

Learning the lessons from workforce planning for coaches and coaching

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This paper reports on the lessons learned from conducting coaching audits and workforce development plans for 14 Governing Bodies of sport in Scotland. The focus is on the particular aspects of workforce planning that apply to the voluntary sector and Governing Bodies in particular. This workforce planning took place in the context of poor data management, very limited current workforce planning, and an ethos of aspirational development growth projections. Each of the projects involved the distribution of survey instruments to club secretaries, questionnaires to coaches, focus groups of coaches and tutors, and a series of interviews with stakeholders. Data were collated from the club network, local authorities, and where appropriate, private providers. A total of over 1500 clubs and almost 4000 coaches were involved in the research.

Workforce planning is traditionally characterised as ensuring that the 'right people are in place at the right time, and with the right skills'. Coaching audits were carried out to establish current supply, with skills shortages and skills deficits identified. Coach education throughput and infrastructure were examined, along with growth projections and workforce recruitment and retention characteristics, to establish demand.

The planning process identified a number of important features of coaching practice that impact on workforce planning. These included the largely volunteer status of coaches, elastic service levels, limited mobility, and recruitment motives. The Governing Body context provided a particular set of circumstances that need to be taken into account in planning.

These included training provider status, a supply focus, the absence of a pool of labour, modest connections to higher education, being reactive to demand, and lack of control of recruitment. Particular challenges were identified in establishing growth projections, the level of 'churn', and the coach's role in development initiatives.

The workforce planning projects provided a set recommendations and targets for coach education and recruitment. However, it was the opinion of stakeholders in each sport that the planning process itself had been a very worthwhile part of the exercise.

Presenter

John Lyle is Professor of Sports Coaching at Leeds Metropolitan University, and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Queensland. He established the first professional diploma in sports coaching and the first Masters degree in coaching studies in the UK, and has played a significant role in the development of sports coaching as an academic field of study. He is the author of the influential textbook *Sports Coaching Concepts* (Routledge, 2002). John has contributed widely through publications, presentations, masterclasses, working groups, and other media to academic and professional developments in sports coaching. John's academic experience is complemented by a considerable personal experience as a volleyball coach, and engagement in consultancy, policy and the delivery of coach education.