



For people with disabilities and other health needs
Hatfield Swim Centre, Lemsford Road, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, AL10 0DH

The Platypus Swimming Club was founded in 1966 to enable people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities such as Autism/ADHD and other medical needs and volunteer helpers of all ages and abilities including non-swimmers from the district of Welwyn Hatfield and the surrounding area to enjoy the benefits of swimming in safety and privacy. The current members range from very young children with congenital and or mental disabilities, to accident and stroke-victims, those with arthritis, learning difficulties, visual impairment, and older people suffering simply from the effects of age.

The Club is run by a small, dedicated committee of volunteers, some of whom have disabilities or are, or have been, related to disabled members. It meets weekly on **Sunday afternoons between 3pm and 5pm**. During this time we have the pool to ourselves to ensure privacy and time for those who need it in order to exercise or relax in the pool.

The Hatfield Swim Centre has excellent facilities. The main 33m pool allows a full length to be swum in either shallow (1m depth) or deeper water. The pool is accessible by a hoist or by steps, designed especially for the club's members. There is also a learner pool, which is excellent for remedial work and great for babies and young children as it is always kept slightly warmer than the main pool.

Recent grants obtained from Welwyn and Hatfield District Council and other charitable donations enable subscriptions to be kept at a reasonable level (currently £10 per annum and £1 per swim session per person).

The aims of the Club are dependent on the needs of each member, instilling confidence in the water, providing advice and encouragement where necessary. We offer a friendly and informal swim session for everyone to enjoy.

Parents/carers must stay on-site if the swimmer is under 18 or needs support. Anyone under 8 years old must be accompanied in the water by a responsible adult.

The competitive instincts of many of the disabled swimmers are catered for by about 6 annual swimming galas. These are mainly run under the auspices of the National Association of Swimming Clubs for the Handicapped (NASCH) and include the annual Club Championships, friendly races against other clubs of the Eastern Region as well as the National Gala held each autumn. Qualification for the National Finals is achieved by winning events at the Eastern Regional Gala.

New members are always welcome, but as with all voluntary groups, the Club is also in need of more independent volunteer helpers. Not every week, but just by having that extra 1 or 2 people to assist both in the water and in the changing area, would make it a lot easier. Volunteer Helpers have the chance for a swim at the end of a session. There are no particular requirements for volunteers (except a willingness to smile, laugh, help and have a good time).

For further information, please contact: Karen Cherry, Secretary on 0781 370 0286 or email us at platypusswimmingclub@gmail.com or find us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/platypusswim>