

Investigation outcome

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Paddle Scotland acknowledges the importance of confronting and understanding harm arising from abuse and the associated trauma, in order to foster a safe and supportive environment in our sport.

We have recently concluded an independent investigation into reports of breaches of our rules centring around safeguarding and non-recent breaches, leading to harm, within a paddling environment in the west of Scotland. We have a responsibility to reflect on the findings and take forward learnings to ensure our safeguarding culture and governance is effective and identify where this needs to improve, in order to protect individuals in our sport from harm.

Investigation into non-recent breaches

An independent, trauma-informed investigation was commissioned as a direct result of Paddle Scotland's Safeguarding Team receiving a disclosure by a member participant, who reported that as a child, he had been harmed by a coach (the subject of the investigation).

The investigation identified evidence which substantiated the allegations against the subject, including the identification of multiple victims who were participants during the same period to which the disclosure related to.

The subject of the investigation is now deceased. As a result, no disciplinary action can be taken. However, the fact that disciplinary action is not possible does not lessen the seriousness of the findings, the ongoing trauma experienced, or Paddle Scotland's responsibility to acknowledge what happened and learn from these findings. While there can be no criminal proceedings also due to the individual now being deceased, the investigation corroborated accounts of breaches and harm being perpetrated by the subject who was a coach. This constituted allegations of extremely serious wrongdoing, a grave abuse of trust and far more than a breach of conduct and safeguarding standards.

Recognising the harm

Paddle Scotland consulted with the victims identified prior to this public statement being issued. In order to guard against further impact on these individuals, the details of this investigation, including the identity of the subject and specific details of the environment in which the harm occurred have been kept confidential.

We recognise the courage it takes for individuals, including those who have shared their accounts in this specific case, to come forward and disclose their experiences, particularly non-recent experiences, occurring as a child. We are committed to ensuring that anyone who participates in our sport is able to do so in a safe environment, including those who have been past members.

We take all allegations into safeguarding matters seriously and will endeavour to ensure that all concerns are listened to, that individuals are treated with dignity and that they are supported to understand their options for remediation.

Paddle Scotland acknowledges the harm that has been experienced by the victims in this case, and we are deeply sorry to those who have experienced this harm in our community. We are continuing to offer these individuals specialised support, bespoke to individuals who have suffered, when in their childhood.

Reporting abuse and channels of support available

If you have been affected by similar events and wish to disclose or report a safeguarding concern or would like support, please contact Paddle Scotland's Safeguarding Team through the following details.

E: safeguarding@paddlescotland.org.uk

Emails can also be sent directly to Julie Mullen, Head of Safe Sport
julie.mullen@paddlescotland.org.uk

Disclosures can also be made anonymously via our website at the following link:

[Report a concern](#)

If you would prefer to report and/or seek support through an independent service, you can reach out to one of our safeguarding partners at the following:

Children First:	T: 0141 419 1156	E: cwps@childrenfirst.org.uk
Kyniska Advocacy:	T: 07895 054597	E: support@kyniskaadvocacy.com

If you require emergency or crisis support in relation to any events you have experienced in a paddling environment, please contact the police on 999 or your local social work services.

[Find your local social care team](#)

Paddle Scotland is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all members of our sporting community - past, present, and future. To enable this, we review the outcome of each investigation to ensure that lessons are identified, and that these learnings are implemented into our existing framework. This supports our continuous work in how we promote an effective safeguarding culture within our sport, helping us to enhance our safeguarding governance for the future. We will share regular insights with our sporting community into how we are achieving this via our website.