



Health, wellbeing
and safety



#SAFER *Together*

British Canoeing's Strategy for Safeguarding,
Safety and Welfare and Performance Wellbeing



FOREWORD

Everyone involved in our sport and recreation, at whichever level, should be able to enjoy a safe and positive experience, free from harm and abuse. British Canoeing believes that when a safe and positive culture thrives, a love for paddling can last a lifetime.

We are acutely aware of what can go wrong when safeguarding, safety, welfare and wellbeing are not prioritised. It is devastating to hear accounts of those who have been subjected to harm and abuse when participating in an activity they love. We have learned tough lessons from findings and recommendations of independent reports - both within our own sport and across other sports - where poor practice, failings and abuse have been identified.

The Whyte review published in 2022 further challenged us to ensure the highest standards of safeguarding, welfare, complaints handling, education, governance and oversight are in place. We are committed to rising to these challenges and we know we must do everything we can to ensure that harm and abuse is prevented.

Health, safety and welfare were embedded as a fundamental cross cutting

theme running through our strategic plan, Stronger Together 2022-2026, setting out our ambitions over our UK-wide responsibilities related to our international, coaching and competition functions and our membership services in England. We committed to developing a strategy which would set out our vision for a safer sport and identify the actions we will take to achieve this.

‘Safer Together’ is a framework to which we can



Foreword (Continued)

be held accountable. It sets out how we will reach our vision for a safe, open and inclusive culture; where poor practice is consistently challenged and deliberate attempts to cause harm are not tolerated; and where safeguarding, safety and welfare, and performance wellbeing are prioritised and embedded across all we do.

Creating a safer culture is everyone's responsibility. The Board and Senior Leadership Team of British Canoeing are committed to being advocates for a

safer culture, driving the delivery of this strategy and reporting openly and honestly to our members and stakeholders on progress made. We will continue to build strong strategic and working partnerships with the other Home Nation Paddlesport bodies (The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland, Canoe Wales and the Scottish Canoe Association) in recognition of our shared commitment to continuous improvements in promoting safer and more positive paddlesport opportunities and experiences.



John Coyne
Chair of the Board



Ashley Metcalfe CEO



Martine Kushner
Board Safeguarding
Champion



Nancy Squires
Director of Governance
and Designated
Safeguarding Lead



OUR VALUES

Our Values define the ways we work, how we treat people and how we want to be treated. Our values are the starting point for our commitment to creating a safer culture.

EVERY PERSON MATTERS

Everyone should be free from harm and abuse.

STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

All those facilitating or supporting paddling should be held to the highest standards.

ALWAYS WITH INTEGRITY

All concerns should be investigated fairly and in line with robust policies and procedures.

INDIVIDUALLY COMMITTED

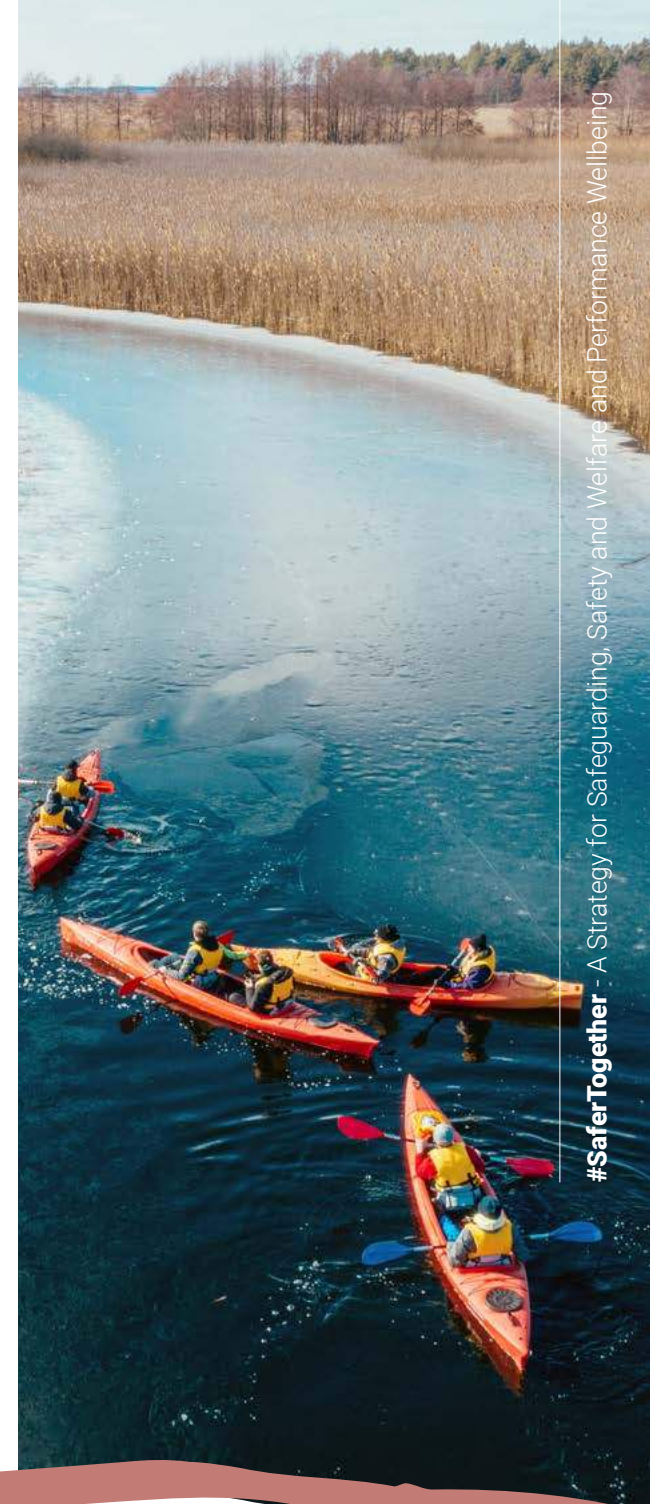
Keeping people safe is everyone's responsibility.

STRONGER TOGETHER

Working together is vital to ensuring a safe environment for everyone.

ENJOYING THE JOURNEY

Involvement in paddlesport should be a safe, fun and positive experience.



WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING, SAFETY AND WELFARE, AND PERFORMANCE WELLBEING?

**A safe and positive environment is an amalgamation of many things.
For British Canoeing, we see three key areas as being fundamental to this:**

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is the action taken to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk and protect them from harm and abuse.

Good safeguarding practice involves a collaborative approach and requires a combination of proactive and reactive systems, policies, procedures and clear and accessible communication.



SAFETY AND WELFARE

Safety and welfare matters are the non-'safeguarding' concerns that can impact on the safety and welfare of participants, members, volunteers and staff.

These issues may include on and off water safety, bullying, harassment, discrimination, or mental health concerns.

Harmful behaviours or unsafe practice must not go unchallenged, and everyone who raises a concern about their own safety or welfare, or that of others, must be appropriately supported and signposted.

PERFORMANCE WELLBEING

Performance Wellbeing encapsulates our aim to enable all athletes, staff and volunteers in a high performance environment to thrive, to be supported to fulfil their potential, and to reflect positively on their experiences.

Individual and collective wellbeing should be recognised and embedded as part of decision making and operations within our performance teams and programmes.



OUR JOURNEY SO FAR

British Canoeing has significantly invested in its safeguarding, safety, welfare and wellbeing capacity since 2016.

This increased and dedicated resource is a direct result of British Canoeing's recognition that ensuring a safer culture is the duty and responsibility of everyone.

Since 2016, we have attained ongoing compliance with CPSU Standards and reported annually on safeguarding and performance wellbeing to our membership. We have worked with our partners in the National Associations as part of a Safeguarding Steering Group and ensures our staff and Board receive regular bespoke safeguarding training.



Our Journey so far (Continued)

First attained Code for Sports governance compliance

Performance Wellbeing Coach appointed

Performance Wellbeing Group established

UK Sport Culture Health Check launched

2016

Board Champion for safeguarding appointed

Independent safeguarding case management group established

British Canoeing and UK Sport commission Sport Resolutions to undertake an independent review into governance, corporate behaviour and responsibility with regards to allegations raised in 2017

Governance and Risk Committee established to provide scrutiny of safeguarding practices/procedures/cases

Governance team established with safeguarding remit



2017



2018



2019



Safety Advisory Panel established

Safeguarding training plan implemented

Athlete Rep Group and Mental Health team established

Launch of English Institute of Sport Mental Health Strategy

Key safeguarding policies updated

Club safeguarding workshops delivered

Initial Mental Health Awareness training rolled out to World Class Programme athletes and staff

Our Journey so far (Continued)

Safety Awards and Education review

Risk Management and Risk Assessment eLearning module launched

Equipment Management and Safety eLearning module launched



2020

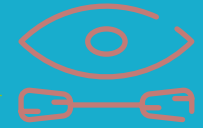
2021

2022

British Canoeing Introduction to Safeguarding and Safeguarding Refresher e-learning launched

British Canoeing publish key findings of Sport Resolutions independent review and commits to action plan

Young people's safeguarding survey



2023

Safer Recruitment e-learning launched

Governance Team of 7 staff, full time Safety Lead

Historic Safeguarding Case Review completed

Club safeguarding support and insight pilot in conjunction with the CPSU

Launched a new organisational strategy, Stronger Together 2 with a commitment to establishing Safeguarding and Welfare, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategies



Joined the Safeguarding Case Management and Sport Integrity programmes to provide additional independence and support for the investigation and management of safeguarding concerns

Implementation of new safeguarding case management system

Development of specific safety awards for new/novice paddlers



Our Journey so far (Continued)

Significant progress has been made in recent years, however, there is more to be done and we have a great opportunity to build on that progress.

We are continually learning from the cases we manage and through collaborative working with the paddlesport community across the UK and other sports and sectors. In developing this strategy we engaged in consultation with our stakeholders which helped us gain a better understanding of the barriers we face in creating a safer culture. We know that sport can be a vehicle for positive social, emotional and physical outcomes but without the due care, attention and governance, negative behaviours can become entrenched.

Our intent with this strategy is to raise the profile of safeguarding, safety, welfare and performance wellbeing; we will not falter in our commitment to bring these issues to the fore, ensuring that they are a priority in all areas of British Canoeing and form a golden thread that runs through everything that we do.

VISION

#SAFERTOGETHER



We will have a safe, open and inclusive culture where poor practice is consistently challenged and deliberate attempts to cause harm are not tolerated. Safeguarding, safety and welfare, and performance wellbeing will be prioritised and embedded across our organisation from grassroots through to World Class Programmes.



MISSION

We will only achieve our vision by working together through:

SYSTEMS AND GOVERNANCE:



implementing the policies, procedures, guidance and governance structures that enable us to bring our vision to life.

KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS:



Providing accessible and high quality educational resources and the promotion of good practice to drive a safer culture.

PEOPLE:



Supporting everyone involved in our sport and ensuring those facilitating paddling are appropriately qualified and deployed to deliver activity safely.



SAFEGUARDING

Protecting all children, young people and adults at risk involved in paddlesports and paddling activity is paramount.

A shared responsibility for safeguarding means that we have to ensure that our message is clear and that we are promoting this consistently. We must ensure that everyone understands what a safeguarding concern could look like, that they know who to report concerns to, and that we have appropriate procedures in place to manage and mitigate any potential risks.

What we will do... PEOPLE

○ All those facilitating or supporting paddling will recognise the need to safeguard and protect children and adults at risk. This begins with safer recruitment and a thorough induction process that sets out expected behaviours and safeguarding responsibilities.

○ All clubs will have at least one Welfare Officer (two for larger clubs) who is competent, confident and committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of others.

○ The role and requirements of Club and Discipline Committee Welfare Officers will be reviewed to ensure role description clarity, identify training requirements, deliver bespoke inductions and provide ongoing support, networking opportunities and CPD.

○ We will work collaboratively with Sport England's project to establish regional welfare officers to provide additional support to our club volunteers.

○ British Canoeing recognises the impact that harm and abuse can have on individuals and we will ensure that we support and signpost victims and those affected appropriately.

○ We will ensure that everyone involved in paddling will be supported to understand what best safeguarding practice looks like and is signposted to help where an allegation/concern is raised against them.

○ Individuals transitioning into coaching will have an understanding of the appropriate boundaries relating to their change of role and the associated safeguarding risks.

○ We will create a Young People's Forum to provide opportunities for young members to be involved in the development of our sport and recreation.



What we will do...

SYSTEMS AND GOVERNANCE

⚙️ Affiliation criteria will require all clubs and academies to meet robust and effective safeguarding standards, including an annual safeguarding self-audit and declaration, as well as selected 'deep dive' audits into affiliated clubs and academies.

⚙️ We will report annually on safeguarding to our membership and other stakeholder groups, and review our approach to reporting on and publishing the outcome of safeguarding cases.

⚙️ Safeguarding policies and procedures will be meaningful, accessible, and regularly reviewed.

⚙️ We will publish tiering guidance to help clubs and committees to manage safeguarding concerns with appropriate levels of support and guidance.

⚙️ We will maintain a Safety and Welfare Board Champion with a responsibility for safeguarding, and embed Board and Committee oversight of our safeguarding framework.

⚙️ We will review the mandatory safeguarding training requirements for all those delivering or facilitating paddling, including those sitting on committees, to ensure they are confident and skilled to perform their role and they are aware of their responsibilities.

⚙️ We will ensure our continued compliance with the Child Protection in Sport framework and the Code for Sports Governance whilst attaining compliance with the Ann Craft Trust framework for Adults at Risk.


⚙️ Our independent Case Management Group will maintain oversight and challenge of safeguarding cases, providing external scrutiny so that our case management remains robust, transparent and delivers natural justice.


⚙️ Our centralised case recording system will streamline the reporting concerns process and make it easier to record low level concerns.





What we will do... KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS


 We will ensure the safeguarding team at British Canoeing are well trained safeguarding professionals with a broad understanding of the diverse safeguarding concerns affecting different communities.

 We will develop and review safeguarding training resources to ensure they are accessible, inclusive, meaningful and up to date, including specific training for parents/carers and children, and a review of safeguarding e-learning costs.

 The British Canoeing website will be updated to ensure safeguarding information is more accessible to all stakeholders, with a particular focus on making information child-friendly.

 We will ensure that information on safeguarding campaigns, good practice, how to report concerns, codes of conduct and expected behaviours is shared amongst all members across a variety of platforms.

 We will monitor increased knowledge and awareness of safeguarding through annual membership surveys.

 We will increase awareness of the different needs and safeguarding barriers affecting under-represented groups and embed this into safeguarding training and procedures.

What we will see...

Annual survey results will show a continual increase in safeguarding awareness and how to report safeguarding concerns.

All affiliated clubs will have at least one Welfare Officer in place who has completed the relevant training and induction (from 2024).

A central register will be developed recording that all those involved in delivering or facilitating paddlesport will have met the minimum safeguarding deployment standards (by 2025).

Our safeguarding audits will ensure all clubs and discipline committees audited will have a clear induction and safer recruitment process for all volunteers (by 2025).

The voice of young paddlers will be captured through the Young People's Forum and will be fed into the programmes, policies and initiatives across British Canoeing (2024).

An increased number of clubs and disciplines will be recording low level concerns with British Canoeing (annually from 2024).

Annual launches of safeguarding learning resources and an increased number of people completing available safeguarding learning and training (from 2023 onwards).

SAFETY AND WELFARE

Ensuring the safety and welfare of all paddlers and participants is of the utmost importance.

This means:

Delivery of affiliated paddlesport activity must only be undertaken by those who are suitable, have appropriate experience, and have had training relevant to the environment they operate in (to ensure on-water safety);



Everyone should be free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and abuse, and we recognise that inclusive practice promotes good individual welfare;

All clubs and committees should be empowered to manage safety and welfare concerns through appropriate procedures; and

Everyone should be supported to seek help if they are struggling with their mental health or wellbeing without judgement.


What we will do...


PEOPLE


-  All those facilitating or supporting paddling, including those on committees, will be required to have appropriate and relevant standards of safety and welfare training for their role.
-  British Canoeing will develop a Member's Code of Conduct setting out clear behavioural expectations aligned to British Canoeing's values.





What we will do... SYSTEMS AND GOVERNANCE

 British Canoeing will support clubs and committees in ensuring welfare concerns relating to adults are taken seriously and robustly managed through clear policies and procedures.

 Messages regarding welfare and safety will be on platforms and sites that we know our independent paddlers access to ensure that they are able to paddle safely and have an awareness of up to date messaging and processes in this area.

 We will ensure ongoing compliance of British Canoeing Qualifications with regulators Ofqual/ Qualification Wales and CCEA.


 The Safety Advisory Panel will collate, monitor and share accurate data about fatalities, incidents and notable events, reporting to the Board and publishing an annual report to members.


 Annual standardisation and ongoing sampling processes will be completed to ensure all British Canoeing Awarding Body qualifications and awards are delivered consistently across the UK.





Safety and Welfare (Continued)


What we will do... KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS


 We will review both our qualifications and ongoing training to ensure non-technical skills such as self-awareness, inclusion, empathy and listening are appropriately incorporated.


 We will share and promote information relating to safe and inclusive practices.


 Everyone will have access to training or educational resources relating to mental health awareness which will guide people to respond sensitively to disclosures or concerns, and to support and signpost appropriately.


 We will promote positive behaviour and campaigns to stop discrimination, harassment and abuse and ensure clubs and committees are equipped with template policies and guidance to manage non-safeguarding behavioural concerns.

 We will invest in research to ensure safety advice and guidance is based on evidence and insight.

 All paddlers and those facilitating or supporting paddling will have access to safety courses, safety information, advice and guidance.

 We will provide clubs and committees with training and support and drive awareness of safety, welfare and safeguarding to ensure it is consistently embedded within risk assessment processes for trips and events at all levels of paddlesport.

 We will work in collaboration with strategic and commercial partners and retailers to promote safety awareness and drowning prevention information.

 Clubs, delivery partners and discipline committees will be regularly signposted to safety and welfare training, information and resources.

What we will see...

A competence for deployment framework will be established and embedded with all clubs, delivery partners, and discipline committees, setting out safety and welfare requirements (by 2025).

All members will be signed up to a Member's Code of Conduct at sign-up and renewal (by 2024).

There will be increased engagement with mental health awareness and inclusion training and resources (annually from 2024).

There will be an annual increase in the access of safety training and guidance (vs. 2023 baseline).



PERFORMANCE WELLBEING

Wellbeing will consistently be at the heart of the culture and decision making within performance environments, underpinned by the principle of high challenge and high support.

The journey towards high performance is inevitably challenging, and so an equally supportive approach is vital to protect the wellbeing of our athletes, to facilitate them to thrive, and to enable them to fulfil their potential.

The concept of high challenge and high support is similarly applicable to those working with high performance athletes. Coaching and support roles are demanding and everyone should feel valued and supported to meet these demands. Our performance culture will prioritise the wellbeing of our people, fostering a culture of psychological safety which will facilitate all to succeed.

In this strategy, 'Performance' refers to:
Great Britain teams, World Class Programmes, Talent Programmes, Sprint Performance Academies, the GB Junior Training Squad, and/or other groups as defined by British Canoeing and our discipline committees across all of the Paddlesport disciplines.

Performance Wellbeing (Continued)

What we will do... PEOPLE

👤 We will work with our funding partners to support the development of an independent representative body for coaches which provides them with leadership, representation, and support.

👤 We will increase safeguarding resources within British Canoeing to enhance the support to performance athletes, staff and volunteers within our non-Olympic disciplines and England Talent programmes, academies and squads.

👤 Our World Class Programmes will maintain annual plans for the development of their performance culture including the prioritisation of wellbeing and positive working relationships. Non-Olympic disciplines, Talent programmes, squads and academies will be supported to assess and develop their performance culture.

👤 The achievements of performance athletes and support teams will be purposefully recognised and celebrated. Achievements may relate to sporting performance, personal milestones such as success in education or dual careers, or good practice in terms of commitment to performance wellbeing.




👤 We will continue to enhance the support provided to athletes who transition onto, through and beyond our World Class Programmes.


👤 World Class Programme athletes will have the opportunity to engage in social or environmental projects which will contribute to their personal wellbeing and development, and have a meaningful positive impact. Other performance athletes will be invited to participate in these opportunities when appropriate.



👤 The Mental Health Team will continue to support and advise World Class Programme athletes and staff. Mental Health First Aiders will be trained to provide support and signposting for all non-Olympic disciplines and England Talent programmes, academies and squads.

👤 We will keep in touch with our **athlete alumni** by providing regular communication, opportunities within Canoeing, and access or signposting to wellbeing support.

What we will do... SYSTEMS AND GOVERNANCE

-  A mental health referral pathway will be accessible to all performance athletes.
-  A Performance Sub-Committee of the Board will be established to provide effective governance support.
-  We will continue to manage selections, appeals and complaints processes sensitively in line with robust policies and procedures, and ensure that athletes participating in selections receive appropriate opportunities to understand the selection, appeals and complaints policies and procedures that apply to them.


-  We will continue to ensure that all World Class Programme and England Talent athletes, parents/carers of those under 18, and staff involved in these programmes have appropriate opportunities for their voice to be heard via representation, review and feedback processes. We will review opportunities to hear the voices of athletes, parents/carers and volunteers within our non-Olympic disciplines.


-  We will offer a mechanism to facilitate sharing of performance wellbeing-related challenges and opportunities amongst appropriate personnel within non-Olympic disciplines and England Talent programmes, academies and squads.
-  Wellbeing and mental health related issues within the World Class Programmes will be tracked and monitored by the Mental Health Team so that learnings are captured and shared where appropriate.





What we will do...


KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

 We will review induction processes to ensure that all athletes and their parents/carers (where athletes are under 18) receive a thorough induction relating to the culture and required behavioural standards and boundaries for all parties. This will include how any behavioural issues will be managed, as well as signposting to the available support mechanisms (including an introduction to their Welfare Officer and Mental Health First Aider or equivalent).

 Everyone working with or supporting performance athletes will be educated on the additional vulnerabilities of performance athletes and what it means for their practice.

 All performance coaches, staff and volunteers will have clear behavioural expectations communicated to them, as well as how any behavioural issues will be addressed. Performance coaches, staff and volunteers will also receive information about behavioural standards of athletes (and parents/carers of under 18s), and how to manage any behavioural concerns from these groups.

 We will ensure that any changes, updates and/or new information relating to culture and required behavioural standards, as well as updates to policies and procedures in this area, are communicated effectively to all athletes (and parents/carers of under 18s).

 Performance Wellbeing will be at the heart of coach development and qualifications.

 There will be a communications plan for sharing relevant resources and supporting campaigns to promote key messages to our stakeholders including performance athletes, parents/carers (of under 18s), coaches, staff and volunteers.

 Sports Psychology and Performance Lifestyle support will continue to be available to World Class Programme athletes, and relevant resources from these areas will be shared across non-Olympic disciplines and Talent pathways as appropriate

What we will see...

A Performance Sub Committee of the Board will be established (2023).

Annual **World Class Programme** culture feedback surveys will demonstrate at least 90% of respondents know where to find advice or support about their wellbeing or mental health (2024 onwards).

Those directly working with or supporting performance athletes will have received education on the additional vulnerabilities of performance athletes within 3 months of beginning their role (2024 onwards).



BOARD AND SLT COMMITMENT STATEMENT

The Senior Leadership Team and British Canoeing Board are committed to delivering this strategy and upholding the commitments outlined within it.

John Coyne

Chair of the Board, British Canoeing

Dee Paterson

British Canoeing President

Ashley Metcalfe

Chief Executive Officer

Richard Boreham

Independent vice Chair of the Board

Nick Donald

Independent Director

Martine Kushner

Independent Director

Manpreet Sehmbi

Independent Director

Clare Dallaway

Board Director, nominated
by the English Forum

Zoey Rowe

Board Director, nominated
by the English Forum

Greg Spencer

Board Director, nominated
by the English Forum

Kerry Chown

Board Director, nominated by Canoe Wales

Gareth Mahood

Board Director, nominated by CANI

James Miller

Board Director nominated by the SCA

Lisa Bryant

Director of HR

Chris Earle

Director of Recreational Paddling

Susan Hicks

Director of Finance

Robert Knott

Director of Business Development
and Communications

Lee Pooley

Director of Coaching and Qualifications

Nancy Squires

Director of Governance

Keir Worth

Director of Paddlesport

Barry Wade

Director of Digital Transformation and IT

NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS COMMITMENT STATEMENT

The National Associations for Scotland (SCA), Wales (Canoe Wales) and Northern Ireland (CANI) are aligned to the vision set out in this strategy and recognise a safe, open and inclusive culture across paddlesport and paddling activity in the UK will only be achieved through working together. The SCA, Canoe Wales and CANI commit to prioritising safeguarding, safety and welfare, and performance wellbeing, and embedding throughout all their activity.



The Scottish Canoe Association is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing and protection of all children in its care and to support affiliated clubs. SCA recognises the responsibility to promote wellbeing and safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation. We work in partnership with sportscotland and Children 1st to do all that is reasonable for the wellbeing and protection of children in our responsibility and to support the adults, volunteers and officials in fulfilling their responsibilities too. We have full compliance and align to the sportscotland Standards for Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport.

You can find out more about the work we are doing, our policies and procedures and how to report a concern here canoescotland.org/safeguarding



Our vision is to provide an inclusive and active paddling community in Wales and the safeguarding and wellbeing of our paddlers is at the heart of everything we do. To find out more follow this link [Canoe Wales - Safeguarding and child protection](#)



“The CANI vision is to Inspire People to Paddle. Safety is a critical aspect of CANI’s operations, particularly in promoting safeguarding and ensuring the well-being of our members. To find out more follow this link [Safeguarding – The Canoe Association of Northern Ireland \(cani.org.uk\)](#)”

