



# NORTHERN IRELAND ORIENTEERING

## COACHING STRATEGY

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

NI Orienteering intends to move from a small volunteer coaching organisation that relies on a few committed coaches to a more fully recruited, professionally supported mix of Club Coaching Coordinators ('community coaches') and volunteer club coaches. The *coaching work-force* will be closely supported by the Coaching & Talent Development Officer and the regional development team.

The Coaching & Talent Development Officer will provide the leadership and expertise in recruiting, training, coordinating and monitoring coaches and coaching activity and to drive up standards. A mix of the Active Communities Programmes, After-Schools Clubs and club coaching programmes will provide the structure in which coaching will develop.

Developing the coaching base is vital to increasing participation and improving performance and maximising the potential within Northern Ireland and its communities.



## 1.1 Aims of the coaching strategy

- To set out the rationale for coaching within NI Orienteering.
- To develop a framework for implementing effective coaching within NI Orienteering.
- To develop a culture of **supported** club/ community based orienteering coaching to maximise individuals' potential and therefore performance.

## 2 WHAT IS COACHING?

***Coaching is "a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve." \****

Coaching is an essential part of all sports and should not be confused with training. Coaching requires interaction between a coach and an athlete. For coaching to be successful it is important to know the background and experience of each athlete so that a progressive coaching programme can be developed which will lead to greatest possible improvement in performance.



It is important to remember that coaching is not only something for young or elite athletes. Orienteers of all ages and abilities can benefit greatly from coaching.

To be a successful coach it is not necessary to come from an high performance background in sport. Many of the world's greatest coaches did not perform at a high level .

### 2.1 Benefits of a coaching strategy

A fully adopted coaching strategy will enable anyone who wishes to improve their personal performance to have access to an appropriately qualified coach. It will also provide a framework of nationally recognised qualifications, training and support to enable coaches to pursue their personal development.

A coaching strategy will lead to:

- Better communication
- Greater cooperation
- Increased self-awareness
- Increased performance
- Increased participation
- Shared vision and commitment

\*Eric Parsloe, The Manager as Coach and Mentor (1999)

## 2 WHAT IS COACHING?

### 2.2 Orienteering coaching in Northern Ireland

Historically orienteering coaching in Northern Ireland has taken place within four separate settings:

- Schools
- Outdoor centres
- Clubs
- Nationally (NI Junior Squad)

It is NI Orienteering's aim that all orienteering coaching will become more integrated and strategic throughout Northern Ireland.





# 3 Coach Education

British Orienteering as the governing body has a duty to ensure that coaches are supported in their activities and are given the opportunity to further their own personal development.

British Orienteering have recently restructured its coaching awards and the training courses that lead to the awards, resulting in two linked pathways:

The **first pathway** is aimed at the teaching of beginners, either child or adult, typically through schools and outdoor education, by people who needed to know the basics of Orienteering instruction but did not wish to proceed to being assessed after that training.

This pathway consists of three courses:

- Young Leader Award
- Teaching Orienteering Part 1
- Teaching Orienteering Part 2

The **second pathway** is being created by the introduction of the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) awards and will ultimately encompass 4 levels of award.

This pathway is aimed mainly at orienteers, who wish to achieve a professional qualification and who may wish to further their coaching skills in order to assist candidates aiming to develop their orienteering .

The first of these awards, UKCC Level 1 is now being offered to candidates and we shall then be introducing UKCC Levels 2 and 3 over the coming months. Before the introduction of further levels British Orienteering will continue to offer its existing Level 2, 3 and 4 awards.

## 3 Coach Education

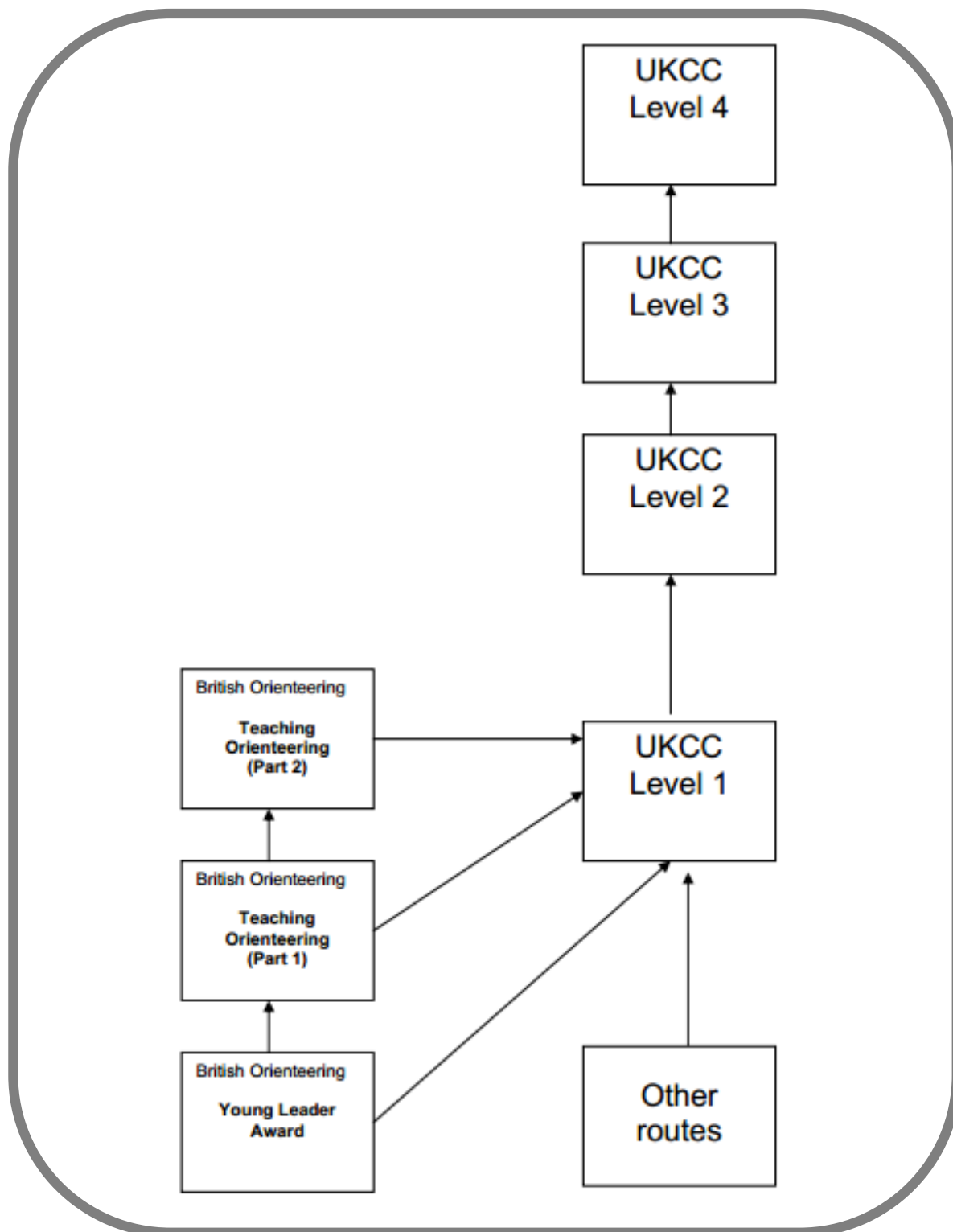
The British Orienteering Coach Education Programme places a great emphasis on the competence of a coach in addition to the knowledge the coach has; 'what they can do as well as what they know'. To enable a coach to progress we aim to create opportunities to put their coaching skills into practice with the ready availability of feedback.

For all our awards the first level is predominantly based around coaching skills, giving the coach the knowledge of "how" to coach, along with a basic introduction to the key principles of the event group areas (i.e. the progression from table-top, class room, gym, playground, playing fields, parks etc...). Level 2 builds on the knowledge gained at Level 1 and at Levels 3 and 4 topics are covered in greater depth and the coach has the opportunity to choose whether they want to specialize in performance or development coaching.

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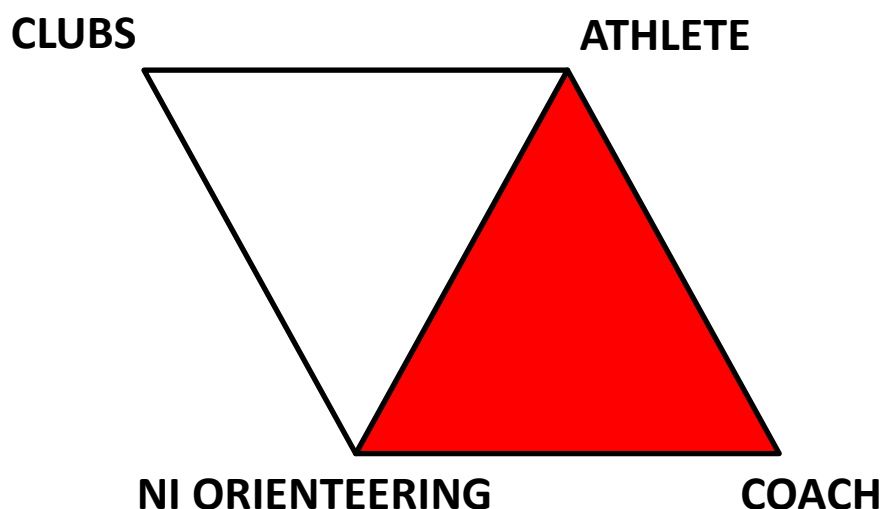
## 3.1 Coach Education- Pathway





# 4 STAKEHOLDERS

The primary relationship in any coaching activity is between the coach and the athlete. Other key stakeholders include NI Orienteering and the Clubs. Both of these parties have an interest in improving the individual's performance and should therefore be involved in a strategic coaching process.



## **Role of the Club**

To provide basic coaching support to club members in order to establish basic performance levels.

## **Role of NI Orienteering**

To make orienteering coaching within Northern Ireland more strategic, to help coordinate coaching at a national level and help support club coaching.

## **Role of the Coach**

The main role of the coach is to help improve performance. They should help support and develop the athlete to help maximise potential performance.

## **Role of the Athlete**

Athletes that have expressed an interest in improving their orienteering performance should act in line to the requirements of this coaching strategy.

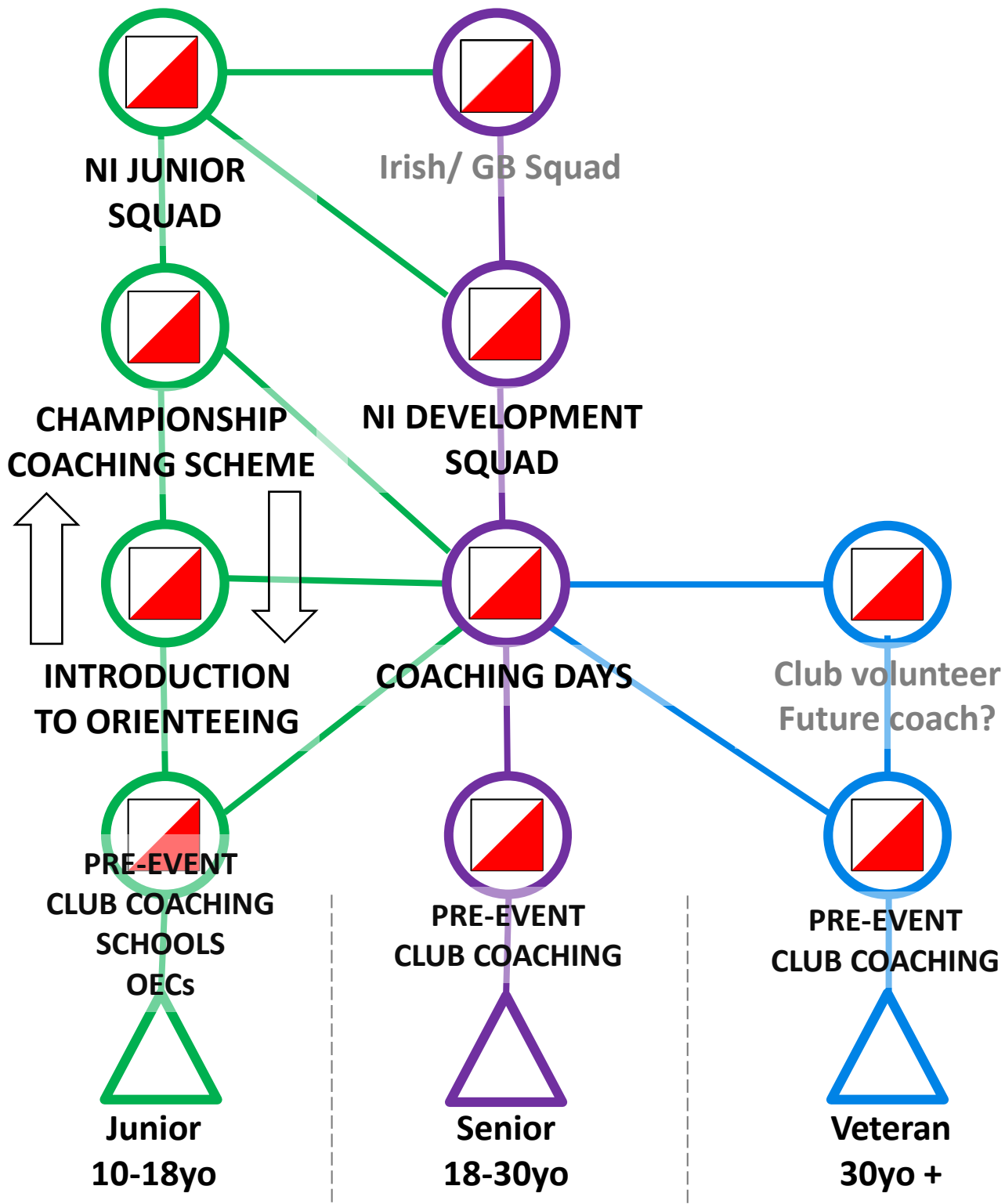
# 5 When is coaching appropriate?

It can be argued that it is never too early (or too late) to start coaching, indeed orienteers of all levels/ ages/ abilities have been shown to benefit from coaching.

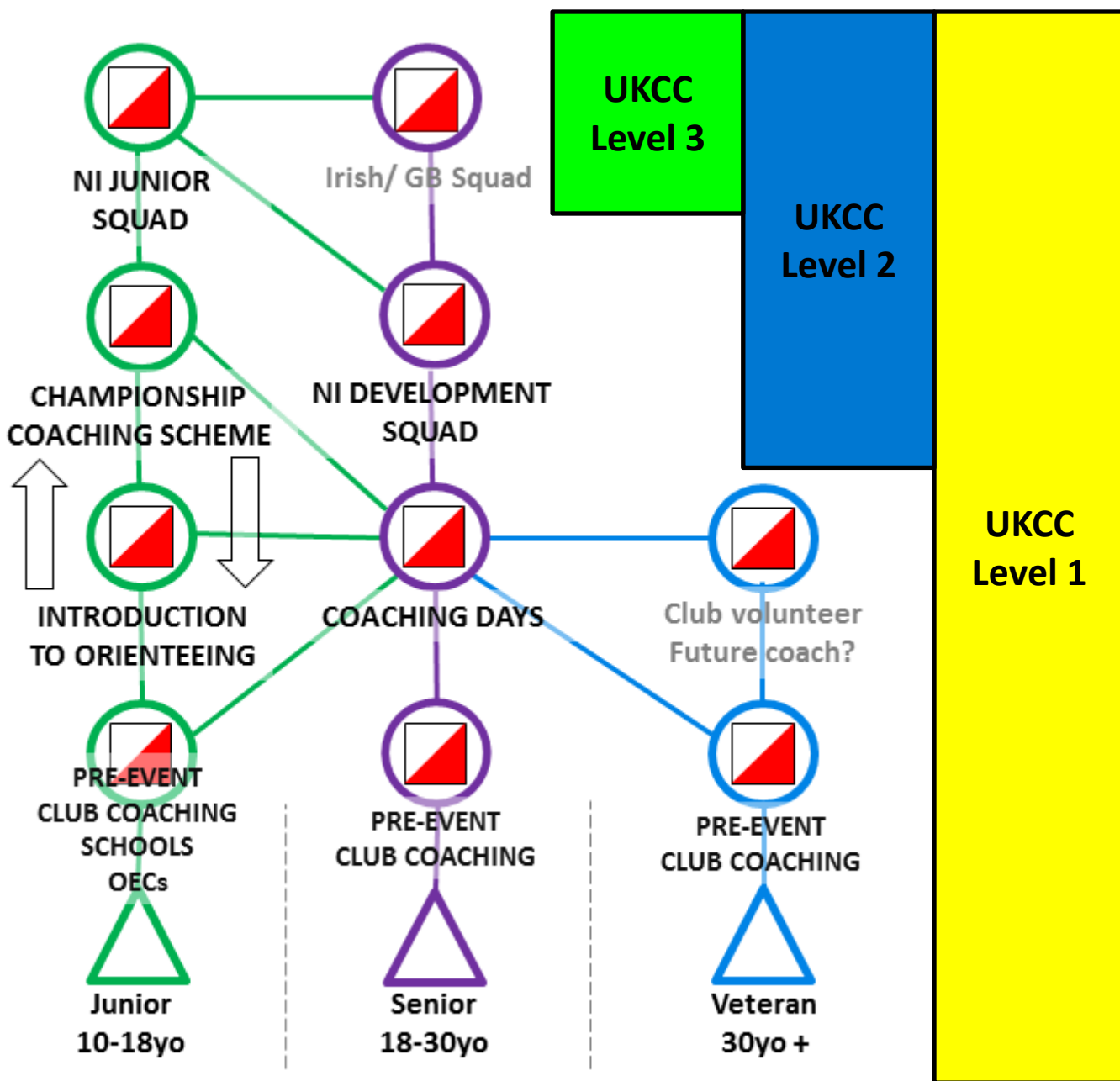
NI Orienteering's coaching strategy will lay out recommendations for coaching at all levels however the overall emphasis will lead towards performance coaching.



# 6 NI Orienteering's Coaching Pathway



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# 7 Recommendations

## Clubs- coaching provision

It is recommended that clubs offer at least **2 Come-and-try-it Days** per year that have a coaching element and **1 Coaching Day** per year which provide coaching for orienteers of all level. It is also recommended that at all local events clubs have a dedicated qualified coach to help advise and help new comers (this coach should wear a Hi-Vis vest).

- **Championship Coaching Scheme**- it is important to provide an 'exit-route' for keen/ talented school children. This will be done through the Championship Coaching Scheme (see section 7).

## NI Orienteering

Historically NI Orienteering has focused most of its attention on junior orienteers and this has meant that the NI Junior Squad has gone from strength to strength. However there has been no clear pathway for talented juniors to follow to take help them perform to their potential and a senior level. NI Orienteering will establish a Senior Development Squad that will eventually lead onto a High Performance Squad. Please refer to the NI Orienteering Talent Pathway document.



## 8 Implementation

### **NI Orienteering will:**

- Implement the participant/coaching model to provide clear direction and a strategic framework for the long term development of the coaching strategy and practice in NI.
- Recruit and retain qualified coaches with the skills to coach inclusively at each phase of the participant pathway.
- Maximise the role of orienteering coaching in the education sector by delivery of appropriate training and resources.
- Establish effective education, delivery systems and resources supporting the development of coaches and the coach education workforce in the context of the UKCC and effective CPD programmes.
- Establish appropriate systems to identify, train, qualify and support quality coaches for specific diverse populations.
- Work to raise the profile and recognition of coaches at all levels.