

British Long Distance Swimming Association



Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

2008

British Long Distance Swimming Association

Policy for the protection of children and vulnerable adults

Introduction & Summary of Policy

This policy outlines the measures which the BLDSA is taking in order to protect vulnerable persons who may engage in our sport, as participants, organisers, helpers or spectators.

The policy includes children, as well as ‘vulnerable adults’. Within law, a vulnerable adult is defined as one who cannot adequately protect themselves from harm. Within the arena of open-water swimming, this may involve the following groups of people (although the list is not exhaustive):

- **Children who have not yet attained their 18th birthday**
- **Adults with certain learning or physical disabilities or mental health difficulties**
- **Swimmers, particularly those who may become confused or disorientated as a result of the cold**
- **All of those who are in need of, or who are receiving, emergency first aid or medical treatment, or rescue from the water.**

Throughout this policy, the term “Vulnerable persons” is used to encompass the terms child and vulnerable adult.

It is the intention of the BLDSA to help vulnerable persons (whether they be children or adults) to protect themselves whilst undertaking activities under the oversight of the organisation. This includes swims, briefings, presentations, meetings, and occasionally travel to and from or accommodation at such events. In addition, when a child or vulnerable adult enters our organisation’s events, having been subjected to abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving their self esteem. In such cases the association shall work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the person receives the required support.

The BLDSA is committed to helping all persons to enjoy the sport of open water swimming. With regard to vulnerable persons, we are fully committed to ensuring that:

- The welfare of the vulnerable person is paramount at all times
- All persons, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs, sexual identity or any other irrelevant factor, have the right to protection from abuse and discrimination
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

All members of the association have a duty to be aware of potential issues regarding the protection of vulnerable persons. This includes ensuring their activities do not cause or facilitate harm to vulnerable persons, and reporting any concerns or complaints to the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer. Volunteers working with the BLDSA are not expected to be trained to deal with situations or abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred, but merely to report any concerns they have.

Certain members of the organisation do have a particular responsibility for the protection of children and vulnerable adults. These include:

- The Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer, who is responsible on an association wide level for putting policies in place and ensuring they are regularly reviewed in light of new developments, ensuring that the policies are adequately disseminated, followed and enforced, providing help and advice, as well as seeking professional advice should this be required.
- The child & vulnerable adult protection committee who assist the child & vulnerable adults protection officer, and deputise for him or her when required.
- The executive committee, led by the BLDSA president
- Swim secretaries and other officials, who must be aware of particular protection issues in relation to their event.

The duties of these people, in addition to the membership as a whole, are explained in further detail throughout this document. Those members who are unsure as to their role should, in the first instance, contact a member of the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee.

This policy is split into the following broad areas:

- Prevention of abuse/neglect (Section A) – this includes vetting procedures for those who work with vulnerable persons, as well as details on how the association seeks to create a culture which respects children and vulnerable adults and minimises the chances of abuse occurring
- Dealing with suspected abuse/neglect (Section B)– information on how to report any concerns, and who is responsible for acting in such circumstances. Further details describing various forms of abuse, and on how to recognise and appropriately report potentially abusive or neglectful situations, are contained as an appendix to this policy.
- Administrative issues and procedures (Section C) – including the makeup of the child and vulnerable adults protection committee, conduct of investigations, and arrangements for affiliated clubs.

In addition, there are a number of appendices to the policy. These include:

- Appendix I: Code of practice for those working with children or vulnerable adults
- Appendix II: Detecting and dealing with abuse or neglect – a guide for members
- Appendix III: Vetting questionnaire
- Appendix IV: Information on the BLDSA Child Protection Strategy
- Appendix V: Sample permission form for use of data & photographs

SECTION A – Prevention of Abuse & Neglect

A1.00 The BLDSA aims to prevent the occurrence of abuse and neglect by:

- Ensuring that a vetting system is in place, and setting standards for acceptable behaviour.
- Ensuring that the BLDSA creates an atmosphere which respects the contributions of children and vulnerable adults and minimises the risks of abuse or neglect occurring

A2.00 **Ensuring that a vetting system is in place, and setting standards for acceptable behaviour.**

All persons whose work with the organisation involves regular, intimate or unsupervised contact with children & vulnerable adults (or data/photographs relating to them), or who has a management or oversight responsibility for such persons, is required to undergo a vetting process. This includes the following people (although the list is not exhaustive):

- Executive committee members and President
- Event organisers and their committee and officials
- Members of other official BLDSA committees
- All those who may man the BLDSA rescue boat
- All those who may act as first aiders at events
- All those likely to act in an official capacity during an event more than once in any twelve month period
- All those who may be advertised, recommended or utilised by the BLDSA's officials as canoe/rowing boat escorts
- Any other persons as identified by the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer or Committee from time to time

In cases where such people may be provided by another organisation (e.g. local canoe club, voluntary aid society and so on), internal vetting by the BLDSA shall not be required if the organisations are able to satisfy the relevant swim secretary that they have a vulnerable persons protection policy in place and the members supplied have been duly cleared. If the supplying organisation is unable to so satisfy the swim secretary, clearance by the BLDSA may be required. This will not be necessarily required if the contact is likely to be brief and non-intimate in nature, however swim secretaries should use their discretion in making such a decision. Swim secretaries are advised to consider these factors well in advance of their event, and to seek the advice of the child & vulnerable adult protection committee if required.

Where swimmers (or their parents) make a private arrangement with a friend or family member to provide a canoe escort (or other 1:1 contact), vetting shall not be automatically necessary, although it may be required, at the discretion of the swimmer/parents or the swim secretary. If not submitted to a clearance process, responsibility for the actions of such a person lie solely with the responsible adult who requested their services, and the BLDSA accepts no responsibility for any protection issues that may ensue. As a minimum standard, the swim secretary should be responsible for collecting the name, address and date of birth of all such persons, and storing these details so that a record is maintained in case of any future allegation.

A2.01 The clearance process shall comprise four parts, these being:

- Vetting Questionnaire
- Criminal Records Check
- References
- Agreeing to a code of good practice

This process (with the exception of the references) shall be repeated every two years (or more often, at the discretion of the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer). On each occasion, two members of the child & vulnerable adults protection committee shall review the information gained from each different component of the clearance process and come to a joint decision as to whether the member should be cleared or refused clearance.

New members applying for clearance for the first time will be barred from undertaking any 1:1 contact with children or (potentially) vulnerable adults until the vetting process is completed. Members already cleared who are wishing to renew their clearance will be deemed to be provisionally cleared whilst waiting for the process to be completed.

Those individuals who fail to satisfy any portion of the vetting process, either through failure to engage with the process when requested, or where the process indicates that they may pose a risk to vulnerable persons, may be subject to conditions on their continued membership, as decided by the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee

- A2.02 Responsibility for ensuring that people have been cleared lies with the person requesting their services (usually the swim secretary).

In order to facilitate this, the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer shall maintain a register of those who have been cleared, refused clearance, or have clearance pending, comprising their personal details as well as details of their clearance status and other relevant factors. Limited information from this register (usually – name, date of birth and membership number, together with the words “cleared” or “refused clearance”) will be supplied to swim secretaries (and other relevant event organisers) by 1st June each year, with any updates notified to such persons during the swim season. In addition, swim secretaries & event organisers may contact the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer at any time to clarify the status of any particular member(s).

A2.10 *Vetting Questionnaire*

The vetting questionnaire shall contain questions regarding the suitability of the applicant to work with children and vulnerable adults within the organisation, as well as collecting basic biographical data. The exact nature of the questionnaire will be decided on an ongoing basis by the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee.

One section of the form will include questions regarding the applicant’s criminal record. Possession of a criminal record does not necessarily bar the applicant from working with or being a member of the BLDSA, and full and early disclosure of facts on this form (rather than them being discovered unexpectedly during the formal criminal records check) will be viewed positively.

The current version of the questionnaire is contained as an appendix to this policy

A2.20 *Criminal Records Check*

Criminal records disclosures (at a standard or enhanced level, dependent on the nature of the activities being undertaken by the applicant), will be requested by a member of the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee via an umbrella body. The cost of this will be borne by the association. This committee member will be responsible for ensuring that the form has been correctly filled in, and checking relevant identification documents. They should also take a photograph of the applicant and send this to the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer, for use in internal checking procedures.

In the case of applicants who have lived abroad for a significant period of time (usually >6 months), the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer should acquire expert advice as to the feasibility of checking for any criminal record within that country.

- A2.21 In the event that a criminal records disclosure process does not record any convictions/cautions etc., the member is deemed cleared as regards this stage of the process (after both checkers have seen it).

If any items are revealed in the disclosure process, the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer must be informed immediately so that appropriate safeguards (such as suspension) may be put in place, and an investigation begun. The investigation should initially comprise an interview with the member to establish their knowledge of the information revealed (unless revealing this information to the member is prohibited by CRB procedures). If the accuracy of the disclosure is disputed by the member, the investigation should be put on hold until the CRB appeals procedure has been completed.

There can be no comprehensive list of those offences which preclude acceptance into a position within the BLDSA, instead the members of the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee viewing the disclosure must make a decision as to whether a risk may be posed to the protection of vulnerable persons coming into contact with the association. Legal advice or similar may need to be sought in some circumstances

If the items shown on the disclosure obviously have no bearing on the applicant's suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults (e.g. minor motoring offences), the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer may authorise clearance without a full investigation. It is the policy of the BLDSA that ex-offenders should be welcomed in the organisation, with restrictions or bars on membership the exception rather than the rule, and only in situations where the member's criminal record represents a continued risk to vulnerable persons in the organisation.

A2.22 Details of the criminal records (or lack thereof) of persons seeking clearance will be treated confidentially, with only persons requiring access to this information (usually limited to the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee) allowed to do so. All disclosures will be destroyed within 6 months of a decision being reached, unless exceptional circumstances (as defined by the child & vulnerable adult protection committee) dictate that they should be kept for longer – if this is the case the member will be informed at the earliest opportunity. During the period of retention, the disclosures will be kept securely by the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer or their nominated deputy.

Due to the diverse geographical locations of members of the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee, it may sometimes be necessary to send information by post. In the case of information relating to criminal records or other sensitive information, this should be done using recorded delivery, in order to ensure confidentiality is not breached. Use of telephone for transmitting such information is left to individuals' judgement. Fax, email or voicemail should not be used as a means of transmitting confidential information.

Under no circumstances will information relating to BLDSA members' criminal records be released to any person not requiring it for the purpose of making a decision as to the suitability of the member to work with children and vulnerable adults. Those members who are privy to this information must ensure that it is used only for this purpose.

A2.30 *References*

All persons seeking clearance for the first time should supply the names and contact details of a referee who can comment on their suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults. Ideally, this should be a recent employer or supervisor in another sports club, and must be from someone outside of the BLDSA. References from family members will not be acceptable.

A2.31 References will be taken up by the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee, who will ask the referee to comment on the following areas:

- The nature and duration of their relationship with the applicant
- Whether the applicant has ever been subject to any disciplinary investigation or action that they are aware of
- Whether they consider the applicant suitable to work with children and vulnerable adults within the BLDSA (an outline of the kinds of activities undertaken by our members should be provided).

The BLDSA will pay the reasonable expenses of referees undertaking this task (normally limited to postage costs, by means of including a stamped addressed envelope)

A2.40 *Agreeing to a code of good practice*

The Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee shall produce a code of good practice for those members of the BLDSA who come into contact with children or vulnerable adults. Every member applying for (or renewing) their clearance will be provided with a copy of this. The code should be read, and then the slip on the bottom signed and returned to the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer.

Compliance with the code will be monitored at events by members of the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee.

A3.00 Ensuring that the BLDSA creates an atmosphere which respects the contributions of children and vulnerable adults and minimises the risks of abuse or neglect occurring

The BLDSA aims to create an environment where the contributions of all its members are respected, including those of children and vulnerable adults. Children and Vulnerable Adults often have the hardest time of all in having their views listened to, and so extra attention should be paid to ensuring that they receive a fair and respectful hearing, on a par with all other members.

All members, but event organisers in particular, have a responsibility to ensure that children and vulnerable adults are adequately protected. In addition, as part of the BLDSA's commitment to provide a culture of safety for all its members, the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer/Committee may occasionally issue guidance (either on an organisation-wide basis, or to individual members) which is aimed at ensuring the protection of, and respect for, vulnerable members. This guidance should be followed.

- A3.10 Those members acting as swim secretaries must undertake a period of education in vulnerable group abuse risk assessment, detecting possible cases of abuse, dealing with disclosures of abuse, and reporting concerns to the relevant authorities, the exact nature of which will be decided from time to time by the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer. Alternatively, they may wish to appoint a deputy from their swim committee to undertake this. In addition, ongoing training in the BLDSA's own procedures and policies will be made available to all officials and other interested parties as part of the annual Health & Safety Symposium, and should be attended by at least one representative from each swim.

Swim secretaries (or their deputies) are expected to use the knowledge gained during this training in order to undertake an assessment as to the protection risks involved in their event and produce a plan to remedy them (as part of their general risk assessment); as well as upholding good practice standards amongst the membership during their event. The Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee have developed a generic risk assessment covering general protection issues pertinent to many swims, in order to assist with this process. Risk assessments should be returned together with the Health & Safety risk assessment at least one calendar month before the event, and their comprehensiveness and appropriateness, as well as their implementation, will be monitored by a member of the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee.

- A3.11 All members of the BLDSA who have received training in child & vulnerable adult protection, either through the BLDSA or via other means, will have their qualification recorded on a central database held by the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer, who will then identify any persons who are still in need of training and make this available.

- A3.20 Data relating to children or vulnerable adults will be collected, used, stored and disposed of in accordance with the Data Protection Act. In addition, all of those who handle data on children or vulnerable adults must have undergone the clearance process described above

Where such data is published (e.g. in event programmes, the BLDSA website, press releases etc.), permission will be sought from the member and/or their parent before this takes place. BLDSA officials are expected to use their judgement to determine whether specific permission is required.

- A 3.21 Photographs will be processed using the same principles as for data. Those taking, processing or publishing photographs on behalf of the BLDSA should have undergone the clearance process as described above.

Good practice dictates that photographs of vulnerable persons (such as swimmers exiting the water, or those in swim suits) should be taken and published with due regard to the subject's modesty. Event organisers are responsible for making sure that any photography undertaken by their officials or by spectators is appropriate and that permission for this has been formally or informally sought by the subjects of the photographs. The BLDSA Publicity officer will be responsible for moderating and appropriately dealing with photographic content for the BLDSA website, newsletters or press releases in accordance with best practice standards.

- A3.22 In order to facilitate A3.20 and A3.21 above, the membership application form for both juniors and adults will include a tick-box asking for permission for use of photographs and data within the organisation (including its website). In those who refuse permission, or for external publicity, further consent will still need to be sought as described above. The form in appendix V may be used for this purpose, although any other form of consent will be considered acceptable.

- A3.30 It is possible that vulnerable persons may witness, or be involved in, distressing events (such as rescue of a severely ill swimmer, being alone with such a swimmer on the water whilst waiting for help, or observing the abuse of another vulnerable person) which may affect their future well-being or enjoyment of the sport. This of course may apply to anybody seeing such an event, but children and vulnerable adults may be particularly at risk. All vulnerable persons who are involved in a distressing incident must be assessed & reassured as soon as possible, and if necessary referred to a counsellor or other appropriate professional. In addition, the swim secretary should ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that vulnerable persons are not put in such a position, taking into account the person's prior experience and maturity.
- A3.40 The BLDSA President and Executive Committee, through the general secretary shall be responsible for ensuring that job descriptions exist for all types of officials in the association, and for distributing these to the person(s) undertaking these roles. Where qualifications are required to undertake a role (e.g. first aiders, powerboat operators, health & safety officials), original copies of certificates must be seen and copies retained by the membership secretary.
- A3.50 All members of the association (and all parents/guardians of junior members) will be supplied, upon joining, with a summary of the BLDSA's child & vulnerable adult protection policy, which will contain, at a minimum, the following information:
- Outline of the policy
 - Details of the child protection officer and committee, explaining how to contact them if required

SECTION B – Dealing with suspected abuse and neglect

B1.00 *Preparedness*

The Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer/Committee shall provide a document giving guidance on how to detect and respond to incidents, disclosures, or suspicions of abuse or neglect. This guidance shall be provided to all event organisers, executive committee members, and anybody else who requests it.

Extra training in this area will be made available to any member requesting it, through the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer.

- B1.01 Each swim secretary must ensure that they (or a nominated deputy) take on responsibility for monitoring, and dealing with, any incidents of abuse or neglect, disclosures, or other concerns, during their event. A statement to this effect (in addition to the contact details of the responsible person) must be publicised e.g. at a briefing, or in the programme.

This person should be physically present and contactable throughout the event, and should usually be the person who undertook the training described in A3.10 above. They should be equipped with the guidance document described in B1.00, this policy, the swim's risk assessment, a list of all participants in the event (and contact details for their parents/carers if appropriate), and have access to a telephone. They should also have the contact details of:

- Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee/Officer
- Local Social Services Child Protection Unit
- Police (including crimestoppers number, location of nearest police station)

B1.10 *Dealing with the incident*

Any person witnessing, hearing about, or suspecting that abuse or neglect may have occurred has a responsibility to act. The way in which they do so is detailed in the guidance document described in B1.00. Full backing will be given to all members (or non-members) who in good faith report their suspicions.

Once the initial stage of the incident has been dealt with and referrals made to the relevant authorities, the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer must be informed at the earliest opportunity. Written details should be provided to him/her by anybody involved in the incident, describing what happened and what was done, using the form developed for this purpose. The Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer is then responsible for putting further safeguards in place (e.g. by suspending members), supporting those who were involved in the incident, and liaising with the statutory authorities.

Following the investigation by Social Services/Police (or immediately if this does not occur), the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer will instigate an internal process in order to safeguard the future needs of children or vulnerable persons within the BLDSA.

SECTION C – Administrative Issues

C1.00 Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee

The AGM shall appoint a Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer, who shall be a member of the executive committee.

C1.11 The Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer shall select at least three persons from the membership of the BLDSA to serve on the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee, which he/she shall chair.

C1.12 The Child & Vulnerable Adults Officer/Committee have overall responsibility for the protection of children and vulnerable adults within the BLDSA, under the oversight of the executive committee & president, including administering and reviewing this policy. They should undergo training appropriate to their role, and may occasionally draw upon the help of external bodies in order to help them safely protect the vulnerable persons within the BLDSA.

C1.13 The BLDSA shall indemnify itself and the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer and Committee against any claims which may be brought against them as a result of their actions, and shall provide access to legal advice should this be required.

C3.20 Compliance

Compliance with this policy is mandatory for all BLDSA members and during all events run under the auspices of the BLDSA. In order to ensure that compliance occurs, the following systems are in place:

- The completion of Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Risk Assessments, together with the comprehensiveness and appropriateness of the assessment, will be monitored. Should any concerns be raised by the member of the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee who is monitoring this, the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer will liaise with the relevant event organiser to ensure that proper procedures are in place and documented before the day of the event. Should this not be achieved to the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer's satisfaction, the event will not be permitted to run.
- Members of the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee will be present at the majority of events each season, and will be responsible for monitoring practice in the area of Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection. Should they note any lapses, they are responsible for taking immediate action to remedy the situation, and for referring the matter to the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer who may wish to instigate an investigation.
- All affiliated clubs will be asked to return a questionnaire sent at the beginning of each year checking that they have the necessary procedures in place and intend to follow them. A random selection of clubs may have an event monitored as described above. Any concerns relating to this will be followed up by the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer.

C3.00 Investigations

Investigations may be instigated by the Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer, if they have any concerns regarding vulnerable person protection issues. Circumstances which should always result in an investigation include:

- a. Evidence of previously unknown criminal record, or other cause for concern occurring during the vetting process
- b. Reports that a member failed to follow the code of good practice, or any part of this policy
- c. Reports of abuse/neglect by a member of the BLDSA, or at a BLDSA event.

- d. Complaints or concerns that the BLDSA's procedures for the protection of vulnerable persons are in any way insufficient

C3.10 Members who are accused of, or suspected of, posing any risk whatsoever to children or vulnerable adults will have their membership of the BLDSA suspended until such time as the investigation has concluded.

The Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer will be responsible for reviewing cases where suspension may be required, and issuing a letter to that effect to the member concerned. Notification should also be sent to other relevant parties (e.g. organisers of upcoming events) so that they can ensure the suspension is not broken. The Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer should also consider notifying external organisations which the suspended member is known to be involved with (e.g. employers, voluntary organisations, clubs) if there is any reason to suspect they may pose a risk to vulnerable persons in that external organisation.

Suspended members should not normally have any contact with other members of the organisation (other than family members, housemates etc.), however they may nominate one member (who is not involved in any way with the investigation) as their representative. This person may provide support and/or attend meetings/interviews etc to act as an advocate for the suspended member.

C3.20 Upon receipt of a child & vulnerable adult protection incident form, investigations will be carried by a member of the child & vulnerable adults protection committee, or, if necessary, more than one member.

If any interviews are carried out, at least two people from the investigating team should be in attendance. Minutes of the interview should be produced and agreed between the interviewers and interviewee. Reasonable travel expenses of all who attend the interview or meeting will be borne by the BLDSA.

C3.21 A written report of the investigation and recommendations for action should be produced by the investigating team, together with copies of any statements, interview minutes etc. This report should be passed to another member of the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection committee who has not previously been involved in the case, who should review the documentation and add their support (or otherwise) to the recommendations it contains. The full child & vulnerable adults protection committee will conduct a review of all incidents and investigations at the end of each season.

Action taken following an investigation should not be punitive, but rather looking to safeguard the children and vulnerable adults who come into contact with the association. Once a decision has been reached, the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer will be responsible for enacting this, as well as filing the report in a safe place

C3.22 Details of investigations will not normally be released to any member outside of the child & vulnerable adult protection committee, except in the following circumstances:

- i. They may be passed to external agencies (such as the police or social services) if it is considered that information regarding a risk to children or vulnerable adults has been discovered.
- ii. Those who are the subject of an investigation, or the complainant, or who are otherwise involved in the investigation (e.g. a child's parents) will normally be provided with a summary of what was discovered and what action was taken (unless to do so would further endanger any vulnerable persons, or might lead to bullying of those who have been involved in the investigation), and all will be given details of how to appeal.
- iii. A brief summary of the outcome of the investigation (e.g. "Member X was removed following a child protection investigation") will be provided to the executive committee, and, if appropriate, swim secretaries, however no other details will be gone into with these persons.
- iv. Any person involved in considering an appeal against a decision (see below) will be supplied with details of the initial investigation

C3.23 If there is any suspicion at any time that abuse or neglect may have occurred, the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer or member of the committee will take brief statements from those who saw/complained of the event and pass these to the relevant authorities (if this has not already been done) and suspend any member(s) involved who may pose a further risk. The investigation will then be adjourned until such time as proceedings by the police or social services have been completed. The role of the BLDSA investigators shall not be to establish what happened, or decide whether or not abuse/neglect has occurred, only to judge if there is a future risk to

children or vulnerable adults within the organisation, or if any lessons can be learned, and to put future safeguards in place as a result.

C4.00 *Affiliated clubs*

Clubs affiliated to the BLDSA who wish to run events under BLDSA rules or insurance must comply in full with this policy. They may, in addition, have their own policies which set in place procedures in addition to those identified here, or for use during events not run under the auspices of the BLDSA.

- C4.10 All affiliated clubs must have their own nominated officer/contact person for Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection. This person may administer the BLDSA policy within their own club (e.g. by running a vetting process in accordance with this policy, rather than routing all vetting requests through the BLDSA), subject to the oversight, approval and monitoring of the BLDSA Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee.

C5.00 *Authority to Act*

In order to safeguard children and vulnerable adults within the BLDSA, members of the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee require the authority to act independently in certain circumstances.

- C5.11 The Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer shall have the authority to suspend members from work with children & vulnerable adults, or from all work with the BLDSA, for the purpose of safeguarding vulnerable persons whilst an investigation is undertaken. They shall also have the authority to instigate such an investigation.
- C5.12 The Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee shall have the authority to conduct an investigation instigated under C5.11 above, and to permanently remove them from the association, or place conditions on their continued membership, for the purposes of Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection.
- C5.13 Assessment of an applicant's suitability to have contact with children or vulnerable adults (by means of viewing CRB disclosures, references, vetting questionnaires and other relevant material) shall be undertaken for each applicant by two members of the Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee, neither of whom should be related to the applicant.
- C5.14 All those concerned (e.g. those who are the subject of an allegation, those who made the complaint etc.) have a right to appeal against a decision made under paragraph C5.11-C5.13 (or a failure to make such a decision) by notifying the president of the BLDSA within 3 months of being notified of the decision (or, in the case of an ongoing suspension, at any time). Details of how to go about this should be included with the notification letter. The president (or their nominated deputy) should conduct a review of the case, and make any recommendations to the emergency committee, who will make a final decision. Confidential information may need to be released to the president and emergency committee to facilitate this, with the permission of the person to whom the information pertains, and must be treated equally confidentially by such persons.
- C5.20 The Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer/Committee shall have the authority to issue guidance to the membership on protection matters, or make amendments to the code of practice, as they deem necessary. Any such changes should be notified to the executive committee by the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer at the next meeting as part of his or her report.

C6.00 *Miscellaneous*

The Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee shall review this policy at least once every 12 months (or sooner, in light of developments in Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection) and make any recommendations for changes to the executive committee and AGM.

C6.10 Copies of this policy (together with all guidance documents, code of practice etc.) shall be kept by the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer, and distributed to all relevant parties, including (but not limited to):

- a. Members of the executive committee
- b. Members of the Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee
- c. Swim secretaries

Receipt of these documents by the above persons must be recorded by signature, and returned to the sender.

In addition, these documents will be available on the association's website, and made available to any person who requests them.

APPENDIX I

BLDSA Code of Practice for those in contact with children or vulnerable adults

The following is issued by the BLDSA's child protection committee as a code of good practice for those who may be in contact with children or vulnerable adults (or data/photographs relating to them) as part of their role within the association. It should be read in conjunction with the BLDSA's policy for the protection of children and vulnerable adults, guidance issued by the BLDSA's child and vulnerable adult protection committee, and any instructions particular to the role you undertake (i.e. some swims have special procedures in place in order to control additional risks), copies of which can be obtained from the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer and/or event organiser, to whom any questions or uncertainties should also be addressed.

Within this code, the term "child" refers to someone who has not yet attained their 18th birthday, and "vulnerable adult" refers to any adult unable to protect themselves from harm. This may include (but is not limited to):

- Adults with certain physical or learning disabilities or mental health difficulties
- Swimmers, particularly those who may become confused or disorientated as a result of the cold
- All of those who are in need of, or who are receiving, emergency first aid or medical treatment, or rescue from the water.

The term "vulnerable person" encompasses both the terms "vulnerable adult" and "child"

THE CODE

Maintaining good character

1. You must not engage in any activity which might bring your suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults into question. This includes occasions when you are not acting on behalf of the BLDSA (e.g. when working for another organisation, or in social situations).
2. If, outside of the BLDSA, you are the subject of any investigation into your suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults, you should inform the BLDSA child & vulnerable adult protection officer at the earliest opportunity
3. You must also inform the BLDSA child & vulnerable adult protection officer if you are charged with, or convicted of, any criminal offence, or if you receive a caution or reprimand.
4. You must submit to any request from the BLDSA's child & vulnerable protection officer to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau check or other vetting procedure, and co-operate fully with any investigation into the conduct of yourself or others.

Contact with children or vulnerable adults

When you are in contact with children or vulnerable adults, it is important that you display certain standards of behaviour. These protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, but also protect you from false allegations, and are therefore in everybody's interests. The following are recommended as good practice, and should be followed at all times.

When in contact with children or vulnerable adults on behalf of the organisation, you should:

1. Act at all times in the best interests of the children and vulnerable adults in your care
2. Respect the opinions and rights of children and vulnerable adults (including their right to privacy), and support them in making their own decisions wherever possible.
3. Be honest about your contact with children and vulnerable adults, and be able to defend any actions or omissions you make in relation to such persons
4. Ensure that the parents or carers of a vulnerable person are aware of the nature of your contact with that person, and give their consent, unless faced with an emergency situation or other unanticipated event which renders this impractical. The vulnerable person should be encouraged to give their consent also, whenever possible.
5. Avoid being a position of unsupervised 1:1 contact with a child or vulnerable adult. Where you are placed in such a position (e.g. when providing a canoe escort to a swimmer), you must ensure that another responsible adult (e.g. the swim secretary) is aware of this, and that you have means of communication with such responsible adults (e.g. whistle, radio, mobile phone).
6. Avoid any remarks, gestures or activities which may be misconstrued as abusive, neglectful or disrespectful to vulnerable persons, either by the vulnerable person themselves, or anybody else
7. Ensure that you gain their (or their parent/guardian's) permission to take photographs, or use photographs or data (e.g. name, address and so on) for any reason. Full body photographs of vulnerable persons in swim suits, or on their own, should not normally be taken without explicit permission from the person involved or their parent/guardian. You must destroy any photographs, or refrain from distributing them, if the vulnerable person or their parent/guardian requests this.
8. Seek guidance from an appropriate person (such as a member of the child & vulnerable adults protection committee) if you are unsure as to how you should behave in any situation pertaining to vulnerable persons.

You should not:

1. Touch a vulnerable person without their or their guardian's consent except to protect them from harm in an emergency. This particularly applies to touching of the genital area or breasts.
2. Undress in the presence of a vulnerable person
3. Allow a vulnerable person to undress when you are alone with them. All activities requiring a child or vulnerable adult to partially or completely undress should be supervised by their parents/carers or at least two responsible adults of the same sex, or undertaken in complete privacy.
4. You should not insist that vulnerable persons undress (e.g. for the purposes of changing or washing), especially where this might cause embarrassment to the person concerned. In addition, you should not remove (or assist in the removal of) clothing from a vulnerable person, except when this is required in order to provide treatment in a medical emergency, or the person is in need of such assistance by way of disability and it is part of their normal routine.
5. Physically restrain a child or vulnerable adult, except to prevent life-threatening harm in an emergency, and then only for the shortest time possible. If you are unable to manage challenging behaviour of children in your care by verbal means, you should contact their parents or guardians.
6. Share a hotel room, tent or similar with a vulnerable person, nor invite them to your house or other location without another responsible adult being present.
7. Engage in a sexual or romantic relationship with any child or vulnerable adult who is, or has been, in your care or supervision (this includes children between the ages of 16 to 18), unless this period of care or supervision has only been fleeting, and the person is no longer vulnerable (e.g. if you rescued an adult swimmer who was briefly incapacitated by the cold, it may be acceptable to engage in a relationship with them at a later date).
8. Be under the influence of alcohol or other substances when responsible for the supervision or care of children and vulnerable adults. When participating in a social event where a group of responsible adults are collectively supervising children and vulnerable persons (e.g. on a campsite), it is acceptable for some members of the group of adults to drink. However, there should be sufficient sober adults present to deal effectively with any emergency, and if you do drink you must be aware of your actions and the changes to your behaviour which might ensue.

Reporting concerns

If you have any concerns regarding the protection of children or vulnerable adults with whom you come into contact, or you feel that the BLDSA's procedures have in any way not been followed, or are inadequate for a given situation, you should in the first instance contact the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer or a member of their committee.

You are not asked to decide whether or not abuse/neglect has occurred, but simply to report any concerns you have. One small piece of information received from you may be the 'missing piece' in a complex jigsaw being put together by the child & vulnerable adults protection committee or statutory authorities, even if it appears to you to probably be insignificant. Guidance on how to detect abusive or neglectful situations, as well as how to deal with disclosures of abuse/neglect, is available from the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer if you do not already have a copy.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Training and information on detecting abuse and neglect, as well as promoting safe practice, is available, and you are encouraged to undertake it. Please contact the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer for details if you are interested. Copies of the BLDSA's full child protection policy (to which this document is an appendix) are also available on request from the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer or on the BLDSA website.

The following people may be contacted in relation to child/vulnerable adult protection within the BLDSA:

- John Wilson (Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer) – 48 Creyke Close, Cottingham, East Yorkshire, HU16 4DH. Telephone 07951 206964 or 01482 840833
- Dee Llewellyn (Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee Member)
- Chris Hickling (Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee Member)
- Sandra Wright (Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee Member)
- Jacky Classen (BLDSA President)

DECLARATION

I agree to follow the BLDSA's "Code of practice for those dealing with children or vulnerable adults" as outlined above.

Name: _____ Membership Number: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please detach this declaration and return to the official who sent it to you

Appendix II

Detecting and dealing with abuse or neglect – a guide for members

Child and Vulnerable Adult abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement regarding the appropriate actions to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations, home, school and sport. Some individuals actively seek situations in order to harm children and vulnerable adults. An official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

It is not your responsibility to decide if a child is being abused. However it is your responsibility to act if you suspect abuse. Your observations could be the missing piece in a jigsaw of worries, which is already being pieced together by child protection professionals like social workers and the police. This is why it is vital that you are aware of all these signs and indicators.

Recognising Abuse

Indications that abuse is taking place include:

1. Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
2. The child or vulnerable adult describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him or her.
3. Someone else, a child or adult, expresses concerns about the welfare of a Child / Vulnerable Adult.
4. Unexplained changes in behaviour over time, e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper.
5. Inappropriate sexual awareness.
6. Engages in sexually explicit behaviour in games.
7. Is distrustful of adults, especially those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected.
8. Has difficulty in making friends.
9. Is prevented from socialising with other children
10. Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating and loss of appetite.
11. Loses weight for no apparent reason.
12. Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.

Main forms of abuse

Neglect

This is where adults fail to meet the Child's / Vulnerable Adult's basic needs such as food or warm clothing, fail or refuse to give a Child / Vulnerable Adult love, affection and attention. Children / Vulnerable Adults might also be constantly left alone or unsupervised.

Neglect in a sporting or activity based context could include an association member, official or volunteer failing to ensure children / vulnerable adults are safe, exposing them to unnecessary risk or injury.

Physical Abuse

Adults physically hurt or injure children / vulnerable adults by hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting or by giving children / vulnerable adults alcohol or inappropriate drugs or poison. Attempted suffocation or drowning also comes within this category.

In sports or activity-based situations, physical abuse might occur when the nature or intensity of a particular activity exceeds the capacity of a child's immature or growing body or capability of a vulnerable adult.

Sexual Abuse

Adults, both male and female, who use a child / vulnerable adult to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing a child/vulnerable adult pornographic material (books, videos, pictures and images) is also a form of sexual abuse.

Sports or activities, which involve physical contact with children/vulnerable adults, could potentially create situations where abuse may go unnoticed. The power of a committee member, coach or volunteer over children or vulnerable adults, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations arising. Within swimming, the nature of swim suits may make this form of abuse particularly likely – you should be aware of, for example, people taking photographs or videos of people in swimming costumes, when this would not be expected (e.g. the BLDSA's officials taking photos for publicity, or parents taking photos of their children).

Emotional Abuse

Persistent lack of love and affection, where a child / vulnerable adult may be constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Emotional abuse may also occur where there is constant overprotection (which prevents children / vulnerable adults from socialising for example), or there is neglect, physical or sexual abuse.

Emotional abuse in sport or activities may occur if children / vulnerable adults are subjected to constant criticism, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently. In our sport this could occur when a child or vulnerable adult is unhappy about competing or continuing in an event or is publicly criticised for their performance.

Bullying and Harassment

The damage inflicted by bullying and harassment is frequently underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children / vulnerable adults, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, in extreme cases, cause them significant harm (including self-harm). There are a number of signs that may indicate that a child / vulnerable adult is being bullied.

Physical indicators may include: Stomach ache or headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching or bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing (e.g. on food, cigarettes or alcohol), shortage of money, frequent loss of possessions.

Behavioural indicators may include: reduced concentration, becoming withdrawn or depressed, being clingy, being emotionally up and down (e.g. tearful), a reluctance to go to school/training, a drop in performance in sport or at school.

Taking appropriate action

False allegations of abuse do occur, but they are rare. You should always take immediate action if a child / vulnerable adult says or indicates that he/she is being abused or bullied or you have reason to suspect that this is the case.

Dealing with Disclosures of abuse

Children / vulnerable adults who are being abused may only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. Coaches very often share a close relationship with their pupils and therefore may be the sort of people in whom a child / vulnerable adult might place his/her trust.

It will have taken a great deal of courage for them to tell you about abusive behaviour and it is crucial that you take this in to account when responding to their disclosure.

- Do not panic – react calmly so as not to frighten the child / vulnerable adult.
- Acknowledge that what the child / vulnerable adult is doing is difficult, but that they are right to confide in you.
- Reassure them that they are not to blame.
- Make sure that, from the outset you can understand what they are saying.
- **Be honest straight away and tell them that you cannot make promises that you will not be able to keep.**
- **Do not promise that you will keep the conversation a secret. Explain that you will need to involve other people and that you will need to write things down.**
- Listen and believe them, take them seriously.
- Do not allow your shock or distaste to show.
- Keep any questions to a minimum, but clarify any facts or words that you do not understand – do not speculate or make assumptions.
- Avoid closed questions (i.e. questions which invite yes/no answers).
- Do not probe for more information than is offered.
- Encourage the child / vulnerable adult to use their own words.
- Do not make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- End the disclosure and ensure that the child / vulnerable adult is either being collected or is capable of going home on their own.
- Do not approach the alleged abuser.

Recording the Disclosure

1. Your initial action should be to lodge a record of the incident with the police or local social services child protection unit, or take the child to hospital if they have injuries or are unwell. The BLDSA Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee can provide support, but it is crucial that you refer any concerns to the statutory authorities at the earliest opportunity.
2. Make an accurate written record of what was said, and fill in a BLDSA Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Incident Form
3. Sign and date it.
4. Provide copies for the BLDSA Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer or Committee Member as soon as possible (this should normally be within 72 hours, following an initial phone call to inform them of what has happened straight after the incident).
5. Store the information in a locked cabinet or secure place.

Sharing your concerns

As a result of a disclosure or an observation, you may be worried about what a child/vulnerable adult has said or simply have a feeling that something is not quite right. Taking action in cases of child abuse is never easy, but is essential in order to protect both the person concerned and others. What is important is the child/ vulnerable adult's long-term future – imagine what could happen if you do not take action. Sadly, a failure to act in some cases has led to a child's/vulnerable adult's death. In some sport situations, it may be quite easy to determine who you should contact if you are concerned about someone being abused.

If you have any concerns, you should contact the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer or in their absence a Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Committee member, or the person responsible for the event (e.g. swim secretary). You may also talk to external agencies e.g.

1. Social Services (Contact your nearest Office – the nominated child & vulnerable adults protection official/swim secretary at the event should have this number, or use the phone book/directory enquiries)
2. NSPCC helpline Tel 0808 800 500 (or textphone 0800 056 0566). The NSPCC also have an Asian helpline (0800 096 7719), and a helpline for those in Wales (or who speak Welsh) (0808 100 2524)
3. Police (your nearest Police Station, or call 999 in an emergency)
4. ChildLine 0800 1111

Sharing with professionals

In some situations, particularly if it would be inappropriate to discuss your concerns with the child/vulnerable adult's parents or carers, it may be necessary to report child protection concerns to social services and/or the police.

The process is as follows:

1. Inform the duty officer at social services or the police and explain that it involves child protection. Give your name, role, address and telephone number (this is helpful rather than required). Give clear, accurate details of the child/vulnerable adult (i.e. name, address and date of birth), what you have observed, (include date and time, details of the child/vulnerable adults behaviour and emotional state), what they have said and what action you have taken.
2. Social services will advise you on what to do next and how and when to involve parents/carers, and will also take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate investigations are undertaken.
3. If a child/vulnerable adult needs urgent medical attention as a result of suspected abuse, then you must seek this as a matter of urgency. Healthcare professionals who you come into contact with will also be in a position to take action regarding actual or suspected abuse.
4. Record carefully what you have heard, seen and done.
5. Inform the BLDSA's child & vulnerable adult protection officer, or a member of their committee, as soon as possible by phone, followed by a written statement and incident form within 72 hours.

Dealing with difficult situations

In some cases, a child / vulnerable adult may be placed at even greater risk if you share your concerns with his/her parents or carers (e.g. when a parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse or is not able to respond to the situation appropriately). If the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer or a member of their committee is unavailable, or you cannot identify or locate the person responsible for child protection at the event, report your concerns to social services or the police immediately.

Allegations against members, officials or volunteers

As a BLDSA member or official you are responsible for the welfare of each child/vulnerable adult in your care and for making others aware of their responsibilities (e.g. volunteers helping out with events).

Reporting suspicions, allegations or incidents of abuse against a colleague is distressing. The BLDSA will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports his/her concerns about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a child/vulnerable adult is being abused. This will include keeping the complainant's identity confidential from other parties (such as the accused) if requested, subject to legal requirements.

Responsibility of the association

The last thing you should have to do when an incident of abuse is suspected is to search through the telephone directory to find who to contact. Your role at this time will be to reassure the child/vulnerable adult and act calmly – to not appear confused or unsure of what to do.

Each swim secretary should identify a designated person to handle child protection issues. This person's name should be available to all who attend the event, for example in the programme, or announced at a briefing. If you cannot identify or locate this person, the BLDSA has a number of people who you can contact for advice, their details are listed below.

- John Wilson (Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer) – 48 Creyke Close, Cottingham, East Yorkshire, HU16 4DH. Telephone 07951 206964 or 01482 840833
- Dee Llewellyn (Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee Member) –
- Chris Hickling (Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee Member) –
- Sandra Wright (Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee Member)
- Jacky Classen (BLDSA President)

Remember, that in an emergency, or where you suspect that there is a continuing risk to a child or vulnerable adult, your first priority should always be to inform social services or the police, following the guidelines above. Although the BLDSA officials listed above will be able to offer you support and advice if you are unsure as to what to do, they may not always be immediately contactable – in that case, you should *always* err on the side of caution and seek professional help from the police or social services. You will never be criticised for making a complaint in good faith, however failing to take action when it might have prevented further harm to somebody could have grave consequences.

Appendix III

British Long Distance Swimming Association: Vetting questionnaire

As your position within the BLDSA may entail you being in close, unsupervised contact with children and vulnerable adults, or their records, photographs etc., the BLDSA requires that you undergo a vetting procedure, which will be repeated at least once every 2 years. This procedure involves several steps:

- Obtaining a Criminal Records Bureau check
- Providing a reference (in the case of new applicants for vetting only)
- Signing up to the BLDSA's code of good practice for those working with vulnerable persons
- Submission of this form

The purpose of this vetting questionnaire is to allow us to identify early any factors which may impede your suitability to work with vulnerable persons. Holding a criminal record is not necessarily a bar to membership of the organisation, or working with vulnerable persons. The BLDSA is fully committed to supporting the rehabilitation of ex-offenders, and judges each case on its own merits. Full, voluntary disclosure of facts at this stage will be viewed positively. The BLDSA's child and vulnerable adult protection policy includes further details on the recruitment of ex-offenders to the organisation.

Your personal details (including your criminal record, if any) will be held in the strictest of confidence by the BLDSA's child & vulnerable adult protection committee, and will not be used for any purpose other than safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. A summary of the information contained in the child protection committee's database (usually confined to name, membership number and clearance status) may be made available to selected members of the organisation outside of the committee in order for them to check that you have been cleared before they engage you in any activity relating to vulnerable groups.

Section A – Personal Details

Surname: _____

Forenames: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

BLDSA Membership Number: _____

Section B – Criminal Record

Please tick as appropriate:

- I do not have any criminal convictions or cautions, spent or unspent
- I have a criminal conviction or caution in the UK
- I have a criminal conviction or caution received outside of the UK
- I am currently charged with an offence (in or out of the UK)

Details: _____

(continue on separate sheet if necessary)

Section C – Reference (applies to members seeking clearance for the first time only)

Please supply the contact details of a person who is able to provide a character reference for you. This may be an employer or leader of a voluntary organisation, or sports club, who should have known you for at least two years. References from family members cannot be accepted.

Name: _____

Relationship to you: _____

Address: _____

Section D – Confirmation of good character

Please tick as appropriate:

- I am (or have ever been) the subject of an investigation by any organisation relating to the protection of children or vulnerable adults
- I am (or have ever been) barred by any court, employer, or other organisation, from having contact with a child or vulnerable adult.
- None of the above apply to me

I do/do not* know of any reason why I should not be allowed into contact with children and vulnerable adults.

*delete as appropriate

Details: _____

By signing below, I confirm the following:

- I consent to the information on this form being used for the purposes of preventing the abuse and/or neglect of children and vulnerable adults, as detailed above.
- I consent to the person named in section C above being contacted to provide a reference for me (first time clearance only)
- I consent to the BLDSA undertaking a criminal records check on me every two years, or more frequently if asked (application form and further instructions for this will be supplied separately)
- I will comply with all relevant law, as well as BLDSA policies and guidance, regarding the protection of children and vulnerable adults.
- All of the details given on this form are correct. Should they subsequently be found to be false or incomplete, I may be subject to an investigation by the BLDSA. If any of these details change, I will inform the BLDSA as soon as possible.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix IV

Information on the BLDSA's child & vulnerable adult protection strategy

The BLDSA has a policy on the protection of children and vulnerable adults, which outlines the measures which it is taking in order to protect vulnerable persons who may engage in our sport, as participants, organisers, helpers or spectators. Copies of this policy are available from the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer on request. The policy includes children, as well as 'vulnerable adults'. Within law, a vulnerable adult is defined as one who cannot adequately protect themselves from harm. Within the arena of open-water swimming, this may involve the following groups of people (although the list is not exhaustive):

- Children who have not yet attained their 18th birthday
- Adults with certain learning or physical disabilities or mental health difficulties
- Swimmers, particularly those who may become confused or disorientated as a result of the cold
- All of those who are in need of, or who are receiving, emergency first aid or medical treatment, or rescue from the water.

It is the intention of the BLDSA to help such vulnerable persons to protect themselves whilst undertaking activities under the oversight of the organisation. This includes swims, briefings, presentations, meetings, and occasionally travel to and from or accommodation at such events. In addition, when a child or vulnerable adult enters our organisation's events, having been subjected to abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child/vulnerable adult's self esteem. In such cases the association shall work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the person receives the required support. The BLDSA is committed to helping all persons to enjoy the sport of open water swimming. With regard to vulnerable persons, we are fully committed to ensuring that:

- The welfare of the vulnerable person is paramount at all times
- All persons, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

All members of the association have a duty to be aware of potential issues regarding the protection of vulnerable persons. This includes ensuring their activities do not cause or facilitate harm to vulnerable persons, and reporting any concerns or complaints to the Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer. Volunteers working with the BLDSA are not expected to be trained to deal with situations or abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred, but merely to report any concerns they have. Further guidance on detecting abusive situations, as well as what to do if you have any concerns, is available from the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer or on the BLDSA website at www.blds.org.uk.

Certain members of the organisation do have a particular responsibility for child and vulnerable adult protection. These include:

- The Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer, who is responsible on an association wide level for putting policies in place and ensuring they are regularly reviewed in light of new developments, ensuring that the policies are adequately disseminated, followed and enforced, providing help and advice, as well as seeking professional advice should this be required.
- The child & vulnerable adult protection committee who assist the child and vulnerable adults protection officer, and deputise for him or her when required.
- The executive committee, led by the BLDSA president, who sanction the actions of the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer/Committee
- Swim secretaries and other officials, who must be aware of particular protection issues in relation to their event. Each swim should have a designated official who deals with child protection issues at their event, and their details should be publicised (e.g. in programmes, entry forms, or at briefings)

The duties of these people, in addition to the membership as a whole, are explained in further detail in the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. In particular, those who may be involved in close contact with a child or vulnerable adult (e.g. those providing 1:1 canoe escorts) may be required to undergo a vetting procedure and sign a code of good practice to ensure that they are suitable to work with such people. In addition, those taking/collecting, processing or publishing photographs or data on behalf of the BLDSA (other than for internal administrative purposes) must seek permission of the vulnerable person and/or their parents/guardians before doing so. **Those members who are unsure as to their role should, in the first instance, contact a member of the Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee.** Training in child & vulnerable adult protection is available for all members upon request.

The following people may be contacted with any queries regarding the protection of children and vulnerable adults :

- John Wilson (Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer) – 48 Creyke Close, Cottingham, East Yorkshire, HU16 4DH. Telephone 07951 206964 or 01482 840833
- Dee Llewellyn (Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee Member)
- Chris Hickling (Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee Member)
- Sandra Wright (Child & Vulnerable Adult Protection Committee Member)
- Janet Wilson (BLDSA President). Telephone 01943 830042

Appendix V

Permission for use of data & photographs relating to children or vulnerable adults

I hereby give permission for the following to be used for the purpose of:

(Please indicate the proposed use e.g. "Publication of event winner's name in Airedale & Wharfedale Observer Newspaper")

Name _____
Age _____
Date of Birth _____
Home Town _____
Club Affiliation _____
Other (please state): _____

(Please indicate the desired pieces of data with a tick)

I also give permission for the use of _____ photographs (copies of which are attached to this form) for the same purpose.

(Please tick if photographs are attached, and state how many thereare)

This data and/or photograph(s) relates to the following person:

Name: _____
Date of Birth: _____

Signed (authoriser): _____, Date: _____

Authoriser's name & relationship to person (if not the person whom the data/photographs related to): _____

The authoriser should also sign and date the back of the photographs attached to this form (if any)

Signed (person seeking permission): _____, Date: _____

Name: _____, Position in BLDSA: _____

This form should be retained by the person seeking permission, and produced if asked for by the Child & Vulnerable Adults Protection Officer or any person acting on their behalf.