



A collage of four grayscale photographs showing various canoeing and kayaking activities. The top-left photo shows a group of people in a narrow channel with a bridge. The top-right photo shows a person in a kayak on open water. The bottom-left photo shows a group of people in a large inflatable boat. The bottom-right photo shows a person in a kayak navigating rapids. The collage is overlaid with white geometric lines and a pink and blue diagonal band.

Leadership Award

Participant Focused

Leadership Guidance

Participant Focused Leadership Guidance

Introduction

This document provides specific guidance for paddlers, Leaders and Leadership Providers on the British Canoeing Awarding Body Leadership Model. The content provides further clarity on the leadership principles, as well as the standard expected when leading paddlesport activity.

It is the guidance within this document that is used to help inform assessment decisions.

For the purpose of this guidance document, the term 'Leader' may be used to cover both Leadership and Raft Guiding pathways.

This Participant Focused Leadership Guidance should be read in conjunction with:

- British Canoeing Awarding Body Leadership and Raft Guide Course Guide
- British Canoeing Awarding Body Assessment Guidance – specific to the leadership award
- British Canoeing Awarding Body Leadership and Raft Guide Provider Notes
- British Canoeing Awarding Body Leadership and Raft Guide Sample Programme

Participant Focused Leadership Skills

During training and consolidation, these leadership principles and examples should be explored and applied. Providers are expected to demonstrate skilful application of these principles, as well as put them into context for paddlers to understand and practice.

During assessment, the Leader needs to show that they have the ability to lead safe, enjoyable, quality journeys/sessions based on the group's needs, abilities and aspirations. They will need to demonstrate skilful application of leadership principles and strategies, judgement and decision making, safety awareness and risk management, group management, navigation, and the control and management of outcomes within the stated environments.

Practical leadership must be underpinned by:

- the ability to explain and justify leadership decisions
- an extensive base of background knowledge and understanding
- relevant and adequate experience to support the decision making process
- understanding of deployment matters and leadership responsibilities
- commitment to reflective practice and the ability to learn from experience.

Venue Selection

The Leader selects safe venues, appropriate to the group members

Within the planning and execution of a session, the Leader matches the location and conditions, etc., to the group's aims, aspirations, enjoyment and safety. To find the right balance, Leaders should consider the influencing factors. For example:

- the goals, aspirations and expectations of the group members
- the abilities and past experiences of the group members
- how to align the activity to individual motivations
- an appropriate level of challenge (difficulty, freedom, choice, etc.)
- the weather and conditions
- which craft to use
- explicitly agreeing group goals (where to go, how difficult)
- risk-benefit analysis (finding a position in which the benefits balance and justify the risks)
- ensuring that the level of risk (challenge) does not exceed group members' expectations.

The Leader must remain within scope of the remit and their skills/experience. This requires:

- the Leader to accurately assess that the group has the ability to avoid hazards present (e.g. other water users, or being swept/blown out of the safe working area)
- the Leader to accurately assess that the conditions do not hinder the group's ability to land or avoid hazards

- the Leader to accurately assess the group's ability to remain in the safe working area at all times (particularly in the event of a capsize or a paddler becoming incapacitated)
- the Leader to accurately assess, and operate within the scope of, their own skills and experience; demonstrating good judgement and an appropriate attitude to risk.

Safety

The Leader designs and implements effective safety frameworks

For example, the Leader:

- undertakes appropriate risk assessments prior to, and during, the session
- accurately identifies hazards and takes effective actions to avoid them
- has a good awareness of the typical hazards found within the remit of the award
- finds a position in which the benefits balance and justify the risks (risk-benefit analysis)
- pitches the difficulty of activities appropriately for the group's ability (aims and aspirations)
- ensures that the level of risk (challenge) does not exceed group members' expectations
- involves group members in the decision making process and explains decisions made
- ensures equipment used supports safe practice
- uses appropriate physical and psychological warm-ups when required
- selects activities and leadership style appropriate for the given weather/water conditions
- supports the group to take adequate rest, food and hydration
- follows any organisational procedures (e.g. risk assessment, operating procedures, venue/equipment/activity specifics)
- uses and promotes safe manual lifting and handling techniques at all times (e.g. launching, landing, during rescues, loading, etc.)

Vision

The Leader is a positive role model and aims to inspire others

For example, the Leader:

- leads by example; behaves like they want the group members to behave (e.g. cares about and respects the environment, the group, the sport, fair play, other people, equipment, etc.)
- shows passion and enthusiasm for paddlesport, for the activity, for the task at hand and for what others can/have achieved
- articulates and acts on a personally held value system
- is consistent with the British Canoeing Awarding Body core values (e.g. access, environment, educational philosophy, equality)
- articulates, supports and develops the individuals'/group's vision
- develops a strong team attitude and spirit
- gets the group to work together towards shared goals
- sees the best in people.... thinks the best of people
- stimulates the trust and respect of others
- shows optimism and enthusiasm about what others can achieve
- is cheerful and a pleasure to be around.

Support

The Leader provides empathetic social support in a positive atmosphere

For example, the Leader:

- recognises and pays attention to individual needs, differences, strengths and abilities
- treats each team member as an individual, use individuals' names
- aims to make everyone feel welcome and at ease
- helps people develop their strengths and to solve their problems
- creates an atmosphere where mistakes are seen as learning opportunities
- seeks/praises positives from unsuccessful outcomes
- provides encouragement and support to help recover from mistakes

- is clear about any ground rules (what should/should not be done)
- helps group members get on well together, promote the sense of 'team'
- cares about the group members' personal welfare/wellbeing
- shows interest in the things the group members care about
- displays acts of kindness
- openly compliments things done well
- praises improvements in performance
- rewards hard work, effort, good decisions, problem solving, coping strategies, error recovery
- praises mainly outcomes that are the result of hard work and effort
- recognises achievements, visibly celebrate success..... whoop, clap, thumbs up
- recognises and thanks individuals for their influence in the success of the group/others
- passes on positive feedback to others.

Challenge

The Leader supports appropriately challenging experiences

For example, the Leader:

- aligns the level of challenge inherent in the activity to individual motivations (e.g. how, and how much, they want to be challenged)
- agrees group goals (e.g. where to go, how difficult, etc.)
- helps individuals set appropriate levels of challenge
- encourages paddlers to solve their own problems
- actively involves paddlers in the decision making process
- uses appropriate leadership styles to control/give freedom to the levels of challenge.

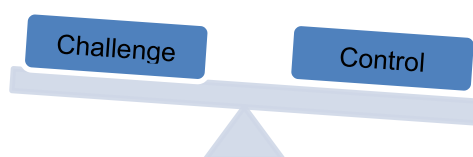
Leadership Style and Behaviours

The leadership style and behaviours meet the participant needs, the task and environment

The amount of control that the Leader chooses to maintain/hand over within their leadership style is a critical element to be considered. Different leadership styles give the Leader/participants varying levels of control within the decision making process. The choice should be based on the main influences (i.e. the situation and environment, the group members, and the Leader's own characteristics) and by paying attention to the effects (i.e. the group's enjoyment and performance).

The level of control can be considered on a spectrum:

Research suggests that non-controlling leadership behaviours result in improved performance and psychological wellbeing. This empowering and supportive style ensures that the group members are central to, and actively involved in, the process. If controlling behaviours are felt necessary for safety reasons or because they are the preferred leadership style of the group members, Leaders should check to ensure they haven't set the challenge too high. Can the level of challenge be manipulated in order that more control can be handed over to the group members? Can individuals be challenged through the use of non-controlling behaviours rather than stretching their skills through higher risk activities? Can the Leader find an appropriate balance?



Typical controlling/non-controlling behaviour:

Controlling	Non-controlling
Leader has control over decisions with little input from the group.	Members participate in the decision making process.
Typical Behaviour: • prescriptive • makes independent decisions without group members' involvement • doesn't explain actions • little compromise • speaks and presents ideas with authority • expects compliance • indifferent to people's feelings or level of enjoyment • attempts to control group members' behaviour and activity • a 'follow me' approach to route choice.	Typical Behaviour: • asks for group member opinions • gets group approval on important matters • lets group members make own decisions/share in the decision making process • encourages group members to make suggestions • lets group set own goals • gives group members space to try their own way • allows group members to work at own speed • sees the merits of others' ideas when they differ from the Leader's • encourages people to find their own solutions • encourages people to find their own learning from mistakes • includes group members in the risk management decisions.

Communication

The Leader communicates clearly and effectively.

For example, the Leader:

- communicates clearly and is understood by the group
- made sure group members had necessary information prior to the session
- uses language that is appropriate to the group members
- uses concise, simple instructions and explanations
- uses clear signals and visual communication methods when required
- uses introductions, demonstrations and explanations to help participants understand tasks
- uses effective listening skills.

Group Management

The Leader has effective group management strategies to suit the required leadership style.

For example, the Leader:

- uses techniques to manage line of sight
- uses strategies to support the management of the group whilst on the water
- uses positioning to be of most use to the group and to be able to prevent/deal with the most likely scenarios
- is able to gather the group into a non-dynamic environment when/if it becomes necessary
- the Leader is able to intervene to affect safety, enjoyment and quality outcomes.

Judgement and Decision Making

The Leader uses effective judgement and decision making

Decision making is an essential skill for Leaders. Both slow-time decisions and in-the-moment, time pressured decisions have significant impact on the safety, enjoyment and performance of the group members.

The Leader gathers accurate and comprehensive information to inform their decisions, for example:

- weather/water conditions
- venue/s planned to be used
- goals of the group
- nature of task/activity (length, seriousness)
- group/individual personalities, aspirations, motivations, expectations
- group/individual abilities and past experiences.

The Leader plans a safe, enjoyable, quality session, taking into account:

- the group's needs, abilities and aspirations
- effective analysis of information gathered
- the balance between the level of challenge and the level of control
- alternatives to deal with predictable/changeable factors that may compromise participants' safety, enjoyment or learning (e.g. alternative venues, activities or leadership style).

The ability to access and interpret a range of weather forecasts (e.g. wind, temperature and visibility), information from other forecasts, (e.g. swell, and wave height) and tides (e.g. heights and swell) is critical to the Leader's skill set. Accurate interpretation of this information is required to plan where to go and what to take. It will also provide foresight into what should be expected and will have a significant impact on the overall enjoyment, safety and quality of the session.

Once on the water, the Leader:

- pays attention to the member's response to the activity; the social environment, the physical environment, the leadership style
- monitors and pays attention to the triggers that help them read the group members' response to the situation and their performance (e.g. technical, tactical, physiological, psychological)
- keeps a vigilant and watchful eye on the conditions and group response
- adapts their level of control to suit the situation
- matches the level of challenge to the level of the group members
- alters plans due to unforeseen events
- responds appropriately when outcomes are not as desired.

Off the water:

- reflects to inform future decisions.

Equipment

The Leader ensures that personal, group and safety equipment is suitable

For example, the Leader:

- checks group members have the required clothing and equipment for the session
- ensures participants' equipment is appropriate for their size, ability and the activity
- ensures clothing and equipment is correctly worn, sized and fitted
- has safety equipment to match the risk management strategies, including:
 - things to manage paddlers' basic comfort, e.g. spare clothes, drink, food, shelter
 - things to manage accidents, e.g. first aid kit, repair kit, towline
- ensures safety critical equipment is in good condition and appropriate to the trip
- uses personal equipment suitable for their safety, comfort and leadership responsibilities.

Environmental Impact

The Leader manages themselves and the group to reduce any negative impact on the environment, local communities and other water users

The appropriate National Association Codes of Conduct must be followed, for example:

On land:

- stay away from houses and private gardens
- change discreetly
- drive sensibly
- park considerately
- ensure your kit does not cause obstruction when loading
- leave gates and property as you find them
- avoid damage to fences and walls
- never miss an opportunity to use a public toilet; if you need to 'go' in the outdoors, do so discreetly and without risk of pollution or distress to other people.

On the water:

- follow the general rules of navigation, local bye-laws, waterway authority notices
- respect and do not obstruct other water users
- take early proactive action to avoid collision or risk of collision
- consider the number of paddlers in your group
- minimise your impact on the environment
- show consideration to other water users
- follow etiquette appropriate to the situation.

Invasive non-native species – stop the spread:

- Check, Clean, Dry boats and wet equipment after use. Always take biosecurity measures to minimise the risk or prevent the spread and environmental damage from invasive, non-native aquatic species and diseases:

- check your equipment and clothing for live organisms, plant fragments, etc.
- clean and wash all equipment, footwear and clothing thoroughly
- if you come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them
- dry all equipment and clothing, some organisms survive weeks in moist conditions
- make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

Caring for the environment:

- find out about the area before you go, noting sensitive places, protected areas, species and breeding seasons
- take your litter home, leave no trace of your visit
- when clearing litter left by others, handle it with care
- leave the environment as you find it
- where possible, keep to designated paths or launching points
- constantly assess wildlife, if you see signs of disturbance, move away quickly
- take care on shingle beaches; they may be nesting grounds, avoid dragging boats through inter-tidal areas, through sand-dunes and their grasses
- don't damage plants and other habitats that animals depend upon
- keep a safe distance away from wildlife to avoid causing disturbance and stress; if animals change their behaviour in reaction to your presence, move away without causing further disturbance
- report pollution, incidents, damage and invasive species to the relevant authorities.