

Essex County Officials Training and Developments 2025

I am pleased to provide an overview of Essex Officials Training and Development in 2025 and share aims for the upcoming year.

JL2 & JL2S (Starter)

Another successful year of centralised training through East Region for both the JL2 and JL2S courses, culminating in more than 20 JL2 courses and 4 JL2S courses running in 2025.

Referee Training in 2025

Essex County had 2 trainee referees apply and partake in the Referee Training Programme for 2025:

Clare Dixon, Barking & Dagenham SC

Kin Lee-Hook, Harlow Penguins SC

Both candidates successfully completed the poolside mentoring programme and sat the written exam on 8th November. Candidates are awaiting their results.

Officials training in 2025 (Essex East Region only):

- New JL1 Trainees (up to October 2025): 35
- JL2 Trainees: 11
- JL2s (Starter) Trainees: 5
- Referees: 2

World Aquatics Update (2023-2025)

We are coming towards the end of this period of WA rules, but I still ran 2 update training sessions for those Essex officials who missed previous sessions. This training is a pre-requisite for renewal of the officials' license and allowed these officials to renew their license for another 4 years.

National Para Officials CPD

There were two opportunities for officials to attend the National Para Officials CPD, to gain their Para Swimming Official qualification in June and November 2025. This course was run by WPS International Technical Official David Metcalf over Zoom. There are plans to run more of this next year. I wish to encourage all Essex officials, who have yet to take the CPD, to undertake it as we often get para-athletes at local and Essex County Championships.

Additional Training Opportunity for Referees in Essex:

In September at the start of the 2025/2026 Season all Essex County Referees were invited to join an evening of update training. This training included items such as DQ reporting, Stroke Judge positioning, and JL1 training sign off. It ensures that Essex referees are all aligned and that we are consistent in our working approach at all galas in Essex.

Outlook for 2026:

It is very positive to see many new JL1 trainees coming forward, particularly since September. This needs to continue as many galas still find themselves short of officials. It is

also encouraging to see so many officials continue their training onto JL2 and JL2s. This past year has seen the most JL2S (Starter) trainees for many years.

The focus for 2026 will be to continue this trend but also add to the number of referees in Essex. Some clubs are still struggling to find referees for their club meets and with such a large County, Essex needs more referees. I have been encouraging many of our JL2S (Starters) in the County to consider referee training in 2026 and I am hopeful that the County will have 5+ candidates in 2026.

It is understood that Swim England is going through a period of change and update; I await to see what developments this might bring in regards to Officials courses, training and development. I expect an update to the World Aquatics Rules in 2026, and will update the County in regards to training for these rule updates asap.

Thanks

I wish to thank the dedication and enthusiasm demonstrated by each and every one of our officials during 2026, and we look forward to further growth and success in the coming year.