

## Guidelines for rowing competitions

Anyone working with children (young people under the age of 18) or providing a service for them has a 'duty of care' to them. A duty of care is the duty that rests upon an individual or organisation to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the safety of any person involved in an activity for which that individual or organisation is responsible. There is an additional duty on those working with or providing services to children.

Although many of the regattas and heads (hereafter referred to as competitions) in rowing are organised by clubs that have agreed to adopt British Rowing's *Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy*, and most of the participants will be members of those clubs, the competition still needs to ensure that it has its own house in order. Should an allegation arise at a competition, or any individual witness an act of abuse during the course of the competition, which is not appropriately acted upon, the organising committee could be in breach of this duty.

This document provides competition organisers with a simple checklist to help put together a welfare plan and statement about the care and protection of children, and the reporting structure that should be followed, in the event of a concern or issue arising. This must be easily available to competitors, other participants such as volunteer helpers and clubs and may be sent out with entry forms or available on the competition/club website.

There should be a clear, brief notice on an appropriate notice board in the changing room or boating area giving a contact number or location for the competition's 'welfare officer or coordinator' (for most competitions the club's own Club Welfare Officer (CWO) would be most appropriate), for the British Rowing Child Protection Officer (CPO) (**020 8237 6700**), for the NSPCC (**0808 800 5000**) and for local police with a brief explanation of the competition's reporting procedures for such concerns.

The statement or policy might read:

The Organising Committee of [club/regatta/head] believe that the welfare and wellbeing of all children is paramount. All children, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion or ability, have equal rights to safety and protection. All suspicions, concerns and allegations of harm will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

A welfare officer/coordinator for the competition will be appointed annually and will act as the point of contact for any concerns or allegations. Their contact number will be posted in the boating area throughout the duration of the competition.

The 'welfare plan' should be appropriate to the risks, to the size of the event and take all reasonable steps to address the following areas:

1. What is the **reporting structure** for any concerns raised? With whom does the overall responsibility for decisions and disciplinary procedures lie? The first point of contact should be the competition welfare officer/coordinator. How might the chairman of the Organising Committee be contacted in such a situation? When should a matter be reported to police? Who is responsible for passing the concern to the British Rowing CPO?
2. All participants and coaches abide by the Rules of the competition and by good sportsmanship. Is there a **code of conduct** that might be useful here for competitors, coaches or even spectators?

3. **Medical provision** should be provided at the competition during the hours of racing and, outside of this time, those at the venue should have available contact numbers for the local hospital or doctors clinic. In an emergency, you can always contact **999**. This could be made available on the same poster as the welfare officer details.
4. An **appropriate level of security** should be provided to ensure people are not given free access to young people. For very large events this may be a professional security team or it may mean briefing appropriate volunteers to be vigilant and report anything suspicious such as someone taking photos in the changing area, someone unknown to crews hanging around or tampering with equipment.
5. Procedures for **missing participants** should be thought through and communicated to volunteers. For example, is it best to report to control commission or another official and then report to welfare officer/coordinator, how should the chairman of Organising Committee be kept informed? How would you make contact with team manager/crew coach if an athlete had an accident? Does anyone keep emergency mobile numbers for the person responsible for each crew so that in the event of an accident they can be contacted? It may need stating, for example, that any young person missing over, say, 20 minutes should be reported to the police, depending on the size and environment of the event.
6. Where staff and volunteers have unsupervised contact with children at the competition, the Committee should consider who needs to be vetted including **CRB checks**. Currently these are not a legal requirement for volunteers but it may be changed in the future. If any volunteers working on the competition's behalf do have supervisory roles over children, or are working unsupervised in the changing rooms when junior crews are present, they must be vetted. Where possible, volunteers and staff in changing room areas should work in pairs. You may like to use WG 2.5 and WG 2.6 a self declaration form or WG 2.4 for references for volunteers.
7. You should consider what, if any, **basic training** is appropriate for those with unsupervised contact with children eg awareness, referral and recognition. At very least they should be familiar with British Rowing's *Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy* and the information it contains on good practice.
8. Anyone who holds **personal contact details** of children, whether competitors or volunteers such as stake-boat boys/girls, should be CRB checked.
9. **Photography** is a difficult issue for rowing events as they generally take place on open public land and may cover considerable distances. The Organising Committee should consider the advice given in WG 5.1 and brief volunteers on how to respond to any inappropriate photography they may witness.