

How to report concerns of abuse

When discovering the possible abuse of a vulnerable adult who is a club member be prepared to feel concerned and possibly angry. You must remember that despite the difficulty involved in reporting such matters the welfare of the vulnerable adult is paramount. You have a duty of care to report any concerns you might have immediately and by following the correct procedures you are ensuring concerns are dealt with fairly and in the best interests of the vulnerable adult.

The CWO should be informed of the suspicions of abuse immediately. If the CWO is not available or is implicated in the allegations, then a senior club officer and/or the British Rowing Child Protection Officer (CPO) should be informed.

Where concerns may arise outside the rowing setting and there is no CWO then another responsible individual should be informed such as the Head Teacher at an academic institution or the member of staff responsible for the protection of vulnerable adults. Always ensure in these circumstances that the British Rowing CPO is informed of the referral.

Where Rowers have been away from home, the individual who is responsible for their welfare should be informed, providing they are not implicated.

Carers and parents

- Working in partnership with carers and parents is encouraged by British Rowing and can often clarify concerns and allegations regarding the possible abuse of a vulnerable adult. Consulting carers or parents must be considered in light of the vulnerable adult's right to confidentiality (*Mental Capacity Act 2005*) and ideally should be undertaken with the full consent of the vulnerable individual. Where there is doubt as to the vulnerable individual's mental capacity to make decisions then advice must be sought from the CPO.
- Where a parent or carer may be implicated in the abuse or is unable to respond to the situation appropriately then they should not be involved as this may place the vulnerable individual at greater risk.

British Rowing

- The CPO should be informed of all allegations of abuse and persistent poor practice as soon as possible and will decide the following:
 - What further action should be taken by the club or British Rowing.
 - Whether the vulnerable adult should consider taking further action or advice.
 - Whether the situation should be reported to the Police or Social Care Services.
- Reporting the allegations and concerns is vital. What may seem to be only a minor matter could be one of a series of other instances which together are just cause concern. Reporting also enables the CMG and the CPG to analyse trends and improve existing British Rowing policy.

Vulnerable Adult referral letters should be clearly marked 'private and confidential' and sent to the CPO at the following address :

British Rowing
6 Lower Mall,
London.
W6 9DJ.

Alternatively, the CPO can be contacted through the national office on: **0208 237 6700**.

Where an individual indicates they have been abused or you suspect abuse

- 1** React calmly to prevent anxiety and fear

- 2** Give reassurance the individual is not to blame and was correct to report it

- 3** Listen to and take seriously what is said

- 4** Be aware there may be difficulties interpreting what is said by someone who has a communication difficulties, or if English is not their first language.

- 5** Ask only relevant questions to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Where possible make notes

- 6** Reassure the individual and remember that you have a duty of confidentiality in cases of vulnerable adult protection. Advise the individual that the concerns should be reported to the appropriate authorities and discuss this procedure with them. Seek to gain their consent to report the matter and offer support in doing this and afterwards.

- 7** The safety of the vulnerable adult is paramount. If urgent medical attention is required call an ambulance, inform the paramedics of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is an adult protection issue.

- 8** Record all information

- 9** Report in accordance with British Rowing procedures

- 10** Ask only relevant questions to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Where possible make notes.
