravitational pull of the moon and to a lesser extent the sun. As a result, they can be forecasted accurately years into the future. The UK experiences some of the largest tides in the world. They do not create waves but tides have a big impact on our surf and can completely transform a surfzone in a short amount of time. They are one of the most important things to consider when planning a lesson and instructors must be able to plan for the impact of the tide on the conditions within a lesson to maximise the conditions on offer and maintain the safety of the group.

Around the UK, there are mostly two high tides and two low tides each day; this is called a semi-diurnal tide regime. A **tidal cycle** is the time between successive two high tides and is, on average, **12 h 25 min**.

Tidal range is the difference in water height between high and low tide. Tidal ranges in excess of 10m are not uncommon in England. **Spring tides** have the largest tidal range, **neap tides** have the smallest.

Spring tides occur twice a month when the sun and the moon's gravitational pull are in alignment, or just after, a full or new moon.

Neap tides have a smaller tidal range and occur during the first and last quarter of the moon when the Moon faces the Earth at a right angle to the Sun and the gravitational force of the Moon and Sun work against each other.

Spring tides will have a higher high tide and a lower low tide than neap tides but the mid tide point on a beach will be roughly the same. There are just over seven days between spring and neap tides. Tidal range will gradually increase with each tide as we move from a neap to a spring tide then will gradually decrease again as we approach the next neap tide.

The rule of 12ths

The rule of 12ths helps us to understand how fast the tide will change during the course of a **tidal cycle**. Simply put, the tide will move the least in the hours around high tide and low tide and most in the middle of the tide. The tidal flow will be greatest in the middle of the tide or 3 hrs and 7 minutes before or after.

Let's look at an example

Typically, sandy beaches have a gradient of less than 10% (10:1)

Therefore on a sandy beach with a 10m tidal range the shoreline can move 100m between high and low tides (average 6h 12 mins). (10m vertical equals 100m horizontal.)

During the first hour the tide will change by 1/12 of the range.

$$10\text{m} \div 12 = 0.83\text{m of vertical height}$$

Assuming the gradient is an even* 10 % this would mean the tideline may move 8.3m.

*Beach gradients are not even, every beach profile is different and they will change over time, particularly after large swells.

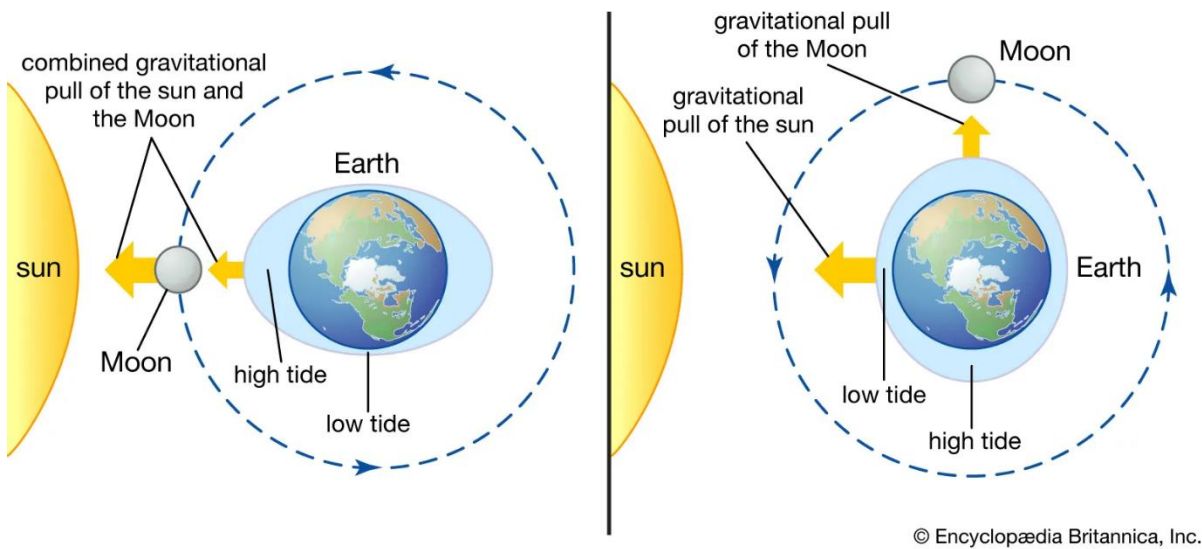
During the 2nd hour the tide will move $\frac{2}{12}$

$10\text{m} \div 12 = 0.83 \times 2 = 1.6\text{m}$ vertical height equating to 16m movement of the tideline.

During the 3rd and 4th hour the tide will move $\frac{3}{12}$ each hour

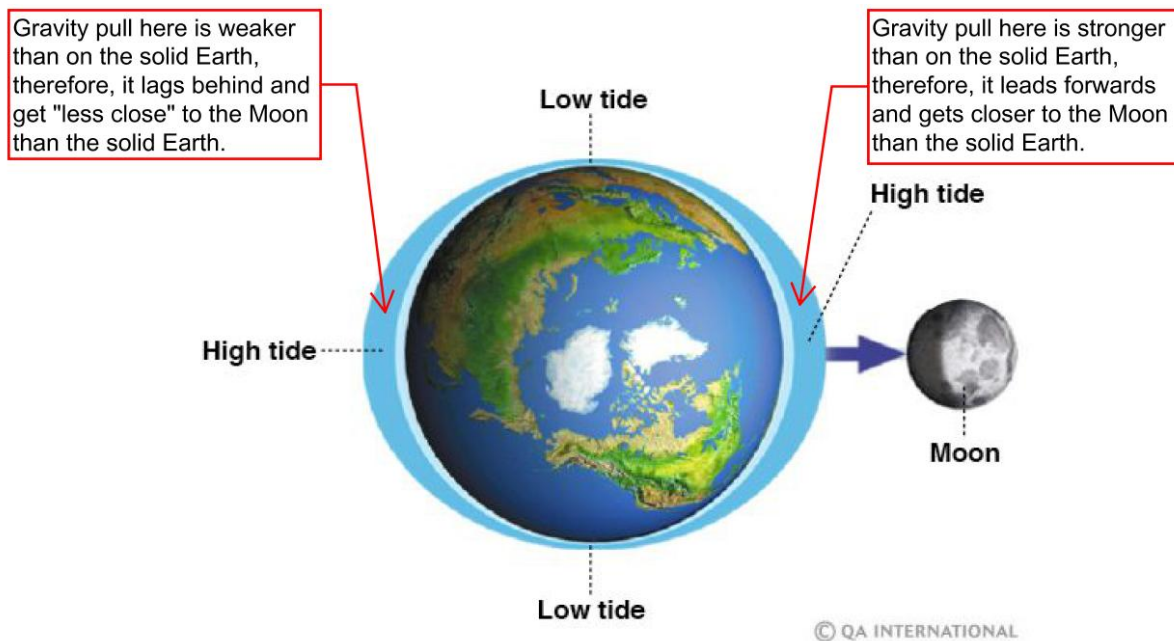
$10\text{m} \div 12 = 0.83 \times 3 = 2.5\text{m}$ vertical height equating to 25m movement of the tideline.

These diagrams show the Sun and Moon positions causing Spring tides (Left) and Neap tides (right)



Reference: Encyclopaedia Britannica

This diagram explains why we have high tides on both sides of The Earth in the plane of the Moon's orbit.



Reference: QA International

Anomalies

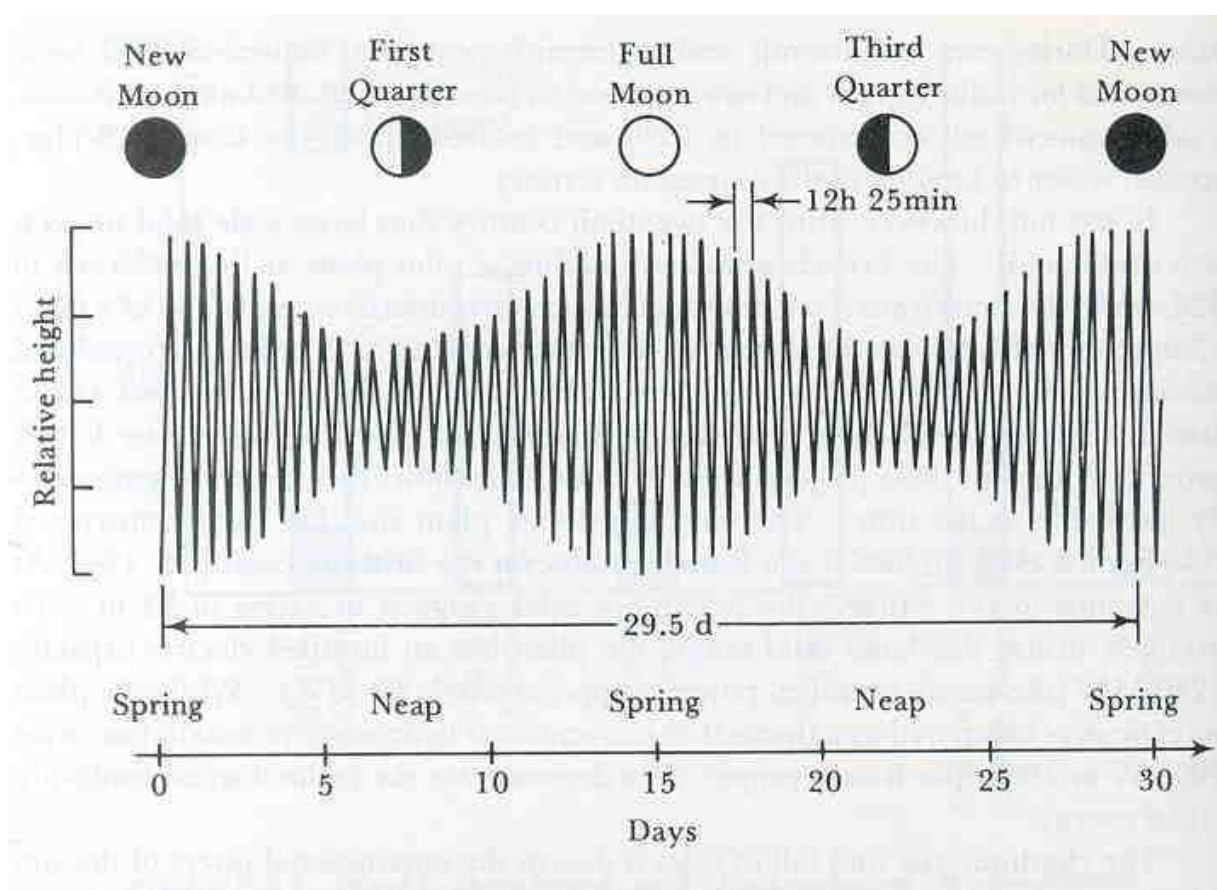
Due to their specific geography some locations in the UK, such as the channel coast, do not have such a uniform curve. Locations such as Bournemouth have 'double' high waters and Weymouth Bay has 'double' low waters. In these instances, the 'Rule of Twelfths' cannot be used.

Tidal Modulation

For many locations in the UK, wave height and power will increase on the incoming tide or push. It is not uncommon for the breaking waves to double in size on the incoming tide with no increase in the forecasted swell height.

The larger the tide, the greater effect it will have on the size and power of the waves. This again highlights the importance of knowing the location you intend to teach surfing.

Below is a diagram showing relative tide height with lunar cycle.



Module 4

Selecting a Suitable Surf Zone

All beginner & improver surfing at both lower & higher ability will be conducted in beach break wave conditions.

The individual coach must assess the conditions on each occasion.

Any lesson cancellation decisions caused by changing sea conditions will be made by the coaches/instructors in charge of the lesson on the day, not by centre managers or surf school owners.



REMEMBER: You, as instructor in charge of the lesson, must decide if you are capable of managing your group in the conditions presented on the day.

All beginner & novice improver surfing lessons will be conducted on safe, sandy beach locations where the **breaking waves are less than 1.5 metres** and surf conditions are clearly safe and tolerable for the group and individuals who will be surfing in the lesson.

For most groups a breaking wave height of around 0.5m (1-2ft) will facilitate progression. No matter what the average size of the actual breaking waves on the day, even if it is less than 1.5m the decision to operate a beginners and improvers lesson at the chosen location, will be decided by the strength & power of the prevailing surf conditions.

These forces are conventionally referred to as:

- Swell (strength, direction, size)
- Tide (height & flooding / ebbing direction)
- Wind/air/sea (force, direction and temperature)

These forces will be assessed in addition to the other beach / coastline environment conditions of the geography and topography. These coastal environment features will determine whether a location is tolerable for surfing to take place.

Selecting a suitable area will be an important step in managing the risk in your surf lesson. Every venue will be different and will change with the conditions.

Before each lesson you should:

- ✓ Check the swell and weather forecast including;
- ✓ Swell height, direction, period
- ✓ Tide times and heights
- ✓ Wind speed and direction
- ✓ Temperature
- ✓ Precipitation

You can use [Surfline](#) as well as the [Met Office](#). It can be useful to compare forecasts. Remember forecasts are predictions based on computer models and may be different to what you observe on the beach.

Observe the conditions, ideally from a good vantage point (not a webcam!). Ensure you allow enough time to see a number of sets (particularly important for higher period swells).

Identify any rips, sweeps, rocks or other hazards in the surf or on the beach if on a rising tide.

Look for an area with spilling waves with manageable whitewater over sand. If possible look for a quieter area away from other surfers, consider the location of any RNLI patrols and communicate with the lifeguards regarding the positioning of the flagged areas as the tide changes.

Consider and monitor how the conditions change with the forecast and tide throughout the lesson.

Module 7 Communication and Teaching Methods

Communication

Communication Skills

Communication is one of the most important skills an instructor can develop. There is a large amount of information to be communicated in a surf lesson but it is not just about being able to demonstrate skills and telling people how to stay safe in the ocean. It is about creating a rapport with the person and group in front of you, knowing their motives and helping them reach or exceed their potential. Being aware of the different communication types and the challenges of communicating in the ocean can help us to get the best results in our sessions.

Types of communication

There are a number of ways to communicate, and a good instructor will be able to use a variety of combinations of these during a surf session.

Verbal Communication

Words allow for fantastic detail in communication; however research suggests that your tone of voice can be even more important. You may use different vocabulary for children and adults to help match their level of understanding. Ensure you speak clearly and naturally and explain any surf specific terminology. During a surf lesson you will use verbal communication to give instructions and deliver **feedback** on performance.

You may be tasked to teach people for whom English is a second language or have a hearing impairment so it's imperative we are skilled at using other methods of communication too.

Listening

Instructing is not just about broadcasting information and good communication, it is a two way process. Good instructors will listen to their students and act on the information given. Active listening is a skill that will help you to understand the needs of individuals in your group. When combined with questioning, active listening can give you a gauge as to how well your instruction has been understood. Check in with the people in your group regularly, ask them how they are getting on and try to ensure their enjoyment and progression.

Demonstrations

You should be able to proficiently demonstrate* all techniques in the lesson on dry land and in the water. Demonstrations are often much more effective than words when teaching skills, particularly with children. Demonstrations can be done with or without verbal explanation. A demonstration without verbal explanation allows people to focus on watching the technique being demonstrated.

You can also demonstrate what mistakes people are making as they may not be able to see it for themselves. It is important to follow this up with the demonstration of the correct technique and get them to practise it.

*A trainee surf instructor who is a disabled person and cannot fulfil all the safety /surf lifesaving pre-requisite elements can attain this award as 'Supported Surf Instructor'. They are then supported by a

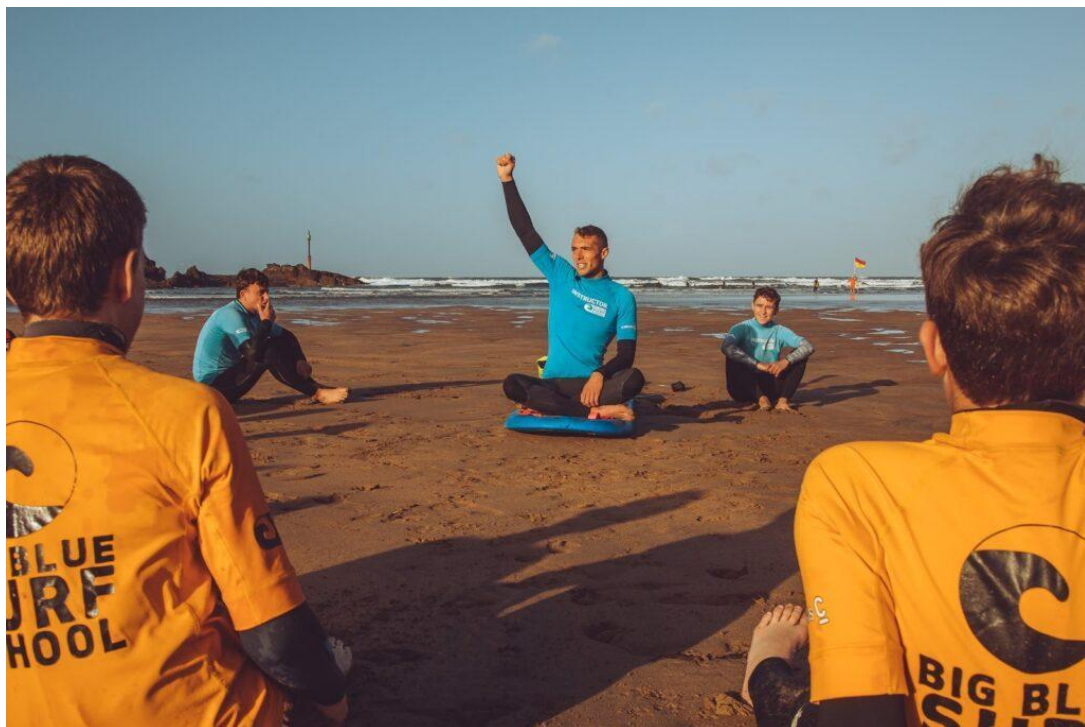
colleague with a relevant surf lifesaving award and surfing experience. (The group ratio would change e.g. from 1:8 to 2:8.) The Supported Surf Instructor is then to collaborate with this surf lifesaver for the purposes of demonstrations, and to continue to lead the lesson through verbal instruction.

Whistle and Signals

Whistles and signals should be used in line with your lifeguard training to communicate with customers, public, other instructors and lifeguards. They are particularly valuable in windy or rough conditions. You will need to teach your group the meanings of key signals and whistles before entering the water.

Signals

- Return to shore (in case of emergency)
- Move left, right
- How to signal for help
- One more wave



Return to shore signal, shown above.

Whistle signals:

One blast for attention of surfers in your group or public

Two blasts for attention of another surf instructor/ lifeguard

Three blasts for emergency action, initiating rescue

Body language

Statistics imply that without body language up to 50-65% of communication is lost or at least unreadable. You should aim to present yourself with open and positive body language. This will help to demonstrate you are listening and approachable and will help with customer satisfaction.

Some examples of open body language are:

- Smile!
- Use hand gestures.
- Make eye contact, where possible remove sunglasses, particularly if speaking one to one with someone.
- Good posture, relaxed – palms open.

Try to avoid:

- Crossing arms- This creates a barrier and can make you appear closed and unapproachable.

You can also look for body language cues from the people in your lesson. If someone is displaying signs they are not enjoying the lesson, possibly feeling uncomfortable, nervous or apprehensive they may be looking at the ground and avoiding eye contact. A positive, encouraging coaching point can get them engaged again and enjoying the lesson.

Remember when you are observing or co-teaching during your training your body language is important as customers will be observing you too. Think about how you can position yourself and what you can do to benefit the lesson. If the lesson is being led by a colleague, can you offer a demonstration from another angle?



Pictured above: Here the observing instructor demonstrates good positioning and body language. Her hands behind her back indicate she is listening and approachable.

Her positioning to the side means she is not distracting from the lesson but able to observe and demonstrate if needed.

Module 7

Lesson 2 Process of teaching skills

Process of teaching skills

The ocean is a challenging place to communicate effectively so much of the teaching in a beginner surf lesson will happen on land. This will also allow you to practise skills in a more controlled environment. You can recall your group to the beach during a session to go over skills and techniques or set new drills if necessary.

There is no right or wrong way to teach skills however it can be useful to follow the acronym **IDEA**. This will help to ensure you cover the different needs of people within your group and have the opportunity to check if your delivery has been understood. IDEA can be applied to a whole lesson and also to individual skills within a lesson.

Introduce

Introduce the skill you are going to teach e.g. how to lie prone on the board. Say why this skill is important and when you will use it.

e.g. 'We are going to learn how to lie in the prone position on the board'

Demonstrate

If a picture paints a thousand words a demonstration could account for ten thousand. Demonstrate on land, the skill you have introduced. You can do this in real time first. Avoid talking too much throughout the demonstration to allow people to focus on watching the skill.

Explain

You can then explain and repeat the skill demonstration, breaking or slowing it down and giving key teaching points such as toes on the tail or head up looking forwards.

Action

Get your participants to practise the skill and demonstrate it themselves – make corrections by giving **feedback** where needed and reinforce key teaching points positively. The process of them performing the skill on land will help them to develop the necessary **motor programmes** and allow them to develop a **kinaesthetic awareness** of the movement.

Progressive-part-practice

As we have seen there is a lot to learn in a beginner surf lesson. The skill of catching a wave and riding it successfully consists of a number of different parts. **Progressive-part-practice** helps to develop a new skill which needs a lot of information, such as surfing.

To use Progressive-part-practice we break the skill down into its constituent parts and teach them individually before putting them all together. Teaching them sequentially can aid memory.

In beginner surf lessons the student is learning in the cognitive stage, so when the instructor applies the principle of Progressive-part-practice it provides better opportunities for the learner to develop a skill. This is because they need to build the motor programmes* required for the outcome in that piece(s) of technical skill acquisition.

*Motor unit: Motor neuron innervating skeletal muscle

*Motor programme: Widely adopted abstract metaphor that movement is planned; how the brain signals through the nervous system to the muscles to cause the planned movement.

Whole-part-whole

Where someone has some experience at performing a skill it can be useful to use the whole-part-whole method. For example, a surfer that has had a number of lessons recently may start with a warm up then go out and catch 5 waves before coming in for the land part of the lesson. This allows the instructor to assess their performance. You may identify a certain aspect of their surfing that needs attention such as their paddling technique. You can then use the land lesson to work on and break down and practise the paddling technique before setting further drills in the water. Following some specific paddling practice, the surfer can start surfing again using the new and improved paddling technique, hopefully with improved performance.

Feedback and coaching

As we have seen from the experiential learning cycle, feedback is the key to learning. There are different types of feedback and different ways it can be delivered. Positivity, encouragement and enthusiasm are incredibly important. Following each point of contact with the instructor the surfer should feel good about themselves and their journey to becoming a better surfer (developing self-esteem and confidence). The surfer should also have one or two ideas about how to improve their performance.

Intrinsic feedback

Intrinsic feedback is the physical feel of the movement as it is being performed. It is what is felt by the surfer as they execute a skill or performance. As an experienced surfer you will instinctively notice things about your own surfing E.g. When you time a pop-up well and your feet land in the right place on the board it will feel good. Equally, if your feet are not in the right place you will be able to feel it.

A beginner surfer (in the cognitive learning phase) does not yet know what good surfing feels like. Understanding and interpreting intrinsic feedback can be difficult for beginners as they do not have the experience to know what success or failure feels like if they have not attempted the skill before. This is why instruction is so helpful for beginners and effective feedback will accelerate their learning.

Extrinsic feedback

Extrinsic feedback is provided by external sources, during or after a performance. It could come from instructors, coaches or other surfers. It is your role to give participants extrinsic feedback and also to help

them interpret their own intrinsic feedback. Extrinsic feedback can be delivered verbally or visually (using photos or video). Video analysis will be looked at further in the level 2 Progression surf coach award.

You will receive extrinsic feedback from your senior coach about your instruction and progression. You can also seek further feedback from other coaches and customers to help you improve your coaching. As we have seen you should use this to plan for improvement

Concurrent and terminal feedback

Feedback can be experienced at different times. Feedback which occurs during the performing of a skill is called **concurrent**. It is usually intrinsic but can be extrinsic too if you are able to communicate with a surfer whilst they are riding a wave. If attempting concurrent feedback be concise! Too much information can be distracting or overwhelming.

Terminal feedback occurs after the skill has been performed or at the end of a learning cycle. This may be after a single wave or at the end of a lesson or block of lessons. Terminal feedback is usually extrinsic, given by an instructor or coach. Photo or video feedback is also terminal. Terminal feedback should highlight positives as well as giving a goal for improvement. Within one session you may give someone several pieces of feedback on individual waves. At the end of all lessons the instructor should give a summary of the session and what has been achieved. This is a great opportunity to discuss progression steps and goals and the potential for further instruction / coaching with customers. You will receive feedback from your senior coach following individual sessions and at the end of your course.

Watch this video, or your Trainer Assessor may be able to show you a suitable alternative

Q. What type of feedback is the coach offering the performer on this wave?

1. Concurrent extrinsic feedback
2. Terminal extrinsic feedback
3. Terminal intrinsic feedback
4. Concurrent intrinsic feedback

Answer: 1. Concurrent extrinsic feedback

The coach is able to give feedback to the surfer during the wave. This is concurrent and extrinsic feedback.

How to give quality feedback

Receiving feedback on your performance, particularly in the cognitive stages of skill learning, can be humbling for the performer if not delivered sensitively. Feedback also needs to be delivered soon after the performance so the feeling is fresh in the athletes head. This will allow them to associate their own intrinsic feedback of the performance with your external feedback. Remember our coaching interactions need to be positive and should motivate.

Overload and the KISS principle; KISS - Keep It Short and Simple

For beginners in the cognitive stage of learning a new skill, frequent feedback is useful as they begin to experience the kinaesthetic (physical) feeling of performing the skill but we need to be careful not to overload people with too much information. When you observe a surfer on a wave there may be a number of aspects of a performance that require improvement, but when learning new skills people can only effectively focus on one or two. The whitewater surf zone can also be a hectic environment full of stimulus that can be distracting making coaching more difficult. Use the KISS principle to keep your coaching points concise and focus on the aspect you think will improve performance the most. The KISS principle reminds us not to overwhelm people with information in coaching points.

Questioning feedback

The questioning feedback model encourages a surfer to start to interpret their own intrinsic feedback from their movements and the outcomes. We ask the surfer to consider what they think they did well and where they can improve instead of giving them this information ourselves. Their response will give you an idea of their understanding of their own performance. You may agree with their answer, or you may offer guidance and focus to help bring their attention to a particular aspect of their performance.

The benefit of this is it allows the surfer to begin to analyse and take ownership of their own performance and development. This technique is most useful for people with good athletic ability and awareness who are motivated to improve their skills. It is also useful as the performer moves into the associative stages of learning.

Some examples questions:

- How was your last wave?
- What did you do differently that time?
- What do you need to do on the next wave?

Watch this video

What question could you ask the surfer to help them reflect on their performance?

Questioning can be combined with a feedback sandwich.

Internal vs External Focus of Attention

Research shows that the focus of attention of the coaching points you give can affect how well they are interpreted and executed by the performer.

An **internal** focus of attention is where we give a cue related to a certain body part, for example, bend the back knee or lift the chin. An **external** focus of attention is where we think about the effect of the action and focus on things outside the body such as the board or the wave.

The theory is that thinking about controlling a certain part of your body during a complex skill such as surfing, may affect the fluidity of the movement. Focusing attention externally can allow the body to coordinate without conscious attention.

For complete beginners an internal focus of attention, like where to put your feet, can be beneficial as it is a simple way to enable them to learn the movements required by the body.

As surfers progress it can be beneficial to give external focuses of attention, such looking in the direction you want to turn, then the body can coordinate more fluidly.

For experts, using internal focus of attention can also be effective as they are at a level where they need to make small precise adjustments to their body to execute movements effectively. They also don't need to concentrate on multiple aspects of the surfing movement like novices because they are well-adapted to the movement.

As an instructor you must use your experience to determine which coaching cue will be most effective for each person.

Module 7

Lesson 3 Coaching styles

Think of some of the different types of leadership you have experienced in your life, it may be from teachers, employers, or sports coaches. It is likely that there will be some leaders who have inspired you to give your best and maybe some that were less effective. The most effective leaders will be able to use and adapt their leadership styles to suit the people they are working with and the task at hand.

In this unit we will look at some (not all) of the most common and relevant leadership styles, as well as some tips for engaging different groups.

Autocratic

Autocratic leadership is where the instructor or coach has total control over all decisions and there is little input from group members. This command style is useful when communication needs to be efficient. An autocratic style is appropriate for beginners when you are conveying technical and safety instruction. It works well when there is a large amount of information to be conveyed.

Here is an image showing autocratic, command style instruction in action. Everyone is copying the instructor, following the instructions.



Every beginner surf lesson will have aspects of autocratic leadership as the instructor will need to convey important safety information to keep people safe. The term instructor indicates that you will be giving instructions to people, and this is generally suited to the autocratic, command style of leadership. Autocratic style can be perceived as being bossy and controlling but it doesn't have to be. You can give

instructions in a positive and friendly manner. You will be able to implement other leadership styles more as you work with people over several lessons and develop professional relationships.

Democratic

Democratic coaching is where the participants are able to input into the goals and outcomes for their own session. Having input on the session can be an important part of providing good customer service. With democratic leadership participants should feel their opinions are heard, but the instructor is still ultimately responsible for the session. This can help people have a sense of control over their own journey by identifying and receiving instruction on the areas they want to improve. To be able to influence their own learning, participants must have at least a basic knowledge of what they want to achieve. Asking the group about their goals within a surf lesson and helping achieve them would show democratic leadership.

Holistic

Holistic coaching embraces a person as a whole and helps them meet their needs as a human, not just their surfing aspirations. Each person will have different reasons for taking part in surf lesson(s) and the skill learning aspect may only be a small part of their reasons for taking part. The coach will work with them to help them recognise their goals. Some people may participate to spend time with their families whilst others may aspire to progress to an elite level. Surfing can be used to enhance confidence, self-esteem and can be prescribed by the NHS to help people deal with issues such as anxiety and depression.

Honesty, empathy, kindness, and humility are just a few of the traits coaches need if they want to positively affect others and create an uplifting environment for learning to surf.

These coaching styles should be seen as guides for different ways to interact with people depending on the nature of the lesson and participants. A skilful instructor should be able to read a situation and recognise which coaching style will be the most appropriate for the individuals and the situation.

Module 7

Communication in the surf zone

Communication in the surf zone & 'KISS'

When working in the water the instructor can position themselves in either waist deep water where people will be catching their waves from, or nearer to shore where people are finishing their waves. Each has its advantages and disadvantages, and you may move between both positions multiple times during a lesson.

Waist deep water:



Advantages of this position are:

- You can assist and give coaching to help people get on the board in the correct prone position
- You can assist with wave selection and catching, this is particularly important when progressing to green waves or reforms.
- You can push/pull people into waves if needed
- You can give a coaching point right before or as they catch a wave so it is fresh
- You can ensure people are catching waves from waist depth; not too deep or shallow

Disadvantages are:

- It can be difficult to observe them once they have caught the wave
- They have to come back to you to get feedback after the wave

Knee deep water:



Once the surfers can catch waves independently you can position yourself nearer to shore 'on the inside' from your group.

This allows them to surf towards you and allows for a better view of the group and the surf. You can give feedback at the end of their ride, or you may be able to give tips to them during their ride. It is also easier from this position to return to the beach with your group when you decide that they will benefit from some technical reinforcement on land.

Working with other instructors

When working with other instructors you can plan how you will work together to manage the group in the water. **(Module 4)** You may have one instructor waist deep and one in knee deep water. You could also have one instructor at each side of the group to mark the safe surfing area between you and keep people safe **(Module 3)** from rips or other hazards. If you are working with strong cross shore wind and or current, it can be useful to have one upwind of the group and one downwind.

Once you start work as an employed instructor you should be able to utilise your learnings, in both the online and practical elements of this course, to work with fellow instructors/coaches to designate appropriate ratios of surfing clients : instructors. This ratio would never be more than 8 clients : 1 instructor.

For adequate safety due to conditions, working with a mixed ability level group, or with children of various ages, there may be lessons where the ratio needs to be 2:8, or even subgroups of a 1:4 & a 2:4, for example. Surf schools are very much used to adjusting ratios (within a maximum of 8 clients : 1 instructor) to give a greater number of instructors/coaches to a group as needed.

KISS - Keep It Short and Simple

Remember the whitewater environment can be hectic and the beginner surfer has a lot to focus on and remember. When giving coaching points simplicity is key. After each wave it is best to give someone **one** clear coaching point or task to focus on for their next attempts.

Module 7

Top tools and games for engaging different groups

One to one instructing

1 : 1 instructing allows you to tailor a session to meet the needs of one individual. This can allow for rapid progression or specific work on an area that someone is having difficulties with. They will receive more feedback than if part of a group lesson, but the instructor needs to be careful not to **overload** the participant with too much feedback or information.

Mixed Groups

A typical surf lesson may have several parties taking part that have never met before. The instructor can facilitate introductions at the start of the lesson to break the ice and help people get to know each other. You could ask people their name and what surfing experience they have or what their motivations are for learning to surf. With all lessons positivity and a sense of humour can help people feel more comfortable.

Working with Kids

Instructing children & teenagers is one of the most rewarding and fun parts of being an instructor.

Some tips for working with kids:

- Keep it fun, kids will learn more if they are enjoying themselves
- Get them warm with a good warmup and keep them warm, staying active through the lesson
- Demonstrate and get them to copy your movements during the beach lesson
- Children often prefer visual learning
- Praise efforts as much as achievements
- Be patient, you may have to assist with board carrying, leash wrapping etc.

You can introduce fun challenges or competitions such as:

- Longest ride?
- Best 'claim'/celebration?
- Surfboard dance off ('flossing'?!)
- Coffin rides, cockroaches, other animal impressions?
- Party waves

Teach safe dismounting during briefing.

Instruction and coaching techniques

Throughout this course we have looked at various instructing and coaching techniques that can be used during your delivery of beginner surf lessons.

- ✓ The IDEA Model
- ✓ STEP Tool
- ✓ Feedback Sandwich

- ✓ Questioning feedback
- ✓ Progressive-part-practice
- ✓ Whole-part-whole practise
- ✓ Coaching styles: autocratic; democratic; holistic

We want you to feel empowered to try these methods within your session using the “Plan, do, review” cycle. It is likely that some will come easier than others.

Consider each lesson as an opportunity for your own learning as you implement and review the effectiveness of these methods. Set yourself challenges and goals for your own development as an instructor in the same way you will set them for the participants in your lesson. During your practical training you will work with your Trainer Assessor to identify some areas of your teaching that you can improve.

Module 7

Introduction to physical components and demands in surfing

Progression: Beginners; Improvers; Intermediates

We all reach points in our development as surfers where it feels difficult to progress. For some surfers their physical capabilities can be a limiting factor as to their surfing technical progression, be it at beginner level, or improver and intermediate levels.

Many physical qualities can be developed with time and effort, and some may increase as a new surfer becomes more physically conditioned to what they are doing with practice.

The needs of the person in front of you in your lesson is such that you work with their present physical capabilities, and work around any limitations in a positive and constructive way.

Physical capabilities and progression

Surfing is highly physically demanding! Many people may not realise this until they have their first lesson, or also as they look to progress their capabilities in the water.

When a surfer finds they cannot progress something technically due to their current physical capabilities it can be frustrating. You can try alternative methods to work around issues, for example using the knees to stand method or larger equipment.

If the surfer is committed to 'clearing a hurdle' they encounter technically or physically, they may benefit from working on one or more of their fitness qualities. This is a sensitive issue - remember the priority for a surf lesson is to ensure fun and enjoyment. When people are motivated to maximise their progression, we could potentially make suggestions which could help them improve.

Remember to work within the remit of your qualifications. If asked, you can advise people which aspects of their fitness may need improvement and suggest activities that may be appropriate but do not give specific advice that you are not qualified to give. It would be inappropriate to give someone a surf specific fitness training programme unless you have an appropriate fitness qualification.

We experience fatigue both neurologically and in terms of muscular endurance. This can lead to a plateau and then decrease in performance (be it during a session, during a schedule within a week, and/or longer). This can be particularly noticeable following extended use of the energy systems, and/or repeated bursts application of strength or power. It is useful to notice this occurring in individuals within your groups, especially if they don't, since some participants may need less rest than others to maximise their fun and learning.

Beginners and surfers of all levels will use a mix of all of the fitness qualities outlined next.

The components of fitness

The 3 energy systems -

- Phosphagen (ATP-PC); Anaerobic. Used in short bursts of movement, lasting 10-30s
- Glycolytic; Anaerobic. Gives approx. 30-120 seconds of movement at high intensity
- Oxidative; Aerobic. Utilised for activity from approx. 2 mins and longer i.e. hours. Often also associated with muscular endurance.

All three energy systems are active at any given time.

Mobility – Range of motion of the joints (Active and Passive)

Flexibility – Muscle length/tension (which can affect mobility)

Strength and Power – Strength is the amount of being force produced; Power is Force x velocity, and is also Work done divided by time

Muscular endurance – The ability to use voluntary muscles repeatedly without tiring

Agility (utilising coordination & balance) – Changing direction and reacting to stimulus

Speed – How fast we can move

Body composition - Percentages of the body weight as muscle, fat and bone

A healthy body composition is also something that may help surfer progression. Of course there are surfers of all levels in all ranges of body composition. If someone asks you about it, if they are seeking to develop their body composition (muscle:fat) to help their surfing, there may be many ways in which they could successfully do this, much of which is down to nutrition. Having other fun, engaging, motivating activities could be important and could aid development of the fitness qualities outlined, as well as generally support the body systems.

Be aware this could be a highly sensitive issue, for children and teenagers especially. Let people come to you rather than you to them.

Physical demands in surfing:

More will be covered on this topic in depth in the Surfing England Coach-Progression, and beyond.

Beginners

Learning new skills – wading out, board control, pop up; Strength
Cardiovascular- recovering from each bout of strength or muscular endurance work

Improvers

Increased cardiovascular & muscular endurance – paddling for waves
Power – wave catching

Intermediates

Increased cardiovascular & muscular endurance – paddling out back

Power – wave catching and faster pop ups

Paddling

The paddle position demands all the muscles along the back up to the neck are working hard. The paddling itself is demanding on the shoulders.

Pop up

Each method of pop has varying demands including lots of upper body strength particularly at beginner level in the white water.

The whole body needs to work to organise the flow of each part of the movement. Muscle flexibility and joint mobility and stability/strength are all tested!

Wave riding

The lower body demand may be surprising for some, but is relatively minimal as rides are short in time duration and without significant demand for power application.

The 'Core'

The core is a popular term but it is more helpful to consider all of the muscles around the **'Trunk'** – Consider the whole region from just below the shoulders down to just below the hips. [Muscle - Diversity of muscle | Britannica](#)

Strength and muscular endurance of the core and trunk, to power the limbs helps everything in surfing, indeed with all sports.

When compared with land-based activities, surfing offers distinct challenges. It shares similarities with swimming, as both require open-chain movements (moving joints independently) and take place in the unpredictable and unstable medium of water.

Some common examples of physical challenge are:

Poor flexibility in the upper spine - This can make arching the back for efficient paddling more difficult. As a result, they may often nose dive and you may need to adjust their positioning on the board

Poor flexibility in the lower spine or legs - this can make positioning the feet more difficult so you might spend some extra time on the beach refining their pop up.

Poor core strength or upper body strength - people struggle to push up and bring their legs underneath them. In this instance a slightly larger board may help. Use the knees method to stand.

Poor cardiovascular fitness - people get tired quickly so their wave count reduces. Give them time to sit out and rest.

It can be worth reminding people that the majority of time spent surfing (at all levels) is mostly paddling. As we know, paddling stamina takes time to build and can also be lost quickly.



Refer back and remind yourself of the warm up principles in Module 4. Pop up practice with coaching can also be a good final stage component of a warm up.

A good warm up (essential as part of your lesson) can reduce the risk of injury, will prepare people physically for their session, and over time could help further their physical qualities. Explaining why it's important and making it fun can help your surfing clients develop good habits when they surf independently.

Module 8 Beginner to Intermediate and Surfing England Grom Squad resource

Scope and use of the resource

A Surfing England Instructor-Recreation can instruct people from their first experience of surfing as a complete beginner up intermediate level.

An intermediate can be defined as being able to safely and independently assess conditions, paddle out and catch green waves making progress left and right.

As we have seen there is a great range of physical and mental skills that a surfer needs to master on their journey from being a beginner surfer to an intermediate. These skills should be seen as a progression and it is important to learn all the skills necessary at each level as they will provide the foundation for the next one.

Each 'learn to surf' journey will be different depending on the individual and the conditions available to them. To progress from beginner to intermediate could take a few days or several years.

In this unit we will look at each stage in detail, identify the core skills needed and common mistakes made by learner surfers. You will learn valuable coaching points to help people progress through the levels.

Grom Squad



The Surfing England "Grom Squad" resource (previously known as the Junior Surf Scheme) is a progressive pathway award scheme (or curriculum) for juniors (8-18 years) to develop their surfing. The programme aims to improve participants' surfing skills, knowledge, and enthusiasm for surfing. The Grom Squad resource is also an awesome opportunity for surfers' personal growth and should be a fun and enjoyable experience for them. Surfers can join in with the programme at any level. Individual development and commitment throughout the scheme are of greater importance than general surfing ability.

There is no time scale to complete each programme level. Encouragement and support should be given to everyone in order to help them both challenge themselves and succeed.

Juniors can access rewards – Badges, certificates for the efforts. This incentivises youngsters and may be motivational e.g. to work harder, not give up, strive for progress even if at a time they find a surfing session frustrating.

The Grom Squad resource can help you to focus learning objectives when working with juniors and can be part of your session planning.

Grom Squad is a great way to encourage people to take part in a series of lessons to progress their skills. Grom Squad can be used by juniors to evidence their participation and skill learning for qualifications such as BTEC in sport, and it is worth a junior asking their school leader for consideration for part of their Duke of Edinburgh awards ([DofE](#)).

There is also a strong environmental awareness aspect to the scheme with the **Protect Our Playground** initiative where we encourage surfers to pick up 5 pieces of litter.

Each level is symbolised by a famous surf break. Surfers can progress by completing all that is required to attain each level (or break), from one to the next, and be signed off by their coach in their logbook.

You are encouraged to, and Surfing England Accredited Surf Schools are expected to promote and use Grom Squad resources when working with juniors. However the levels and skills identified in the programme are applicable to everyone learning to surf.

A **Surfing England Instructor – Recreation** can take learners through the **first 4 levels of the Grom Squad**: Malibu, Fistral, Bells and Cloudbreak. For adults these can be referred to levels 1-4. Check out the Grom Squad Coach's Handbook for all the details of what skills juniors have to demonstrate to achieve each of the levels (with their named surfing breaks.)



L1 Safe Surfing skills (Malibu)

SUMMARY: Catching white water waves. Learning the basics, correct equipment, how to ride on a board and how to catch a wave. Basic surf safety and being able to ride a wave in a prone position.

Common mistakes	Coaching points and drills
Poor prone positioning	Toes on the tail, focus on the beach (head up)
Jumping on too late	Allow plenty of time before the wave arrives
Forget action for wipeout or other safety advice	Remind surfers of the safety signals and actions including wipe-out for every beginner session



L2 Moving to stand (Fistral)

SUMMARY: Standing up and controlling the board on waves. Understanding surf safety around rips and water hazards, paddling and catching a wave without assistance and a confident pop up.

Common mistakes	Coaching points
Insufficient paddling	Paddle hard! Paddle for 4 strokes after you feel the wave Long and strong paddle strokes, try not to splash. Whole arm in water.
Poor foot placement not across the stringer	Bring front foot to opposite hand on the deck Natural: left foot to right hand Goofy: right foot to left hand Re-practice technique on the beach, teach regression if needed
Paddling too early/ late	Look over shoulder
<u>Surf Stance Issues</u>	
Feet too close together or too far apart	Adjust feet, step forward/ back
Front foot not under chest	Head over centre of the board, look forward
Over extending (straight legs)	Stay low/ compress, close to the board (knees bent) Look forward
Bending over at the waist	Check foot positioning, lead with the head/ chest. Straight back
Not looking up and ahead	Look down the line, Head up – arm up, Focus ahead
Front arm not held up and pointing the way	Lead with the arm, look ahead, point where you want to go

Many of the common issues at this stage are around learning an efficient pop-up. This is a complex movement so encourage learner surfers to practise regularly both in and out of the water. Teach the regressions where needed.



L3 Board control (Bells)

SUMMARY: Paddling out in small waves, executing smooth pop ups, turning board in a lying and seated position, knowledge of wave sizes and conditions.

Common mistakes	Coaching points
Paddling too early/ late	Regular glances over the shoulder
Hips High	Stay compressed, look forward
Bogging a rail	Turn gradually, wait for the board to respond
Not paddling strongly enough	Paddle stronger – faster - as above
Not paddling on an angle in the desired direction	Angle the board more down the line
Not looking in the down the line	Rotate head, hips and leading arm
Leaning into the wave too much	Compress (bend knees) –back straight
Weight on the back foot	Weight forward, hands forward, look forward



Pictured: Paddling from too far back, stalling the board. This makes catching green waves much more difficult.



L4 Green waves (Cloudbreak)

SUMMARY: Catching unbroken waves and using hard boards. Paddling out through bigger waves and turtle rolling, timing take offs, changing direction on an unbroken wave.

Common mistakes	Coaching points
Paddling inefficiencies	Legs and heels together, squeeze glutes, lift chin and head to look forward. Keep your head still looking ahead. Ensure you can sink the nose by leaning forward.
Not making it out back	Time the sets, paddle fast during a lull
Getting washed off board	Paddle hard at the approaching wave, move weight back, hold the rails tightly
Turtle roll	Paddle hard at the wave, push up then roll, pull the nose down, get back on and paddle ASAP.
Board not responding to turning	Weight back to stall into turn, engage fin(s). Weight forwards to accelerate out of the turn.



Efficient paddling position pictured

Key technical points

- Head up
- Board is flat
- Legs together

The 'turtle roll' or 'eskimo roll' Refer back to Module 6 for full sequence



Alex Bird



Alex Bird is a dynamic and accomplished individual who combines his passion for education with his love for surfing, creating a unique and inspiring approach to teaching and coaching. As a Lecturer in Sport and Outdoor Adventure at Petroc, Alex is at the forefront of progressive teaching techniques, empowering and motivating the next generation of sports, fitness, and outdoor professionals. With a strong academic foundation, Alex holds a BSc in Surf Science and Technology, a field that merges his love for the ocean with scientific knowledge. Additionally, he possesses a PGCE from the prestigious University of Plymouth, further enhancing his ability to deliver exceptional teaching and learning experiences. Beyond the lecture halls, Alex is the proud owner of Barefoot Surf School, a testament to his dedication to surf coaching and outdoor instruction for over two decades. Throughout his career, Alex has witnessed the transformative power of surfing, recognizing its ability to change lives and instil a profound sense of joy. His unwavering belief in the importance of every individual experiencing the thrill of riding waves fuels his commitment to creating supportive and encouraging learning environments both in the ocean, the classroom, and through digital platforms. Passionate about various sports, Alex's talents extend beyond surfing. He is an accomplished kite surfer and snowboarder and engages with a wide range of outdoor activities. However, Alex's true bliss lies in the pursuit of a good righthander, where he finds pure happiness and a deep connection with the ocean. With an innovative and modern teaching approach, Alex brings excitement, creativity, and expertise to his coaching and education practices. His goal is to inspire and empower students, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their chosen fields. By blending his academic background, progressive teaching techniques, and years of experience in surf coaching, Alex ensures that every individual he works with receives outstanding instruction and support. Alex Bird is a true advocate for promoting surfing in the UK. Through his roles as a lecturer, surf coach, and outdoor enthusiast, he continues to make a significant impact, inspiring others to embrace the thrill of riding waves and nurturing a new generation of surfers and outdoor adventurers.

Nick Moffatt



Nick is a passionate and dedicated individual who thrives on supporting and advancing the highly skilled and professional work within the world of surfing. As the Coaching & Qualifications Lead at Surfing England, he has taken on the responsibility of nurturing talent and empowering surfers nationwide. With a wealth of experience under his belt, Nick has spent numerous seasons coaching both surfing and windsurfing in various locations across the UK and around the globe. His journey into the world of surfing began after finishing school, where he realised his passion for teaching and learning and gained qualifications including Surfing Australia level 1 and British Surf Association level 1 and went on later to manage water sports centres. Nick's commitment to education led him to pursue a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in science with a specialisation in physics. Throughout his time working as teacher and coach, he became actively involved in mentoring trainee and newly qualified teachers, as well as sports coaches. This experience further enhanced his ability to guide and motivate individuals to reach their full potential. Nick's coaching prowess extends beyond the realm of surfing. He has successfully coached U18s and adult club members to national competition in rowing and swimming. As a level 4 strength and conditioning coach, he continues to provide private coaching services to a diverse range of athletes, including U23GB fencers, recreational participants, and competitors across a range of traditional and free sports. Despite his extensive involvement in various disciplines, surfing remains Nick's true passion. He finds solace and exhilaration in riding the waves, making it his favourite activity. Furthermore, Nick has found immense fulfilment in his ongoing work in education and training. His unwavering dedication to collaborating with and learning from individuals from all backgrounds has proven to be incredibly rewarding. Nick's journey as the Coaching & Qualifications Lead at Surfing England reflects his deep-rooted desire to contribute to the growth and development of the surfing community. With his extensive background in coaching, mentoring, and education, he continues to inspire and empower centre managers, coaches and surfers of all levels while fostering a culture of excellence and inclusivity within the sport.

Contributors

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