



Standards for Deployment

Guidance for Clubs

Published September 2025

Document Purpose

The Standards for Deployment aim to prioritise safety in all Paddle Activities. This document is intended to provide guidance and support to clubs while the main the Standards for Deployment Policy created by Paddle UK can be found [here](#)

Clubs are required to meet these Standards across three main areas: Policy, People, and Activity, by ensuring the following:

- **Policy:** Relevant club policies are established and accessible.
- **People:** The Club committee is operational, and key personnel possess the necessary training and qualifications.
- **Activity:** A club safety framework is in place, and all club activities adhere to this framework and the Standards for Deployment.

Paddle Scotland offers support to clubs in each of these areas. For assistance, please contact Adam Burns, one of our development managers, at adam.burns@paddlescotland.org.uk.

Further information and guidance for clubs can be found in the subsequent pages.

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Club Policies

All Clubs need to have the following policies in place and uploaded onto their Club JustGo Account:

- Health and Safety Policy (including provision of First Aid)
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Risk Assessments (this could include generic risk assessments, site specific risk assessments or competition risk assessments)
- Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Policy (Adult Safeguarding policy is appropriate for Adult only clubs)*
- Equality Policy*
- Club Constitution

* Where an asterisk is, this indicates where a club can choose to formally adopt the Paddle Scotland document if they wish, you can do this on your club JustGo account.

→ All clubs must have the above documents publically available by the end of 2026, for example on a club website.

People

Club Roles

Each club needs to have the below roles identified on their club JustGo account as a minimum. The people within these roles need to have completed the relevant training (see table below)

- Club Chair
- Club Secretary
- Club Treasurer
- Club Safeguarding Officer*
- Club Safety Officer*

*Where an asterisk indicates that the role doesn't need to be part of the committee but needs a strong link with the committee.

Club Role Training Requirements

Role	Training requirement (hyperlinked to training)	Notes	Role Descriptions
<i>All Club Committee Members</i>	Intro to Safeguarding elearning or Child Wellbeing & Protection in Sport	Sport Scotland board and committee training is currently NOT accepted	Anyone holding a role on the committee, in a named or general committee role
<i>Safeguarding Officer</i>	Child Wellbeing & Protection in Sport & Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer Training & Paddle UK Code of Conduct for Coaching Workforce	CWPS & CWPO courses must be updated every 3 years.	The person in charge of all safeguarding for the club
<i>Club Safety Officer</i>	Paddle UK Risk Assessment and Risk Management elearning & Intro to Safeguarding elearning or Child Wellbeing & Protection in Sport & Safety Officer Induction Programme & CPD through SO newsletters/ workshops	Those that have attended Event Safety Training are required to attend the Safety Officer Induction Programme within a 3 year period of their Event Safety Training	Person in charge of overseeing all safety within the club
<i>Trip Organisers, Team Managers & other organising roles</i>	Paddle UK Risk Assessment and Risk Management elearning & Intro to Safeguarding elearning or Child Wellbeing & Protection in Sport	Anyone in an organising a trip, team manager or another organising role.	Safeguarding updated every 3 years.
<i>Chaperones</i>	Child Wellbeing & Protection in Sport & Paddle UK Code of Conduct for Coaching Workforce	Supporting and in charge under 18s when away	Safeguarding updated every 3 years
<i>Club Instructor / Coach / Leader</i>	Intro to Safeguarding elearning or Child Wellbeing & Protection in Sport & Paddle UK Code of Conduct for Coaching Workforce	By the end of 2026 all formal instructor/ leading / coaching must have a suitably BCAB qualified person leading the session.	Safeguarding updated every 3 years. Have appropriate first aid, safeguarding & CPD in place.
<i>Event Organisers</i>	Paddle UK Risk Assessment and Risk Management elearning & Intro to Safeguarding elearning or Child Wellbeing & Protection in Sport & Safety Officer Induction Programme & CPD through SO newsletters/ workshops	Those planning and organising events	Event management training updated every 3 years
<i>Event Safeguarding Officers</i>	Child Wellbeing & Protection in Sport & Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer Training & Paddle UK Code of Conduct for Coaching Workforce	Those in charge of the safeguarding at an event	CWPS & CWPO updated every 3 years

Activities

What is the Club Safety Framework?

A paddlesport club safety framework is a structured approach taken to ensure the safety of those engaging in club activities. Its purpose is to manage risk, promote safe practice and ensure effective response to emergency situations. Its aim is to create a culture of safety within the club or organisation, where all participants understand their responsibilities for maintaining a safe paddling environment and are empowered to contribute to the overall safety of the group.

The Club safety framework may include:

- A Generic Risk Assessment: This may cover most club activities and additionally, where appropriate, venue or activity specific risk assessments will be required.
- Safety Policies and Procedures: Establishing clear rules, guidelines, and protocols for safe participation in paddlesport activities. This may include, for example, guidance relating to:
 - Equipment use
 - Participant conduct
 - Communication procedures including ways to communicate such as phone, VHF etc
 - Emergency response
 - Minimum experience and competence requirements for taking part in club activity
 - Minimum qualification and experience prerequisites for leading or coaching

Annual reviews of risk assessments and safety paperwork is seen as good practice and keeps the club safe / constantly developing safety protocols.

- Supervision
 - Ensure that those supervising club activities are suitably qualified & experienced and are within staffing ratios.

- Equipment Maintenance and Inspection
 - Ensuring that equipment, including boats, paddles, personal flotation devices (PFDs), and safety gear, is properly maintained and regularly inspected for wear and tear.
- Emergency Procedures:
 - Procedures for responding to emergencies, such as injuries, or incidents requiring search and rescue operations.
- First Aid provision
- Safeguarding policies
- Communication and Reporting:
 - Having channels of communication for sharing safety information, such as trip plans, weather updates, and safety alerts. Encouraging participants to report safety concerns or incidents to club officials for review and follow-up.
 - Thinking about what lines of communication you have is important such as VHF, Phone, PLB, Flares etc.
- Requirement for, and nature of a 'Float Plan':
 - This outlines the details of a paddling trip. It may include: the planned route, estimated time of departure and return, contact information for the paddlers, shore contact, descriptions of the paddlers and their equipment, and any other relevant details about the trip. Float plans provide essential information to rescue personnel in case of an emergency or if paddlers fail to return as scheduled.

Overall, a paddlesport club safety framework aims to create a culture of safety within the club or organisation. A culture where all participants understand their responsibilities for maintaining a safe paddling environment, and are empowered to contribute to the overall safety of the group. Frameworks may differ based on if the activity is formal coaching, supervised or a collaborative club activity and clubs should put in appropriate measures based on the activity taking place.

See '[Paddle Safer](#)' document for comprehensive safety guidance for Paddlesport Clubs.

How does my club ensure we comply with the standards?

1. Determine what type of activity you are delivering using the flow chart below (table 2)
2. Review the requirements for that activity in the table below (table 2)
3. Ensure that the activity requirements such as qualifications, experience and safety protocols are in place.

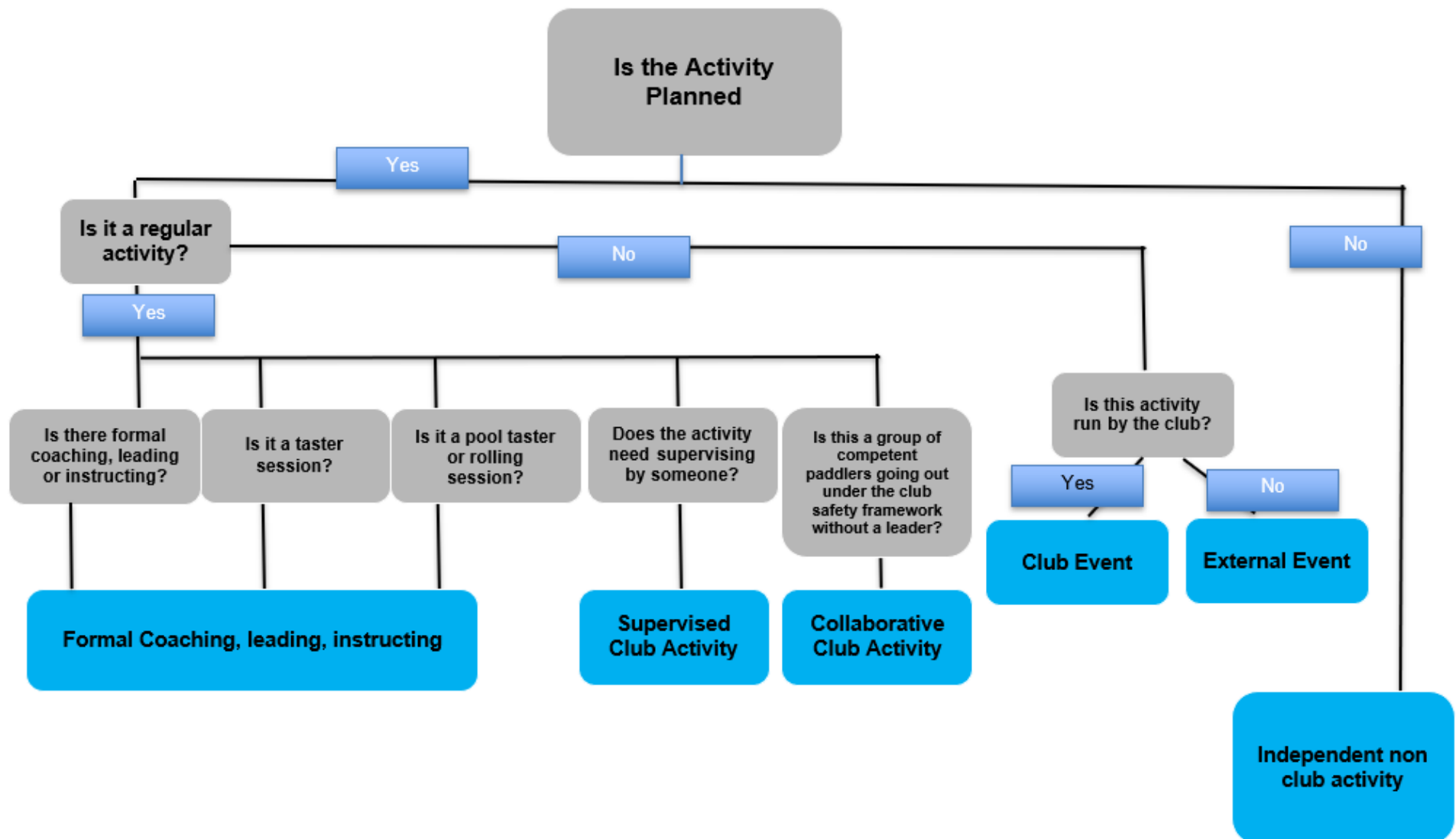
Table 1: Deployment of Instructors / Coaches & Leaders

	Membership	Min qualification required	Training	Safeguarding & First Aid
Instructors (14 to 17) <i>(deployed with supervision)</i>	Junior Membership	• BCU Level 1 Coach • BCAB Paddlesports Instructor • BCAB SUP Instructor • Bell Boat Helm • Stadium Raft Guide	• BCAB Code of Conduct Elearning • 20 CPD points every 3 years	• BCAB Introduction to safeguarding elearning
Instructors (18 plus) <i>(Can be deployed without direct supervision)</i>	Full Membership	<i>(those being deployed without supervision should have a site specific competency sign off)</i>		• BCAB Introduction to safeguarding elearning if NOT working with those under 18s • Sport Scotland CWPS if working with under 18s Hold appropriate first aid training (minimum 1 day)
Coaches <i>(under 18 year old coaches need to be deployed with supervision)</i>	Full Membership	• BC/ UKCC Level 1 Coach • BCU Level 2 Coach • BCAB Coach Award • BC Paddlesports Instructor (completed before 01/01/2019)		• BCAB Introduction to safeguarding elearning if NOT working with those under 18s • Sport Scotland CWPS if working with under 18s Hold appropriate first aid training (Minimum 1 day for Sheltered Water / minimum 2 days for moderate water)
Leaders	Full Membership	• BCAB Leader Award • BC Leader Award • BC 4 Star • BCAB Raft Guide		

For more information on environmental & discipline specific qualifications check [Environmental Definitions & Deployment Guidance](#)

Table 2: Types of Club Activity

Type of activity	Example	Covered by club Insurance	Qualified instructor / coach / leader required	Notes	Covered by Generic Risk Assessments?	Specific Risk assessment needed?	Approved by Club Safety Officer (Covered by Club Safety Framework)	Club trip organiser in place	Chaperone needed
Formal Coaching/ Leading/ /Instructing	Taster sessions Coaching sessions Led trips Pool sessions	Yes	Yes		Yes	No (unless specific to coaching -e.g polo)	Yes	Yes	No
Supervised	Performance training session Uncoached Pool Sessions Club Training sessions	Yes	Maybe	There are clear supervision arrangements using people skilled enough for the responsibility	Yes	No (unless not covered by Generic RA)	Yes	Yes	No
Collaborative club activity	Buddy group Paddling Weekly set group paddles	Yes	No	All members are at an appropriate standard for the paddle and will follow club rules	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Club Events	One off River Trips, Symposiums, interclub events	Yes	Yes	A qualified person needs to be managing the safety of the event	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
External Events	Wet West, GBSUP Race CVC	No	No	Event organisers must have insurance in place and meet the standards for deployment	No	Covered by external organisers risk assessment	No	No (Yes if formal club trip to attend the event)	No (Yes if formal club trip to attend the event)
Independent non club activity	Members of club paddling together outside of club activity	No	No	This is paddling from outwith the club. If club equipment is used clear protocols must be put in place.	N/A	N/A	N/a	No	No
Overnight Trips	Overnight camp or residential trip	Yes	Dependant on which activity above takes place		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes



Collaborative Club Activity Explained

- It is up to a club committee to decide how members of the club are competent to take part in activities such as a Formal Led paddle or Collaborative Club Activities, there is no set way to do this and no clear requirement from Paddle UK/ Paddle Scotland.
- Clubs and committees will have a strong understanding of their club & it's members and should put appropriate checks and balances in place to ensure that paddlers are safe and competent to be taking part in paddles.
- Below is an example of a way for clubs of how they could evidence the competence of their paddlers. The below example would be seen as a robust system using Personal Performance Awards to show competence to paddle in appropriate environments. There are many ways a club may decide to implement this and this is for the committee to agree.
- Collaborative Club Activity is all focused on club members paddling together in groups of competent paddlers where a leader doesn't need to be present. It's important that a club committee puts appropriate steps in place so anyone attending a Collaborative Club Activity has the appropriate competence in place.

ExampleType of Paddle	Example Description	Example of Level of competence
Development Paddle	This will be a relatively short paddle in sheltered conditions, which may be on a loch or sea. Wind speed is expected to be F3 or below and paddlers will not be exposed to tidal races or overfalls. Simple escape routes will always be available.	This is a led paddle where competence can be seen and a qualified leader is in place.
Grade A	Single day trips up to 20km in distance. Relatively easy landings with escape routes available. They will offer relative shelter from extreme conditions and are little affected by ocean swell. Some tidal movement and short crossings may be found, but no tidal races or overfalls expected. Not expected to exceed force 3 winds.	Sea Kayak Award Or BC 3 Star Award Sea or equivalent
Grade B	A day trips up to 30km in distance. Some awkward landings and sections of coastline with no escape routes should be expected. Tidal movement, tidal races, overfalls, crossings, ocean swell and surf may be encountered. They will also be exposed to the weather and associated conditions. Not expected to exceed force 4 winds.	Coastal Sea Kayak Award or BC 4 Star Award Sea or equivalent
Grade C	Single and multi-day trips of greater distances. These trips will have difficult landings and will have no escape routes for the majority of the trip. Fast tidal movement, tidal races, overfalls, extended crossings,ocean swell and surf may be found on all of these trips. They will be very exposed to the weather and conditions, therefore requiring detailed planning. Potentially exceeding force 4 winds.	Coastal Sea Kayak Award or equivalent

Frequently Asked Questions

Why do we have standards for deployment?

- We fundamentally want paddling to be a safe and fun activity, open to everyone.
- One of our roles as a Governing Body is to ensure paddlesports is as safe as possible and our clubs are supported to ensure this within a club setting.
- As such we have worked closely with Paddle UK and other governing bodies to learn lessons from the findings of reports into safeguarding issues experienced in other sports, (e.g. the Whyte report into gymnastics). We are committed to put in place expertise and training to support the safeguarding and safety of paddlers.
- Following the follow-up reports by coroners, the Marine Accident Investigation Branch and others into a number of paddling related incidents, including Haverfordwest, the Kerry River, the Great Orme, we want to ensure those coaches and leaders that take responsibility for paddlers have the required level of training, qualification and support to ensure the safety of all participants.

What support is available to Affiliated Clubs?

- Paddle Scotland is offering a wide package of support to clubs to assist with meeting the Standards for Deployment. Please get in touch with us!

What if the standards for deployment are not followed?

- The standards for deployment have been put together to ensure all those involved within paddlesport activity have a safe and enjoyable experience, and that the standards have been thoroughly considered and deemed reasonable.
- For those that wish to be affiliated with a National Association e.g. Paddle Scotland, it may be difficult to gain affiliation and insurance. It could also be deemed that not following the standards of deployment is putting those in your care at risk.

As a qualified coach or leader can I use an assistant?

- A current BCAB coach or leader can make an informed decision and professional judgement in using an assistant on sessions or journeys. Someone that has completed a formal BCAB training course (coach discipline specific training or leadership training) would be deemed as appropriate to support such activity. The qualified coach/leader would have overall responsibility and maintain line of sight during the session/journey.
- A risk assessment taking into consideration the assistants knowledge and skills, the individuals on the session as well as the environment to consider whether the recommended ratios within the environmental definitions document can be increased by the use of an assistant

What if our club does not have activities for children or adults at risk? Do we still need to have a safeguarding policy?

- Yes you do. Safeguarding is a collective responsibility. Everybody involved in paddlesports has a duty of care to safeguard and protect adults, both inside and outside our sport. Safeguarding training is mandatory for people in key roles of responsibility working with adults. Paddle Scotland will

ensure that all those working or volunteering in regulated activity have access to appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to adults at risk.

What about activities that my club delivers that are not formal coaching or leading?

- The club is responsible for the safety of people participating in all club activities. You still need to have all the policies and safety frameworks in place even if you're not running formal coaching and leading.

How do I know what training our members have done?

- Within JustGo, club Secretaries and online administrators already have access to a number of reports to view the training, qualifications and roles of club members.
- Clubs also now have access to a visual dashboard on the Paddle UK website with the option to add specific individuals and view their details.
- If you're struggling with using these, get in touch and we can offer support or training for your club.

How will this be assessed?

- This process is about helping you to protect your volunteers, members and paddlers. We are here to help you comply too. Paddle Scotland will carry out regular monitoring and send reminders to clubs where necessary.
- You will not be able to reaffiliate with Paddle Scotland without the appropriate policies in place.

Can I use alternative training for safeguarding courses?

- No, Safeguarding training exists in many contexts and we recognise some individuals may have completed training through other organisations. However, there are important differences between sport and other sectors and therefore there is no longer any recognition of equivalents.

My Club buys in Coaching and leading support from outside our membership. Do we have to check their qualifications and status?

- Yes, many clubs use outside providers to provide coaching and leading within the club. Coaches and Leaders should be happy to provide evidence that they are qualified for the activity and updated.

Is there a grace period for safety and welfare officers completing training:

- We understand that committees can experience changes in roles, sometimes planned and other times unexpectedly. For planned transitions, it is recommended that a handover period occurs, along with the completion of any required training, before the new officer begins their role.
- However, when changes happen suddenly, it may not always be possible to follow this process. In such cases, the committee should agree on a course of action to ensure the role is covered and if someone steps into the role unexpectedly, we advise that they should be given up to eight-weeks to complete the mandatory training, as outlined in the Standards for Deployment. Should the club re-affiliation date fall within the eight week period, clubs must contact their National Associations for support

Can our certificated coaches or leaders operate outside of the recommended ratios & remit?

- Paddle Scotland advice will always be that best practice is to work within the recommended remit and ratios of the [Environmental Definitions & Deployment Guidance](#) for Instructors, Coaches & Leaders document. A club may choose to deploy a coach or leader outside of their formal qualification remit, the best way to do this would be a robust and detailed risk assessment being carried out, and a recorded and current skills verification approved by the committee gaining assurances from experienced coaches/leaders holding an appropriate qualification within the discipline and environment.

As a committee member am I covered by insurance?

- Committee members are covered to the value of £5m, with any injuries claimed to the value of £10m. If a committee member were found to be at fault, it would be regarded as the 'club' being in the wrong rather than an individual as all decisions of the committee are by consensus.

As a club, can members use Social media to advertise peer paddles?

- Peer paddles would happen out with the club and as such wouldn't be club activity so shouldn't be advertised through the club social media. Collaborative club paddles can be seen as a way to support paddlers of a set level of competence to paddle with each other without a leader and can be advertised through the club pages and socials.

I'm part of a competition Club and we do training sessions where we aren't coached but are personally training together, where does this sit?

- This would most likely sit in collaborative club paddling or supervised as the paddlers aren't being coached and all competent to be in a space paddling together. See table 2

Does a Club Safeguarding Officer or Safety Officer need to be on the club committee?

- No they don't need to be on the club committee but need to have a strong link back to the committee.

If two affiliated-clubs come together to organise a joint led paddle, is this classified as an Event or Formal Leading? e.g. an in-ratio group going on a day trip with a qualified leader, but participants are from 2 different clubs.

- This is classified as an event as it has members from multiple clubs, this could be a lead paddle if members were all affiliated members of one of the clubs. Clubs could choose to add new members at any time in their affiliation period.

If a club organised an external provider to deliver training or coaching e.g. Sea Kayak Leader Training and offered any spare spaces to a neighbouring club, would this classify as an Event?

- This would be an external event that is set up and run by the external provider, those attending should organise through the external provider to ensure this stays an external event. The external provider would be responsible for risk assessments and safety management protocols.