

CURRICULUM VITE

Discipline	Trampoline
Name:	Karen Gent

Outline your previous experience and involvement in Gymnastics.

I have run my own club in Bromley, Coney Hall Cosmonauts, since 2007. I am a Senior Club Coach in Trampoline and Club Coach in DMT and am Regional Judge level for trampoline.

I began to help the LT committee with competitions 6 years ago as I have expertise in data and I have been responsible for the competition database, results and competition standings during that time. Since then, I have increased, year on year, my role with London Trampolining and I am now on the London Trampolining Committee as Judging Secretary and I also help with setting up all regional events.

I have organised and run our borough (Bromley) trampoline competition for the past 10 years. During that time the number of schools participating has increased, and all schools have increased their entry numbers. This competition provides a good platform for schools to progress to the BSGA competition structure.

Seven years ago, I was asked by the LSGA chair to take over the running of the LSGA trampoline competitions. Since then I have successfully organised and run seven regional competitions and two Southern Zonal competitions.

My club has made steady progress since its inception and now competes at all regional grade levels. Next season we intend to enter NDP events for the first time, demonstrating that the regional programme provides a sound grounding for the British Gymnastics' sanctioned events. Two years ago we took our first steps on to the national circuit, entering the Trampoline League competition and came away with two gold medals (including one in disability) and a 9th place. Our planned future developments are to aim for the BG SES events.

The club has provided a complete support package to our resident school along with other schools in Bromley to increase and develop their participation in the BSGA Schools Trampoline competition. This has resulted in a year on year improvement in achievement and results for local schools, recently 22 students from schools supported by my club qualified for the BSGA National Finals in Northern Ireland and returned with several podium placings and a national schools champion in 2018 and national individual and team champions in 2019 as well as a disability champion for three consecutive years.

I have competed at the British Veterans Championships on a number of occasions, winning twice. I do still compete at our regional competitions as I think it is beneficial to be involved in all three aspects of the sport – coaching, judging and participation.

I am a firm believer that our sport is one that all ages and abilities, including gymnasts with disabilities, can enjoy and that is reflected within my club – our oldest competitor is 73 years old and we've had more than one pensioner join us over the years who we've taken great pride in teaching to somersault.

Describe how your personality, experience and skill-set support your nomination as Technical Committee Chairman

I am a calm person and I carefully weigh up situations and differing opinions before arriving at a decision. I am direct, polite and professional and look to build relationships with the people with whom I work.

I am a qualified accountant with over 20 years post qualification experience. I've held a range of posts throughout my career, including Chief Financial Officer of a multi-national company. My career has provided me with experience of a broad range of situations, issues and problem solving that I can bring to London Trampolining in order to further develop and improve on what we already have. There is a great deal of change approaching London Trampolining which needs a skill set that has experience of conducting feasibility studies, analysing all of the options available and proper costing of them which will enable the committee to make decisions that will provide maximum benefit for the region's clubs and gymnasts.

From within the sport of trampoline I can draw on the past seven years management experience with LSGA such as resolving the problems encountered with some schools at the beginning. We're now at the position where the schools in London know they have the support of LSGA Trampoline to enable them to continue to increase their participation and improve their delivery of trampoline within their respective schools. Entry numbers to LSGA Trampoline competitions have doubled during the past seven years and are continuing to grow and I would like to see similar growth in our regional events.

I respect existing rules, guidelines and expectations and where I feel that these are lacking, I will endeavour to follow due process to achieve change. I have demonstrated this with my work with schools by listening to the issues that schools had and being influential in the changes that were made to the trampoline competition structure a few years ago. More recently I have implemented some amendments to our regional rules to help clubs as judging courses weren't running.

Prior to becoming involved with the sport of trampoline, I was Treasurer for London Advanced Motorcyclists (this is best described as the equivalent of a TC for the Institute of Advanced Motorists). When I took over they had around £300 in their bank account. When I handed the role over, some five years later, they had over £10,000 in their bank account, partly from careful financial management and partly from identifying and successfully applying for funding. Some of these funds were ring-fenced for specific projects such as reducing the KSI statistics by getting under 26's enrolled for advanced training. During my tenure I was instrumental in a number of projects such as the production of a road safety video produced in partnership with the former head of police motorcycle training.

I believe in providing a variety of pathways, and a mixture of provisions. There is no "one size fits all" model which will work for the region's clubs and gymnasts and I am committed to ensuring

everyone, beginners, aspiring elite, elite, adult, disability, regional, NDP and BG pathways has the opportunity to participate and achieve. At this time, I believe that the region requires a period of continuity and stability following a period of significant change and I feel that I am the best placed person to provide this for the region's trampolinists and clubs.

What does success look like at the end of your three year term in office? Outline how you would drive this discipline forward?

The NDP pathway needs to be further developed – the recent statement by our National Coach that London is underperforming is correct. There are multiple reasons for this and I would like to work with clubs to revamp the way that London approaches the NDP pathway so that all of our best gymnasts represent our region at the NDP Team Finals and our results at that event improve. We need to have a more inclusive methodology for the NDP pathway, from regular 'squad' training days, reduction in the cost of team kit by adding a hire option, transparency in team coach selection and a more prestigious March event. Disability events need to be developed so that they are an integral part of London's calendar.

We need to support our higher-level gymnasts who compete on the national circuit – one option would be to review the London competition calendar so they could use regional events as 'test' competitions for League / English / SES events. We are fortunate to have a strong regional grades structure running alongside the BG NDP structure which would be an ideal platform for our National level gymnasts to trial new routines and provide some inspiration for our budding talent to aim for.

I would like to see the exodus of our talented gymnasts stop. We are losing too many gymnasts to clubs located just outside of the region. I believe that one reason for this is a lack of HPC coaches in London. We have a lot of talented coaches but currently they are unable to develop further because there are few, if any higher-level coaching courses available to them. We need to better support our developing coaches through a variety of mechanisms to ensure they are better placed to access the limited number of higher level coach courses.

Whilst we are one of the smallest, if not the smallest region geographically, we are blessed with having probably the largest density of population to draw participation from. Despite this we do seem to have a very small number of active trampoline clubs in the region, and recent additions have sadly folded. I would like to see a non-financial support package developed by LT for newly registered trampoline clubs to help them during their first couple of seasons which will in turn increase participation at regional level, both recreational and competitive.

I would also like to bring back an ambassador or buddy type of role, similar to the one carried out by Rohan Nichol several years ago. Rohan would contact clubs and visit on a regular basis, offering very beneficial and constructive advice. I know that I always valued and appreciated his visits to our club, as did our kids and coaches.

My three children are now grown up and continue to be involved in the sport. They are all qualified coaches and judges, however they are choosing their own paths. One prefers to compete, another competes at regional level and also enjoys coaching whilst the third is

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developing a passion for judging. I would like to see LT develop a program to work alongside clubs to identify and nurture future coaches and judges as these will be the people running the region's clubs and TC in the longer term.

We are also fortunate to have a large number of very supportive clubs in the region yet the makeup of the current committee doesn't reflect this. I would like to see a broader representation of clubs on the future committee which would in turn improve the communication and transparency of Committee activity.

Lastly, and most importantly, we must always ask and challenge ourselves as to whether what we are doing is in the best interests of ALL of the region's gymnasts. The answer to that question should always be a resounding "Yes" and if it isn't then we need to find an alternative.