



Diversity and Inclusion Guidance Notes Race, religion or belief

Introduction

Inclusivity is one of the Royal Yachting Association's core values. We work to ensure boating is accessible and attractive to the widest audience. We share our expertise, work with partners, and embrace diversity.

The RYA is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity and aims to ensure that all present and potential participants, members, instructors, coaches, competitors, officials, volunteers and employees are treated fairly and on an equal basis, irrespective of sex, age, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment or social status.

The RYA encourages its affiliated clubs and organisations and its recognised training centres to adopt a similar policy, so that they are seen as friendly, welcoming and open to all.

The **RYA Racing Charter** aims to ensure that the sport of sailboat racing welcomes all people and treats them equally. Foul or abusive language, intimidation, aggressive behaviour or lack of respect for others and their property will not be tolerated.

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance note is to help affiliated clubs and class associations and recognised training centres to understand their responsibilities and to provide a welcoming environment for all members of their community.

Background

In 2015 almost one in three primary school children in England was from a 'black or minority ethnic group' (BME), meaning that they were not identified as 'White British'. In this instance BME includes 'White Irish' and 'White Other'. Sometimes statistics for BME groups include anyone who doesn't identify as 'White'. Of course the minority groups are not evenly distributed, so in some parts of the country, generally the larger conurbations, the proportion is far higher whilst in others it is much lower.

Over time people tend to mix and assimilate whilst still retaining their cultural identity, particularly if that is linked to their religion. For example, a first generation immigrant in the 1970s might have described herself as Pakistani, her adult children might say that they are British Asian, and their children might identify as British Muslim. In the 2011 Census 59.3% of the population of England and Wales described themselves as Christian, 25.1% had no religion and 7.2% declined to answer the optional question. The largest other religious groups were Muslims (4.8%) and Hindus (1.5%). Again distribution across the country is uneven.

Statutory protection

The Equality Act 2010 brought together and simplified a complex range of anti-discrimination legislation. It extends to England and Wales and forms part of the laws of Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Act applies to all Service Providers - anyone that provides a service to the public, sells goods or provides facilities. Clubs that provide RYA training or other services such as room hire to members of the public may be considered as Service Providers, as will most commercial Recognised Training Centres. The Act also applies to private members' clubs if they fall within the definition of an Association.

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination on the grounds of nine 'protected characteristics', including:

- race – including colour, ethnic origin, national origin or nationality. Ethnic origin refers to racial, religious or cultural factors which give a group a shared history and a distinct social identity;
- any religion, religious or philosophical belief, or lack of religion or belief.

The Act protects from:

- *direct discrimination* - treating someone less favourably because of their race, religion or belief
- *indirect discrimination* – where a rule, practice or procedure is applied to everyone, but disadvantages certain groups;
- *harassment* – when unwanted conduct causes a distressing, humiliating or offensive environment
- *victimisation* – treating someone unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint of discrimination.

Engaging with your local community

Voluntary organisations such as sports clubs are often slightly behind society as a whole in adapting to change. They may genuinely believe that they welcome everyone, but not be aware of the stereotypes and preconceptions held both by their current members, and by people in their area who don't see sailing and boating as something that's open to them.

The proportion of your local population who practise a particular faith or religion, or who identify as members of a specific racial or ethnic group, can normally be obtained from your local authority's website – try searching for 'Population data' or 'Population statistics'. The religious and ethnic profiles of a population are likely to overlap but will not be the same.

If your local community has a high proportion of residents who are members of certain faith or ethnic groups, but this is not reflected in your club membership or customer base, you may be missing out on potential new members or customers. There may be unintentional practical barriers to participation that could quite easily be overcome. These are more likely to be linked to religion or belief than to race or ethnicity. The main organised religions in the UK are: Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Buddhism.

Timing

Most organised religions have a holy day or Sabbath when their main services or collective prayers take place: Friday for Muslims, Friday evening to Saturday evening for Jews, Sunday for Christians. If you are organising an event such as an open day, you should consider whether a high proportion of your local community are members of a particular faith group and try to avoid times or days when they will be excluded from taking part due to a conflict with their religious or family commitments. In addition to weekly days of worship, every religion has its own festivals. For a list of the key festivals, see this website:

<http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/uk/>

Dress

Some religions require or encourage people to wear specific items or types of clothing. Examples are a Sikh man who may choose to wear a turban (some Sikhs do not cut their hair) or a Muslim woman who may choose to wear a headscarf or hijab. Several religions expect women and girls to dress modestly. If you are supplying wetsuits or drysuits, make sure there are some available with full-length arms and legs for girls and women who want to be fully covered. They may also be uncomfortable wearing a tight-fitting garment below the waist and should be allowed to wear a long t-shirt, tunic, rash vest or loose trousers over the wetsuit or

drysuit to cover that area. If there any safety concerns these should be discussed with the participant and/or their parents/carers.

Provided that participants can comply with your safety requirements, in particular regarding the wearing of buoyancy aids or lifejackets and kill cords (if relevant) and have sufficient protection from the cold or sun depending on the weather conditions, dress requirements should not be a barrier to participation.

Some RYA Training Centres require inexperienced sailors, particularly children, to wear helmets to minimise head injuries from swinging booms. If there is anything that might make it difficult for the participant to wear a helmet, for example a Sikh boy's topknot or man's turban, you should discuss the risks with the sailor and/or their parents/carers and try to reach a mutually acceptable solution, such as covering their hair with a patka (simple cloth head covering) worn under the helmet. It should be possible for a Muslim girl or woman to wear a headscarf or hijab under a helmet.

Catering

If you are providing refreshments at an open day, or organising a social event, you should take account of the dietary requirements of people of different faiths. A typical British barbecue tends to include beef and pork. Pork is forbidden to Jews and Muslims and beef is forbidden to Hindus, whilst Buddhists do not eat meat or fish. Make sure you consider offering vegetarian and vegan alternatives. If you are expecting a group of Jewish or Muslim people to attend, you could ask them in advance whether they require Kosher or Halal food.

You should also ensure that there are plenty of non-alcoholic drinks available for people who don't drink for religious reasons, as well as those aged under 18 and those who are driving home. People who are not used to being in an environment where there is a bar may be concerned that they will feel out of place in a sports club if they don't drink.

Language

One primary school child in five in England speaks English as a second language. Their parents may be fluent English speakers even if they speak another language at home, but if they have recently arrived in the UK from a non-English speaking country and haven't been educated here, they may be less proficient in spoken or written English. This should be borne in mind if you are communicating via e-mail, text, letter or leaflet, for example to explain what their child needs to bring to the next sailing session – a face to face conversation may be more effective.

Prayer space and times

Practising Muslims pray five times a day at specified times, and attend congregational prayer on Fridays, normally between midday and 3.00 pm. They require a clean, private area for prayer, with facilities for cleansing themselves beforehand. This would particularly need to be considered if you are running an all-day training course or event. It is good practice to ask participants whether they have any special requirements (whether dietary, disability access-related or religious) and to discuss in advance what you can do to accommodate them.

Other considerations

For some Hindus and Muslims, the need to respect modesty would require men and women to participate separately. Most sailing waters are visible to the general public and it would not be possible to guarantee, even if you were to run women-only training with a female instructor, that no men would be on site. This should be made clear to participants if they have particularly requested single-sex training.

Promoting your club or centre

When publishing photos on your website or in leaflets, try to include images of both male and female participants from a wide range of ages, abilities and ethnic backgrounds to show that all are welcome at your club or centre.

To reach the whole community, you could consider promoting your activities, courses, open days etc through the local temple, mosque, gurdwara, synagogue or church, as well as local schools. Have a look at your local authority's website for contact details. Councils often promote local events through their websites or e-newsletters. Local radio stations, including those catering for minority groups such as Asian radio stations, are always looking for local stories and events.

Welcoming a new member or participant

Don't make assumptions or rely on stereotypes. Even within one religion there can be numerous different groups or sects with more or less strict practices. The key is always to treat each person as an individual and understand their needs. Make it clear to everyone that you will do what you can to cater for any particular requirement.

A good approach with any new member who doesn't already have friends at the club is to ask an existing member to act as their 'mentor' for a while, to show them round and introduce them to other people.

Your club or centre should have a clearly communicated route for anyone to raise a complaint, including concerns about discrimination, harassment or inappropriate language.

For more information see the following websites:

<http://www.rya.org.uk/clubs/support/your-people/members/Pages/equality.aspx>

<http://www.sportingequals.org.uk/>

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RYA Cymru Wales contact, Ruth Iliffe, National Development Officer and Equality Lead

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