

Competition Update – January 2026



The competition year ahead has some added excitement with the delivery of our National Summer Games but there will also be plenty of other competitive opportunities for athletes to get involved in! Here's an overview of what support SOGB will be providing for this year's local to regional competitions...

Our continued support includes:

Funding

SOGB Competition Support Grants continue to support the delivery of competitions in 2026. Applications are [now open via this link!](#) *The first deadline will close on 31st March and grants will be processed and paid by 30th April.*



We'd also encourage you to link with your local [Active Partnership](#) to receive support with raising funds.

Please also check out our [website page dedicated to fundraising](#) where you will find lots of opportunities to apply for local funding.



National Sport Advisors Our amazing network of passionate and knowledgeable volunteers are on hand to support you with technical, developmental and building networks within their sport. For more info click [here](#).

Technology We are working hard to provide more efficient processes (exciting news on this coming very soon!) For now, our online forms can help alleviate the admin of competition entries. We know how precious volunteer time is so let us build your entry form, receive the entries and share them in a simple spreadsheet. We can also support with divisioning and medal quantities!





Are you thinking about delivering a competition? Here's some things to consider:

- **New to Special Olympics competition?** Have a read through the '[Guide to Competition](#)' to see what you need to consider. This is a detailed document and to help you can utilise the checklist at the end of each section. Alternatively, if it helps to go through it with someone [please get in touch](#) and a call can be arranged.
- **Already got a date booked?** Check out the [current events calendar](#) to avoid any date or sport clashes, 2026 competition dates are now being added.
- **Need help?** Contact SOGB [Competition Development Manager, Rachael](#), to check pending events and access bespoke support/guidance.
- **Don't forget!** Complete the [online event sanction form](#) 3 months in advance of your competition (refer to the useful checklist in [Guide to Competition](#), pg. 31)



Here is an update on some event specifics that will help you deliver a quality competition:

Rules and Guidelines

Follow Special Olympics International rules and guidelines wherever possible. For some sports and levels of athletes this isn't always applicable and therefore if you have an alternative format, please make this clear in your entry pack.

You can find the most up to date Special Olympics rules on the Special Olympics International (SOI) Resources website [here](#). We strongly suggest you regularly check the SOI website for any rule updates.

Please also note for the sports Athletics; Swimming and Football there are 'Sport Impact Standards'. These standards outline minimum guidelines on delivering a top-quality competition. SOGB are working hard to implement these at higher level competition to give our athletes the best experience possible.

The best way to prepare our athletes for higher level competition is to educate them at their first competition so adopting Special Olympics guidelines is key.





Event Safety - Check out the health and safety section on the [SOGB resources page](#) where you can find templates for the required documents.

To keep athletes and volunteers safe please ensure you have the following in place:

- Risk Assessment for the venue/facility you are using AND a sport specific section for the event (Please see page 26 of the [Guide to Competition](#))
- A nominated Safeguarding Officer at the event. If you need support in recruiting this role, please contact volunteer@sogb.org.uk
- A process of communicating the SOGB Safeguarding Policy – (Please see page 27 of the [Guide to Competition](#) and the [Safeguarding Resources webpage](#).)
- Adequate medical/first aid provisions and a process of recording any incidents or accidents requiring medical treatment must be reported to SOGB National Office. (Please see page 25 of the Guide to Competition)

Brand Guidelines

Please refer to page 49 of the [Guide to Competition](#). For further advice on branding, including for club/team kit and clothing, please see the [Special Olympics International Branding Guidelines](#). If you require access to a club logo, please email info@sogb.org.uk.



Media and Communications

Contact your local newspaper to share that you are hosting a Special Olympics GB event! Capture some good quality photos to send into our Marketing & Communications Lead, Tom tom.rawlings@sogb.org.uk

Photography

If you are hosting an event you must get photo permission from every attendee (this includes volunteers!) Our entry forms can capture this information effectively.

Need someone to take photos of your competition? Why not contact a local college or university student? *Don't forget to include this person in your event volunteer registration processes and follow best practice safeguarding guidelines.*

Branding

Banners with Special Olympics branding on can help create a positive atmosphere at your event. SOGB can support by providing banners at your competition, please request this on the competition sanction form.



Awards/Medals

SOGB can support by providing awards/medals for any sanctioned SOGB competition, you can now request this via our [online request form](#) or scan the QR code:



Volunteers

Officials – if you are struggling to recruit and find specific sports officials, please get in touch with us and we can utilise our growing sports network to try and support you.



Need event volunteers? Via the event sanction form you can request support to recruit volunteers. Got a question? Email volunteer@sogb.org.uk

SOGB provide volunteer t-shirts – request this on your sanction form!

Code of conduct

SOGB expects a high standard of personal conduct and behaviour from all involved in events and competition. Please share the Special Olympics GB Codes of Conduct:

- Athletes [Code of Conduct](#)
- Volunteers [Code of Conduct](#)

Coca Cola Partnership – complimentary water supplies

Coca-Cola will again be supplying water free of charge for this year's competitions. You can request this via the [online drinks request form](#).



Feedback

We are really keen to hear what our athletes and volunteers think about competitions they attend, to help gather this feedback we have a [short online survey](#) we'd like anyone who attends a competition to complete. Please share this link with your competition attendees.



FAQs

We've pulled together a few of the most frequently asked questions around competitions:

Can non-SOGB registered athletes attend my event?

Yes, they can, on a one-time basis. Check out our athlete entry flow chart on the [competition resources page](#).

How does divisioning work in my sport?

Check out [this useful infographic](#) that also links to an online video and fact sheet. Please also refer to the [Sport Rules Article 1](#), specifically section 10. If you require support with divisioning please email competitions@sogb.org.uk

Can I add other logos to the entry templates?

Yes, you can add your own logo's to the templates, whether that is a partner logo or a Special Olympics Accredited Programme. If you need support with this, please contact competitions@sogb.org.uk.

I have never completed a risk assessment before, where can I access support?

You can access our health and safety templates [here](#). If you need any support completing a risk assessment, please email competitions@sogb.org.uk and we will get in touch to help you.

Can I have my sponsors' logo on event t-shirts?

Yes, at come & try, local and regional competitions it is fine to have any sponsors logos on clothing/banners at your event. Remember the Special Olympics Accredited Programme/SO Club logo should always be prominent over sponsor brands.

What should the event safeguarding lead be doing at a competition?

As well as being the main point of contact for any safeguarding issues, this person should ensure they are made known to all attendees at the event via posters/printed resources and provide a briefing for volunteers and key staff.

How do I manage photo consent at my event?

The competition manager/event host must ask all attendees for consent to have their photo taken. If a person does not provide consent, they should be provided with something like a wristband/sticker at the event to make photographers aware.

Can my athletes attend non-SOGB competition?

Yes! We are activating more partnerships with other competitions opportunities. These are also listed on our [website event calendar](#).

Any other questions?

If you have any questions regarding competitions, please contact Rachael on competitions@sogb.org.uk / 07361 442331