



## THE ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY

### POSITION STATEMENT

**TITLE:** Youth Engagement within The Royal Life Saving Society

**DATE:** 11 March 2020

#### 1. PURPOSE

To set the relevance of youth engagement in RLSS and assist the involvement young people in decision-making regarding the development of its policy, programmes and activities

#### 2. BACKGROUND

The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS), established in 1891, is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) charity registered in the United Kingdom (Charity Commission No: 306094) and is governed by Royal Charter. RLSS is accredited to the Commonwealth Secretariat as a Civil Society Organisation. Our vision is: "No person in the Commonwealth should drown".

RLSS has Member Organisations in at least 30 Commonwealth Nations or Territories.

The Commonwealth consists of 53 Countries comprising some 2.4 billion people, 60% of which are below the age of 30.

As a Commonwealth Accredited Organisation, RLSS seeks to uphold the Commonwealth Charter which recognises the importance of young people in the Commonwealth.

*"We recognise the positive and active role and contributions of young people in promoting development, peace, democracy and in protecting and promoting other Commonwealth values, such as tolerance and understanding, including respect for other cultures. The future success of the Commonwealth rests with the continued commitment and contributions of young people in promoting and sustaining the Commonwealth and its values and principles, and we commit to investing in and promoting their development, particularly through the creation of opportunities for youth employment and entrepreneurship".*

The adopted values of RLSS include Family, Working Together, Mutual Respect, Learning and Inclusion all of which are relevant to our engagement with youth.

Young People have unique and diverse gifts, knowledge and skills and have much to offer RLSS.

Young people are already involved in many of our members and their activities, make valuable and significant contributions to drowning prevention and play a large part in lifesaving sport but are not embedded in the structure of RLSS.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**Young People** and **Youth** are regarded for the purpose of this Statement as being between the ages of 15 and 29.

**Youth Trustee** is someone between the ages of 18 and 29 appointed to the RLSS Board of Trustees.

**Youth Ambassador** is a person nominated by an RLSS Member or Companion Organisation to contribute to the voice of youth in RLSS.

### 4. STATEMENTS

RLSS believes that

- Lifesaving is a life skill which can benefit young people and the communities in which they operate;
- Young People can and do play a vital role in the prevention of drowning and the development of lifesaving organisations in the Commonwealth and succession in RLSS and its members

And will

- a. Recognise the contribution young people can and do make to it, its members and activities and the perspective they can bring.
- b. Include the position of Youth Trustee in its structure and create a means of engaging youth across the RLSS network utilising Member organisations wherever possible.
- c. Encourage the engagement and participation of young people throughout its membership.
- d. Create an environment and pathways conducive for youth development and participation, including creating organisational support for youth development.
- e. Create and support a group representative of youth (Youth Ambassadors Forum) which can facilitate consultation and the selection of the Youth Trustee.
- f. Create and sustain communication mechanisms that facilitate dialogue between all relevant stakeholders.
- g. Ensure/encourage participation and consultation of young people on all RLSS Committees and Working Groups and in life saving planning processes.
- h. Establish mechanisms for communicating with and educating youth about RLSS, its members and its programmes.
- i. Provide opportunities and pathways for young people in RLSS to get together and share experiences, demonstrate skills and communicate views.
- j. Maintain an Honours system that can recognise and reward all its volunteers including young people.
- k. Periodically review and evaluate this RLSS Position Statement and its impact, RLSS programmes and activities.

## 5. POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

RLSS depends on volunteers and skills in a wide range of areas; having a structure for youth engagement and the right level of support could provide access to volunteers, the skills they have and a succession pathway and wider pool for recruitment.

We would have a democratic basis for election of our Youth Trustee, greater engagement with key stakeholders and a basis to reflect the youth perspective.

Greater participation at all levels and ages will lead to a more sustainable organisation.

Greater alignment to the structure of the Commonwealth of Nations

## 6. APPROVAL

This Position Statement was first approved by the Board of Trustees on 11 March 2020.

## 7. CONTACT

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