

BRITISH ROWING

# Inclusive Club Guide

How to make your club more inclusive and diverse.





## Dear Rowing Club Members

### Welcome to the British Rowing Inclusive Club Guide.

There are many ways that rowing can benefit people's lives, from teaching new skills to forming new friendships, as well as varied health and well-being benefits. The rowing community recognises these positive impacts and wants everyone to have the opportunity to enjoy them.

It was for this reason that being 'open to all' was identified as one of the sport's key values by our rowing clubs and members when British Rowing's Strategic Plan was published in 2015.

You told us that you want rowing to be an accessible and inclusive sport that provides opportunities for enjoyment and achievement at all levels. Inclusivity was also recognised as key to the continued growth of a healthy and vibrant sport.

This Guide, which focusses on promoting inclusivity in its broadest sense, is designed to help your club become more inclusive. Developed in partnership with Sporting Equals and in consultation with the rowing community, it aims to:

- **Highlight the benefits of being inclusive.**
- **Explain inclusivity and its importance in creating a diverse sport that is open to all.**
- **Provide practical advice on creating an inclusive club.**

The Guide will be a living resource. It will continue to be developed over time, so please provide feedback and share examples of inclusive practices within your club.

As part of its commitment to inclusivity, British Rowing has also developed an Inclusive Sport Plan, which complements this guide, to drive change across the governing body's varied activities. This is available, together with an Equity Policy, Code of Conduct and a Transgender and Transsexual Policy, on the British Rowing website.

Working together, at both a national and local level, we can make rowing a sport that is truly open to all. We look forward to working with you on this exciting journey.

### The British Rowing Community Support Team

[clubsupport@britishrowing.org](mailto:clubsupport@britishrowing.org)

# Contents

In partnership with:

**Sporting Equals**

Promoting ethnic diversity in sport & physical activity

Supported by:



<b>01</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>04</b>
	What is an inclusive club?	04
	Is your club inclusive?	04
	How can your club become more inclusive?	04
	British Rowing support	05
<b>02</b>	<b>The benefits of becoming an inclusive club</b>	<b>06</b>
	Why become an inclusive club?	06
<b>03</b>	<b>Understanding inclusivity</b>	<b>08</b>
	Explaining the terminology	08
	The Equality Act 2010	09
<b>04</b>	<b>Creating an inclusive club</b>	<b>10</b>
	I. Understanding your local community	11
	II. Creating an inclusive club environment	15
	III. Community engagement	20
	IV. Inclusive marketing and communication	22
	V. Club offer	25
	VI. Inclusive volunteering	27
	VII. Inclusive coaching	29
	VIII. Inclusive leadership and governance	31
	IX. Cultural change and unconscious bias	34
<b>05</b>	<b>Inclusive club resources</b>	<b>36</b>
	Appendix 1 – Diversity in Rowing	40
	Appendix 2 – Equality Act 2010 – Protected characteristics	43
	Appendix 3 – Equality Act 2010 – Types of discrimination	45

## Acknowledgements

In developing this Guide, British Rowing and Sporting Equals carried out extensive research to understand current diversity across the rowing community and provide insights into how clubs can become more inclusive. This included a member survey and multiple workshops. Rowing clubs, volunteers, rowers and non-rowers, as well as a number of key organisations, were all consulted. British Rowing wishes to thank everyone involved for their invaluable insight and commitment to shaping this resource.

We would also like to thank the English Federation of Disability Sport, Muslim Women's Sport Foundation, Sport Allies, Sport England, Sport and Recreation Alliance, Women in Sport, Women's Sport Trust and UK Sport, for reviewing, providing feedback on and supporting the contents of the Guide. Each of these organisations provides a range of resources and materials to support inclusivity within clubs, details of which are provided in Section 5.

Front cover – Photo credit: Naomi Baker

# 01 Introduction

## What is an inclusive club?

Being an inclusive club means that regardless of race, gender, disability, faith, sexuality, age or any other characteristic, your club allows everyone an equal chance to participate and have the opportunity to progress if they choose. Inclusive clubs are welcoming, open, friendly and committed to helping everyone enjoy the benefits of rowing.

## Is your club inclusive?

Ask yourself:

- Is your club welcoming and open to all those that could benefit from your offer?
- Does it reflect and encourage membership from the community in which you are based?

If the answer is no, or not always, you are not alone. Whilst there are many examples of inclusive practices within clubs, the evidence shows that inclusivity is not being achieved consistently.

The sport's current diversity is not representative of today's modern society and there is particularly significant under-representation by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, people with disabilities, as well as lower income groups.

## How can your club become more inclusive?

Research to inform this Guide showed that the rowing community recognises the need for change but acknowledges that its understanding of inclusivity, why it is important and how it can be achieved, varies considerably. This impacts on the ability and confidence of clubs to take action.

This Guide therefore aims to educate, encourage and empower the rowing community to actively address the barriers to inclusion that currently exist. Its content is designed to:

- Explain the benefits of becoming an inclusive club (section 2).
- Build the rowing community's understanding of what inclusivity means and its importance in creating a diverse sport that is open to all (section 3).
- Highlight how clubs can take practical steps to achieve change including checklists to support inclusivity planning (section 4) and directing clubs to a series of additional resources (section 5).

It is recognised that all clubs are at different stages in their efforts towards being more inclusive and few are starting with a blank sheet. This is reflected in the Guide, which also highlights good practice examples of clubs already providing a range of services and offers that encourage a more diverse take-up of rowing.

## BRITISH ROWING MEMBER DIVERSITY – 2017

*45% of British Rowing members (aged 16+) are female and 55% male.*

*8% identify as gay/lesbian or bi-sexual compared to 2% across the UK.*

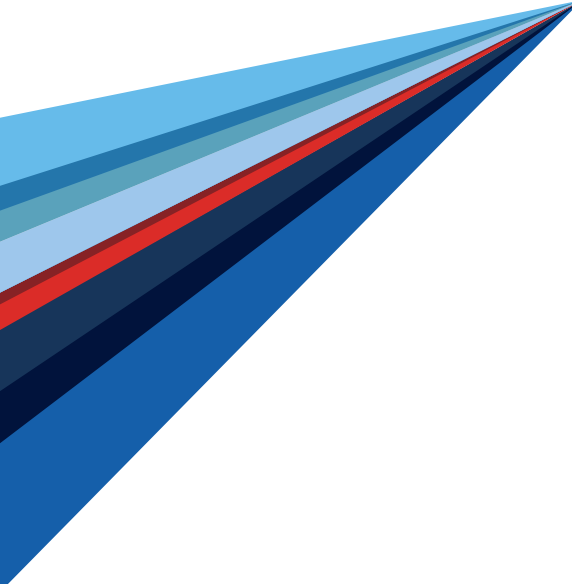
*10% have some form of disability compared to almost 19% in the UK.*

*48% of member households have an average income exceeding £40,000 compared to a UK average of £27,000.*

*60% of British Rowing members are from state selective or independent schools compared to 7% of all British children.*

*Less than 5% of members are from BAME communities compared to 14% of the population of England and Wales.*

*See references in Appendix 1.*



To help your club get started on its journey towards becoming a more inclusive club, we recommend the following practical steps:

### **Getting started – Inclusive Club Action Plan**

1. Encourage all committee members to read this Guide and discuss what it could mean for your club.
2. Use the partner organisation resources detailed in section 5 to learn more about the principles of inclusion, equality and diversity and what they could mean for your club.
3. Use the Case Studies in this Guide to learn about what is working elsewhere.
4. Read and understand British Rowing's Strategic Plan, Inclusive Sport Plan and related policies.
5. Identify an Inclusive Club Champion/Inclusion Officer, who can become a spokesperson for inclusion and drive positive change in your club.
6. Form a Working Group to actively champion your clubs efforts to become more inclusive. Encourage members to get engaged and put forward ideas.
7. Find out about other similar organisations in your locality and what they are doing.
8. Seek out and invite local community group representatives to visit the club, discuss the Inclusive Club Guide and provide feedback.
9. Be willing and open to listen to both positive and negative feedback about the club's current culture and approach to inclusion, equality and diversity.
10. Use this Guide to help develop your own Inclusive Club Plan, encouraging everyone in your club to contribute to its development and take ownership of its roll-out.



### **British Rowing support**

This resource forms part of British Rowing's ClubHub resources which will include a range of complementary guides on varied aspects of club management and development. As with all ClubHub resources, this Guide will be a living resource that will continue to be developed over time. Feedback and examples of inclusive practices within your club, for inclusion in future editions, are welcomed.

British Rowing Community Support Managers will also be trained to support the delivery of Inclusive Club Guide training across the Regions.

# 02 The benefits

## Why become an inclusive club?

Becoming an inclusive club is not always easy. It can be hard work and challenging.

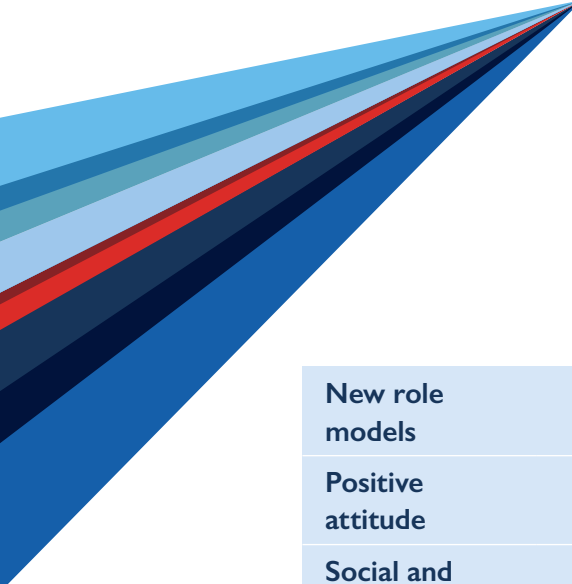
But approached with a positive and open mind set, the process of exploring, understanding and embracing inclusion and diversity can be a joyful and enlightening experience for your club and its members, whilst also having significant and wide ranging additional benefits.

These club, individual and community benefits, as highlighted below, reinforce why inclusivity is an important objective within any club's development plans. It should not be seen as an 'add-on', or something that is imposed on clubs.

### Club benefits

Where do you see your club in the next five or 10 years' time? What challenges are you likely to encounter? Growing your membership and pool of volunteers and coaches, by being more inclusive, can support long term sustainability.

<b>Positive club environment</b>	Inclusivity can create a positive club environment where members appreciate and learn from each other's backgrounds and experiences.
<b>Increased club membership</b>	Inclusive clubs understand and address the needs of different communities to attract more people to take part. This, in turn, has a positive impact on perceptions of the club and sport, encouraging others to consider rowing. <i>Inclusive clubs challenge the stereotype that rowing is an elitist activity and make it clear that rowing is a sport that everybody can enjoy.</i>
<b>Performance success</b>	Inclusive clubs have access to a wider sporting talent pool which can contribute to performance success.
<b>More volunteers</b>	Inclusive clubs have access to a wider talent pool from which to attract new volunteers to contribute to the success and running of your club. <i>'We want to expand and have more relevant stories to a wider range of communities. We are actively looking for these opportunities'. Inclusive Club Workshop Discussion, 2017</i>
<b>New skills and expertise</b>	New members and volunteers will bring new skills, experiences and expertise to your club which can help to promote innovation and new ways of working.
<b>Additional funding opportunities</b>	A proactive commitment to inclusion will increase your clubs ability to attract funding grants, sponsors and maintain long term support structures. Many funding partners and commercial partners will only work with clubs that can demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity.
<b>Broader networks</b>	Clubs can benefit from the new community networks that diversity brings.
<b>Community profile</b>	Being an inclusive club can improve the image and profile of your club, both locally and nationally.



### *Individual benefits*

Being part of an inclusive club can have many benefits for existing and new members, as well as volunteers, over and above those which are typically associated with the sport.

<b>New role models</b>	Members and volunteers from different communities can act as positive role models for members, particularly younger members.
<b>Positive attitude</b>	Inclusive clubs can have a positive influence on individual member attitudes by breaking down stereotypes.
<b>Social and support networks</b>	Being part of an inclusive club can improve an individual's sense of connection with diverse groups and communities, helping them to build broader social and support networks.
<b>Increased personal reward</b>	Positively contributing to the creation of an inclusive club can boost an individual's sense of purpose and personal reward.

### *Community benefits*

Inclusive clubs can benefit the local communities in which they are based as well as the wider rowing community.

<b>Breaking down stereotypes</b>	Inclusive clubs can help to break down social stereotypes, both of the rowing community and particular community groups.
<b>Improved community relationships</b>	Inclusive clubs benefit from greater connections into their local communities and vice versa. These can include links with local businesses, schools, local authority and community groups. In turn, these clubs are typically well placed to support local community initiatives and develop partnership projects.
<b>New community offers</b>	Inclusive clubs understand the benefits of creating offers to meet the needs of different community groups, e.g. recreational or indoor rowing offers at different times of the day, which can result in a wider range of local sporting opportunities.



Photo credit: John Stead

# 03 Understanding inclusivity

## Explaining the terminology

We often hear and use the terms 'inclusion', 'equality' and 'diversity'. But what do these words actually mean? And why is it important that we understand the difference?

<b>Inclusion</b>	Inclusion is the act of making all people within a society feel valued and included. Inclusion is the process of removing barriers to participation and learning so that everyone can benefit from the opportunities on offer. Inclusion is about the culture of your club and is everyone's responsibility. An inclusive culture welcomes diversity and actively seeks to attract new people.
<b>Equality</b>	Equality is about creating 'fairness'. Making sure that we are treating people fairly and that everyone has equal opportunity to participate and fulfil their potential. It is not about treating everyone the same. Equality means that we recognise and acknowledge that people are different and that those differences require us to meet their needs differently. If we don't consider differences then we may be creating an environment that makes it difficult for some people to join in, participate or achieve their potential. Equality law provides protection against discrimination.
<b>Diversity</b>	Diversity means recognising, valuing and respecting someone's background, knowledge, skills and experiences. It means placing a positive value on differences and individual life experiences. Inclusive environments encourage diversity and vice versa.



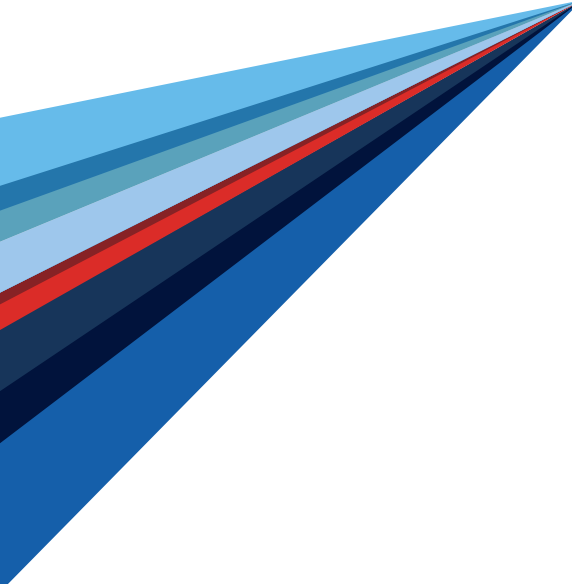
Photo credit: Naomi Baker

This Guide has been developed with a focus on helping clubs to become more inclusive, with the aim of providing a solid foundation on which to build equality of opportunity and embrace diversity in a sustainable way.

Where sports organisations focus on appealing to particular target communities but have not addressed any underlying cultural barriers to inclusion, or really understood what equality of opportunity means, these programmes tend to be short lived and ineffective.

This Guide's focus on inclusion first aims to support long term and sustainable change towards a sport which is truly open to all. Clubs that are inclusive, understand equality and embrace diversity typically have a diverse make-up of members and volunteers and will be a reflection of the communities in which they are based.





## EQUALITY ACT 2010 PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and Civil Partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion or belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual Orientation

See Appendix 2 for further information.



Photo credit: John Stead

## The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. The Act restated and simplified 116 separate pieces of earlier equality legislation into one Act including the Race Relations Act 1976 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

It is principally about fairness and sets out individual and collective legal rights which state that everyone should be treated fairly and have equality of opportunity to reach their full potential. It protects everyone in Britain from discrimination, harassment and victimisation and places a duty on all of us to end unfair or discriminatory practices, stop them happening in the first place, and to promote equality of opportunity.

The Equality Act 2010 specifically prohibits discrimination based on nine 'protected characteristics' which must be taken into account when making decisions about your club and what you can offer. All of the protected characteristics, further information on which is provided in Appendix 2, have the potential to impact on whether someone is able to access your club or not.

There are four main types of discrimination that are unlawful under the Equality Act 2010 – direct, indirect, harassment and victimisation – an explanation of which is provided in Appendix 3.

The Equality Act 2010 applies to:

- Clubs and associations including rowing clubs.
- The workplace.
- Public services such as healthcare, schools and colleges, leisure centres.
- Businesses providing goods and services such as shops or restaurants.
- Public bodies such as local councils and government departments.

It applies to everyone associated with your club, including members, staff and volunteers.

For the rowing community, the main driver for complying with the Equality Act 2010 will be a commitment to fair and equal access for all. However it also allows for 'positive action measures' which encourage and develop opportunities for those who are currently underrepresented or disadvantaged. These measures should be designed to help those groups to come forward, widen participation and increase diversity.

Having an understanding of the legal implications of the Equality Act 2010 represents good risk management, minimising potentially costly and damaging legal action. Section 5 includes links to relevant resources and guidance.

# 04 Creating an inclusive club

This section focusses on practical actions that clubs can take to improve their inclusivity across nine key areas:

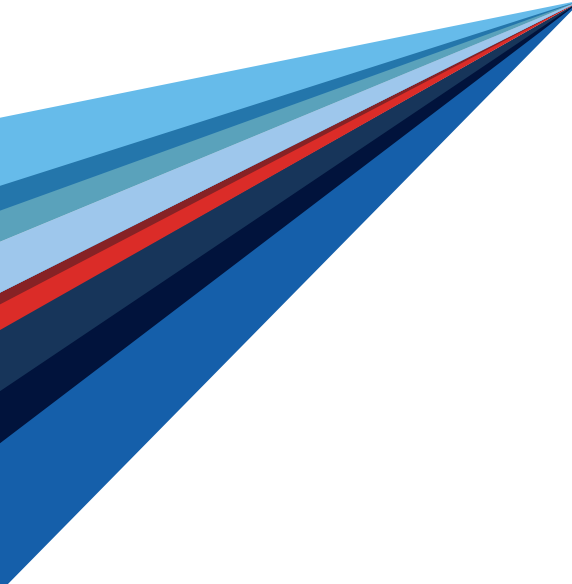
- I. Understanding your local community**
- II. Creating an inclusive club environment**
- III. Community engagement**
- IV. Inclusive marketing and communication**
- V. Club offer**
- VI. Inclusive volunteering**
- VII. Inclusive coaching**
- VIII. Inclusive governance and leadership**
- IX. Cultural change and unconscious bias**

Each area is considered in turn and consideration given to the barriers that exist and how your club can take practical steps to achieve change. This information can be used to inform the development of your Inclusive Club Plan.

It is important to remember that there is no single right answer to becoming more inclusive. Every club and potential club member is different. The actions detailed in this section are for guidance only. They are not exhaustive and you will need to consider how they apply to your club and the community in which you are based.



Photo credit: Simon Way



## I – Understanding your local community

Having a poor understanding of your local community, its make-up and the needs of key groups can be a key barrier to inclusivity. It is easy to have pre-conceptions or make assumptions based on our individual experiences but this can easily be addressed through some simple research into the local demographics and key community groups including schools, language groups and faith communities.

Making assumptions about whether or not someone will be interested in taking up rowing based on their race, gender, disability, sexuality or other characteristics will also limit your club's ability to attract new members. Try to meet local community groups, invite them to the club, get their feedback and try to understand the barriers to participation that they face.

Before considering how to become more inclusive, ensure your club also has a good understanding of its current make-up. This will provide you with a baseline against which to develop a plan of action and assess progress. Survey your members to understand their demographic make-up. You may also want to ask their views on different aspects of inclusivity, using the areas identified within this section as a guide.

Understanding the difference in make-up between your current club and the local community will help you identify areas where the club is doing well, as well as key opportunities to proactively target new members to grow your club.

You may want to prioritise where your club focusses and makes improvements. However, to achieve inclusivity, it is important that you don't just focus on one aspect of equality or attempt to make one area more important than others.

*“People do not make choices about sport in a vacuum. Where they live and work plays a big part in the choices they make, with each community having its unique structure, relationships and geography.”*

*Sport England:  
Towards an Active Nation,  
Strategy, 2016-21*

*“Adaptive rowing is a fantastic disability sport because almost anybody with any kind of disability is able to participate.”*

*Scott Ballard-Ridley,  
Evesham Rowing Club*



Photo credit: Fulham Reach Boat Club

### *Understanding your local community checklist*

The following checklist provides some suggested actions to support your club in developing a better understanding of its current membership and local community.

#### **Understanding your local community – Checklist**

- Survey your current club members to understand their demographic and socio-economic make-up.
- Research the local community's demographic and socio-economic make-up, as well as key community groups, faith centres, schools etc. Local Authority, Sport England and ONS websites all provide this information.
- Meet with key local groups and invite them to your club to understand their needs and the barriers they face.
- Identify where the club is successfully reflecting the local community, as well as key gaps and areas for improvement.
- Consider where you want to see change over the next 1/3/5 years – which groups are currently underrepresented and could be prioritised?



Photo credit: Simon Way

## Understanding your local community – Case Study

### Rainbow Laces Campaign

The Rainbow Laces campaign is a way for everyone involved in sport to show their support for LGBT equality and inclusivity. National teams, leading clubs, top athletes, fans and grassroots players are lacing up to come out for LGBT people in sport. In 2017, the campaign had its most successful year yet:

- 8% decrease in 18-24 year old and 25-34 year old sport fans thinking that homophobic language is acceptable.
- 75,313 pairs of Rainbow Laces were distributed in all areas of sport, fans, players, referees and officials.
- 12 million adults in Britain saw the campaign.
- 42,000 views of the campaign web page during one week.

Rowing clubs can download the Rainbow Laces toolkit from the Stonewall website to get hints, tips and resources to make the sport more inclusive.



Photo credit: University of York Boat Club

## Understanding your local community – Case Study

### Jubilee Riverside Centre

The Jubilee Riverside Centre in Slough is in the heart of the Thames Valley Rowing community and just four miles from Eton Dorney but is located in an area with significant pockets of deprivation. It provides a range of activities for local children but recognised that not all communities were taking advantage of what the club could offer. It therefore took steps to adapt its offer.

*“We found that a high number of Asian young people do not swim. This was an issue for our club if we wanted to increase diversity. We therefore took the decision to make all young people wear buoyancy aids until they have done the capsized drill.”*

*“What has worked very well is engaging with Community groups. We engaged with the Somalian Community Group, which had little experience of rowing and offered them free taster sessions. Twenty Somali young people took up the offer. We now have Somali young people rowing that would not otherwise have done so.”*

Jamie Green, Jubilee Riverside Centre



Photo credit: Jubilee Riverside Centre



## II – Creating an inclusive club environment

A truly inclusive club feels welcoming to all, at every stage of the new club member journey. The key stages are illustrated in Figure 1 on the next page. This starts when someone first becomes aware of the club through to them becoming an active participant at the club.

The first impression that a potential new member has of your club will impact on whether they think it is somewhere for them and whether they want to stay and learn more. When clubs are not inclusive in their welcome, club environment, member interactions, marketing and communications, potential new members may feel that the club is 'not for them' and they will choose not to continue their journey towards becoming a club member.

Whilst rowing clubs are generally welcoming and friendly places, the clubs we consulted recognised that the barriers to entry or specific needs that newcomers from different community groups might have, are often not considered. Often, without realising it, the responsibility for highlighting and navigating these barriers is placed on the individual rather than the club.

It is therefore important, drawing upon your understanding of your local community, to put yourself in the shoes of the various community groups that you want to attract to the club, experience the club as they might, and take actions to address any barriers which may impact on the club's ability to attract new members. Key inclusivity considerations at each stage of the new member journey are identified in Figure 1.

Unfortunately when you know a club well, it can be difficult to see it from the perspective of a newcomer and to understand why it might not be as welcoming and inclusive as you think it is. So consider asking representatives from your local community groups (e.g. from local faith centres or youth groups) to visit the club and describe their experience.

The questions raised in Figure 1 can be categorised into the following areas for action:

- **Create an inclusive club culture** – where inclusion and diversity are understood, embraced by all members and evident across all activities.
- **Develop inclusive clubhouse facilities** – where the club facilities are designed, maintained and managed to meet the various needs of current and potential members.
- **Community engagement** – effectively engaging with different local groups to understand their needs, inform the club's offer/marketing and grow a network of ambassadors.
- **Inclusive marketing and communications activity** – the use of inclusive imagery, language and channels to communicate that a club is welcoming and open to all.
- **Develop an inclusive club offer** – providing activities which meet the needs of the different groups that you want to target.

Figure 1. New member experience – inclusivity considerations





### *Inclusive club environment – checklist*

The following checklist provides practical suggestions as to how you can take positive action to develop an inclusive club environment, both from a cultural and facility perspective.

#### **Inclusive club environment – Checklist**

##### **Creating an inclusive culture:**

- **Educate, engage and empower** committee and club members to better understand inclusivity and diversity, the clubs plans and the role they can play:
  - Hold a training session/workshop, using this Guide to inform the discussion. Encourage members to reflect on their own beliefs/assumptions and how these impact on others, as well as practical steps to support inclusivity.
  - Cultivate an interest amongst members in understanding the club from the perspective of a newcomer and identifying barriers – reward members who are proactive and call out non-inclusive behaviours and practices.
  - Include information on noticeboards and within member updates, newsletters etc. Share relevant research, inclusivity plans and other policies.
- **Establish inclusive new membership processes and procedures:**
  - Membership lead to respond to emails from potential new members in a timely manner with a welcoming email response, invite to the club and information.
  - Identify the best time to invite potential new members i.e. when the club is less busy and you can take time to show them around.
  - Potential members visiting the club to be informed who, when and where they will be meeting. On arrival they should receive a warm welcome, be given a pre-prepared information pack including FAQs of relevance to different target groups (e.g. access/support for disabled people, availability of women's only sessions and whether head coverings are acceptable) and be invited to a trial session so they can get a better feel for the club before deciding to join.
- **Pro-actively address potentially non-inclusive aspects of clubs culture** – Think about your clubs 'culture', identify particular aspects which may be perceived as non-inclusive and consider how this could be addressed. For example:
  - **Social culture** – If there is a prominent drinking/social culture that members are expected to participate in, consider how this can be managed this for those that do not wish to take part. What other social options could also be offered?
  - **Waiting lists** – The management of waiting lists should be transparent and fair as they are often viewed as a sign that a club is not inclusive. Consider if the club needs to have a waiting list – are there alternative options e.g. indoor rowing training, or can newcomers be sign-posted to a neighbouring club?
  - **Dress codes** – Newcomers may not be familiar with typical rowing attire and it can be helpful to be clear on what to expect. Also be flexible on kit requirements (e.g. head coverings) where this would be a barrier for modesty reasons.
  - **Women's only groups** – Whilst gender equity is supported across the sport, some women may only be able to access women's only sessions. If this is a barrier for your local community, consider offering women's only groups.

## Inclusive club environment – Checklist continued...

### Creating inclusive facilities:

- **Clubhouse approach** – Consider the experience of someone approaching your clubhouse for the first time. What barriers might exist? Consider the need for:
  - Clear, visible signage on where to park and where the entrance is.
  - An external club notice board which informs newcomers of opening times, when the club is open for visitors, where to go, who to speak to etc. This can also act as a place to meet visitors if there is no reception/accessible entrance.
  - Clean, well maintained building, grounds, entranceways and routes from the car park.
- **Clubhouse maintenance/management** – newcomers will expect the clubhouse to be clean, tidy, well maintained and welcoming, in line with other facilities they might access.
- **Clubhouse environment** – Think about what people will see/experience when moving around the club:
  - Posters, photographs and other displays to fully reflect the clubs diversity.
  - Club Notice Boards with information on the club's inclusive policy/plans.
  - Club information packs available for newcomers to take away.
  - Signage for accessible changing facilities, lockers and alternative access routes where appropriate.
- **Accessible sports facilities and equipment** – Under the Equality Act 2010, all sports clubs are required to make reasonable adjustments to allow people with disabilities to become members or associates. Sport England's Accessible Sports Facilities Design Guidance Note and Audit Check List provide a useful summary of the requirements. An adaptive rowing equipment guidance document is available on the British Rowing website.

Adaptive Rowing uses equipment that is adapted to enable the individual to take part in the sport. The way people adapt to their disability is an individual process. Two rowers with the same disability may require completely different equipment modifications, so it is important to work with athletes to determine what is optimal to enhance their rowing activity.

## Inclusive Club Environment – Case Study

### Fulham Reach

Fulham Reach Boat Club is a charity based in the London that aims to unlock the potential of young people through rowing. Their ambition is to create a sustainable and successful rowing club in all 12 London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham state schools by 2021, and demonstrate the improvements in physiology, behaviour, social skills and academic results through participation. Beyond this they are working with The Boat Race Company to deliver rowing sessions at each of the 52 state schools that border the Championship Course.

In 2016/2017 around 1,000 participants from eight schools attended the club. 57% were female and 49% were from BAME backgrounds.

Fulham Reach Boat Club is based in a new development of luxury flats whilst also operating in Hammersmith & Fulham which is a local authority that has some of the highest levels of deprivation across England. Being mindful of this, and the traditional perception of some rowing clubs, the club has taken steps to ensure that their club is welcoming, friendly, and generally “a place for all.”

This has included numerous photos on the walls of the club showing young students rowing, a requirement for all staff to be welcoming and respectful to whoever walks through the door and training/best practice sharing on how to coach children with different requirements whether that be for religious, cognitive or physically limiting reasons.

*“One of the key phrases we keep using at FRBC is ‘Rowing for Everyone’. It is a statement that every member of staff, participant and club member buys into and is the ethos behind everything we do. There has to be a pro-active step taken by the leadership of the club to ensure that previously under-represented groups are actively engaged and made to feel welcome in the club environment.”*

Steve O'Connor, CEO, Fulham Reach Boat Club



Photo credit: Fulham Reach Boat Club

### III – Community engagement

Whilst understanding your local community is an important first step, only by getting to know and effectively engaging with different local groups will your club be able to understand the needs of specific groups, tailor its offer and target its marketing more effectively. It will also help you to grow a diverse group of ambassadors and champions to support your club's development.

#### *Community engagement – checklist*

The following checklist provides some suggestions on how to engage with your local community. However, it is important to recognise that every community will be different and will need a different approach.

#### **Community engagement – Checklist**

- Approach and build relationships with school and community group leaders, faith centres, young people and volunteers passionate about sport – provide them with information about your club and form links with them.
- Contact your local authority's Leisure Services team and your County Sports Partnership (CSP). They may have existing relationships with many of your local community groups, particularly grass roots community sports organisations, and can direct you towards key individuals, organisations and opportunities.
- Develop a network of local community advocates as a good way to build trust and get buy in.
- Find out about and go to cultural, community or faith led events taking place in your city or area. Offer 'taster' sessions as a way to draw people in.
- Invite targeted groups and individuals to your events.
- Find out from your local council about cultural events or celebrations that are taking place such as Asian Mela, Caribbean Carnival, Chinese New Year or Diwali and offer information about your club, taster sessions and contact details. Most event organisers are very happy to promote local clubs and events.
- As well as local groups, you may also want to collaborate with larger or national organisations such as AgeUK, Sporting Equals, Youth Sport Trust, English Federation of Disability Sport and Street Games.



*Photo credit: Fulham Reach Boat Club*

## Community Engagement – Case Study

### Leeds Rowing Club

*“We are very committed to widening participation and inclusion. We have some young people from the local independent grammar school but our new boat house is right in the middle of one of the most deprived areas of South Leeds. By partnering with the Ruth Gorse Academy Trust and employing a full time coach who understands the needs of young rowers, we have been able to attract young members from deprived inner city areas and make a real difference to their lives.”*

David Cottrell, Leeds Rowing Club

### Warrington Youth Rowing

Warrington Youth Rowing is a charity led by Ben Dunne and Richard Sinnott that aims to improve the lives of disadvantaged children by giving pupils from local state schools the opportunity to row on the River Mersey.

As a former head teacher, Ben Dunne used his knowledge of local schools and partnerships to sell the scheme to 8 of the 11 Secondary Schools in Warrington.

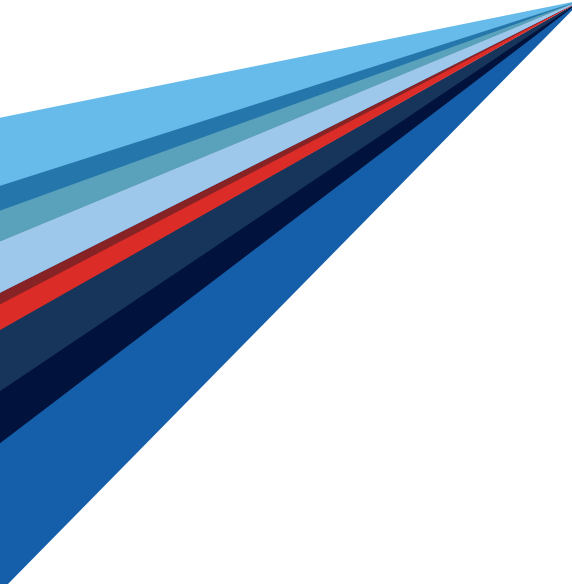
The charity works by taking year 9 and 10 children on the Pupil Premium register (i.e. children on free school meals) to Warrington Rowing Club, where they are taken out on the River Mersey for a two hour rowing session. The Pupil Premium funding paid by the government to schools covers the cost of equipment, use of facilities and coaching. The schools allow their children to do this activity as part of the school day.

*“The response we have had from the schools has been fantastic and the improvements that have been reported with many of the children is very rewarding.”*

Ben Dunne, Warrington Youth Rowing



Photo credit: Warrington Youth Rowing



## IV – Inclusive marketing and communications

Inclusive club marketing and communications avoids targeting particular demographics or relying on traditional stereotypes which may make some communities feel excluded. For example, significant use of senior men's eight crew imagery in a club's advertising or newsletters could be interpreted as meaning this crew takes precedent within the club over the junior, women or masters crews and is the focus of any member recruitment efforts.

Through the use of inclusive imagery, language and distribution channels, inclusive club marketing and communications activities can help to communicate that a club is welcoming and open to all. This will act as an indicator of the importance your club places on inclusion and be a reflection of your club culture.

Inclusive club marketing and communications are particularly important due to the existence of traditional rowing stereotypes which, in contrast to the realities of many clubs, portray it as a predominantly white, middle class and exclusive sport.

Proactive marketing and communications are often seen as a low priority for clubs and it is easy to fall back on 'doing things the same way they have always been done', as illustrated by some of the comments from the Inclusive Club Guide workshops. This Guide, as well as other partner resources, as referenced in section 5 (such as the EFDS's Inclusive Communications Guide), therefore aims to support clubs to make simple but effective changes to their marketing and communications activities.

### *Marketing and communication checklist*

Marketing and communications is a large area and there are multiple resources available to support clubs including Sport England's Club Matters. British Rowing also runs Growing Your Club workshops, further information on which is available via the British Rowing Education & Training Team. The following checklist is not exhaustive but highlights some key considerations for marketing and communications.

### **WHAT DOES YOUR CLUB MARKETING STRATEGY LOOK LIKE?**

*“We have got somebody that does our marketing but we haven't seen her for a while though.”*

*“We have printed some flyers last year – but haven't really had a big response.”*

*“We just want to row – and anyone can join if they want to. They can find us on our website if they are interested.”*

*Inclusive Club Workshop Discussion, 2017.*



Photo credit: London Youth Rowing, featuring indoor rowing competition for flagship programme Active Row, which works with 8000 young people from 76 London State Schools, aiming to get participants active for life.

## Inclusive marketing and communications – Checklist

### Creating content:

- Think about the experience that someone has to go through to understand your offer and access your club. Does your website/flyers/social media help someone to:
  - Learn about rowing and make the decision to find out more.
  - Find out about your club offer, where it is and how to get there.
  - Know where to go for further information.
  - Answer any questions or concerns they might have?
  - Decide if what you are offering is suitable or relevant to them.
- Think about the specific needs/potential barriers of any particular local communities you want to attract to your club and include these in marketing materials or on a FAQ page on the website. For example, are baby-changing facilities or prayer spaces available? What are newcomers expected to wear? Are there women only offers? Are there recreational offers? Do you need to be able to swim? Are buoyancy aids provided?
- Consider the language and imagery used – How will information be received/interpreted? Will it appeal to the communities you are trying to target? Does it reinforce or counter stereotypes?
- Sell the varied benefits of rowing – fun, fitness, health and social – rather than having a narrow competitive focus.

### Communication channels:

- **Website** – This will be the primary information source for potential new members and needs to be up-to-date, easy to navigate and access.
- **Social media** – Many people will use social media to find out more about your club culture, members and day-to-day activities. Consider which channels your target communities are likely to use. Facebook and Twitter can be particularly effective for club communications.
- **Local media** – Approach local radio, newspapers and other media networks that are prominent in your area/target communities. For example, The Asian Radio Network can be very effective in promoting activities and offers to BAME communities.
- **Community communications** – Work with local community contacts to identify other channels through which to target particular groups. These might include newsletters, community websites and popular noticeboards.
- **Flyers and posters** – Effective at a local level, posters can be positioned in places used by your target communities e.g. speciality shops, colleges, supermarkets and faith centre notice boards.

## Inclusive marketing and communication – Case Study

### Broxbourne Rowing Club

Alex Ferguson joined Broxbourne Rowing Club in 2017 after completing a learn to row course and quickly recognised an opportunity to develop the club's social media platforms, as a way to help it connect with both club members and the community in which it is based.

Her objective is to maintain a balance of posts that will appeal to all audiences including competitive adults, recreational rowers, juniors coaches and volunteers, whilst also appealing the community outside the club – those who don't currently row who may like to, those in the local area who just like to know what's going on, as well as the local council and relevant agencies.

The club now has four platforms running – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. The first three are 'similar but different' both in content and audience demographics.

*"Facebook appears to have a slightly older audience of club members with good engagement, Twitter is where we can engage with members, partners, local agencies and those wider afield both in and out of the sport. It was our Juniors who asked for Instagram, which is the current preferred platform of young people, although it has the added benefit of also appealing to all ages and being global. YouTube is used by the racing crews, coaches for training purposes, and recreational rowers who like to see themselves in a boat."*

*"It takes a lot of time for social media platforms to be successful but they are a fantastic way of connecting with both club members and new audiences, providing an insight that wasn't previously available."*



Photo credit: Drew Smith



## V – Club offer

Once your club has attracted potential new members to visit your website or clubhouse, they will want to know what you can offer them. If the club has worked hard to attract a diverse range of newcomers, it is important to follow through with activities that are just as welcoming and inclusive.

For clubs that currently have quite a traditional structure and competitive focus, this represents both a challenge and an opportunity to create alternative offers that can sit alongside your existing activities.

### Club Offer – Case Study

*“We’ve worked with the University of the Third Age to engage and build a daytime rowing group. We have gone from no daytime rowing to groups rowing three times a week and taking part in West Midlands Explore events. This is now the most social section at the Club. Come down and try our Coffee ‘n’ Cake rows!”*

*Maggie Jameson,  
Birmingham Rowing Club*

*“It is important that we build a pathway for indoor rowing. A pathway that doesn’t have to lead to on water rowing. Using indoor [rowing] we have a greater chance of working with more young people.”*

*Matt Rostron,  
London Youth Rowing*

#### Stratford-Upon-Avon Boat Club

By tailoring their offer to provide weekday morning Learn to Row courses, Stratford-Upon-Avon Boat Club have successfully attracted older retired and semi-retired rowers, as well as women with children at school or nursery, to the club.

Start times for the courses were set to fit in with school runs. On completion of the Learn to Row course there are follow-on weekday groups that run in term time and which the rowers can attend. These sessions have designated coaches who have been key to building the rowing skills of the groups.

If they’re interested, the crews can take part in local tours and the Explore Sunday events that run in the West Midlands. These have been excellent in introducing women who think they are either too old or not interested in competition, to an informal event.

*“I love rowing in a crew, trying to keep in time and fit with everyone else, but especially love the socialising afterwards, I’ve taken part in the easy events run for beginners locally and whilst I didn’t think I minded who won, it turns out I am competitive after all!”*

Celia Price, Stratford-Upon-Avon Boat Club Member



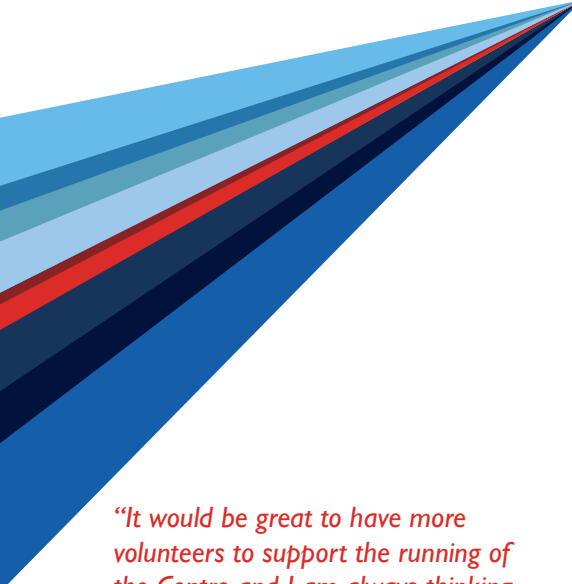
Photo credit: Naomi Baker

### Club offer – checklist

Key considerations for clubs looking to create a broader and more inclusive offer are highlighted in the club offer checklist.

#### Club offer – Checklist

- **Club-based activities** – Consider if your club's current activities are relevant to your target communities e.g. disabled people, older people and BAME communities:
  - Consider **recreational on-water rowing** as a way to introduce the sport to new people, breaking down perceptions that it is elitist or that you have to be very fit or a certain body type to row. It also works well for people that are interested in rowing but don't want to compete and those who can't commit to the demands of competitive rowing due to work, education or family commitments. British Rowing's research indicates that there is strong market demand for recreational rowing and this is a significant opportunity for clubs.
  - Consider providing 'come and try' **taster sessions** (free or paid for), for both indoor or on-water rowing, allowing people to experience rowing without having to commit to full membership straight away.
  - Consider increasing the number and regularity of **'learn to row' courses** on offer, so there is a rolling programme of courses available to newcomers, who may be put off by having to wait a long time to join a course.
  - Consider getting involved in British Rowing's **Go Row Indoor** club programme which provides clubs with training, materials and support to run indoor rowing group exercise classes. These classes are designed for newcomers to the sport and can be tailored for different local communities.
  - Consider developing an **indoor rowing focussed pathway** for people who want to compete in indoor rowing events. This can be provided as a standalone discipline of the sport and can appeal to a wide range of community groups.
- **Community based activities** – Consider running indoor rowing sessions at local community centres, clubs and faith centres as a way to introduce new people to the sport. This can start as a one-off introductory session and develop into a weekly class.
- **School based activities** – Consider how you can work with local schools to develop formal or informal links with the club. Working to create opportunities for parents to get involved, as well as children, can help you engage with different groups.
- **Cost** – For many people, especially those on low incomes, the cost of participating in rowing may be a barrier. Discuss what you can do to make participation affordable. Can pay-as-you-go options be introduced alongside full memberships?
- **Flexibility** – There is no 'one size fits all'. Some groups will have specific requirements which you may not currently address. Where this happens be willing to adapt your offer to their needs. You could also look at teaming up with other rowing clubs to offer shared activities.
- **Programming** – The majority of rowing clubs are currently very busy in the early morning, during evenings and at weekends but have limited, if any, day-time programming. This presents an opportunity to target groups for whom day time activities can work well, including older age groups, stay-at-home parents and people with flexible work patterns. Day time rowing activity may also suit the availability of some coaches and volunteers.



## VI – Inclusive volunteering

All rowing clubs are heavily reliant on an army of committed volunteers, without whom the sport would not have been able to thrive in the way that it has. They give both their time and a wide range of skills and experiences to support their clubs and their members.

Inclusive volunteering means ensuring that volunteering opportunities within your club are open to all regardless of background, religion, ethnic or national origin, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.

*“It would be great to have more volunteers to support the running of the Centre and I am always thinking about ways we could do this. I want to explore working with an organisation called the UK Men’s Sheds Association [www.mendssheds.org.uk]. Men’s Sheds are community spaces for men to connect, converse and create, with the aim of helping to reduce loneliness and isolation by also provide fun. I think that if we could run a group once or twice a week and get members involved in learning skills such as carpentry, this could then translate into volunteering their time for boat or clubhouse maintenance.”*

*Jamie Green, Jubilee Rowing Centre Slough*

The benefits of having a diverse pool of volunteers include:

- A broader range of skills and abilities.
- A better understanding of, and ability to respond to, the needs of different people/community groups.
- New ideas and fresh approaches informed by different outlooks/perspectives.
- Greater confidence in working with different people/community groups.
- Giving credibility to the club’s inclusivity objectives, showing that it is truly open to all and welcoming, which will in turn help you to attract new members.

### *Inclusive volunteering checklist*

The following checklist highlights some key considerations to support the development of inclusive volunteering practices within your club.

### Inclusive volunteering – Checklist

- Clearly communicate the range of volunteer roles you have on offer and the benefits of volunteering. Consider what you can do for your volunteers as well as what they can do for you.
- Encourage all club members, no matter their age, background or rowing ability, to get involved and provide support where needed.
- Consider advertising volunteering opportunities to people within the local community, as well as working with established volunteering groups, rather than relying solely on existing members.
- Use local networks to increase your chances of attracting volunteers from different community and social groups – talk to them about what you are looking for and ask for their advice and support to overcome any barriers.
- Take time to understand your volunteers, their motivations, skill sets and any specific concerns or needs they might have. Organise an induction process and provide training, ongoing support, encouragement and feedback.

## Inclusive Volunteering – Case Study

### The AHOY Centre

The AHOY Centre is a water sports charity based in Greenwich that uses rowing, sailing and water based activities to break down social barriers and provide innovative training. They have a diverse range of programmes, including their unique 'Shipmates' programme, which is aimed at disadvantaged and at-risk youths aged 8 to 18.

Shipmates are taught to row and sail, and also how to use their new skills to go on to help and teach others. This means young, local volunteers trained in, and contributing to, all aspects of the charity – rowing, sailing, maintenance, admin and fundraising through sponsored rowing challenges.

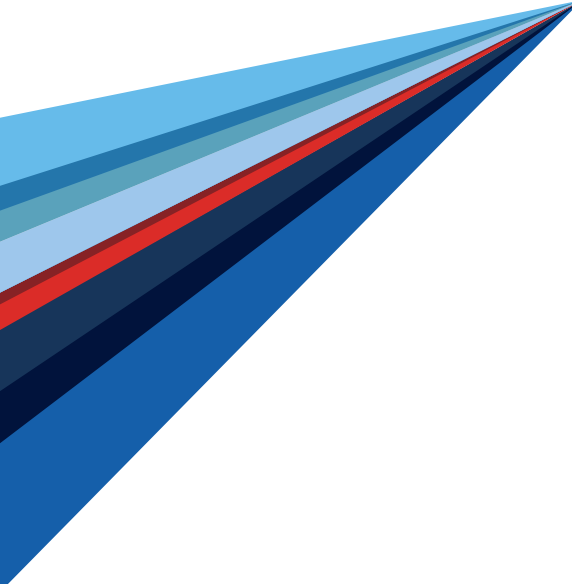
The AHOY Centre also helps young people aged 16 to 18 to kick start their careers in water sports and coaching by placing them on formal apprenticeships. These provide a stepping stone to finding employment, helping to build self-esteem and confidence and the necessary, transferable skills that are vital to their future prospects.

*"We are a watersports Charity located in one of London's most deprived communities," explains Clair Ongley, AHOY's Operations Manager. "Our primary objective is to give opportunities for disadvantaged and at-risk young people whilst also providing opportunities for disabled participants to engage in activities and courses on an equal level."*

*"We bring together people from many walks of life to work together as a community. Helping others and teaching transferable and employable skills is at the heart of everything we do. Rowing and sailing are the educational tools we use to get results – the influence and passion of these activities bring about solid, positive changes in our participants and the local community – creating good citizenship and role models."*



Photo credit: The Ahoy Centre



## VII – Inclusive coaching

### *Inclusive coaching practice*

Inclusive coaching means adapting and modifying coaching practices and activities to ensure every participant, regardless of age, gender, ability level, disability and ethnic background has the opportunity to participate if they choose to. Good coaches adapt and modify aspects of their coaching and create a welcoming environment for all.

Inclusive coaching is not necessarily about having special skills or knowledge to coach a particular community, such as people with a disability. The basic skills of good coaching, when applied with an inclusive philosophy, should ensure the inclusion of all participants becomes a natural part of coaching. There is also lots of guidance available to support coaches working with particular groups, such as the British Rowing Adaptive Rowing Equipment Guide.

### *Inclusive coaching workforce*

Coaches from all backgrounds can deliver inclusive coaching and should be supported to develop their inclusive practices. However, there is also strong evidence that having a diverse pool of coaches can have a significant positive impact on a club's ability to grow a more inclusive environment and attract a more diverse membership. Coaches from different backgrounds are able to empathise with the challenges facing diverse groups, act as role models and build trust within different communities and groups.

Even in clubs which have adopted inclusive practices, low rates of participation by under-represented community groups can be self-perpetuating. For example, when rowing clubs have very few members from BAME communities, potential new members may turn to other sports with higher BAME presence. Having a diverse range of male and female coaches from different backgrounds can help to break this cycle, by signalling that a club is open to all.

Taking steps to attract and retain coaches from a variety of backgrounds, as well as supporting all coaches to adopt inclusive practices, will make your club much more attractive to a wider section of the community.

*“Coaching BAME young people with traditional, white, middle aged coaches is just not going to work. There needs to be more coach education on retention and fun.”*

*Steve O'Connor,  
CEO, Fulham Reach*



Photo credit: John Stead

### *Inclusive coaching checklist*

The following checklist highlights some key considerations to support the development of inclusive coaching practices within your club.

#### **Inclusive coaching – Checklist**

- When advertising coaching roles, be clear on the club's inclusive objectives and use local and national networks to increase your chances of attracting applicants from different community groups.
- Consider supporting existing club members and parents from key local communities to get involved in coaching and become qualified, providing financial and mentoring support if needed.
- Encourage all coaches to access inclusive coach training and related resources.
- Support coaches in the development of their inclusive coaching practices, aligning this with wider Inclusive Club Plans.
- Include inclusive coaching within the club's Inclusive Club Policies/Statements.

*“I love that adaptive rowing is accessible to so many varied disabilities. There always seems to be a solution to each individual's issues, allowing them to get into a boat and on to the water whatever their disability.”*

*Hilary Birkinshaw, Guildford Rowing Club Adaptive Squad*



*Photo credit: Don Somner*



## VIII – Inclusive leadership and governance

### *Inclusive leadership*

Club committee members have the power to make decisions, prioritise projects and spending, and take actions which affect many people. They can have significant influence on the culture of a club and their ownership and commitment to new inclusive club plans and initiatives will have a significant impact on the extent to which they are embraced. It is therefore important to help them to better understand inclusion and diversity and their role in making the club inclusive.

### *Inclusivity planning*

The importance of clearly documenting a club's inclusivity plans was highlighted by the clubs consulted in the development of this Guide and reflects good governance. Having clearly documented plans can support their clear and consistent understanding by committee and club members, which is critical to long term sustainable change.

### *Board diversity*

It is widely recognised that decision-making is improved when committees are able to draw on, and harness, a diverse range of opinions. However, the clubs consulted in the development of this Guide recognised that the majority of club committees are not as diverse as they could be.

Consider the current diversity of your club's committee members relative to the communities you are targeting, the impact this might have on current decision making and the benefits of recruiting new committee members from different backgrounds. What actions could you take to achieve change?

### *A Code for Sports Governance*

The importance of inclusive leadership, inclusivity planning and board diversity is enshrined within 'A Code for Sports Governance', launched by Sport England and UK Sport after the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Code explicitly seeks to promote greater diversity and an inclusive approach and is available on the UK Sport and Sport England websites (see section 5). It has three tiers and is mandatory for any organisation seeking funding from Sport England or UK Sport, regardless of size and sector, including national governing bodies of sport, clubs, charities and local authorities.

The Code is proportionate, expecting the highest standards of good governance from organisations requesting the largest public investments. Most community rowing clubs would fall under Tier 1 of the Code, which applies to organisations receiving one-off grants of less than £250k including small grants from Sport England. A smaller number of clubs, such as those applying for major capital funding, may fall under Tier 2.

Two of the seven Tier 1 Mandatory Requirements include specific references to inclusivity as illustrated below. Any club that wishes to apply for Sport England funding, now or in the future, will need to meet these requirements, along with others detailed within the Code.



## A Code for Sports Governance

### Tier I Mandatory Requirement 1

The organisation is properly constituted, has a clear purpose and, if membership based, is inclusive and accessible.

#### Being properly constituted

Being properly constituted and having a clear purpose means:

- Having appropriate documents which set out why the organisation exists, the area of work it is involved with, how it makes decisions and other rules clarifying how it operates.
- Operating according to the provisions set out in those formal documents as well as any other legal obligations which are relevant.

Having a clear purpose and being properly constituted provides a formal framework for the organisation which enables those who grant awards, or invest funds, to understand how decisions are made and how funds would be managed.

#### Membership

This Code seeks to promote greater diversity and an inclusive approach. This means membership based organisations are expected to take all reasonable steps to ensure they are accessible to all sections of the community.

If an organisation thinks it has a clear justification to act otherwise (e.g. the organisation exists solely to promote or benefit a particular group in the community) it should be prepared to explain this. Organisations should think about the information provided as part of the membership application process to ensure those to whom membership may be refused understand why.

### Tier I Mandatory Requirement 4

In deciding who sits on its governing committee the organisation considers the skills and diversity required of its committee members.

An online consultation formed part of the development of this Code and an overwhelming majority of those who responded recognised a need to increase diversity within their organisation. Having people with the right experience or knowledge and a varied range of opinions can lead to improved decisions and better outcomes.

This Requirement expects organisations to consider the skills and diversity required when a vacancy exists on the committee or an opportunity arises. For example, someone with financial experience might be required to help understand and scrutinise funds. Or, an organisation might wish to work with a particular group in the community and could look to recruit someone from that group to help shape ideas. Organisations should determine what is appropriate to them.

Many small organisations (e.g. clubs or charities) rely on volunteers who give up their time to administer the organisation, and without whom, the organisation may not exist. This Requirement recognises those circumstances but asks organisations to at least consider the skills and diversity it needs should the opportunity to recruit relevant individuals arise.

Further consideration will be given to how organisations can be supported to increase diversity.

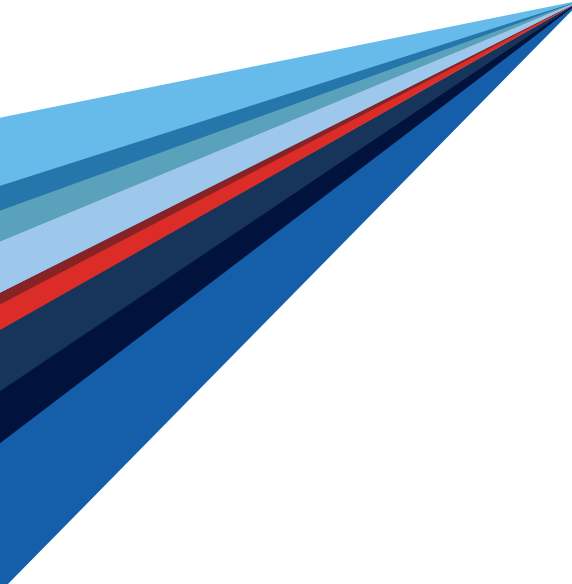


### *Inclusive governance and leadership checklist*

Potential considerations when exploring how best to achieve inclusive leadership and governance within your club, are highlighted in the following checklist.

#### **Promoting inclusive leadership and governance – Checklist**

- **Support existing and new committee members** to better understand inclusion and diversity and their role in making the club inclusive. This can be in the form of formal training or meetings to discuss this Guide and related documents.
- **Document inclusive club policies and plans:**
  - Create an Inclusive Club Plan with clear actions, objectives and rationale.
  - Create an 'Inclusive Club Statement' setting out your club's commitment to inclusive practices and include a statement encouraging club members to become inclusivity advocates and to call-out non inclusive practices.
  - Create a simple inclusivity guide, in the form of FAQs, which volunteers can refer to when talking to newcomers.
  - Share the club's plans and statements on your website and noticeboards, as a reminder of the club's commitment to inclusivity.
- **Inclusive leadership** – In developing your Inclusive Club Plan and Statement, consider what inclusive leadership means to your club and why it matters. What steps could you take towards being more diverse and inclusive as a leadership group? Consider the following actions:
  - Appointing an Inclusion Officer from amongst your current committee members to champion the club's focus on inclusive and diversity.
  - Recruiting more women and under-represented groups onto the committee.
  - Creating a transparent pathway for gaining committee/leadership positions – including opportunities for mentoring and shadowing to support members from under-represented groups to assume committee roles.
- **Inclusive committee recruitment practices** – Take a look at your policies or practices for recruiting committee members. Are these hindering or preventing certain people from taking up leadership positions? Consider term limits, expectations, the timings of committee meetings and other practical barriers, as well as current recruitment processes. Implement a refreshed committee recruitment process with clear role specifications, a proactive advertising plan (within and outside of the club where appropriate), transparent selection processes and a comprehensive induction.



*“Most clubs communicate within their own communities and we need something that breaks us out of that.”*

*Inclusive Club Guide  
Club Workshop*



Photo credit: Naomi Baker

## IX – Cultural change and unconscious bias

### *What is unconscious bias?*

Becoming a more inclusive club often requires a shift in thinking. Understanding unconscious bias can help us to think differently and embrace change.

Unconscious bias refers to a bias that we are unaware of, and which happens outside of our control. It is a bias that happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgements and assessment of people and situations, influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences.

Everyone has unconscious bias. No matter how unbiased or even ‘neutral’ we think we are, we may have negative opinions about those outside of their own group. Unconscious bias is not necessarily a bad thing, as long as we recognise how it affects our decision-making and manage this.

Examples of unconscious bias include:

- A tendency to generalise about someone based on a few attributes.
- A failure to recognise factors that may be beyond the control of an individual or group.
- A tendency to look for fault or justify actions based on personal characteristics that have no bearing on performance, potential or capability.
- Assessing a person’s capability or potential based on personality characteristics.
- Giving more positive opinions about those that are within our own group or that we perceive to be more ‘deserving’.
- Recruiting people that are similar to ourselves rather than those most qualified to contribute to our organisations or committees.

Acknowledging and understanding unconscious bias is an important step towards changing the culture of rowing clubs and making them more inclusive. It is important to realise that not everyone thinks, dresses, speaks or behaves in the same way. It is necessary to challenge ourselves to be less discriminatory and challenge negative stereotypes.

### *Tackling unconscious bias*

Improving awareness of unconscious bias and proactively addressing it will help clubs to become more inclusive and welcoming.

When thinking about making your club inclusive, try to tackle some of the things that may be happening because of unconscious bias. For example, why not see if there is a predominance of images of younger, taller white males portrayed as the ‘typical’ rower by your club. Why is that? The reality is that rowers are a very diverse group coming in all shapes, sizes, heights, genders and ages. Consider who selects images that go on the walls and how they could potentially be reorganised.

### *Cultural change and unconscious bias checklist*

The following checklist highlights some practical ways that you can tackle unconscious bias at club level.

#### **Unconscious bias – Checklist**

- **Be Aware** – Become aware of how unconscious bias may affect decisions and day-to-day practices within your club. Your Committee has an important role to play in monitoring decision making, particularly in relation to individuals or groups from the 'protected characteristics'.
- **Provide training** – There are various resources available online (see section 5) to support members and volunteers to better understand and address unconscious bias.
- **Engaging with different groups** – This helps to highlight biases, break down assumptions and challenge stereotypes. Valuing and engaging all groups also helps to create a more inclusive club environment.
- **Make use of positive imagery** – This is an important step in challenging unconscious bias and should not be underestimated. Making use of a variety of positive images shows that you are taking a proactive and positive approach to changing stereotypes and you will be encouraging your club to consider diversity as a part of the overall club culture:
  - Proactively gather and use stereotype busting images on posters, newsletters and on your website.
  - Rearrange the photos in your club to showcase the breadth of your membership and portray the club as welcoming to all.
  - Encourage engagement with campaigns and events that are inclusive and promote them through your own social media channel.
- **Create your own role models, ambassadors and inclusion champions** – Encourage and reward your volunteers, staff and club members for ideas to target unconscious bias and promote inclusion.



Photo credit: Naomi Baker



# 05 Inclusive club resources

## Information sources

The following organisations provide additional specialist advice, guidance and resources on different communities, the barriers they face and how these can be overcome.

### ACAS

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

Provides information, advice and resources for employers on how to build inclusive workplaces and practices. These include videos entitled ‘What are the nine protected characteristics?’ and ‘Discrimination and Protected Characteristics’.

### Age UK

[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

Acts as a centre of expertise on ageing issues and supports exercise and physical activity for older people.

### Beaumont Society

[www.beaumontsociety.org.uk](http://www.beaumontsociety.org.uk)

A national self-help body for the transgender community.

### Disability Rights UK

[www.disabilityrightsuk.org](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)

Umbrella organisation run by and for disabled people. Offers a range of advice and information on disability and inclusion.

### English Federation of Disability Sport

[www.efds.co.uk](http://www.efds.co.uk)

Provides research, guidance and support to varied sporting partners, including local clubs, on how to be more inclusive of disabled people. Resources include an Inclusive Communications Guide – <https://youtu.be/XGcoCZa-a50>

### Equality and Human Rights Commission

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

Provides detailed guidance for voluntary, community and charitable organisations, as well as sports activity and service providers, aligned to the Equality Act 2010. Resources include guidance for sports activity providers – [www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-law-gyms-health-clubs-and-sporting-activity-providers](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-law-gyms-health-clubs-and-sporting-activity-providers)



### **Government Office for Disability Issues**

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication)

Government guidance on how to produce communications that include, accurately portray, and are accessible to disabled people.

### **Muslim Women's Sport Foundation**

[www.mwsf.org.uk](http://www.mwsf.org.uk)

Aims to increase the involvement of Muslim women and girls in sport without compromising their religious or cultural values by raising awareness of their needs.

### **Sport Allies**

[www.sportallies.org](http://www.sportallies.org)

Promotes sport, and especially team sport, as an inclusive and supportive route to personal growth for everyone through research, advocacy and communication projects/campaigns.

### **Sport England**

[www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)

A non-departmental public body under the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport with a remit to foster, support and encourage the development of sport and sporting excellence. It places particular importance on promoting sport to people from all backgrounds including those who do not typically participate as regularly as others.

Sport England's Accessible Sports Facilities Design Guidance Note and Audit Check List provides a useful summary of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 as they relate to local sports facilities – [www.sportengland.org/media/4246/accessible-sports-facilities-audit-check-list-october-2012.pdf](http://www.sportengland.org/media/4246/accessible-sports-facilities-audit-check-list-october-2012.pdf)

Club Matters is Sport England's one stop shop for sports clubs. It provides practical guidance on creating inclusive clubs, as well as providing links to other organisations that can help. Resources include inclusivity and disability guidance – [www.sportenglandclubmatters.com/club-people/members-participants/inclusivity/disability/](http://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com/club-people/members-participants/inclusivity/disability/)

### **Sport England/UK Sport – A Code for Sports Governance**

[www.sportengland.org/about-us/governance/a-code-for-sports-governance/](http://www.sportengland.org/about-us/governance/a-code-for-sports-governance/)

The Code for Sports Governance, in which increased diversity is a key requirement, sets out the levels of transparency, accountability and financial integrity that will be required from organisations asking for Government and National Lottery funding from April 2017.



### **Sporting Equals**

[www.sportingequals.org.uk](http://www.sportingequals.org.uk)

Actively promotes and provides resources to support greater involvement in sport and physical activity by disadvantaged communities, particularly the BAME population. Has carried out extensive research on BAME communities' access and barriers to sports.

### **Sport and Recreational Alliance**

[www.sportandrecreation.org.uk](http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk)

Works with Government, policy makers and the media to support the development of grass roots sport. Provides a range of online resources and training opportunities focussed on diversity and inclusion.

Resources include:

An unconscious bias podcast – [www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/governance/podcasts-and-webinars/recorded-webinar-unconscious-bias-how-is-it](http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/governance/podcasts-and-webinars/recorded-webinar-unconscious-bias-how-is-it)

The principles of good governance for sport and recreation – <http://sramedia.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/9bb47d57-7523-4966-8839-707377f94148.pdf>

### **Stonewall**

[www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

Stonewall campaigns for the equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people across Britain.

'Make Sport Everyone's Game' is a toolkit, developed by Stonewall, to help sports clubs become more inclusive for LGBT people.

### **UK Coaching**

[www.ukcoaching.org](http://www.ukcoaching.org)

Promotes inclusive coaching methodologies across its varied activities, supported by an online resource bank.

Resources include Inclusive Coaching Guides – [www.ukcoaching.org/sites/default/files/Quick-Guide-to-Inclusive-Coaching.pdf](http://www.ukcoaching.org/sites/default/files/Quick-Guide-to-Inclusive-Coaching.pdf)

### **UK Sport**

[www.uksport.gov.uk](http://www.uksport.gov.uk)

The nation's high performance sports agency investing in Olympic and Paralympic sport.

## Women in Sport

[www.womeninsport.org](http://www.womeninsport.org)

Advances gender equality through and within sport, empowering women and girls through sport and the sport sector by using insight, campaigning and establishing partnerships.

Resource include:

The Ideal Sports Club for Women – [www.womeninsport.org/support-advice-service/research-and-insight/ideal-sports-club-women/](http://www.womeninsport.org/support-advice-service/research-and-insight/ideal-sports-club-women/)

Understanding Women's Lives – [www.womeninsport.org/support-advice-service/research-and-insight/understanding-womens-lives/](http://www.womeninsport.org/support-advice-service/research-and-insight/understanding-womens-lives/)

Good Sport (women as volunteers in sport) – [www.womeninsport.org/support-advice-service/research-and-insight/good-sports-engaging-female-volunteers-2/](http://www.womeninsport.org/support-advice-service/research-and-insight/good-sports-engaging-female-volunteers-2/)

Checklist for Change – [www.womeninsport.org/support-advice-service/research-and-insight/trophy-women-checklist-change/](http://www.womeninsport.org/support-advice-service/research-and-insight/trophy-women-checklist-change/)

## Women's Sport Trust

[www.womenssporttrust.com](http://www.womenssporttrust.com)

Raises the visibility and increases the impact of women's sport through the promotion of diverse athlete role models, increasing media coverage and improving the funding landscape.

## Adaptive rowing information sources

The British Rowing website includes extensive information to support clubs and coaches accommodate the needs of disabled rowers.

Resource include the British Rowing Adaptive Rowing Equipment Guide – <https://www.britishrowing.org/go-rowing/learn-to-row/adaptive-rowing>

## Equality Law Information Sources

ACAS Guide to Equality Law and the Protected Characteristics – [www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3017](http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3017)

The British Rowing Equity Policy  
[www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Equity-Policy-2014.pdf?41e6e6](http://www.britishrowing.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Equity-Policy-2014.pdf?41e6e6)

## Inclusive Club Funding Sources

Many charitable/grant giving organisations have a remit to support diversity and inclusivity related projects. To explore potential funding support for your project, go to the British Rowing website – <https://www.britishrowing.org/knowledge/club-support/developing-your-club/funding-sources>

*Please note that these links to external websites are provided for convenience. However, British Rowing is not responsible for any information supplied on external websites, nor does it endorse any commercial products or any information supplied from other websites.*



## **APPENDIX I – Diversity in rowing**

### **Introduction**

The following findings draw on Sport England's 2017 Active Lives Survey, British Rowing membership statistics and a member survey conducted in early 2016, as well as various national data sources.

It should be noted that the British Rowing data sources are sample based, as not all members currently provide diversity data or respond to the surveys. In addition these data sources focus on the sliding seat rowing community and do not yet encompass the fixed seat rowing community or indoor rowing community. This is being addressed through the introduction of a new club/member management system and we expect better quality data to be available by late 2018.

Acknowledging these limitations, the available data, when taken together, is believed to provide an accurate reflection of the rowing community.

### **Diversity in rowing**

#### ***Overall participation***

Rowing is a popular sport, with over 771,000 people rowing on water or indoors, at least once a month, according to the latest Sport England Active Lives statistics.

#### ***Membership growth***

British Rowing's membership, which currently focusses on the on-water rowing community, also continues to grow at a rate of 1.9% each year for the last 10 years, largely a result of the rapid growth of junior rowing (rowers under 19 years old) over this period (2.3% per annum). It is currently circa 32,000 per annum. At present 59% of members are under 25 years old, 15% are 25-39, 13% are 40-54, 10% are 55-69 and 3% are 70 years plus.

#### ***Gender diversity***

British Rowing's member statistics and diversity research consistently show that the rowing community has a good gender balance (45% female, 55% male). This has improved consistently over the last 10 years, when the balance was 36% female to 64% male (2007).

#### ***Sexual orientation***

4% of British Rowing members identify as gay/lesbian and another 4% as bi-sexual. This is higher than the national average. Public Health England estimates that lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people make up 2.5% of the population of England, whilst the Office for National Statistics (ONS) places the UK LGB population at 2% and shows that younger people (aged 16-24) are more likely to identify as LGB.





### **Disability**

10% of British Rowing members have some form of disability compared to almost one in five (19%) in the UK. Of the British Rowing members who have declared a disability, 42% have a learning disability followed by 'other' disabilities (26%) and physical disabilities (15%). 8% of British Rowing members with a disability have identified to be visually impaired whilst 5% indicated they are deaf.

### **Socio-economic diversity**

A large proportion of British Rowing members are drawn from higher income, education and employment groups. 48% have an average household income of more than £40,000 annually, which compares to a national average of £27,000. In addition almost 60% of British Rowing members are from state selective or independent schools, which is significantly higher than the national average of 7%.

### **Ethnic diversity**

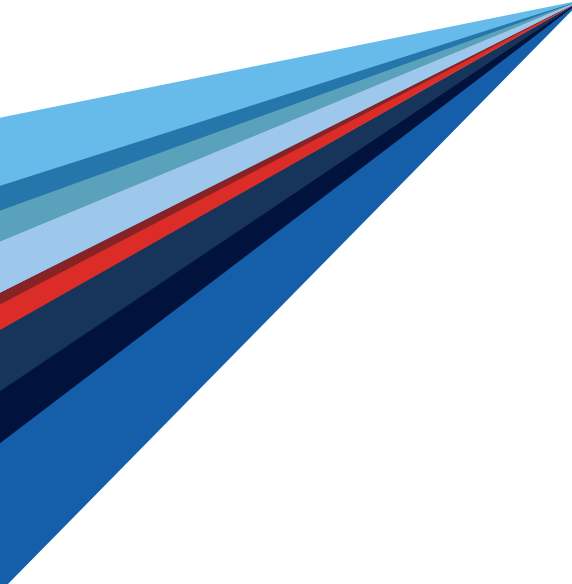
British Rowing's recent diversity survey and member statistics indicate that between 93% and 95% of the membership is White (British, Irish or other) with only 4.3% to 5% coming from BAME communities. This is in stark contrast to recent Census data (2011) which indicated that 86% of people living in England and Wales are White (British, Irish or other) and 14% of the population of England and Wales is from a BAME community.

Whilst there are a number of successful rowing programmes targeting BAME communities (e.g. London Youth Rowing, B-Row and Fulham Reach Boat Club), it is clear that individuals from these communities continue to be under-represented. This is true across the sport but is particularly evident amongst those rowers that choose to become British Rowing members or compete at higher levels within the sport.

Whilst Sport England's 2012 Active People Survey (APS 6 Q2) results indicated that across sport as a whole 89% of those who took part were from white backgrounds (White British, Irish or other) and 11% from non-white backgrounds, this varies across sport. Rowing has an ethnic diversity that sits alongside cycling and ahead of golf, but is significantly behind sports like badminton, basketball and cricket.

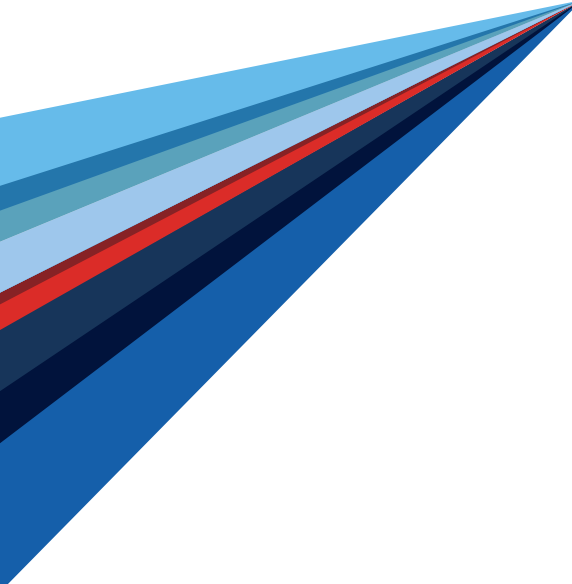
The importance of sport to BAME communities is also evident from the statistics. According to 2016 APS findings, the proportion of BAME communities taking part in active sports is now 37.8%, which is slightly higher than for White British groups at 36%. The survey also shows that 19% of BAME communities are involved in keep fit and gym activities at least once a week compared to 15% of White British.

*These statistics reinforce that, whilst rowing has been very successful in achieving diversity in some areas, there is still significant work to do, if it is to be a truly inclusive sport. It also highlights that the scale of the opportunity for rowing, particularly in terms of new members and volunteers, if inclusivity can be achieved.*



## References

- British Rowing (2016) Membership Diversity Survey 2016. London
- Office for National Statistics (2017) Sexual Identity in the UK: 2016. London
- Office for National Statistics (2017) Family Resources Survey 2015/16. London
- Office for National Statistics (2017) Living costs and food survey 2016. London
- Department of Education (2013) Schools, pupils, and their characteristics. January 2013. Statistical First Release. London
- Independent Schools Council (2017) Census & Annual Report Snapshot. January 2017. London
- British Rowing, Membership database (2017) Monthly membership stats (Export 31 August 2017). London
- Office for National Statistics (2012) Ethnicity and National Identity in England and Wales: 2011. London
- Sport England (2012) Active People Survey 6 Q2. London
- Sport England (2017) Active Lives Survey November 2015/16. London
- Sport England (2012) Equity in Sports Participation: Ethnicity and Faith. London
- British Rowing, Membership database (2018) Monthly disability stats (Export 31 January 2018). London



## **APPENDIX 2 – Equality Act 2010 – Protected Characteristics**

### **Age**

In general the Equality Act 2010 protects people of all ages, including younger as well as older people. However, it does allow differences of treatment because of age if it can be justified. For example, where an organisation is taking steps to address under-representation of particular groups through age-related concessions.

### **Disability**

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone with a physical or mental impairment [which can include a long term health condition] that has a substantial and long term effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. It also includes people who are looking after or care for a disabled person, or are otherwise associated with a disabled person.

### **Gender reassignment**

The Equality Act 2010 protects people defined with the characteristic of Gender Reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process or part of a process for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. The Equality Act 2010 also covers someone who is referred to as a transsexual person as someone who is protected within the definition of Gender Reassignment.

### **Marriage and civil partnership**

It is unlawful to discriminate against someone who is married or in a registered civil partnership in accordance with the Civil Partnership Act (2004).

### **Pregnancy and maternity**

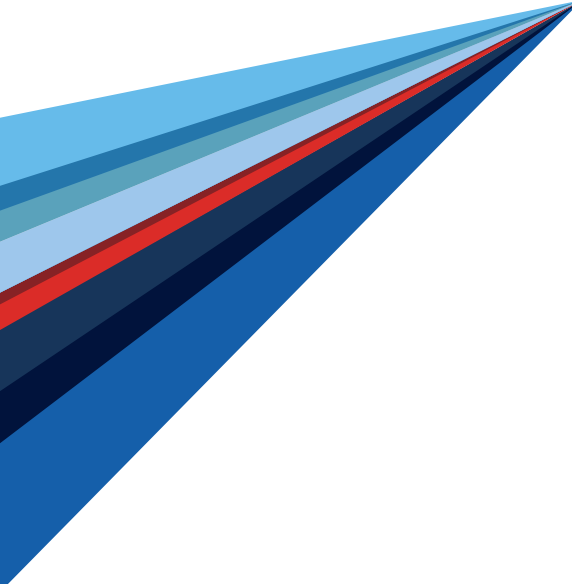
The Equality Act 2010 protects women from being discriminated against because of a reason related to their pregnancy and maternity, including during periods of (statutory maternity) leave to which she is entitled. It also explicitly protects women who are breastfeeding and this includes public places such as restaurants.

### **Race**

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against someone because of their colour, nationality or ethnic origin. It includes protection for groups that share a distinct cultural identity such as Gypsy and Traveller communities, Sikhs and people and communities of Jewish origin.

### **Religion or belief**

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against someone because of their religion or belief. Religion refers to any religion that has a clear structure and belief system. Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs and includes non-belief or lack of belief.

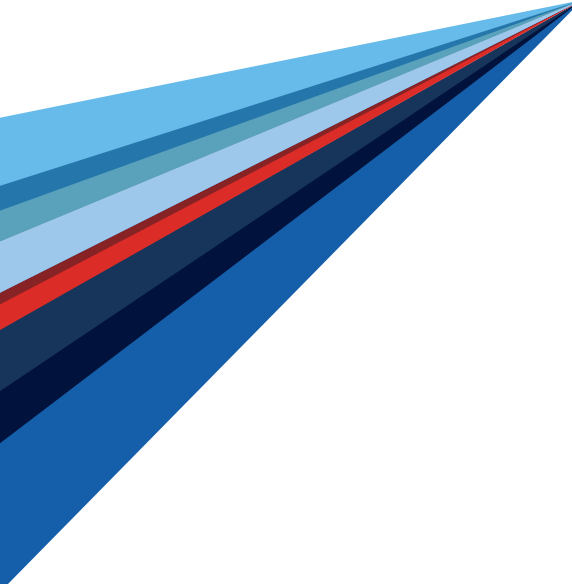


### **Sex**

The Equality Act 2010 protects both men and women from being discriminated against, or treated unfairly or unfavourably because of reasons related to their sex.

### ***Sexual orientation***

The Equality Act 2010 protects someone from being discriminated against because of their sexual orientation. The Equality Act 2010 defines a persons' sexual orientation towards people of the same sex as a gay man or a lesbian; towards people of the opposite sex as heterosexual; towards people of either sex as bisexual.



## APPENDIX 3 – Equality Act 2010 – Types of discrimination

1. **Direct Discrimination** means unjustifiably treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than someone without that characteristic. For example, not giving a particular opportunity or club role to a woman because of the assumption that she will not have time due to family responsibilities.
2. **Indirect Discrimination** can happen when a rule, policy or way of doing things is equally applied to everyone but disadvantages someone because of their protected characteristic and where there is not an otherwise good reason for it in the first place. For example, a club may strongly want rowers to adhere to a certain dress code that would be difficult for someone to comply with because of their religious beliefs.
3. **Harassment** on the basis of protected characteristics is considered unlawful. The Equality Act 2010 defines harassment as behaviour which the recipient considers offensive and that violates their dignity and/or creates a hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.
4. **Victimisation** can happen where someone is subjected to discrimination because they have made a complaint or taken action under the Equality Act 2010 or have supported someone in doing so. For example, if a club member makes a complaint that they have been harassed because they are disabled and loses their membership as a consequence.



# Thank you.

Copyright © British Rowing Limited 2018

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, sorted in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of British Rowing.