

## MCA targets uncoded race yachts

The MCA has agreed to discontinue prosecution against the owners of Scarlet Oyster and Playing Around, under the condition both enter into a written agreement to ensure their vessels are coded when engaged in any commercial activity.

The outcome reaffirms the agency's committed position to ensuring all vessels hold the correct documentation.

Small, commercially operated yachts must hold a valid code certificate when being used for any commercial purposes, including racing and training, while vessels must also only operate within the category of water for which they have been authorized. A failure to comply will result in enforcement action with the MCA committed to maintaining the rigorous standards of the UK Flag.

Despite initiatives to address concerns raised in 2019, such as publication of the information leaflet 'Are you in code mode' and officers attending Gran Canaria for the start of the ARC, investigations were begun into several yachts.

The Regulatory Compliance Investigation Team found a number of breaches, resulting in the owners receiving official cautions, paying several thousands of pounds in intervention costs to the MCA and ensuring their vessels were coded for future commercial use. Other yachts were sold or removed from the UK flag and no longer entitled to be UK registered.

Mark Flavell, Lead Investigator at the MCA as part of the Regulatory Compliance Investigations Team, said: "A misinterpretation of the code concerning yachts engaged in racing had developed. The MCA want to send a clear message and dispel this misinterpretation.

"Commercially operated vessels, including those engaged in racing, must be coded. This is to ensure commercial vessels are subject of an independent survey and inspection regime. The aim being, as with any scrutiny of commercial operations, is to keep employees and public safe.

"We will not hesitate to take enforcement action against yacht owners who don't want to hear this message and fail to get their yacht coded."