



Child Protection Update



CHILD PROTECTION is everyone's responsibility. Within our sport, we have opportunities for child participation and every child should have the opportunity to take part in the sport in the knowledge that he or she will be safe, secure and respected. Above all, taking part in the sport should be enjoyable and fun.

In 2006 we launched our new Junior Snorkel Award, designed for children aged 7 and upwards and this year we have lowered our minimum age requirement for aqualung training to 14 years. Overall, we welcome participation in our sport at all ages.

Since the first version of our Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures was produced in 2003, great progress has been made towards making our sport a safer and more secure environment for children. We have further demonstrated our commitment to child protection by revising our policies and procedures, and working with partners through the Child Protection in Sport Service, a Children 1st and **sportscotland** partnership, and the Central Regis-

tered Body for Scotland (CRBS) to ensure compliance and best practice.

Whilst we have made great progress in the implementation of child protection, there is no room for complacency. We must also ensure our instructors and other members are protected and can enjoy the sport to its full potential and welcome younger members.

The new policy has been developed, taking account of the feedback that we have received and reflects requirements in relation to new child protection legislation and guidance. Further changes to legislation are anticipated for implementation in 2009, with further implications for ScotSAC members. The guidelines no longer refer specifically to vulnerable adults, now referred to as 'adults at risk', although many of the principles are the same as child protection. Details of these changes and updates to the policy will be provided to clubs and members when available.

The new guidelines define a child

as anyone under 18 years of age to comply with the range of legislation and for the purposes of best practice and consistency across the sport and the voluntary sector, this policy will apply to all those under 18 years.

Child protection in sport is not just about protecting children from others who may seek to harm them through sport. A trusted instructor may be the person a child chooses to tell about something that is happening at home or out with sport. In either case, we all have a responsibility to act on concerns.

What does it mean for Instructors and Branches?

We recommend that all branches appoint a Child Protection Officer (CPO) or at the very least include Child Protection within the role description for another committee position. The role description for a CPO can be found in our policy and website. It is recommended that all Instructors attend a 'Safeguarding and Protecting Children' 3 hour workshop, and Branch Child Protection Officers also attend the 'In

Report From The AGM

APART FROM the EGM we held to vote on incorporation which lasted all of 9 minutes, a record for Governing Bodies, this was the shortest AGM I have attended. The retiring Chairman started waffling about five past one and the new chairman wound things up at two-thirty. Which prompts the question do we need to give up a Sunday's diving to attend the AGM? The chairman asked this very question to the 43 members in attendance and a majority said they would prefer to have the AGM on an evening during the week.

However those who had travelled from afar and had driven for two hours to attend voted against. Something for the Board to think about for next year along with moving the meeting later in the year probably early April, to give time for the accounts to be ready for the meeting.

Back to this year's meeting and it started with the Chairman reporting on the past 12 months. During that time Annmarie, our part time administrator, left and he thanked her for her 9 years of diligent and loyal service. He also thanked Hazel who has been working on her own three days a week and managing to keep the club going while also taking on the role of lead signatory for CRBS (disclosure) checks and learning 'Sage' our new accounts package.

He was pleased to announce that a new member of staff had been recruited and from mid April the office would be manned five days per week. As retiring Chairman he took the opportunity to thank his fellow board members for all their support during his two years in office.

The Treasurer Jim Anderson reported on the accounts for 2007 which showed we made a small surplus for the year and our reserves were healthy. However he also reported that our third party insurance premium had seen a substantial rise due to the vagaries of the insurance market.

The Board decided that this increase will be met by the provision of £4.24 per member from the reserves and £2.00 per member added to the annual subscription as all members enjoy the protection of third party insurance. This increase will apply from May 1, 2008. We have received our investment grant of £17,000 from **sportscotland** and the Board are pursuing the £7,000 from last year that was mistakenly paid into the account of one of our branches.

Kevin Miller, National Diving Officer presented his report which highlighted the work of the NDC and the Regional Coaches over the past year. The review of the training schedule is well under way.

During 2007 there were 6 reported incidents, one less than 2006 and a summary of them will appear in the next edition (July/August) of **SCOTTISH DIVER** magazine.

The following courses were run during 2007/8:

- ▼ O2 & Heart Start – 92 candidates - 8 courses;
- ▼ Nitrox Courses – 15 candidates - 2 courses;
- ▼ Branch Instructor's Course – 15 candidates - 2 courses (candidates have completed qualification);

Safe Hands' workshop, with both courses being run by all local authorities in Scotland. Dates and further information on our website.

The simple Code of Conduct outlines some basic principles in the implementation of child protection including transport, communications, overnight stays and risk assessments. Engaging with parents is important and many branches already request that parents attend during all sessions.

Child protection is not simply about disclosure checks, although this may be the area where Members have had experience. Disclosure checks form part of the process for recruiting and appointing a volunteer to a childcare role. Child protection is about much wider issues in terms of the running of a club and conduct of training.

We are aware of some branches, as well as other sporting organisations who have received requests from facility owners (e.g. local authorities) regarding disclosure checks.

ScotSAC is happy to provide support with these requests, within the legislation. Facility owners have no entitlement to receive disclosure information or even a list of disclosure numbers.

The requirement for photographic permission remains, and exists to protect both children and Members of ScotSAC. We recognise that many divers now have underwater cameras, and remind members that permission is only required where the photographs or video is of children or young people.

A 'quick guide' to the policy has also been produced and available on our website.

Further information and the full ScotSAC Child Protection Policy and Guidelines is available from www.scotsac.com/childprotection.htm or by contacting Marion Brown, Lead Child Protection Officer childprotection@scotsac.com

Marion Brown
Lead Child Protection Officer

▼ Regional Instructors Course – 8 candidates – 1 course.

The Secretary reported on the various activities that he carries out for the members: policy development and review, job descriptions for Branch Instructors, Regional Instructors, Examiner, Branch Diving Officer etc, development plan, headquarters health and safety, minutes and record keeping. Plus he has made submissions on the following consultations, Single Equality Bill, Scottish Sustainable Marine Environment Initiative, Benchmarking Competency in Maritime Archaeology, Immigration, Protecting Vulnerable Groups, Bathing Water regulations.

At this point he introduced Marion Brown our new Child Protection Officer - there is a short article elsewhere in the magazine about child protection.

The meeting then voted on the proposal to drop the age for aqualung training to 14 year olds. The proposal was carried by a substantial majority. The Chairman pointed out that this was not compulsory and that branches could opt to set a higher minimum age but no older than 18. This is effective immediately.

This was followed by the announcement of the winners of the Walt and Jean Deas

photography competition and showing the pictures was a welcome interlude.

At this point the new Board was confirmed as:

Chairperson	Andrew Murray
National DO	Kevin Miller
Treasurer	Jim Anderson
Director	Iain Graham
Director	Jack Morrison
Director	Archie Gillies
Director	Douglas Forman

The National Diving Council (NDC) members are: Marion Brown, Graeme Forsyth, Sam Paske, Kevin Watson and Gordon Young

The new Chairman then announced the projects the Board and the NDC intended to carry out during the coming year including the Training Schedule review, HQ relocation / refurbishment, updating Child Protection, Conference 2008 & 2009, new staff, new website, database upgrade, Master Diver lectures, **SCOTTISH DIVER** developments, Marketing and Volunteering.

He then introduced an exciting new award in conjunction with Suunto UK and you can read about that elsewhere in this magazine.

Finally he thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed.

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Tips From The Doc

AS SUMMER APPROACHES we will all start planning the dives ahead so in this issue of **SCOTTISH DIVER** I hope to give some general advice on over the counter remedies that can either make or spoil a dive trip.

We all know how important equalising our ears is as we descend and ascend from a dive. A piece of wax (produced naturally to clean out the external ear canal) can cause a blockage as it will swell on contact with water. This can trap air behind it and put extra pressure on the eardrum as the pressure changes which will cause pain at best but may also cause disabling dizziness and even perforation of the drum (neither of these are pleasant and could be very serious underwater).

It is an easily treated condition with solvent drops from the pharmacy or even get a nurse or doctor to check they are clear for you. NEVER put cotton buds into your ear as this can ram wax further in or even damage the eardrum.

Staying with ears I am often asked how to stop infections in the outer ear that are common with multiple dives such as on a liveaboard. The key is to wash out the salt water on surfacing with clean water.

Antibiotic drops can be useful but would need a prescription from your doctor.

However, a trick I learned some years ago which can be a good stand-by, is to mix equal parts of olive oil and vinegar and use as drops post diving. The olive oil soothes the skin of the ear canal and vinegar is a natural antiseptic. This doesn't work every time although it can be a life-saver (or trip saver).

Next is the nose and with that the small tube that connects to the ear ... the eustachian tube. When we get a cold and our noses are blocked, it is normal to find we go a little deaf because the eustachian tube becomes blocked and can't equalise the middle ear pressure. This is the reason we often get earache with a cold and also why it isn't advisable to dive when suffering from one.

A lot of people find they get a bit stuffed up with modern heating and the use of saline (common salt) nasal drops before a dive can clear their passages. Decongestants are not really advised as they tend to be sedative (even when claiming not to be) and they are also unpredictable in their length of activity. Decongestants containing ephedrine do initially clear the passages only to wear off quickly often leaving you worse off congestion wise. If you suffer from hayfever (or allergic rhinitis) the use of nasal steroid sprays can alleviate your symptoms and are probably ok, but if you have any doubts ask your GP or myself for advice.

Another common problem can be gastric upset. The causes are many but as a rule of

thumb if simple antacids cure you, then this is ok. However if the problem is gastroenteritis, over the counter remedies are fine but hydration is the key here as dehydration comes on rapidly especially in hot countries and leaves you at much greater risk of decompression sickness. It is much better to sit out for a day than to risk DCS with all its possible consequences.

Finally I feel I should mention painkillers. We all take them from time to time for headaches, aches and pains in joints and muscles. Simple paracetamol and even low dose ibuprofen or aspirin are fine but diving under the influence of stronger painkillers can be very problematical as the way the body copes with the effects of drugs like codeine on the surface can change dramatically under pressure and lead to a situation of a diver needing rescued by his buddy. Remember that if pains come on after diving, did you really bang yourself or could it be signs of DCS ... so be wary of doping yourself up post dive.

As the weather improves lets all get diving safely.

Doctor Wilmot



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