

HASTINGS RUNNERS

GUIDANCE ON PRIVACY, DATA PROTECTION & CONFIDENTIALITY

Laws have changed recently affecting the way we protect personal data and respect the privacy of each and every individual. If you are a committee member, prominent volunteer, coach or official you will also, from time to time, be subject to obligations of confidentiality. You will have been made aware of these before, perhaps in your club's guidelines, during your training or induction.

Athletes, participants and members are expected to respect the privacy of others. If you are concerned by anything, perhaps that you have seen or heard, the correct person to discuss this with in the first instance is a member of your club's committee. Defamation discussions take place all the time in different environments. Conversation (and gossip) may seem harmless but can in certain circumstances be harmful. Falsehoods or rumours can become defamatory if they are made with the intention of lowering the estimation of any person publicly and/or have malicious intent, or risk causing harm to a person's reputation or livelihood, or any other tangible damage. Individuals can be held personally liable for a civil claim for publishing defamatory material about a person, or for making defamatory, or slanderous, words or gestures. Persons acting on behalf of their organisation in their official capacity could be responsible for a civil claim being made against that organisation, if their words or actions are found to be defamatory.

Data Protection: if your role or a task you are given as a volunteer involves handling an individual's personal information, in a paper or electronic format, perhaps their contact details or address; their date of birth; their health or medication information; or details of any special circumstances or incidents they have been involved in, this is personal data. Not only is personal data confidential, any personal data being handled for club purposes is protected by data protection laws, including the General Data Protection Regulation, known as the 'GDPR'.

If personal data is shared, disclosed or otherwise used in a way that is not explicitly authorised in an instruction or in writing by a club, then this is a possible breach of these laws and the club could be given a significant monetary fine, or otherwise subject to regulatory sanctions. Personal data laws are strict, and failure to protect personal data could potentially mean a club has to be wound up and cease operating if it cannot pay the fine.

It is not permitted to use personal information for your own purposes, or for other non-club purposes. If you choose to do so this is a possible offence under the Data Protection Act 2018, and you could be personally prosecuted by the data protection regulator, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), and ordered to pay a fine and damages.

Everybody who puts on their club colours or are otherwise carrying out their club duties should be aware that anything they do reflects on our community, and any ill-advised actions they take could bring us and the sport we all love into disrepute. We would like to thank all of our members for all that they do to promote and protect athletics and running as the safe and welcoming sport that we have all built.