

A Simple Guide to Safeguarding in Bowls for Clubs and Associations

This short guide has been prepared to highlight issues affecting Clubs, but does not replace or override the information, examples and procedures recommended elsewhere in the national policy documentation.

Club Policy and Procedures

Every club must have in place a relevant safeguarding policy whenever

- it has, or intends to have, children or vulnerable adults in membership
- it regularly opens its facilities for their use whether accompanied or not, e.g. for coaching, open recruitment or family days
- it offers the use of its facilities to schools, Gateway clubs, and other bodies, which provide for the vulnerable

A formal statement of the adoption of the policy should be prominently displayed in the Club, with effective communication of its contents made to everyone involved. A sample statement can be found [here](#) (Microsoft Word .doc file, 58kB). A general guide to promoting Good Practice is to be found at [Expected Behaviour & Code of Conduct](#).

Policy for Safeguarding the Vulnerable

This title acknowledges the diversity of participants in Bowls. It equates with the more readily recognised title 'Child Protection Policy or Safeguarding Policy' found in child and at risk adult focussed organisations. In both cases the policy should provide relevant procedures for:

- reporting concerns, allegations and disclosure of possible abuse or poor practice
- appointing a named person to be contacted should a concern or incident arise
- dealing with Health and Safety issues
- setting guidelines on transport responsibilities
- promoting codes of conduct for every body involved

It is possible that some items already feature in Club Rules or in mandatory compliance regulations of the governing body and a simple summary or reference to them within the policy may be found adequate. See the [Action Plan](#) for what to do next.

In light of recent events since 2011 with the current changes to legislation regarding the Criminal Record Bureau and the Vetting and Barring Scheme being merged under the Disclosure and Barring Service, please refer to the [Vetting and Barring Section](#) of this website as well as the main Government web-site for the DBS on the Home Office web-site.

British Crown Green also have documentation for guidance on their web-site as downloadable word documents. Click [here](#) to access the BCGBA web-site Child Protection page to access.

English Short Mat Bowling Association also have documentation for guidance on their web-site as downloadable word documents. Click [here](#) and select the Child Protection button to access the ESMBA web-site Child Protection page to access.

English Bowling Federation too have documentation for guidance on their web-site as downloadable word documents. Click [here](#) and select the Child Protection Label button to access the EBF web-site Child Protection page to access.

Bowls England have documentation on their web-site in relation to safeguarding and child protection. Please refer to regular guidance statements on the [Bowls England website news page](#).

EIBA Ltd also have information on their web-site.

Staff recruitment (including volunteers)

In the majority of clubs all coaches, team managers and helpers are volunteers. Nevertheless, they should be required to satisfy normal recruitment standards with any references taken up. Where the person recruited will have direct contact with any child or vulnerable adult they should also be screened for suitability to work with the relevant age group under the Criminal Records Bureau Enhanced Disclosure process. Should anyone decline to be checked, they should not be allowed to work with these groups.

See also

- [Disclosure and Barring Service](#). (formerly the Vetting & Barring Scheme (VBS) and involvement of the Independent Safeguarding Agency (ISA)). This section also given guidance on who needs to be CRB/DBS clearance

and the criteria for doing so. It also advises on the current situation in relation to the review of the whole DBS system.

- [Criminal Record Bureau/ Disclosure and Barring Service Clearances](#). This section gives guidance on how to complete the CRB/DBS form and other useful information.
- [Recruitment procedures](#). This section details the criteria which should be taken into account in recruitment of "staff" (be they salaried or volunteers).

Child Protection Officer (CPO) or Safeguarding Officer (SO) or Welfare Officer (WO)

The club must appoint a designated person to serve as its Child Protection Officer (CPO) or Safeguarding Officer (SO) or Welfare Officer (WO) as appropriate. A deputy officer may also be appointed to provide support.

The CPO/SO assisted by the deputy, is responsible for implementation of the policy. It is important that both are assured of the complete support of all other club officials and the committee.

Further information and guidance on the rôle of the CPO/SO/WO is given [here](#). Help and advice is also available from the county CPO or SO WO or alternatively from the National CPO or SO or WO.

Volunteer Disclosures

As part of the recruitment process it is good practice for all volunteers, including those awaiting a CRB/DBS disclosure certificate, to be required to complete a self disclosure declaration. A voluntary disclosure could also be used for any "one-off" occasion by a person or persons. A specimen disclosure form is available [here](#) (Microsoft Word .doc file, 59kB).

Parental or Carer Consents

Parental/carers consent to a child's (or vulnerable adult's) participation should be obtained annually, e.g. on renewal of membership. The consent form should give both a home and an emergency telephone number and must include details of any medical condition, the medication being taken, and authority to refer to a medical practitioner if necessary. Authority must also be included to cover transportation and supervision. Specimen forms can be found on the [Sample Forms](#) page. Parents/carers and juniors are expected to adhere to a code of conduct. See the [Expected Behaviour and Code of Conduct page](#).

Transport

The following matters should be considered when providing transport for children and vulnerable adults to fixtures and other events away from the club.

- Sufficient and appropriate supervision in each vehicle
- All passengers should have a seat with a seat belt
- Compliance with current seat belt regulations (including seating children in the back seat)
- Written information to parents/carers on pick up and drop and drop off points, and times
- Supervisory staff briefing with information on passengers, pick up times, etc.
- Procedures to ensure passengers not left unsupervised on drop off.

It is sensible to require regular club drivers to undergo CRB checks and to verify that they have appropriate insurance cover.

Click [here](#) for information to how to get and the application procedure for an CRB/DBS clearance.

Only use reputable outside transport companies with all necessary insurance and CRB cleared staff.

Suitable specimen transport permission forms can be found on the [Sample Forms page](#).

Overnight stays

Where a club or association is taking children or vulnerable adults away overnight a "risk assessment" should be undertaken by the organiser prior to arrangements being formalised. Proper staffing ratios should be adhered to (see the [Travel and transport page](#)).

The proper parental and/or carer consent forms must be completed for all participants with full details completed. Suitable specimen forms can be found on the [Sample Forms page](#)).

Use of Changing Rooms and Toilet Facilities

The use changing rooms and/or toilet facilities by children and vulnerable adults should be supervised by two members of "staff". Ideally, adults should not use the changing room and toilet facilities at the same time as the children. Often this cannot be avoided and in such cases it is important to make sure that adults are not left alone with a child. Staff of both genders must be present at mixed events, and separate male and female facilities must be provided.

At Risk adults using the changing rooms should be supervised by their carer. If no carers are present, supervision of their use of changing rooms and toilet facilities should follow that used for children.

At all times the use of common sense should prevent mutual embarrassment.

Photography and other images

It is known that certain individuals visit sporting events to take inappropriate photographs and video clips of performers. The club should incorporate policy procedures to cater for such offenders and the licensing of official photographers. Any concerns related to the inappropriate use of imaging equipment should be reported to the designated CPO or other responsible person present. A photographic consent form can be found on the [Sample Forms page](#).

Club/ Association Web-site and Electronic Communications - Good practice

Many Clubs/Associations now have web-sites (a useful marketing tool to attract new membership) and some also allow on-line "forums" to occur. Great care should be taken to ensure that the site is not only secure and not vulnerable to unscrupulous "hackers", but also that it is user-friendly and preserves members privacy (data protection) so that unwarranted electronic communication (phone or email) does not occur.

The Club Web-master (liaising with the Club CPO as appropriate) should manage and moderate (overseeing/ reviewing/ responding to posted content) to ensure which 'links' to other sites are appropriate to accept and ensure that on-line contact with any children, young persons and vulnerable adults interacting with the webpage or profile (if the club uses other media) accord with the Club/Association's Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding policies (as well as that for the Family of Bowls). Guidance on Electronic Communications can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

Care should also be taken when putting photographs on the web-site to ensure children and vulnerable adults cannot be identified and singled out by potential people trying to "groom" or that any any other person may be identified and have their identity "stolen". See Photography section above.

Child/Adult Ratios (advised ratios)

Adults should work with children in pairs and avoid being alone with a child on a one to one basis. With large parties the maximum accepted child/adult ratio is 10:1 (5:1 if the group includes children under 6).

Ofsted guidelines, however, may be useful in some circumstances to follow where classes are involved.

Ofsted Recommended Minimum Supervision Ratios

Child's Age	No of Adults	No of Children
0-2	1	3
2-3	1	4
4-8	1	6
9-12	1	8
13-18	1	10

Similar rules must also be applied when working with vulnerable adults, and it is important that the assistance of any carers present is encouraged.

This will ensure that children, at risk adults and the person(s) in charge are adequately covered.

Insurance issues

The Club must hold appropriate insurance cover. In addition, any coach who holds a coaching qualification and is currently licensed by the English Bowls Coaches Society (EBCS) will also carry personal civil liability cover. The Civil Liability Insurance organised through the appropriate National Governing Body has been designed for the sport and covers member to member incidents. Details can be obtained from your appropriate governing body.

Administration/Coaching

Clubs offering coaching should be aware that the English Bowls Coaches Society (EBCS) Foundation Coach (Level 1) should only work under the supervision of a more senior coach. Those holding coaching certificates at EBCS Club Coach level (Level 2) and above will have had some training in the protection of the vulnerable, and be covered by the EBCS insurance scheme for coaches. They may also hold a CRB/DBS Certificate of Disclosure at Enhanced level if they had previously had regular contact with children or the vulnerable.

More details can be found on the EBCS web-site by clicking [here](#).

Crown Green Coaches can also find further information on the BCGBA web-site by clicking [here](#).

At present English Short Mat Bowling Association (ESMBA) Coaches have a different system of coaching criteria. Details can be found on the ESMBA website ([click here](#)).

BDA Coaches should refer to the Bowls Development Alliance web-site for more information and guidance.

General guidance on appropriate behaviour for those working with children can be found [here](#).

Abuse and its recognition

Abuse is where another person hurts, harms or causes distress to a child or at risk adult. Incidents of abuse are openly reported in the media. This short guide does not define the forms which abuse can take, nor how it may be recognised. Clubs and associations should refer to the [Definitions page](#) for fuller information on abuse, and to [Dealing with concerns and incidents](#) where the action to be taken if an incident occurs, are fully explained.

The Home Office have recently launched Parents Protect, and information and resource web-site with the aim of helping parents and carers better protect children from sexual abuse. It aims to inform and guide parents and carers by giving knowledge and advice and on-line training to educate and take preventative measures. [Click here](#) to access the web-site.

Responding to Complaints

When dealing with complaints where a child or at risk adult is involved always

- Stay calm and do not rush into inappropriate action.
- Reassure the child or vulnerable adult he or she is not to blame. Communication should be at the individual's pace without pressure.
- Listen to what the individual is saying and take them seriously.
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.
- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Explain to the individual what steps you intend to take having heard their account.
- Ensure that you understand what the individual has said and that you record it accurately immediately after the conversation.
- You should not take sole responsibility; consult the Club CPO/SO/WO or Club Secretary so that they can take steps to protect the child or at risk adult and offer support.

Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in the sport of bowls, in a paid or unpaid capacity to take the responsibility or to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, if there are concerns that abuse is occurring and you need advice you can contact the Police, or Social Services, who have the responsibility under the Children's Acts to investigate the matter further where children people are involved. Where a vulnerable adult is involved guidance is provided at [Dealing with concerns and incidents](#).

For further reference see [Dealing with concerns and incidents](#).

Confidential advice can be obtained by telephoning any of the help-lines listed below.

Running Sports: a useful source of information

Running Sports is a Sport England funded body which aims to provide support and advice to volunteers and club officials. Web address is www.runningsports.org and provides top tips, case studies, quick guides on a variety of topics, workbooks on practical solutions to a number of problems, role outlines for club officials etc.

Further information and useful contacts

Fuller information on matters highlighted in this short guide is contained on the [Sports Partnerships](#) page, and the government websites listed below.

The National Centre of Volunteering, the NSPCC, SportscoachUK and some local Social Services Safeguarding Authorities offer information, publications and training opportunities

National Policy for Bowls	http://www.bowlschildprotect.co.uk
Department for Culture, Media & Sport	http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/safeguarding
National Centre for Volunteering	http://www.volunteering.org.uk
SportsCoach UK	http://www.scuk.org.uk
NSPCC	http://www.nspcc.org.uk
Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)	http://www.cpsu.org.uk
Action on Elder Abuse	http://www.elderabuse.org.uk
Ann Craft Trust (dealing with the Abuse of Children and	http://www.anncrafttrust.org.uk

Adults with Learning
Disabilities)

The following national telephone helplines can offer advise if there are concerns

NSPCC Help Line	0808 800 5000
Child Line	0800 1111
Action on Elder Abuse	0808 808 8141
Ann Craft Trust (dealing with the Abuse of Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities)	0115 9515400 Mon-Thurs 0830-1700; Friday 0830-1630

Clubs and Associations may find it useful to also have on record the address and telephone number of the County, Regional and National Child Protection Officer or Safeguarding Officer and local agencies such as Social Services, Police and the Local Child Safeguarding Agency.

National Governing Bodies

Links to the National Governing Bodies web-site pages can be found below:

Bowls England (BE) (Youth/Child Protection)	http://www.bowlsengland.com Bowls England Child Protection Section
EIBA Ltd (Youth/Child Protection)	http://www.eiba.co.uk/ EIBA Section on Child Protection
British Crown Green Bowling Association (BCGBA) (Youth/Child Protection)	http://www.crowngreenbowls.org/ British Crown Green Welfare / Safeguarding/ Child and Vulernable Adult Section of web-site
English Short Mat Bowling Association (ESMBA) (Youth/Child Protection)	http://www.esmba.co.uk/ ESMBA Home page and select Child Protection tab on left hand side
English Bowls Federation (EBF)	English Bowls Federation home page and Select Child Protection tab at left hand side