



Sport Welfare Officer Network - Interim Evaluation Summary

The Sport Welfare Officer (SWO) network evaluation report provides analysis of the impact and progress of the network. The findings are taken from the interim report by the independent evaluators Ecorys UK and Professor Melanie Lang from the Centre for Child Protection and Safeguarding in Sport at Edge Hill University. Findings reflect data collected through various tools between **September 2024** and **March 2025**, including SWO reflection logs, surveys, club journey mapping, and interviews.

Key engagement highlights:

National Governing Bodies (NGBs):

- **28** NGBs engaged per Active Partnership on average (range: 11–51).
- SWOs participated in **364** events and supported **556** initiatives.
- Engagement included national meetings, forums, and collaborative training/workshops.

Clubs:

- **2,711** clubs received light-touch advice and guidance (average 68 per Active Partnership).
- **639** clubs received intensive 1:1 support or training (average 16 per Active Partnership).
- Support commonly included advice and guidance on policies and procedures, including recommended training for specific roles.

Emerging outcomes:

- Established and strengthened relationships with NGBs but more time needed to develop complementary roles.
- NGB survey showed good understanding of the network, high satisfaction with advice and guidance provided by SWOs and recognition of the network's potential to add value, especially around providing extra capacity and resource to NGBs.
- Benefits to clubs have included improved safeguarding protocols, training access, and inclusive practices. In time, wider evidence will assist to assess the impact of the SWO network.

Challenges Identified:

NGBs:

- Capacity to engage with the network given the different ways of working between SWOs.

Clubs:

- Low safeguarding awareness and limited capacity to implement changes.
- NGBs noted the level of impact differed between clubs depending on their level of engagement with the network.

Logistics:

- Difficulty accessing accurate club contacts and overcoming internal gatekeeping.
- Duplication of efforts by SWOs given current ways of working.

Good practice:

- NGBs: clear role definitions (e.g. LTA's MoU) and joint initiatives (e.g. British Judo junior welfare role).
- Improved clarity of SWO role through the Universal Offer and theory of change.
- Strong onboarding and communication approach improving mutual understanding with NGBs.

Priorities:

- Strengthen strategies for working with NGBs and protocols.
- Continue building trust and relationships.
- Explore innovative approaches to club engagement.

An NGB has highlighted the benefits of joint working with Sport Welfare Officers:



Active Partnerships have become an essential part of the support network.



[Click here](#) to visit our website and find out more about the Sport Welfare Officer network.