

Types of Events

There are four main levels of events within Special Olympics; local, regional, national and international. By participating in a competition at one level, athletes/unified partners earn the right to be considered for advancement to higher levels of competition within Special Olympics.

Come & Try Event

- Non-competitive event
- Organised by a Special Olympics GB region/branch/associate or an individual (with supporting EMT) on behalf of the Special Olympics GB region/branch/associate with the aim of increasing membership numbers or to spread awareness
- No opening or closing ceremonies
- Place awards **cannot** be given but certificates can be distributed for attendance
- Participation does **not** qualify athletes/unified partners to advance to any stage of the [Special Olympics competition pathway](#)

Training Event

- Non-competitive event
- Specialised events (not just a weekly training session) organised by a Special Olympics GB region/branch/associate or an individual (with supporting EMT) on behalf of the Special Olympics GB region/branch/associate to enhance specific areas of an athlete/unified partners sporting ability
- No opening or closing ceremonies
- Place awards **cannot** be given but certificates can be distributed for attendance
- Participation does **not** qualify athletes/unified partners to advance to any stage of the [Special Olympics competition pathway](#)

Informal Competition

- Organised by a Special Olympics GB branch/associate
- Provides an introduction to competition for athletes/unified partners from the host club and are against another Special Olympics GB branch/associate
- No opening or closing ceremonies
- Place awards **cannot** be given but certificates can be distributed for attendance
- Participation does **not** qualify athletes/unified partners to advance to any stage of the [Special Olympics competition pathway](#)
- (This provides a valid competition experience but is normally a lot less resource intensive e.g. a friendly football match)

Local Competition/Games

- Organised by a Special Olympics GB branch/associate or an individual (with supporting EMT) on behalf of the Special Olympics GB branch/associate
- Primarily provides competition for athletes/unified partners from the host club
- If more participants are needed to make a viable competition, other Special Olympics GB branch/associates from within that Special Olympics region can be invited. If there are still more places to be filled, specific Special Olympics GB branch/associates from other Special Olympics GB regions can also be invited
- Place awards **must** be given to all participants

- Participation makes athletes/unified partners eligible to advance to the Special Olympics GB regional level of competition in that sport

Regional Competition/Games

- Organised by a Special Olympics GB region, a specific Special Olympics GB branch/associate or an individual (with supporting EMT) on behalf of the Special Olympics region
- Primarily provides competition for athletes/unified partners from that Special Olympics GB region
- All Special Olympics GB branch/associate clubs in that Special Olympics GB region with a coaching programme in the sport are entitled to enter. If more participants are needed to make a viable competition, other specific Special Olympics GB regions (but not specific Special Olympics GB branch/associates) can be invited. This should not however be done if it will deny opportunities to those from the host region
- Place awards **must** be given to all participants
- Participation makes athletes/unified partners eligible to advance to the Special Olympics GB national level of competition in that sport

Super Regional Competition/Games

- For the purpose of super regional competitions Special Olympics GB is split into three 'areas';
 - **North** (Special Olympics; North West, Northern, Scotland and Yorkshire & Humberside)
 - **Midlands** (Special Olympics; East Midlands, Wales and West Midlands)
 - **South** (Special Olympics; Greater London, Eastern, South East, South West and Southern)
- Competitions are organised by a Special Olympics GB 'area' or by a Special Olympics GB region/branch/associate or an individual (with supporting EMT) on behalf of the Special Olympics area
- All Special Olympics GB regions within the host area can participate
- Super regional competitions can currently **only** be staged in the following target sports; athletics, aquatics, artistic gymnastics, bowls, football (7-a-side)
- Every Special Olympics GB area should aim to hold a super regional competition in each target sport once within a two year cycle
- The competition should be completed within one day, use suitable facilities and only involve qualified officials
- Place awards **must** be given to all participants
- Participation makes athletes/unified partners eligible to advance to the Special Olympics GB national level of competition in that sport

National Special Olympics GB Competition

- Takes place either annually, biennially, triennially or on a quadrennial basis¹
- Organised by a Special Olympics GB region, a specific Special Olympics GB branch/associate or an individual (with supporting EMT) on behalf of Special Olympics GB
- All Special Olympics regions with a coaching programme in the sport are entitled to enter
- Place awards **must** be given to all participants

¹ See the ['Special Olympics GB National Competition 4 year Cycle Explained'](#) document for further details.

- Participation makes athletes/unified partners eligible to advance to international Special Olympics events

International Special Olympics Competitions

- Special Olympics World Games take place every two years
- Special Olympics European Games take place every four years
- Invitations to other Special Olympics International Events are received sporadically
- Generally organised by or in conjunction with a Special Olympics national programme
- All athlete/unified partners who have participated at a national level of events within the set time frame are eligible to advance to international Special Olympics events

Partnership competition²

Competitions can be run in partnership with other organisations as Special Olympics GB recognises that this can save on resources, promote inclusion, raise awareness of athletes with an intellectual disability and increase the number of competition opportunities for its membership.

² See the ['Special Olympics GB Partnership Competition Definition'](#) document for further details