

Trial Membership

It is important that the participants in the beginner scheme have the opportunity to take up a trial membership so they are able to get a feel for and experience 'membership' of the golf club without having to commit to a full year. Having to initially commit to full membership is likely to put the potential new member off as they are unable to try the product they are committing to.

During the trial membership the existing members helping with the scheme should:

- Arrange specific times to introduce the new members to the course e.g. arranging to play 1, 2, 3 holes until they can play 9 holes independently. This is a great opportunity for new members/ families to become familiar with the rules and etiquette and gain confidence in playing the course.
- Invite the participants to social events at the club and/or arrange new family fun events such as bbq's and samba nights etc.
- Run a mentoring scheme, where 1 member is responsible for specific participants. Contact numbers should be exchanged so that they can arrange times to play the course.
- Existing Club members should be made aware of the Initiative and should offer support and encouragement to the beginners
- Ask the participants in coaching and playing groups what would attract them into membership and ensure the next phase of the progression pathway encompasses these elements
- Offer a range of packages to suit all lifestyles

Examples of Trial Memberships

- 1, 2 or 3 months of membership at the same restrictions as existing members.
- 1, 2 or 3 months of membership at a **reduced rate** with some restrictions to the participants. For example, participants can only play with an existing member or at specific times arranged where existing members take the new participants onto the course.
- Pay as you Play per certain amount of holes 3, 6, 9, 18 at a family rate in 2, 3 and 4 balls e.g - £6 per family to play 6 holes etc.
- Some Club's may even offer unrestricted access to practice facilities.

Trial membership recommendations

Trial memberships should range from 1 – 4 months at a cost of £0 to £40 a month.

The more successful schemes are those schemes where existing members are involved as much as possible in terms of the organisation, attending the lessons, introducing the participants to the course, organising fun competitions and social events and creating a welcoming environment at the club.

During the trial membership phase, the existing members should aim to take the new participants on to the course on a regular basis a least once or twice a week at a particular time.

Clubs could also organise a mentoring scheme where 1 or 2 existing members are responsible for a particular group.

Full Membership Ideas

Flexible membership packages are becoming a more popular option and implemented successfully by many clubs within England as they create more value for money for the potential member and fit in with their current life style.

For example

- **Flexible** – Members pay a one-off fee in a lump sum and then pay a reduced green fee every time they play
- **6/5 day** – for those who only play during the week or do not want to play on a Saturday
- **Lifestyle/Associated/Points** – A reduced rate membership that reflects the modern way of life. A set number of points are purchased over an annual period and the amount of points used varies depending on the day e.g. 12 rounds could be purchased at peak times and 20 if played off peak.
- **Low User** – A reduced rate membership for those who cannot play as much as the average member e.g. an annual fee with no joining fee which can be paid in 4 monthly instalments. The member is entitled to 12 rounds of golf during a 12 month period and additional rounds are purchased at a reduced green fee. The member has full use of the facilities and can obtain a handicap.
- **Family** – Encourage the whole family to join, play and socialise together. Be flexible by accommodating all variations of the family unit, i.e. not just two adults and two children
- **Couples** – Why not offer a reduced fee to encourage more spouses/partners or a social offer for those who are non-golfers
- **Under 30s/40s** – Highlight gaps within your membership that are under-presented and offer a reduced subscription to encourage this age category to participate.
- **Loyalty reward** – operate a loyalty scheme for those members who have remained members for an extended period of time.

The options are limitless!!!

Benefits to Club

- Increased finance
- E.g.
- Increased membership
 - If beginners do not join, the club has still gained the cost of trial membership
 - Family members and friends may join in future
 - Increase participants in competitions
 - Increase participants in social events
 - Positive local and national media coverage

Benefits to Golf Professional

- Continuation lessons are funded/subsidised by Golf Development Wales depending on number of groups
- Participants are likely to purchase equipment when joining club
- Participants are likely to arrange additional lessons

Additional funding to help support the project

The club could apply for a Community Chest Grant to help fund additional parts of the project up to the value of £1500

This could cover costs such as:

Additional lessons

Equipment, golf club balls, half sets for loaning during trial members

Coach education

The contact for an application form for Community Chest or help in completion of the form is: Your Local Authority Sports Development Officer

Alternatively log on to <http://sport.wales/communitychest> and download the application form.