



BRITISH ROWING

# Safeguarding Policy

April 2025

TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT

## Introduction

British Rowing is the governing body of rowing (both indoor rowing and rowing on water) and is committed to safeguarding all participants and its members to ensure that the sport continues to thrive from the grassroots to the elite levels of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. British Rowing is committed to safeguarding and promoting the interests of those who take part in rowing at all levels and its policies, regulations and guidance procedures are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect best practice. This Policy builds on the British Rowing values of teamwork, commitment and being open to all.

## Policy Statement

British Rowing is committed to safeguarding **everyone** and promoting best practice to ensure that safe, happy, inclusive environments are created in all rowing clubs, environments and events so that everyone has positive and enjoyable rowing experiences. Whilst safeguarding children and Adults at Risk are statutory responsibilities and British Rowing is committed to upholding and adhering to all the legislation and statutory guidance as set out in this Policy establishes that British Rowing aims to safeguard everyone in the rowing community.

British Rowing has made the decision to promote safeguarding as the protection of **everyone** - children, Adults at Risk and everyone in the rowing community. Everyone needs to be responsible for safeguarding **everyone** in the rowing community - it is a collective and shared responsibility which will empower and enhance compliance and co-operation. This means that whilst children are entitled to greater protection due to their vulnerability (due to their age) those who are vulnerable for other reasons as adults must be protected appropriately as well. **Everyone** is responsible for protecting each other from abuse, neglect and harassment. **Everyone** in the rowing community is responsible for treating each other with respect, dignity, decency and honesty.

British Rowing acknowledges that abuse can take place anywhere and be perpetrated by anyone, male or female by children as well as adults of any age. Some people are more at risk than others; children due to their age are more at risk and some children due to disability, or ability, can be more at risk. It is important to understand that some may need additional safeguards to protect them due to this additional vulnerability.

Adults at Risk are another vulnerable group which British Rowing has legal responsibilities to protect over and above others in the rowing community. This Policy will address Adults at Risk when there are **specific** aspects which require additional comment or approach, in particular when reporting matters where an adult is the victim of abuse, harassment or neglect, however, all adults may be susceptible to harm, exploitation or adverse circumstances due to factors such as mental health conditions, or other personal situations.

Athletes such as rowers and any sports participants are vulnerable by default due to the power imbalance which exists between them and their coaches, particularly children. British Rowing acknowledges that these individuals require protection and is committed to providing it as far as it is able to do so within a sporting context.

Working together to achieve this goal in a transparent, equitable and collaborative manner will help to develop and grow the sport of rowing.

All concerns must be reported to the British Rowing Safeguarding Lead in accordance with this Policy.

## **Scope and Purpose**

This Policy applies to all British Rowing participants, members, whether as a rower, cox, coach, umpire, volunteer or supporter or anyone involved in British Rowing governed or affiliated activities such as training camps, travel to competitions, regattas, gym training sessions even if they are not British Rowing members.

Where an individual is involved in rowing, whether as an athlete, coach, official or any other role within the rowing community, in an environment where another safeguarding policy exists such as a school or university it is the intention that this Policy will work with that policy and the British Rowing Safeguarding team will communicate with the designated safeguarding lead or other appointed safeguarding officer to ensure that all statutory responsibilities are adhered to.

This Policy is designed to provide details of the British Rowing safeguarding framework including the requirements of the safeguarding regulations, Code of Conduct and the procedures to be followed when concerns are reported. It outlines British Rowing's responsibilities and the role its clubs have and their responsibilities to embed and implement safeguarding best practice in the rowing community.

## **What is safeguarding?**

Safeguarding is the proactive steps and measures taken to protect **everyone** involved in rowing, aiming to prevent harm, promoting wellbeing and responding effectively to incidents. Safeguarding is not the sole responsibility of any one individual or organisation; it is a shared responsibility.

Safeguarding includes recognising, preventing and responding to abuse, bullying and online abuse as well as recruiting the right people to work in rowing and promoting a culture of sportsmanship and integrity. Child protection is the reactive response to children at risk of or suffering harm. Taking proactive steps such as adopting safer recruitment principles and training staff will help to mitigate the risk of individuals suffering harm from abuse.

Safeguarding Adults at Risk is different in some respects from safeguarding children or other vulnerable individuals but from the perspective of sport, the important point is for everyone to treat everyone with respect and dignity. If there is a possibility that an individual is an Adult at Risk (either as a victim or a perpetrator) it is suggested that advice is sought. This Policy will set out some basic principles to be followed and considered when dealing with an adult related concern.

## **Legislation**

This Policy is based on the following legislation and statutory guidance:

Children Act 1989  
Children Act 2004  
Care Act 2014  
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006  
Protection of Freedoms Act 2012  
Equality Act 2010  
Mental Capacity Act 2005  
Children and Social Work Act 2017  
Human Rights Act 1998  
Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

This is not an exhaustive list of the legislation on safeguarding children and adults at risk.

## **Principles**

This Policy is based on the following principles:

- Everyone has a right to enjoy sport free from all forms of abuse, exploitation and poor practice.
- The welfare of the child is paramount and if there is any situation where there is a conflict between the welfare of a child and an adult the child's interests will take precedence.

- Everyone has the right to protection from harm equitably regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or socio-economic background.
- Everyone has the right to a safe, athlete-centred experience in rowing.
- Everyone, both children and adults, should be encouraged to fulfil their potential equitably and in a happy, fair and supportive environment.
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of each other .
- British Rowing has a duty of care to children and adults who take part in rowing and rowing activities.
- Everyone involved in rowing should promote a culture of integrity, accountability, teamwork and inclusivity.

## **Children and Adults**

**A child** is anyone under the age of 18 years of age.

**An adult** is anyone 18 years or older

**An Adult at Risk** is an adult who has care and support needs, is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect and because of their care and support needs cannot protect themselves against actual or potential abuse or neglect. For further guidance on Adults at Risk see [here](#).

## **Implementation**

### **British Rowing Roles and Responsibilities**

British Rowing will do the following:

- Provide support, guidance and advice to members, clubs, Regions and events on safeguarding best practice including template policies, codes of conduct and procedures which will enable everyone to improve their safeguarding knowledge and understanding;
- Provide a safeguarding team led by the British Rowing Safeguarding Lead Officer to deal with all safeguarding concerns and incidents reported to the team to manage and deal with in accordance with this Policy, legislation and statutory guidance as well as current research and evidence taking a trauma-informed approach;
- Support its Safeguarding Lead Officer to produce a safeguarding framework to ensure that safeguarding best practice is embedded within the organisation at all levels;
- Ensure that all staff, volunteers and others involved in rowing are recruited appropriately and safely in accordance with safer recruitment laws, principles and guidance;
- Collaborate with home nations and international partners to ensure the sport of rowing has proportionate information sharing to manage risk and for evidenced-based continuous improvement;

- Implement proportionate minimum operating standards in relation to the environment in which the sport is delivered. Ensure that BR can conduct an assurance process for clubs to meet these standards;
- Ensure that safeguarding data in rowing provides an evidence base for continuous improvement;
- British Rowing's Board Safeguarding Champion ("the Safeguarding Champion") will support the Board ensuring that safeguarding standards and best practice are maintained and embedded driving the development of a Safeguarding Implementation Plan ensuring there is adequate financial resource allocated to it;
- The Safeguarding Champion will embed safeguarding within the work, discussions, and decisions of its Board, promote a culture of listening, provide support to the safeguarding lead through regular meetings and discussions and promote safeguarding at a strategic level to the wider network;
- Promote sportsmanship, integrity and inclusivity by ensuring that its policies include reference to safeguarding where appropriate;
- Will engage with all stakeholders at all levels of the sport consulting them on safeguarding policy and guidance and procedures, working collaboratively to ensure that everyone understands the collective duty they all share working to create a culture of respect, accountability and trust;
- Ensure that it upholds its value of being open to all by adopting a person centred approach which takes into account the variety and diversity of members and encourages everyone to feel seen and heard making reporting of concerns more likely; and
- Provide education and training to all its members, staff, volunteers and athletes on safeguarding to raise awareness of the subject and ensure everyone understands their reporting responsibilities and roles within the rowing community.

## **British Rowing Clubs Roles and Responsibilities**

British Rowing Clubs will do the following:

- Adopt and implement a safeguarding policy for both children and adults based on current legislation and statutory guidance published clearly on their website with clear details, easily accessible about how to report concerns and information about how these will be dealt with ensuring transparency, consistency and fairness for all involved;
- Produce a simple, clear and fair code of conduct for all stakeholders ensuring that all members understand the standards of expected behaviour in particular respect, teamwork and fairness;
- Produce clear safeguarding procedures to be followed, upheld and adhered to by all members when there is any breach of club codes of conduct or safeguarding policy embedding it within club regulations and governance documentation;
- Recruit staff and volunteers in accordance with current safer recruitment guidance including following all necessary Disclosure and Barring Service Guidance;

- Appoint a club welfare officer to championing the club safeguarding policy, sit on the club board and report all concerns to British Rowing's Safeguarding Lead Officer; and
- Support its club welfare officer by promoting best practice and encouraging all members, staff, volunteers.

## **Training**

British Rowing has safeguarding training for all its Club Welfare Officers and those who have a safeguarding function, including British Rowing board members, which is updated regularly. It is essential that this is taken seriously by all attending and kept up to date as required.

## **Review**

This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or as necessary.

## **Appendix**

### **Definitions of Abuse, Harassment and Neglect**

#### **Abuse**

Abuse may be sexual or physical violence, emotional abuse or neglect.

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is when someone is physically hurt for example, kicking, hitting, pushing, burning and any other non-accidental harm likely to inflict pain. Examples of physical harm in sport are:

- if the nature and intensity of training or competition exceeds the capacity of the child's immature growing body;
- where athletes are encouraged to the use of drugs or harmful substances to enhance performance or delay puberty;
- if athletes are made to perform a movement they do not have the skill to execute and this causes an injury;
- if athletes are required to participate when injured;
- if athletes are punished by doing excessive cardio exercises; and
- if sanctions used by coaches involve inflicting pain.

#### **Sexual abuse or violence**

Sexual abuse or violence is when an individual is forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This may involve physical contact or non-contact activities and can happen online or offline.

Children under the age of 13 cannot consent to sexual activities and they may not always realise that they are being sexually abused. Sexual abuse or violence has immediate and long-term impacts on a child's physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, behaviour, development and personal relationships. In sport and activity settings, coaching techniques which involve physical contact with children can create situations where sexual abuse can be disguised.

An abusive situation can develop if a person in a position of authority, such as a coach, misuses their power with either an adult or a child. Grooming is a term used when an adult in a position of trust uses Contacts made within sport and pursued through other routes, such as social media, have been used to manipulate and use children for abuse. Those who want to sexually abuse children can also groom protective adults and organisations in order to create opportunities for abuse to take place.

Adults at Risk may experience sexual abuse or violence where they have not given consent to the activity or there is a lack of capacity to give consent. It can also be where the Adult at Risk has been coerced into behaving in a way that they do not want to by an individual in a position of trust.

### **Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual behaviour that makes someone feel upset, scared, offended or humiliated, or is meant to make them feel that way. Employers have duties under the Equality Act 2010 to prevent sexual harassment of its “workers”. Many of the individuals British Rowing is responsible for may not be workers but best practice would suggest that preventing volunteers and athletes from sexual harassment should be something which British Rowing aspires to and aims to achieve in the course of its provision of rowing activities.

For further guidance on the duties under Equality Act 2010.

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the emotional maltreatment of a child or adult, which is severe and has a persistent negative effect on the child's emotional development or an adult's wellbeing. This type of abuse is often part of another type of abuse being perpetrated at the same time. It is often referred to as bullying. Adults may bully each other or children and children may bully each other.

Emotional abuse in sport may be perpetrated by coaches, staff and volunteers, as well as by one towards another. This can take the form of:



- subjecting a someone to repeated criticism, sarcasm, name calling or racism
- ignoring or excluding a child or adult intending to cause distress
- pressuring an athlete to perform to unrealistically high expectations (this is particularly dangerous where children are expected to perform beyond the sporting expectations of their age)
- excessive weighing of athletes
- making a child or adult feel like their value or worth is dependent on their sporting success
- bullying behaviour towards another adult or child.

## **Neglect**

Neglect is not meeting a child or Adult at Risk's basic physical or psychological needs and can be physical, educational, emotional or medical. Each type of neglect can have a long-lasting impact on a child's health and development. Examples of neglect in a sporting environment include:

- failing to ensure athletes are safe;
- exposing athletes to undue cold, heat or extreme weather conditions without ensuring adequate clothing or hydration;
- exposing athletes to unnecessary risk of injury by ignoring safe practice guidelines within the sport;
- failing to ensure the use of safety equipment as required by the sport;
- requiring athletes to participate when injured or unwell;
- not seeking medical or first aid attention; and
- not responding appropriately when a concern is raised..

## **Adults at Risk - Additional Type of Abuse**

When considering an Adult at Risk there is an additional type of abuse which everyone needs to be aware of: financial or material abuse. An Adult at Risk may be blackmailed, or coerced by requiring financial or material payment in return for benefits - for example including them in a particular crew or competition. Another example may be charging an Adult at Risk more than the standard fee for participation in an activity or event.

Safeguarding Adults at Risk is about protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is important to recognise that everyone has the right not to disclose that they may be an Adult at Risk and therefore treat everyone with respect and dignity.