

Case Study: All Aboard WaterSports – Strengthening Safeguarding Through Partnership

All Aboard WaterSports (AAW) is a multisport venue delivering a range of on-water activities. The organisation follows the safeguarding policies, procedures and codes of conduct of national governing bodies including the Royal Yachting Association, Paddle UK and British Rowing.

Having previously worked with Wesport, AAW was already aware of the Sport Welfare Officer (SWO) role through social media and earlier engagement. The centre wanted to strengthen its safeguarding approach and move from a primarily reactive model to a more proactive approach that would ensure staff were prepared to manage a wide range of safeguarding scenarios.

Initial Engagement

At the start of the partnership in January 2025, a Wesport SWO met with the Centre Manager to review existing safeguarding processes. AAW already had a structured system in place: safeguarding policies and documentation were reviewed every four years by a safeguarding team, with the Designated Safeguarding Officer carrying out annual checks.

The focus of the engagement was therefore not to create systems from scratch, but to build on this strong foundation and support the organisation in embedding a more proactive and preventative safeguarding culture.

Development and Support

During the following months, communication mainly took place via email due to the centre's busy peak season. Throughout this time, the SWO provided advice on safeguarding matters when required, including guidance around updating DBS checks and signposting support relating to mental health.

The SWO also acted as a safeguarding sounding board when the centre developed new changing room facilities. This included discussing appropriate layouts and the proximity of adult and children's changing areas to ensure safeguarding considerations were built into the design from the outset.

Ongoing Progress and Impact

Over the following six months, progress slowed due to staffing changes, including both the SWO leading the engagement and the Centre Manager leaving their roles. However, engagement resumed when AAW's Lead Safeguarding Officer became the main contact with Wesport.

Since then, the Lead Safeguarding Officer has attended several online welfare and safeguarding sessions delivered by Wesport, strengthening their knowledge and confidence. This increased engagement has helped the centre explore new ways to support participant wellbeing.

One example is AAW's interest in collaborating with Andy's Man Club to introduce a Talk Club at the centre. The initiative aims to combine on-water activity with peer support sessions to promote men's mental health, with Wesport supporting the centre as it explores this partnership.

The centre has also begun connecting with local support services and attending sport welfare events, demonstrating a strong commitment to embedding safeguarding and wellbeing across its activities.

Outcome

Through its engagement with the Sport Welfare Officer Network, AAW has gained consistent, sector-specific guidance to support the development of safeguarding and welfare practices. The partnership has helped the centre maintain a strong focus on safeguarding while also expanding its work in areas such as mental health and community support, ensuring a safer and more supportive environment for participants.