

How to run a successful Try Dive event



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Introduction

Hosting a Try Dive event is a great way to recruit new members. Not only does it bring eager Try Divers through your door, it's also good fun for the whole club and provides a chance for everyone to get involved.

Many BSAC clubs regularly use Try Dives to recruit new members – it is a tried and tested formula that, with the right planning and preparation, delivers results. You can typically expect a 10-20% conversion rate of Try Divers to new trainees so, for 40 Try Divers you could see eight new members join your club!

This guide outlines our Try Dive event 'formula' based on the experience of many BSAC clubs and their recruitment successes over the years. We have aimed to make it as simple as possible to use, taking you from the initial event idea and its promotion through to the event itself and the all-important follow ups.

We are also here to help so please get in touch if you need any extra guidance or support.

Useful contacts:

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Step 1

Set your objective

Your club has decided to run a Try Dive event – fantastic!

Before you start, it's important that you outline exactly what your club wants to get out of a Try Dive event – **what is the objective?**

Having a clear objective for your event will enable you to plan and allocate time and resources more effectively, including when to run the event, the right people to work it and the audience to promote it to.

For example: is your objective to specifically fill the remaining spaces on a forthcoming Ocean Diver course your club is planning? Is it an opportunity to work with a local school or youth club or simply to recruit new members? Do you also want to raise money from your Try Dives for your club?

Top tip

Make sure you set a measurable target so you can easily evaluate the success of your event. For example, your target could be to recruit 10 new members.



Our Try Dive event objective is:

Our measurable target is:

Step 2

Write your plan

Once you have a clear objective for your event, you can then move on to the next stage – your Try Dive event plan. Taking time to flesh out your plan now will reap rewards on the night and ensure a well-run event that delivers results.

With your objective and target clearly outlined at the start, your Try Dive event plan should also include:

- The Try Dive event date and time
- The venue/s – both for the meet and greet and for the wet session
- Who you would like to attend
- Your promotion plan (see '**Promote your event**')
- Your Try Dive team (see '**Make the most of your people**')
- Your Try Dive event itinerary (see '**Managing your Try Dive event**')
- Resources needed and wet session timetable
- Post-event follow up plan

Make the most of your people

Try Dive events can be great fun and for the best results we recommend getting as many of your club members as possible involved. Your aim is to present a diverse, sociable and friendly club and getting the right mix of people working the event can make a real difference to your Try Divers' overall experience.

While you will need the required level of qualified instructors, the less experienced members can also play a key role. First impressions count and the Try Dive starts the moment your participants arrive and so you will need a range of people to complete the experience, including:

- **Try Dive coordinator** – your organiser who will keep everything moving smoothly and to plan, troubleshooting where necessary.
- **Meeters & greeters** – these should be the friendliest people in your club who will welcome Try Divers on arrival and take them where they need to be.
- **Registration** – friendly and organised, they'll need to get your Try Divers booked in, the necessary forms signed, instructors allocated and any initial questions answered.
- **'Buddies'** – these are a great idea to ensure your Try Divers are kept engaged and not on the sidelines. They can be formally allocated or just general members briefed to keep mingling.
- **Poolside assistants** – essential to keep the kitting up for the wet session slick and safe and to ensure Try Divers get their maximum time in the water.
- **Instructors** – enthusiasm and patience is key... see the **Try Dive wet session checklist** on page 13.
- **Photographer** – a photo of their first Try Dive is a great memento of their experience so if your club has an underwater photographer, get them in the water! **Important: make sure you get consent to take photos from your Try Divers. You can download photo consent forms from bsac.com/trydiveclubs.**
- **Social media manager** - someone to monitor your social channels in case someone is lost and messages you, and to document the event online.

Top tip

Enthusiasm is infectious!
Make sure you have new club members involved in your Try Dive event who are still excited about their training and can talk about their experiences.

Step 3

Promote your event

With your Try Dive event objective and plan agreed, the venue booked, the date and time in the club diary and your team all lined up, all you need now are your Try Divers!

There are many ways in which you can promote your Try Dive event, with little or no cost to your club:



- 1. Social media** – Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram and/or TikTok are the key to successfully promoting events. Set up a Facebook Event run by your club's Facebook Page. This allows your members to say they are 'Going' and share the event on their profiles. Potential members can then say they are 'Interested' in the event to gain more information. Events can also be 'Boosted' for as little as £1 per day in the week leading up to the event to gain more visibility online. You can also post about your event on your other social media channels, and encourage your members to share the posts. For more guidance on using social media, please contact socialmedia@bsac.com or go to bsac.com/socialmediasupport.
- 2. Maximise your website** – If your club has a website, make sure your Try Dive event is clearly promoted on the homepage, with a direct link to who to contact to book a place. It's also helpful to have a 'Learn to dive' and/or 'Try Dive' page on the site with specific information about these. If you don't yet have a club website, do look at getting one set up. For more advice on setting up Learn to dive and Try Dive web pages go to bsac.com/trydivewebpage.
- 3. Posters, banners and leaflets** – If you have your own club leaflets with details of your Try Dive event then distribute them around your local community in libraries, colleges, sports centres, shops etc (get permission first though). Think of all the places your target audience may be and get a poster up! We can provide official promotional material for Try Dive events which you can order for free online at bsac.com/promomaterial. These posters have space for you to insert your own club and event details or you can download the PDFs of the posters and print off your own.
- 4. Word of mouth** – A tried and tested approach! Ensure all your club members have the Try Dive event details plus posters and leaflets to spread the word, both in real life and on social media.



Photography and video consent form

The BSAC safeguarding policy does not permit photographs or filming of young people, aged under 18, to be taken without the consent of the parents or guardians. We will take all reasonable measures to ensure these image purposes for which they are intended. If you become aware of inappropriate use, please inform the Club Welfare Officer.

I consent to the photography, filming or videoing

Name: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Club: _____

This is to certify that _____ has completed a Free Try Dive with _____

BSAC club name: _____

Branch Diving Officer: _____

Date: _____

Try Dive medical and responsibility declaration

Scuba diving is a safe activity. Anyone with a medical history of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, heart disease, any lung or respiratory disorder (such as asthma) or dependence on drugs may not be able to dive. This should be discussed with the instructor before participating in any diving activity.

I, the person taking part: _____

Do not suffer from any of the disqualifying conditions listed below, and if you do, please inform the instructor prior to the start of the dive.

Do not have a medical condition, asthma, angina, or any other condition that may affect your ability to dive.

Try Dive is set up by BSAC, but local organisers are responsible for the safety of the event. The club or centre organising the event should ensure there is a reasonable level of fitness.

Postcode: _____

Date of form: _____

WITH THE TERMS 1, 2, 3 AND 4 ABOVE

BSAC Dive with us

bsac.com/learn

Top tip

It is best to respond to enquiries within **24-hours**, if possible. Responding swiftly to new enquiries from possible members delivers the best results for clubs, converting those enquiries to all-important Try Divers and members.

5. Working with your local media – Getting coverage in your local newspaper and radio can be useful, and may well be worth a go. However, bear in mind that digital marketing (social media and your website) will be a more reliable and consistent generator of new leads.

Tips and tricks for successful promotion

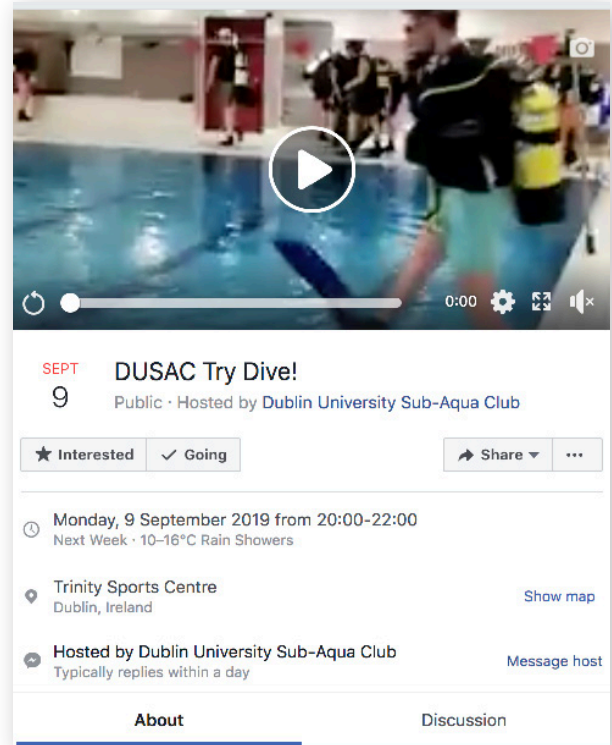
Who's your point of contact? Before you start, decide who your club point of contact will be and make sure they are available to answer queries/requests/bookings as quickly and efficiently as possible. This could be a collection of people on hand to answer emails, Facebook messages and Tweets regarding the event. It's important for this team to respond to enquiries within 24-hours, if possible. Responding swiftly to new enquiries from possible members delivers the best results for clubs.

Social media release - Whether writing a Tweet or Facebook post, remember to keep it upbeat and to the point. You want a clear message with a call to action - do you want them to book a Try Dive, visit your website Try Dive page or say they are interested on a Facebook event? Choose one and stick to it. In your Facebook event, remember to include some information about your club, the location, date and time of your Try Dive event, as well as full contact details for booking.

While this advice is for social media, it can be attributed to a traditional press release as well.

Images - Have you got a few good quality photos of your club and/or Try Dives? Post them on online with more information and a link to the Facebook event! Please also ensure you have permission to distribute the images from the people in them, especially the parents/guardians of under 18s.

Remember the power of video! If you have relevant video content, either topside or better still underwater, that helps to advertise the diving experience to people who have never done it. Video content is great for social media and is very easily shared, widening the reach of your story even further.



Top tip

If you don't have your own video content, we have one available to use online at bsac.com/learntodive.

Need more guidance on working with social media?
Contact us – marketing@bsac.com or +44 (0)151 350 6224

Step 4

Planning and preparation

With your promotional activity up and running, you now need to start getting everything into place to ensure a smooth-running and enjoyable Try Dive event for all. Put together a checklist of everything you will need on the night and remember: you don't have to do everything as this is a team effort so delegate tasks to make sure they get done.

Suggested checklist:

Kit – have you enough full sets of pool kit for your Try Divers, including a range of fin, mask and BC sizes? Is all the kit in test and are all the cylinders filled? If members of your club are lending kit for the event, do they know what time and where they need to bring it?

Instructors – do you have sufficient numbers of suitably-qualified instructors for the Try Dive sessions? Your ideal ratio is one instructor to one Try Diver. Please see the **Try Dive wet session checklist** for more guidance.

Have you got a timetable for the event and circulated it to the team? It needs to have a set up time so you are not rushed, arrival/registration time for Try Divers, time set aside for dry session briefing and time in the water. Don't forget the all-important post-wet session debrief and socialising!

Team roles – does everyone know what time they need to arrive, where they need to be and what they need to do?

Uniforms – do you have club t-shirts all your Try Dive team could wear? If not, why not think about getting them made, they don't have to be expensive and it will help with easy identification for your Try Divers.

Try Divers – do your participants know what time to arrive, where to go and what to bring? Have you been able to get details from the Try Diver such as their fin size prior to the evening so you can pre-plan your kit requirements? Why not send a final confirmation email a few days before the event, outlining all the details.

Event safety – have you carried out a risk assessment for your Try Dive event? See our Pool Safety Officer's Guidelines at [bsac.com/trydiveclubs](https://www.bsac.com/trydiveclubs). All participants must present a Try Dive medical and responsibility declaration form before the session begins.

Set up – do you have a registration area? Can you brand the meet and greet and pool areas with posters or club banners? Is the route from registration to pool clearly marked or can you allocate members to walk Try Divers to the changing rooms. Is all the kit ready assembled and in place?

Participant packs – have you ordered enough Try Dive participant packs from BSAC? In each A5 sized pack you will find a Try Dive certificate, a Learn to Dive booklet, medical declaration and photo consent form plus you can add your own club details and information. You can order Try Dive packs for free from [bsac.com/promomaterial](https://www.bsac.com/promomaterial) or email marketing@bsac.com. You can download additional medical and photo consent forms at [bsac.com/trydiveclubs](https://www.bsac.com/trydiveclubs).

Your club details – ensure you have included information on your club, your membership fees and details of your Ocean Diver training programme plus all the essential contact information in the Try Dive participant pack.

Top tip

Club signage around the pool is a great idea... you can order personalised club banners and pull-up banners at [bsac.com/promomaterial](https://www.bsac.com/promomaterial).

Step 5

Managing your Try Dive event

Taking that first step to a Try Dive can be a little daunting for some so, by providing a warm and friendly reception from the outset, you can settle any Try Diver nerves and create a welcome to remember.

Arrival and dry session

Your aim is for a well-run evening, with activity timed so there is minimal waiting around and your Try Divers are occupied and engaged for the whole evening.

Meet and greet: ensure every Try Diver is met as they arrive with a friendly welcome to reassure them right from the start. Every Try Diver should be taken to the reception area where they can sign in and complete the necessary forms.

Registration: make sure all Try Divers are kept engaged. Wherever possible match up the Try Diver with their designated instructor and watch out for stragglers or participants standing unattended.

Introductions: your event timetable should include a short welcome, ideally led by a member of your club who is confident and comfortable with public speaking. Keep the welcome upbeat and fun – many of your Try Divers will not have much knowledge of diving, your club or BSAC and could be overwhelmed by too much information at the beginning.

At this stage, your Try Divers are simply keen to get on with the business in hand – their Try Dive – so as part of your introduction, give them a brief outline of the evening and what they can expect.

Top tip

Provide all the essential information about your club and learning to dive in progressive, bite-sized chunks over the whole evening. This way your Try Divers get the time to absorb the information while enjoying themselves! Your literature in the Try Dive participant pack will also give them all the information they need to take away and read.

Try Dive night – sample itinerary

Date: Tuesday, 7th June

Venue: Leisure Centre Café, Splash Road

Time: event starts at 7:30pm, wet session 8:15pm – 9:15pm

Instructor team: 8

Poolside team: 4

Try Divers: 16

Try Dive duration: 25 minutes each

Event Itinerary:

6:30pm: Team arrival time to set up and pre-event briefing

7:30pm: Arrival time/registration for Try Divers

7:45pm: Welcome and scuba briefing

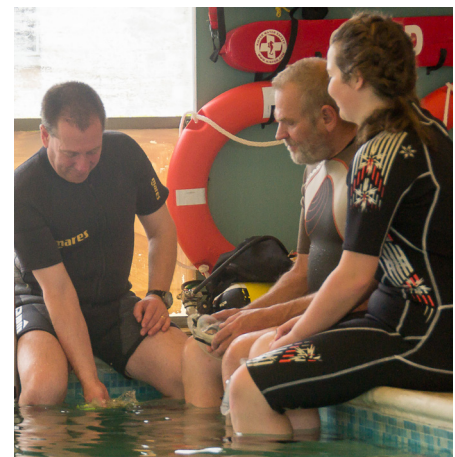
8:00pm: Change and prep for the wet session

8:15-9:15pm: Try Dive sessions

9:15-9:30pm: Change and prep for de-brief

9:30pm: Short de-brief in café/club venue and certificates

9:45pm: Invite to the pub to meet the club and socialise!



Getting your Try Divers ready

Scuba briefing: once registration and the initial introductions are over, the scuba briefing can begin. How this is done is up to you – it could be a group introduction to the kit, safety and signals or it could be one-on-one with their Try Dive instructor.

From dry to wet session: your aim is to keep the flow of the evening going and to avoid any unnecessary hanging around, particularly if your Try Divers have changed into their pool kit. Use your poolside assistants to show Try Divers where the changing rooms are and make sure they know where to meet their instructor once they have changed.

The Try Dive wet session

Time management: the pool is the exciting bit so it's essential that you maximise on your allotted pool time to give your Try Divers as much time in and under the water.

Poolside support: depending on the number of Try Divers, you may have to split the pool session into two 20-25 minute slots and this is where a good poolside team can make the difference. With poolside support, you can manage the Try Diver and kit change-over efficiently and have members available to keep the Try Divers engaged while they wait to go into the water.

For full guidance on running the wet session, please see page 13.

Top tip

You could also consider alternating the Try Dive group with a try snorkel session so they get a full hour of activity in the water.

Step 6

After the Try Dive

Make sure you capitalise on your Try Divers' excitement and enthusiasm!

We can all remember our first time on scuba and that sense of achievement of trying something new. This is the ideal time to sow the seed that they can now learn to dive.

Invite your Try Divers back to the clubhouse, leisure centre café or pub where you can present each of them with their certificate of achievement and their Try Dive pack.

Ensure each participant pack has all the essential information they need on your club, your membership and training costs and how they can sign up for your next Ocean Diver course.

Do a short review of the session, what they need to do next to learn to dive with BSAC and answer any initial questions before handing over to your 'star recruiters' – your club members!

Identify the key people in the room to speak to regarding joining and training, and then create a fun, social environment where the Try Divers can mingle and ask all the questions they may have.

If your club has facilities such as a boathouse, RIBs, compressor room etc show interested Try Divers around, using your club members to keep the Try Dives informed and entertained.

Get email consent

Ask your Try Divers if they would like more information via email so you can add them to your email newsletter, or create a database of Try Divers to send Ocean Diver information to when your courses are beginning.



Top tip

If you can, allocate a mentor or buddy to each Try Diver who can show them around and introduce them to other members of your club. Your mentors don't have to be the most experienced members but they do need to be enthusiastic, friendly and approachable - ideally someone the Try Diver can relate to.

Step 7

Post event and follow ups

Your Try Divers have achieved a lot in one night and have been given a lot of information to consider. You may well find that some Try Divers make their mind up on the night so, as part of your preparations, make sure your Membership Secretary is ready to sign up new members.

However, most Try Divers do not make a commitment to learn to dive straight away. By following this guide you will have already gone a long way to create a welcoming and memorable experience for your participants. The key now is an effective follow up to gain the new members you want as a result of your Try Dive event.

This follow up should include:

Email your Try Divers the day after the event to thank them for attending and invite them back to visit you on your next club night. If appropriate, confirm dates/details of your next Ocean Diver course.

Make a note to call all the Try Divers about a week after their Try Dive to follow up.

Keep a database of your Try Divers and invite them to your next social event as a guest.

Post on social media about the event and how successful it was! Include some of the photos taken at the event and tag members/Try Divers if you're able.

If your club has an e-newsletter, and the Try Diver has consented, include them on the mailing list for the next issue and if appropriate keep them up-to-date on future Ocean Diver training.

Evaluate your Try Dive results against your original objective and target – did you achieve them? Hold a de-brief session with your Try Dive team and discuss the event, what worked and what didn't. This will provide invaluable information for future Try Dive events.

Let BSAC know how your Try Dive event went! We are always keen to hear about your club events and new member recruitment successes so send us your stories, photos and any feedback you may have – marketing@bsac.com



Try Dive wet session checklist

Below is a step-by-step outline of a Try Dive wet session, from the moment the Try Diver is greeted by their instructor at the poolside to the all-important de-brief at the end of the session.

Try Dive Instructor/Leader requirements

Dive Leaders who do not hold an instructor grade cannot teach skills in the water. The Dive Leader can make buoyancy adjustments as necessary for the student. Try Divers can be led under water by:

- BSAC Open Water Instructor (OWI) or above

Divers with the qualifications below can lead the diver underwater provided they have been briefed by an OWI (or above) and there is an OWI (or above) onsite:

- An Assistant Diving Instructor (ADI)
- Dive Leader (DL)

Instructor/student ratio

For a Try Dive session this should be 1:1 to ensure the instructor is able to provide the right level of attention and support.

Rescue Diver

The rescue diver should be a minimum of a BSAC Sports Diver.

- They need to have quick access to basic snorkelling equipment and be dressed to be able to immediately enter the water if necessary while on duty.
- They should be familiar with the local pool Emergency Evacuation Procedures (EAP).

Dive Management

The minimum grade should be a BSAC Dive Leader or a BSAC Sports Diver under on-site supervision of a BSAC Dive Leader.

Facilities

While the most common method of running a Try Dive is in a pool, the requirement is sheltered water.

Sheltered water - This is a well-maintained swimming pool or sheltered open water which provides similar conditions, being generally less than 4m deep, with a stepped or gently shelved open bottom of firm composition, adequate visibility (min. 5m), and free from significant water movement from either waves or currents.

Within sheltered water, there will need to be:

- **Standing-depth water** in between waist and chest deep, allowing students to both stand comfortably, and kneel fully submerged.
- **Deeper water** of approximately 2-4m deep.

1. Meeting your Try Diver

A warm welcome is essential – this is most likely the first time the participant has ever tried scuba and will probably be a little anxious as to what will happen next. Introduce yourself by your first name and let them know your instructor qualification to reassure them. Be friendly and remember their name, ask about any previous experience (snorkelling or diving on holiday), and if there is anything in particular they are worried about.

2. The plan

Explain to your Try Diver that the objective of the session is to give them the chance to experience diving underwater using scuba equipment in a safe sheltered environment. **Remember:** no instruction or skills other than basic techniques (breathing, equalisation, swimming and simple buoyancy control) should be provided within a Try Dive wet session.

3. Swim check

There is no need to ask the participant to do this as a formal 'test' before the Try Dive as this could put pressure on them. Instead, you could casually ask them to do a length of the pool as a 'warm up'. This checks that they can swim and are comfortable in the water.

4. Fitting the equipment

With the equipment at hand, move your Try Diver to the shallow end of the pool. Start by showing them the mask and fins and explain how to fit them correctly. Then move on to the BC – explain its use and operation and then help the Try Diver to correctly put on the equipment. Use a weightbelt if necessary.

5. Safety considerations

Explain to the Try Diver about the possibility of pressure on the ears and mask squeeze and how to relieve the effects. Explain breathing techniques and the importance of not holding their breath. Point out any other safety considerations about potential hazards specific to your pool area, as appropriate.

6. Signals

Demonstrate the core signals to be used during the Try Dive session – OK, up, down, stop, watch me – and ask the Try Diver to repeat the ones they will need to use.

7. Using the scuba equipment

Explain the breathing technique with the demand valve out of the water first and then progress to just under the surface when ready. Emphasise the importance of not holding your breath.

In the shallow end, lie face down and demonstrate the finning technique and how, by using the BC, buoyancy can be adjusted at any depth. Conduct simple buoyancy tests in the shallow end, helping the Try Diver to adjust their initial buoyancy. Then progressively increase depth, monitoring the Try Diver all the time.



8. Time to dive!

Check that the Try Diver is comfortable and their buoyancy is okay, adjusting with weights if needed, and then take them for a swim around the pool, progressively increasing the depth. Demonstrate and signal them to equalise pressure on their ears and mask, if necessary. As you progress down the pool, point out anything of interest under the water – pool toys, other Try Divers or swimmers etc.

Make sure you monitor their air regularly, use signals and invite the Try Diver to signal back in return. Maintain regular eye contact with them to reassure and to check for any signs of distress or discomfort. Be mindful not to let the Try Diver get too cold, 15-20 minutes pool time is often adequate.

9. Exit

When the allotted time is up, return to the shallow end of the pool and signal to your Try Diver to surface. As you help your Try Diver to de-kit in the water, ask them how they enjoyed their experience and answer any immediate questions they may have about the session. Give them positive feedback and provide a short de-brief using REAP – review, encourage, assess and preview.

Once out of the pool, show them where they need to get changed and invite them to meet you in the bar/clubhouse for a chat and to get their Try Dive pack.

If you have any further questions regarding the practical side of running a Try Dive session, please do get in touch. You can contact the Diver Resources Team on **+44(0)151 350 6203** or email **drt@bsac.com**.





Try Dives for under 10s

The minimum age for scuba training within a BSAC club is 10. However, young people under the age of 10 may take part in a BSAC Try Dive and are covered by BSAC's member insurance when doing so. Try Dive organisers may impose a lower age or stature limit, as they consider appropriate.

Participation in a Try Dive by young people does not signify entitlement to undertake a full programme of Discovery Diver or Ocean Diver training, for which the minimum age limits of 10 and 12 years respectively remain. Please ensure you do not raise expectations of those under 10.

The safety of young people while participating in adventurous activities is paramount. While the Activities Centre (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995 does not cover sub-aquatic activities or apply to diving clubs or BSAC centres, it is the wish of BSAC that whatever advice it gives relating to the safety of young people would satisfy this Act of Parliament in the event that it did apply. With this in mind, the following points are particularly valid for those under 10 years of age:

- All participants must present a Try Dive medical and responsibility declaration form and, for those under 18, it must be signed by a parent or legal guardian before the session begins.
- While using scuba equipment, those under 14 must be accompanied by a one-to-one ratio of a diver of at least BSAC Assistant Diving Instructor qualified status. A higher student/instructor ratio is acceptable for basic equipment only, ie. mask, fins and snorkel.
- A depth limit of 2m is advised for those under 14 years. Direct ascents from the maximum depth (2m) should only be made in an emergency.

If you have any further questions regarding Try Dives for under 10s, please contact BSAC's Diver Resources Team on +44 (0)151 350 6203.

And finally, please remember...

Help is at hand

If you have any further questions regarding your Try Dive event or need additional guidance on anything contained in this guide, please do get in touch.

Contact the BSAC team on **+44 (0)152 350 6224 / marketing@bsac.com**



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