

CLUB GUIDE



Special Olympics
New Zealand



Table of Contents

Section 1

Introduction

1.	Special Olympics Environment	4
2.	Affiliation	4
3.	RSC Support for Clubs	4
4.	Special Olympics in New Zealand	5
5.	Special Olympics Sports	7
6.	Athlete Leadership	8

Section 2

Club Governance and Management

1.	Function of the Board/Committee	10
2.	Key Board/Committee Roles	11
3.	Legal Status of Clubs	12
4.	Annual Returns	12
5.	Annual General Meeting	12

Section 3

Club Operations and Administration

1.	Eligibility and Registrations	14
2.	Sporty and Registration Forms	15
3.	Volunteer Management	17
4.	Managing Finances	18
5.	Fundraising	18
6.	Health and Safety	20

Section 4

Club Events

1.	Participation Framework	23
2.	Events Calendar	23
3.	Sports Rules	23
4.	Sports Processes	23
5.	Sports Working Groups	23
6.	Uniform Guidelines	23
7.	Hosting Club Events	24
8.	Introducing a New Sport to your Club	26
9.	Partnership and Sport Manager	26

The Special Olympics New Zealand Club Guide provides information and resources to support regular club operations and functioning. It includes details specific to Special Olympics and links to best practice resources and guidance from across the sector.

Remember, any challenges your club is facing or opportunities you are looking to pursue are likely to be shared by others across the Special Olympics network – don't hesitate to seek advice and support.

If you would like further information on anything within this Guide, or help connecting with other clubs, please contact your RSC or the Community & Participation Manager on community@specialolympics.org.nz



Section 1

Introduction

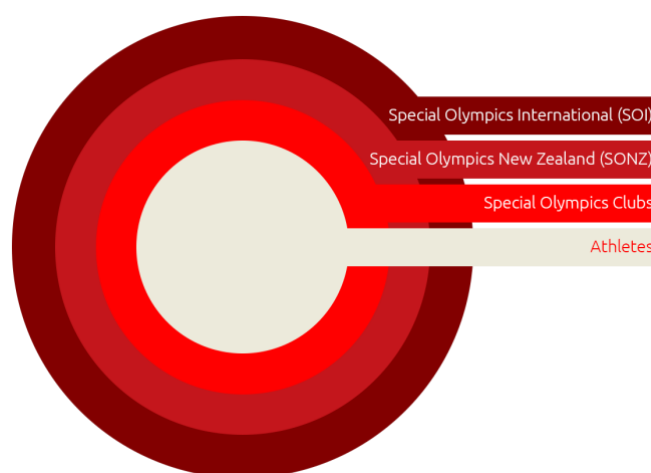
1. Special Olympics Environment
2. Affiliation
3. RSC Support for Clubs
4. Special Olympics in New Zealand
5. Special Olympics Sports
6. Athlete Leadership

1. Special Olympics Environment

Special Olympics International (SOI) is the governing body of the global Special Olympics movement and is responsible for maintaining and implementing the Special Olympics General Rules, which include the requirements and policies that guide all levels of the movement.

Special Olympics New Zealand (SONZ) is the National Organisation responsible for the execution of the SOI mission and objectives in Aotearoa. SONZ is responsible for the policies and procedures which govern and guide its operations and those of its affiliated clubs. While SONZ has autonomy over many elements of programme delivery in New Zealand, some principles and regulations are determined by SOI.

Affiliated Special Olympics clubs are responsible for the local execution and achievement of SOI's global mission to provide year-round sports training and competition for their athletes. Clubs are autonomous entities responsible for their own functioning and operations, with support from SONZ and within SONZ and SOI parameters.



2. Affiliation

The working relationship between SONZ and each affiliated club is underpinned by a Relationship and Accreditation Agreement that helps provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities of both parties.

It is signed on a bi-annual basis and represents clubs' formal affiliation with SONZ. Once the Relationship and Accreditation Agreement is signed, SONZ provides clubs with a certificate of affiliation which will need to be provided when applying for funding.

3. RSC Support for Clubs

SONZ has eight Regional Sports Co-ordinators (RSCs) based across the country, each responsible for delivering, promoting and supporting Special Olympics activity within their respective regions.

This includes being the first point of SONZ contact and support for the region's identified clubs. The nature of this support role is outlined in the RSC Support for Clubs document.



4. Special Olympics in New Zealand

Special Olympics New Zealand provides and supports sports opportunities for people with an intellectual disability throughout Aotearoa and utilises sport as a vehicle to promote a more inclusive society where people with an intellectual disability are empowered, visible and valued.

Our Purpose

To enrich the lives of people with an intellectual disability through sport



Our Vision

Lifelong participation in sport

Strategic Outcomes

Increased Participation

Strengthened
Sports Pathways

SONZ Capability

Our Values

Integrity

Courage

Respect

Inclusion

Excellence

GETTING INVOLVED

Participation and engagement with Special Olympics in New Zealand occurs primarily through the following programmes and events:



YOUNG ATHLETES PROGRAMME

The Young Athletes Programme is a sport and play programme for tamariki aged approximately 2 – 10 years, delivered in both school and community settings, currently in the Wellington region. It introduces participants to basic sport and movement skills and includes a focus on social skills; learning to share, take turns, and follow instructions.



SONZ SCHOOL PROGRAMME

SONZ delivers adapted sport and physical activity sessions and multi-school events to secondary school students with intellectual and learning disabilities across Aotearoa. Through the School Programme, opportunities are available for clubs/Athlete Leaders to support, share their experiences and promote their offerings.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS CLUBS

Special Olympics Clubs across the country provide training and competition opportunities across a range of sports, as well as social and leadership opportunities for athletes. The Participation Framework outlines the types of participation opportunities available and the associated eligibility criteria.



MAJOR EVENTS

SONZ hosts the National Summer Games and National Winter Games on a four- yearly basis; highlight experiences for many athletes. In line with the SOI directed quota, SONZ selects and supports a New Zealand representative team to compete in the World Summer and Winter Games, which are also held four-yearly.



ATHLETE LEADERSHIP

SONZ delivers an Athlete Leadership Programme (ALP) on an annual basis, that supports athletes to develop and demonstrate their leadership skills and contribute in ways beyond the sports field.

The Athlete Input Council (AIC) is made up of Athlete Leaders who are representatives of each Special Olympics region. It's a forum for athletes to discuss and share ideas, and a vehicle through which to advise and provide feedback to SONZ and the SONZ Board.



5. Special Olympics Sports

There are 13 officially sanctioned Special Olympics sports in New Zealand. Clubs can choose to offer any number of these sports to their athletes and, subject to registrations, these sports will be offered at SONZ national competitions.

Detailed sports information is outlined in Section 4.



ALPINE SKIING



ATHLETICS



BASKETBALL



BOCCE



BOWLING



EQUESTRIAN



FOOTBALL



GOLF



INDOOR BOWLS



POWERLIFTING



SNOWBOARDING



SWIMMING



TABLE TENNIS

6. Athlete Leadership

Athlete Leadership Programme

SONZ delivers an annual Athlete Leadership Programme (ALP) that is designed to provide Special Olympics athletes with personal and professional leadership training and development they can apply to leadership roles in their Clubs, community and workplace. Details about the programme and selection criteria can be found [here](#).

Athlete Leadership Opportunities

Beyond the ALP, there are many examples of ongoing leadership development and opportunities across the Club network, including;

- Establishing a Club Athlete Committee and/or having an Athlete Representative on the Club committee/board
- Presentation and speaking opportunities in the local community
- Coaching, assistant coaching or officiating roles
- Event coordination and assistance

For more ideas, click [here](#).

Athlete Mentoring

Special Olympics Mentors support and guide athletes in their personal development and growth and help them to fulfil their potential. To undertake the ALP, an athlete must have a dedicated mentor. There are a number of [resources available](#) to support mentors in these roles.

Athlete Input Council

The Athlete Input Council (AIC) is made up of athlete representatives from each of the SONZ regions. The AIC is a platform for athletes across the country to connect and provide input and insights to help guide SONZ in its decision making.

The nomination and selection process for each region's AIC representative is led by each regional council or where a regional council is not in place, the region of clubs as a collective. To be nominated onto the AIC, athletes need to have completed the ALP. In addition, the Chair of the AIC is a member of the SONZ Board for a two year term.

"I have really enjoyed meeting other people, I like to make new friends and it's been really good to give me more confidence about what I can achieve"

Jack Rowe
Athlete Leadership Class of 2024





Section 2

Club Governance and Management

1. Function of the Board/Committee
2. Key Board/Committee Roles
3. Legal Status of Clubs
4. Annual Returns
5. Annual General Meeting

1. Function of the Board/Committee

Effectively running a club requires strong planning, co-ordination, and communication. This includes being clear on what you are trying to achieve, the activity that needs to be completed to support this, and identifying who is responsible for doing what.

The performance of a club is greatly dependent on the effectiveness of its Board/Committee, and in particular the core roles of Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. Depending on the size and goals of your club, other roles or pieces of work that might need allocation (either inside or outside of the Board/Committee) include;

- **Fundraising Co-ordinator**
- **Volunteer Co-ordinator**
- **Athlete Representative**
- **Sports Co-ordinator**

Example job descriptions for these roles can be found [here](#).

Note – depending on their size, makeup and level of resourcing, clubs will divide and allocate tasks and responsibilities in different ways across roles and have different role titles across their Board/Committee or wider club. In all scenarios, being clear on the structure and roles of your Board/Committee (and wider club) are important in ensuring;

- Defined roles and responsibilities and clarity of understanding - people know what's expected of them and core tasks are allocated and executed efficiently.
- Club sustainability – ensuring knowledge and information can be retained when there is a change in personnel.
- People's skillsets are well utilised – when seeking support or recruiting new volunteers, you are clear what your needs are.



2. Key Board/Committee Roles

The following example job descriptions and templates are guides only that can be tailored to reflect the specific needs and environment of your clubs.

Club Chairperson

The Chairperson is the principal leader of a club and has overall responsibility for a club's leadership and governance delivery.

Core Responsibilities

- Overall leader of the club's programme delivery, and primary representative in dealings with external bodies.
- Ensure the club complies with all its obligations – for example with SONZ, the NZ Companies Office, Charities Services, grant funders etc.
- Chair meetings – regular meetings of the Board/Committee, the AGM and any Special General Meetings as required.
- Manage any complaints or issues of misconduct.
- Primary point of contact with SONZ for overall club functioning.

Job Description Template

Club Secretary

The Secretary is the chief administration officer of a club, often acting as the first point of contact for enquiries and requests for information.

Core Responsibilities

- Manage the registration of club athletes and volunteers
- Ensure that athlete and volunteer details and documentation held by the club are up to date, securely stored and accessible by those who need them
- Prepare an annual schedule of Board/Committee meetings; prepare and distribute agendas
- Record and communicate minutes of meetings; follow up on action points with people responsible

Job Description Template

Club Treasurer

The Treasurer is the chief financial management officer for a club and has overall responsibility for ensuring the club develops and maintains appropriate financial procedures.

Core Responsibilities

- Prepare and manage a budget (if deemed appropriate for the size of your club).
- Keep records of accounts and present these to the Board/Committee.
- Arrange invoicing, receipt of monies, banking and overall financial management of the club accounts, as approved by the Board/Committee.
- Preparation of the club's accounts annually.
- Arrange the audit (if required).
- Present the accounts at the AGM.
- File the club's annual returns with Charities Services.

Job Description Template



3. Legal Status of Clubs

Special Olympics Clubs in New Zealand are incorporated as Charitable Trusts with the New Zealand Companies Office and are registered Charities with Charities Services. In these capacities, clubs have a range of responsibilities to operate in line with their charitable status, including ensuring details are kept current and accurate, and filing annual returns.

Each Charitable Trust has a Trust Deed outlining the specific conditions under which it operates. These details can be found on the [Charitable Trusts Register](#) and must be reviewed at least every three years.

Below are some links with helpful information in understanding your club's responsibilities;

- [NZ Companies Office – Your responsibilities as a charitable trust board](#)
- [Charities Services – Running your charity](#)

4. Annual Returns

Clubs are required to submit their annual returns to Charities Services annually, no later than June 30.

Different reporting standards apply to different sized charities; click [here](#) to understand what standards your club needs to meet.

Similarly, different audit and review requirements apply to different sized charities; click [here](#) to understand the differences between these processes.

Regardless of legal requirements, clubs should have robust systems in place to ensure that the club's finances are managed accurately and responsibly. In addition, some grant funders may require a certain level of assurance around how accounts are reviewed.

5. Annual General Meeting

AGMs are a reporting meeting for the club which means that your club's aims, activities, and finances are reported on at the meeting. They are open to anyone directly involved with the club and are also when key roles like the chairperson are decided upon.

Clubs need to host an AGM on an annual basis (usually in February, March or April), in time to submit their annual returns to Charities Services no later than June 30. The required period of notice to be given to members ahead of the AGM, along with the process for the election of people to positions on the board is outlined in a club's Trust Deed.

Example AGM Agenda

1. Opening of meeting
2. Apologies
3. Confirmation of minutes of previous AGM
4. Presentation of annual report and financial statements
5. Adoption of annual report
6. Election of board/committee members
7. Vote of thanks to outgoing board/committee members
8. Appointment of auditor (if required)
9. Notice(s) of motion
10. General business (as applicable to a general meeting; not core work of the board/committee)
11. Close of meeting

Helpful Links

- [Sport New Zealand have a range of Club Management resources and templates available to support sports clubs to operate effectively.](#)
- [CommunityNet has some helpful information for running an AGM.](#)



Section 3

Club Operations and Administration

1. Eligibility and Registrations
2. Sporty and Registration Forms
3. Volunteer Management
4. Managing Finances
5. Fundraising
6. Health & Safety

1. Eligibility and Registrations

Athletes

To participate within a Special Olympics club, an athlete must be officially registered. Registration includes completion of a medical screening on joining the programme, and renewal of this every four years. This is to confirm the athlete's eligibility* for Special Olympics (on joining the programme) and to approve they are fit and able to participate in sport.

* An individual is considered to have an intellectual disability for the purpose of determining their eligibility to participate in Special Olympics if they satisfy any one of the following requirements:

- 1) An agency or professional has identified them as having an intellectual disability.
- 2) The person has a cognitive delay determined through nationally recognised standardised tests such as "IQ" testing or other measures which are generally accepted with the professional community as being a reliable measurement of the existence of a cognitive delay.
- 3) There is a developmental disability affecting general learning and adaptive skills in at least two of the following areas: communication, self-care, daily living, social skills, health & safety, functional academics, work capabilities, leisure.



Volunteers

Individuals wishing to volunteer in a club should contact the club directly to understand the volunteering opportunities available. Once this has been established, volunteers need to officially register, which includes completing a police vetting process at the time of registration, and on a three-yearly basis thereafter to maintain volunteer registration. Volunteers must be vetted from the age of 16 and must be aged 18 years or older to be included in the 1:4 ratio.

While SONZ manages the administration around volunteer registrations and the police vetting process, individual clubs manage the communications and liaising with volunteers, and leads their induction and upskilling regarding their role and responsibilities within the club.

Unified Partners

A Unified Partner is a participant without an intellectual disability who participates alongside Special Olympics athletes. Unified Partners could be peers, friends, family members or club volunteers.

Unified Partners complete the same registration form and police vetting processes as volunteers.

Athlete/Volunteer Transfers

Athletes and volunteers may transfer from one Special Olympics club to another

The process for an athlete or volunteer transferring from one club to another is outlined [here](#).

Dual Memberships

An athlete/volunteer may hold a dual membership across two different clubs, wherein they are involved in one sport(s) at one club, and a second sport(s) at another.

2. Sporty and Registrations

SONZ utilises a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system called Sporty to manage all athlete and volunteer registrations. It is also a centralised database of all member information.

Clubs are equipped with access to Sporty and are expected to utilise it to manage their athlete and volunteer registrations and information.

Through Sporty, clubs are able to;

- view their databases (i.e. all their athlete/volunteer profiles, contact details, medical/vetting expiry dates etc)
- filter by various data fields to understand different cohorts of their membership
- edit many details within profiles (e.g. update an address/phone number)
- mark that a volunteer's ID has been sighted, to progress the police vetting process
- efficiently communicate to specific cohorts of their membership (e.g. basketball athletes, volunteers whose vetting expiry dates are approaching)
- clearly understand and report on (to the likes of funders, for example) the demographics of their membership (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity)
- re-register their membership (2026 on)

This [Getting Started Guide](#) is a helpful tool to guide clubs in setting up and utilising the basic Sporty functionality that will support their operations.



Registration Forms

There are four registration forms on the SONZ [website](#) – explanations of how these are used are outlined below. No paper registration or police vetting forms are utilised or submitted to SONZ. The only paper documentation that is used in the registration process is the Medical Certificate.

Note: The Registration Forms on the website should only be used by people registering with Special Olympics for the first time. For Athletes and Volunteers who are renewing their medical/police vetting, this should be managed by the Club CRM user/s directly out of Sporty, which prevents the creation of duplicate profiles.

FORM	EXPLANATION	WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THIS FORM IS SUBMITTED?
NEW ATHLETE REGISTRATION FORM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a full registration form that captures an athlete's contact details, emergency contact details, participating sports, code of conduct etc. This form links to the Medical Declaration Form, which is where the Medical Certificate needs to be uploaded – see below. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both the registrant and the Club will receive a confirmation email. The new athlete's profile with all their registration information will be visible within the Club's CRM in Sporty.
NEW VOLUNTEER/ UNIFIED PARTNER REGISTRATION FORM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a full registration form that captures volunteer's contact details, emergency contact details, what volunteer role they are undertaking etc. This form links to the Police Vetting Form, which is where the volunteer enters their details and consent for Police Vetting – see below. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both the registrant and the Club will receive a confirmation email. The new volunteer's profile with all their registration information will be visible within the Club's CRM in Sporty.
ATHLETE MEDICAL DECLARATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This online form is where the Medical Certificate is uploaded. It is separate from the full registration form and completed on initial registration and then every 4 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both the registrant and the Club will receive a confirmation email when the Medical Declaration is submitted. The SONZ Administration Officer will check the Medical Certificate and update the Medical Expiry Date within Sporty & GMS. The Club can view the Medical Certificate within the Athlete's profile in Sporty, within the Registrations Tab.
POLICE VETTING APPLICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This online form replaces the paper Police Vetting forms that SONZ has previously used; the volunteer enters the equivalent details directly into the online fields. No paper forms or copies of ID are required to be submitted to SONZ. A Club representative is required to sight the volunteer's ID. It is separate from the full registration form and completed on initial registration and then every 3 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both the registrant and the Club will receive a confirmation email when the Police Vetting form is submitted. The volunteer is required to present their ID to a Club representative. In Sporty, the Club marks "ID verified" within the volunteer's registration (refer to Getting Started Guide – Page 12) Once the ID has been verified, the SONZ Administration Officer will check the registration and submit the application to NZ Police. Once the application is processed by the NZ Police, the SONZ Administration Officer will update the expiry date within the volunteer's profile within Sporty and send a confirmation letter to the volunteer and the Club confirming their approval.

Volunteer Ratios

Clubs are required to comply with a minimum 1:4 volunteer: athlete support ratio for all Special Olympics events. It is recommended this ratio is adhered to during trainings. Volunteers must be vetted from the age of 16 and must be aged 18 years or older to be included in the 1:4 ratio.

The nature of a given activity (e.g. the unpredictable environment of Snow Sports) and clubs' understanding of their athletes may mean that a smaller ratio is committed to. In some instances, for the safety of an athlete themselves and/or those around them, it is appropriate that they have 1:1 support.

3. Volunteer Management



Recruitment

Determining how many volunteers you need and the precise roles you would like them to play is important to ensure you are recruiting the right people and that the club is ready to utilise their skills when they come on board.

Role descriptions can help volunteers understand exactly what it is they're committing to and allows clubs to set clear expectations from the start. Volunteers can then make an informed decision as to whether they are suited to take on the role, increasing the likelihood of strong retention.

The SONZ Participant Protection Framework includes some guidelines and resources to support safer recruitment processes, ensuring appropriate screening takes place.

Induction and Orientation

An induction is key to ensuring new volunteers feel supported, clear on their role, and that they have made a great decision in joining your club. Investing time and effort in this process helps to ensure new volunteers are well equipped to perform their role.

- Talk them through the key responsibilities of their role and any general guidelines, expectations or policies the club or SONZ has in place that will apply to them and their role.
- Introduce them to other volunteers within your club and any other volunteers/staff members who may be useful contacts.
- Run them through any Health and Safety policies and procedures, including the SONZ Safeguarding Policy.
- Provide role specific training – this could include shadowing the predecessor for some time if possible, or linking them up with a buddy.
- If they are joining as a coach, ensure they complete the online Level 1 Coaching Course

Volunteer Recognition

Looking after your volunteers and creating an environment and culture where they feel valued is key. This could include having regular and meaningful ways to thank and celebrate your volunteers – e.g. through your social media channels, newsletters or website; having volunteer of the month or year awards/celebrations; hosting a morning or afternoon to celebrate volunteers etc.

Club Service Awards

Award pins and certificates that recognise 10, 20 and 30 years of consecutive service are available from SONZ. Clubs need to request these to acknowledge volunteers who achieve these milestones. SONZ uses the registration information in GMS and consultation with clubs to confirm volunteers' years of service and eligibility for these awards.

Life Membership Awards

SONZ oversees Life Membership Awards which are open for nomination only for identified periods of time. These opportunities are communicated directly to clubs when they are live.

4. Managing Finances

The size of your club will determine the financial management processes that need to be established and managed. Online accounting software (like Xero) is usually the easiest and simplest way to keep track of your club's accounts, though a manual process may be sufficient for smaller clubs.

To ensure the club's finances are managed responsibly, it can be helpful to have some core standards and commitments in place as appropriate for the size and activity of your club. Examples to consider include;

- A suitably qualified person is recruited to the role of Treasurer
- A budget for the year is determined and agreed, and expenditure is tracked against budget
- Any funding accountability requirements are understood, adhered to and reconciled as required
- Monthly reports are produced and presented to the next Committee Meeting
- An annual audit or review is completed
- Two signatures are required for all accounts

5. Fundraising

Having a clear plan around fundraising activity will support the club to achieve its goals. Key elements to consider in this planning include;

- Decide who will oversee the club's fundraising activity (e.g. fundraising co-ordinator, fundraising committee etc)
- Determine what purpose the funds are being raised for
- Identify potential sources of funds e.g.
 - traditional fundraising activity (raffles, bake sales, movie nights)
 - grant funding
 - [Tū Manawa Funding](#)
 - Sponsorship
- Develop a fundraising plan – what avenues will be pursued for which funds, what are the key dates and deadlines that need to be met, who from the club will lead this activity etc
- Take the time to thank and maintain relationships with any donors, grant funders and sponsors

Grant Funding

Applying for grants may form part of your fundraising plan. Below are some general information and guidance around grant funding applications.

- To guide your planning, develop a funding calendar - outlining who you can apply to, for what, how much, and when.
- With some funders, you can only submit one annual application and for others, there isn't a limit.
- The [Department of Internal Affairs website](#) gives information about gaming machine societies that distribute grants to community groups. Information on other grant opportunities can be found via [Community Matters](#) and [Public Trust](#).
- Funders have different focus areas, priorities, and allowable expense items that you can apply for – ensure your application is relevant to the funder you're applying to.
- Check that you meet any eligibility criteria e.g. location, non-profit, amount of reserves allowed etc.
- Remember you cannot use grant funding for any spending that has already occurred.
- Keep all of your relevant documentation saved - you'll need this for the accountability stage if your application is successful.

Most funders will require the following information, so it pays to have it collated and ready to go;

- Your Charities Services number (if you are registered). Make sure that the organisation name you use on the application matches what is registered with your charities number. If it doesn't match exactly, some online systems won't accept your application.
- Some funders are now also asking for your NZ Business Number (if you have one)
- Bank account number and account name
- PDF copy of bank deposit slip to attach to your application
- GST number (if registered)
- IRD number
- A list of your board or committee members' names (date this document and keep it updated)
- Quotes dated within three months of the application are provided on the supplier's letterhead, with their contact details.
- Signed resolution from your board or committee detailing who you are applying to, for what and how much.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship is when businesses and companies provide funds, resources or services to a club or athlete, in return for commercial rights and/or associations with the club or athlete. These may take the form of a logo on a uniform or equipment, signs at a venue, or free advertising in a newsletter.

Sponsorship links a club with a sponsor in a mutually beneficial relationship that is not just about money. An effective sponsor can add considerable value by, for example, becoming the club's primary promoter. In the long term, this may be of more value than the sponsorship income initially received.

There are a number of different ways in which a commercial partnership can be developed – with different properties, assets or promotional opportunities “exchanged for an agreed value.” Special Olympics on a regional and national level has the ability to deliver a variety of valuable leverage opportunities to a partner, with a brand many

will see the value of associating with. It is important to clearly outline and agree what your club will deliver a sponsor, who will cover any costs in delivering the association (e.g. branded banners), where and when the opportunities will be brought to life and who is responsible for managing the agreement and relationship.

There are a number of branding opportunities and considerations clubs should keep in mind when developing and managing any commercial partnerships, including but not limited to the following:

- Special Olympics International requirements. SOI have some guidelines and restrictions around the use of sponsor logos on playing uniforms. Clubs should understand and use these guidelines when updating club uniforms and apparel.
- Permission and sign off of brand inclusion in any collateral or event promotional materials. Seek brand guidelines from sponsor organisations and ensure they are followed.
- Quality presentation of brands – high res files, correct colours, application on backgrounds etc
- Where possible think creatively about where you can give sponsors added value and leverage.
- It's more than just \$\$ and brand placement; invite sponsor representatives to attend events, acknowledge the contribution and support in speeches and any media or PR, take the time to get to know what they personally value and hope to achieve with the partnership.
- Partner with organisations who share your values, understand and support the purpose of Special Olympics.

Helpful Links

- [Regional Sports Trusts can often help provide information around grant funding options within the region and currently have a fund called Tū Manawa which clubs can apply to.](#)
- [Sport NZ – Financial Management for Clubs](#)
- [Aktive – Resource Hub](#)

6. Health and Safety

Club Responsibilities

Clubs have a duty of care to create and maintain a safe environment for their members, and implement sound health and safety practices. This includes things like understanding and minimising hazards, risk management planning, and reporting mechanisms for accidents and incidents.

Clubs' legal requirements will depend on whether or not they have any paid staff. Even if your club is entirely voluntary, it is still important that reasonable steps are taken to ensure the health and safety of participants and volunteers.

To ensure health & safety is managed responsibly by the club, having some core standards and commitments in place is advised. Examples to consider include;

- Someone holds responsibility for ensuring that any H&S policy or commitments are implemented and adhered to
- The Club will adhere to all safety related directives from SONZ/SOI e.g. volunteer: athlete ratio
- The Club aims to have first aid equipment and adequately trained volunteers available for competition and training
- Accidents, incidents and near misses will be documented, including any follow up actions. This will be regularly viewed by the Committee to inform any risk management strategies required
- Club coaches will ensure that players utilise personal safety equipment, and that general playing equipment is well maintained
- Risk assessment and management planning will be undertaken for all Club events and travel

Helpful Links

- [Sport NZ – Health & Safety for Clubs](#)
- [Health & Safety at Work Act - Volunteers](#)

Risk Assessment & Management

Understanding and taking steps to manage the risks associated with your club activity is a key element of your club's Health and Safety responsibilities. This process involves identifying the risks that are present and outlining any mitigations to eliminate, minimise or isolate these risks.

A Risk Assessment & Management process should be undertaken and form completed for each event your club is hosting.

 [RAMs Template](#)

First Aid

Ideally, a volunteer with a first aid qualification should be present at all club activity (trainings and competition). Coaches should have access to a first aid kit during all activity.

SONZ has a relationship with Hato Hone St John that provides a 50% discount on identified First Aid Courses for registered Special Olympics Club volunteers. To access this discount, Clubs are required to provide details for a primary contact and someone to receive invoices (these can be the same person), which will enable the Club to be setup in the booking system. To get set up, please contact the Community & Participation Manager on community@specialolympics.org.nz

Ratios

Clubs are required to comply with a 1:4 volunteer: athlete support ratio for all Special Olympics events. It is recommended this ratio is adhered to during trainings. The nature of the activity and clubs' understanding of their athletes may mean that a smaller ratio is committed to. In some instances, for the safety of an athlete themselves and/or those around them, it is appropriate that an athlete has 1:1 support. At national competitions, this level of support is an option for clubs to apply for.



Athlete Information

Clubs should ensure volunteers/coaches have access to relevant details from their athletes' medicals and emergency contact details on hand, at training and competition.

Accident Reporting

Clubs need to have a process for reporting and recording any incidents or accidents that occur during club activity. This enables the club to ensure appropriate follow-up and support of athletes/volunteers, and to identify if there are any trends or learnings that can be adopted to ensure future incidents can be minimised or avoided.

Clubs do not need to provide completed accident/incident forms to SONZ unless the accident/incident is considered major (e.g. emergency medical assistance required; life threatening situation/close call) or support is required with follow up.

📄 [Example incident/accident form](#)

📄 [Example Hazard Register](#)

Alcohol

Special Olympics New Zealand and affiliated clubs need to operate in line with the SOI rule that *"No Accredited Programme shall knowingly permit the use of any alcohol or tobacco products, vaping products, or cannabis products at any Special Olympics training or competition venue."*

Where trainings or competitions are held at licensed premises and families/spectators want to have a drink, it's expected this occurs away from Special Olympics activity.

Social functions held within the parameters of a Special Olympics competition (e.g. the Saturday night of a Saturday/Sunday event) are expected to be alcohol-free.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding refers to the actions that everyone can take to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and harm. A safeguarding culture is woven throughout everything an individual, group, or organisation does. It includes the actions, values and behaviours that prevent abuse and harm and are fully integrated into a club or organisation's culture.

The [Special Olympics New Zealand Participant Protection Framework](#) aims to guide on best practice in safeguarding, and promoting a safe and fun environment for athletes, families and volunteers.

SONZ has two Athlete Safeguarding Leads (ASLs) who lead on the education and support around the Participant Protection Framework and are the 'go-to' for the SONZ community for any safeguarding questions or concerns;

- Josie Fitzsimons
community@specialolympics.org.nz
- Fran Scholey
ceo@specialolympics.org.nz

Special Olympics clubs are required to have an identified Club Safeguarding Lead who helps to promote a culture of safeguarding and is the key point of contact for SONZ and any safeguarding concerns in the club community.

Sport Integrity Commission

The Sport Integrity Commission works to ensure that sport and recreation in New Zealand is safer and fairer. They provide guidance and resources across a range of areas within integrity in sport. This includes helpful information and e-learning modules on safeguarding.

🟢 [Sport Integrity Commission](#)

Misconduct and Complaints

Special Olympics New Zealand's Complaints, Member Discipline & Appeals Policy outlines who various types of complaints should be directed to and the processes that will be followed.

Clubs are expected to have systems in place to manage minor incidents and complaints. SONZ can provide guidance and support in managing these, though overall responsibility sits with the Club.

📄 [SONZ Complaints, Member Discipline & Appeals Policy](#)





Section 4

Club Events

1. Participation Framework
2. Events Calendar
3. Sports Rules
4. Sports Processes
5. Sports Working Groups
6. Uniform Guidelines
7. Hosting Club Events
8. Introducing a New Sport to your Club
9. Partnership and Sport Manager

1. Participation Framework

The Special Olympics New Zealand Participation Framework outlines the participation opportunities available to athletes, the tiered competition pathway, and the guidelines and recommendations for each tier.



 [Participation Framework](#)

2. Events Calendar

A [national calendar](#) of club-hosted events is developed annually, to provide competition and qualifying opportunities for athletes. In line with the Participation Framework, there are windows for different types of events to be delivered that align with the national event cycle.

The development of the calendar requires co-ordination between individual clubs, each region as a collective, and SONZ. Commitments are required from all parties to help create an events calendar that maximises participation opportunities that are well attended. SONZ will communicate the process, timeframes and responsibilities in July, for the development of the following year's calendar.

3. Sports Rules

The official rules for each of SONZ's sanctioned sports can be found [here](#).



4. Sports Processes

All documentation required to support a club sports event can be found on the Special Olympics New Zealand website [here](#).

This includes Protest, Dispensation, Performance Improvement and Sports Rules Feedback Forms, and information on the Maximum Effort rule. These should be referred to and used at club events.

5. Sports Working Groups

Special Olympics New Zealand have established Sports Working Groups made up of volunteers from across the country. These groups meet regularly to discuss any sports feedback provided by clubs.

If you are interested in joining or nominating someone to join one of these groups, please contact the Partnership and Sport Manager via sport@specialolympics.org.nz.

6. Uniform Guidelines

SONZ clubs are required to adhere to the Special Olympics Club Uniform Guidelines which are found [here](#). Clubs should refer to these guidelines when looking to make changes to club uniforms and sports apparel.

7. Hosting Club Events

The Club Event Management Timeline outlines the actions, responsibilities and timeframes that guide the administrative, communications and programming preparations for an event. It commences approximately three months out from an event and requires strong collaboration between the RSC, Event Manager and SONZ GMS Lead.

The fundamental components of managing an event include;



DATE AND VENUE

Ensure your event is in the Club Events Calendar and your facility is booked. Have a key contact person at the facility to work through logistics and understand where everything will happen on the day, what is provided and what you need to source yourself. You'll need to be clear how many courts/ fields/lanes etc you'll have access to.



EVENT FORMAT

You'll need to be familiar with and make decisions on how your event is being formatted – this includes things like what disciplines/events are offered, the way a tournament is structured (e.g. round robin, singles, pairs) and how the scoring/results work.



RULES AND POLICIES

Official SOI sport rules can be accessed [here](#). In some sports, other policies or rules may also be relevant – e.g. from the relevant national sports body. SONZ sports forms and processes can be accessed [here](#).



COMMUNICATIONS

Your Event Invitation should clearly provide all the information that invited clubs need in order to determine and prepare their entries. RSCs will provide an invitation template to Event Managers that outlines all key details that need to be covered (e.g. key contacts, tentative timings, entry deadlines, payment information etc).



HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Host Club/Event Manager is responsible for ensuring a Risk Management Plan is prepared and adhered to.





GMS AND PROGRAMMING

GMS is the system SONZ uses to create programmes for club events. Event Managers, RSCs and the SONZ GMS Lead each have responsibilities to implement the Club Event Management Timeline and ensure relevant information is received and provided in a timely manner, to enable the production of the programme.

Event formatting and divisioning decisions are based on the information received via entry forms, and SOI guidelines.

GMS 'how to' guides can be accessed [here](#). Clubs are required to submit all event results to their RSC upon completion of an event. These results are imported into the National Copy of GMS and provide individual athlete qualification data directly to SONZ.



EQUIPMENT

Equipment used in club events should be in line with SOI rules. Sometimes local clubs or sports bodies are able to loan sport-specific equipment for an event.



OFFICIALS

Officials manage the sports competition and rules (e.g. football referees, swimming technical officials, powerlifting judges etc). You will need to be familiar with the various roles required to deliver the event and where you can source this expertise.



VOLUNTEERS

General volunteer needs will vary across sports/events and include the likes of marshalling, organising lunches, managing award ceremonies, being a runner/providing extra hands etc. Planning should include identifying what roles and how many are required to deliver your event and who these are being filled by.



CATERING

You'll need to determine if you're providing lunches for volunteers/athletes or whether teams are expected to bring their own. If you are providing, you'll need to determine who will provide or prepare this catering and communicate to attending clubs the charge per person and how payment is made.

If your club would like to work towards hosting an event but needs support, please get in touch with your RSC.



8. Introducing a New Sport to your Club

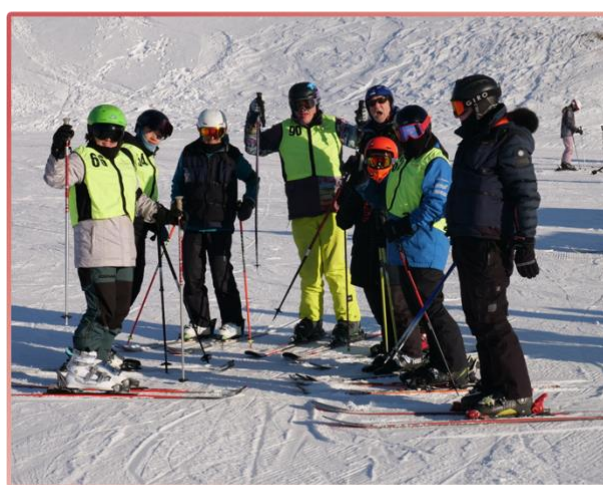
The decision to introduce a new sport at your club may come from a range of factors – for example appetite of current athletes, an intent to attract new athletes, a new volunteer with a particular skillset or a regional sports body in a position to offer resource and drive an opportunity.

In all scenarios, it's important that a number of considerations are worked through to ensure appropriate planning is in place and any growth can happen in a successful and sustainable way;

- Is it a sanctioned Special Olympics sport in New Zealand?
- Do you have the volunteer workforce to manage the administration and logistics of a new, additional sport?
- Is there clear athlete demand or promotional opportunities to connect with potential new athletes?
- Are there competition opportunities for this sport?
- Do you have an appropriately skilled coach?
- Are there training facilities available?
- Can your club realistically finance a new sport and growth in athlete numbers?

Hosting a one-off or series of standalone “have a go” opportunities may be a way to test appetite before committing to a formal introduction of a sport to your club's programme.

Talk to your RSC to work through the planning considerations of introducing a new sport, and to ensure SONZ retains an accurate record of sports offered by each club. They may also be able to utilise their relationship with local secondary schools to help grow interest in a new opportunity.



9. Partnership and Sport Manager

The Partnership and Sports Manager is responsible for overseeing the running and development of the Special Olympics athlete sporting pathway in New Zealand. This includes:

- Sports rules
- Club event procedures
- Athlete pathway
- Coach development
- National/regional sporting partnerships

If you have any questions/comments about the above, please contact sport@specialolympics.org.nz.