



## **Inner City Children's Charity 'Horizons Plymouth' Ready to Return Safely to Sailing**



*Members of the Horizons Cadet Club, based at Mayflower Marina. Plymouth are keen to get back out on the water this month.*

Inner city children's sailing charity 'Horizons Plymouth' is to reopen its doors to local sailing cadets on the 27<sup>th</sup> July now that the coronavirus restrictions around recreational sailing have been eased.

The charity, which supports disadvantaged and disabled children from the inner city communities of Plymouth to experience sailing first hand, has undertaken an extensive Covid-19 action plan to minimise the risk of infection whilst allowing a limited return to sailing within the Government guidelines.

Andrew Eccleston Chair of Trustees at Horizons Plymouth says *'It has been extremely disheartening for our young cadets not to be able to get on the water in the early part of this season. Many of the children who participate at the club hugely benefit from regular contact with the team and from the life skills and confidence they build through sailing.'*

Andrew continues *'Horizons Plymouth is committed to returning to sailing whilst minimising the risk of infection from COVID-19. Our board of trustees and professional staff have worked together to devise a programme which will ensure that our suitably qualified cadets can safely enjoy recreational single-handed Pico sailing under the supervision of our Senior Instructors, with on shore support provided by our team of volunteers'*

Safety measures at the sailing club will include initially restricting activity to two pre-arranged bubbles in one day. Each of the sailing team bubbles will be made up of 1 staff member, up to 4 cadets and one volunteer for shore side support. The cadets won't be receiving formal tuition during these sessions and face coverings and gloves will be provided for instructors and assistants in case they need to get closer than 2m to a sailor. The clubs equipment, kit and boats will also be sanitised before and after use.

Simon Mace, Horizons Operations Manager says *"We will be debriefing with our team after each session and the situation will be monitored continuously with any necessary alterations implemented as appropriate. Safety is at the forefront of our minds as we get back out on the water"*

Horizons Plymouth is a year round club and even when sailing is not practical the team provide land based excursions and team building adventures for their cadets, who form great bonds with their fellow members and volunteer instructors. During the recent socially distant time the charities team of volunteers have jumped up to the mark and have been doing virtual catch ups with the children instead. The children have been given a different task relating to sailing, like learning different knots. There have also been some fun picture quizzes featuring local Plymouth landmarks and trying to recognise Horizons volunteers from photos taken when they were very young.

Andrew says *"The ongoing virtual gatherings have been really important to keep the children and volunteers engaged and we really hoped it wouldn't be too long before we could safely return to our much loved and needed sailing club."*



*Safety measures at the Horizons Plymouth sailing club will include initially restricting activity to two pre-arranged group bubbles in one day.*

Horizons Plymouth was formed as a charity in April 1991 and provides learning and educational opportunities that increase self-confidence and improve social and practical skills, through water-based activities. The charity, which is based at Mayflower Marina, Plymouth, relies on both charitable donations and the dedication of their 60-strong team of volunteers to maintain the 3,000 sailing sessions (involving hundreds of young people aged 8 to 19) which take place annually. The charity runs weekly sailing clubs and also hosts a number of sessions for disabled children and vulnerable adults from across the city and beyond.

Charles Bush, Managing Director of Mayflower Marina said *"We are delighted to learn that Horizons shall be getting back on the water very soon. Over the years we have seen first-hand the good work they do and the fun their cadet sailors have afloat. The life skills and confidence the cadets gain whilst participating in Horizons activities, is all part of the process and adds significantly to outcomes off the water. We are proud to support Horizons and look forward to welcoming the Horizons team and their cadets back to the marina at the month end."*

Andrew concludes “Many of the young people sailing with us learn new things about themselves and we’ve seen this have a hugely positive effect on their wider lives. At Horizons Plymouth our members have an opportunity to form lifelong friendships, develop their social and mental wellbeing, learn about the environment and heritage as well as gain new skills and qualifications. The support we received from charitable donations and our volunteers, especially during the Covid-19 crisis, has been crucial in helping us continue with this amazing project and to invest in the future”.

Ends.

**Notes for editors:**

- To view Horizons Plymouth Return to Sailing Plan visit <http://horizonsplymouth.org/return%20to%20sailing/>
- For more information on Horizons Sailing Plymouth and how could you support their work visit: <http://horizonsplymouth.org/>
- Horizons Plymouth is based at Mayflower Marina in Plymouth [www.mayflowermarina.co.uk](http://www.mayflowermarina.co.uk)
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