

EREWASH INDOOR BOWLS CENTRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IN BOWLS



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Introduction

EIBC is committed to ensuring that everyone who participates in bowls can do so in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment. Children are the future of our sport. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in our sport is central to this commitment. All children are entitled to feel safe and protected from any form of abuse and neglect. Their voice is important in the process of keeping them safe and helping them to enjoy bowls.

Children may be harmed in any environment and those having regular contact with children have a key role in supporting the statutory agencies to keep them safe. In each local authority area in England, the three safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and clinical commissioning groups) are responsible for making arrangements for working together with relevant agencies to safeguard and protect the welfare of children in the area.

Working Together to Safeguard Children emphasises that **Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**. For services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part. Paragraph 63¹ of this statutory guidance provides specific information regarding the role of sports clubs and organisations. The Bowls Development Alliance (BDA) and the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of bowls, affiliated County Associations and bowls clubs are all covered by this guidance.

Legislation and Government Guidance

- **The Children Acts 1989 and 2004²** – provide the legislative framework for safeguarding children. A child is defined in this legislation as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children³ (2018 (updated in 2020))** – is the main Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It makes specific reference to the responsibilities of sports clubs and organisations.
- **Information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers⁴** – is the key information sharing guidance for safeguarding cases amended to reflect the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (**GDPR**).
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated annually)** – is the key statutory safeguarding guidance for all those working in education. It contains useful links to the growing number of safeguarding issues faced by children.
- **The Prevent Duty⁵** – is specific guidance for those involved in education and childcare but it provides key information about the safeguarding concerns of radicalisation and exploitation of children by extremist organisations.
- **The Sexual Offences Act 2003⁶** - sets clear limits and boundaries about behaviour with children.

Definitions

- In England, a child is defined in **The Children Act 1989** as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The age criteria is the same for Wales and Northern Ireland. In Scotland the definition of a child varies in different legal contexts, but statutory guidance which supports the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, includes all children and young people up to the age of 18.

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined within statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018** as 'protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Key Principles

- The safety and welfare of children is paramount.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race (including ethnic origin, nationality and colour), religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation have the right to enjoy their sport free from abuse and poor practice.
- It is recognised that some children have additional vulnerability, which may be due to disability, language, sexual orientation, culture, the impact of previous experiences or the fact that they perform in an elite environment.
- All concerns and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- The views of children will be listened to, valued and respected

What is Abuse?

- It is important to be aware of what constitutes abuse. The following definitions are adapted from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
- Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse.
- Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them, or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. Those in positions of trust such as relatives, community leaders, teachers or coaches can be perpetrators of abuse.
- Traditionally four main types of abuse were identified:
 1. **Physical Abuse** - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. This definition also applies where a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.
 2. **Emotional Abuse** - the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

3. **Sexual Abuse** - involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual physical contact including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (e.g. masturbation, kissing and touching outside of clothing). It may also include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at or in production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including online). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
4. **Neglect** - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development (such as food, clothing, medical care/treatment or shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment). Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Emerging abusive issues identified in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 include:

- **Domestic/Relationship Abuse** – controlling or coercive behaviour within the family home or in a child's relationship. Children may be adversely affected by witnessing/hearing an abusive relationship in their household.
- **Sexual Exploitation** - child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.
- **Criminal Exploitation** – often referred to as **County Lines**, a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.
- **Radicalisation** - extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** - a form of child abuse and violence against women. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. This is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003.
- **Forced Marriage** - a forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not (or, in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities, cannot)

consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It is different to an arranged marriage where the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses. Forced marriage is illegal in the UK.

- **Honour based abuse** - a broad umbrella term used to describe a combination of practices used principally to control and punish the behaviour of a member of a family or social group, in order to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs in the name of 'honour'.
- **Hazing** - any activity expected of someone in joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers them regardless of a person's willingness to participate.

Signs of Abuse

There are a number of signs that may indicate that children are being abused:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries, such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries,
- an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent,
- unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g., becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper),
- age-inappropriate sexual awareness,
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour,
- distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected,
- difficulty in making friends,
- being prevented from socializing with other children,
- displaying variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite,
- loss of weight for no apparent reason,
- the child becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

This list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. Some changes in behavior can be caused by changes at home, for example, bereavement or hormonal changes. Parents/carers should be encouraged to inform the Club Coach or Club Safeguarding Officer of any changes in home circumstances.

Safeguarding Responsibilities in Bowls

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. To fulfil their commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, all organisations that provide services for, or work with, children must have:

- a senior board level member to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements,
- at least one identified lead safeguarding practitioner who can advise and support others when a safeguarding concern arises,
- a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in

individual decisions and the development of services,

- safe recruitment practices for individuals whom the organisation will permit to work regularly with children and adults at risk, including policies on when to obtain a criminal record (DBS) check,
- codes of conduct for all relevant participants which clearly support the paramountcy of safeguarding children,
- clear whistleblowing procedures which are suitably referenced in staff training and codes of conduct, and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed,
- clear policies in line with those from the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) for dealing with allegations against people who work with children, information, with relevant professionals and with the LSP,
- appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training.
- clear information sharing arrangements which set out the processes for sharing

Good Coaching Practice

Coaches have a very important part to play in protecting children from potential harm and are often the first to recognise and raise concerns.

It is very important that all coaches read this Policy and any related procedures and are aware of the process to follow, to deal with any concerns. All coaches have an outline to safeguarding included within their Level 1 or 2 coaching course and are recommended to attend a Coach Bowls Safeguarding Course⁷.

The Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) outlines best practice guidelines for coaches coaching young people's activities⁸. It stresses the need for ratios for coaches to participants which are linked to the age of children involved. This will minimise any risks to participants and enhance the benefits they draw from the activity.

Coaches should never be left alone with an individual or group and it is recommended that at least one adult present is the same gender as the bowler or group of bowlers.

Physical contact should always be intended to meet the child's needs not the adult's. It is obvious that adults should never touch a child inappropriately. A responsible adult should only use physical contact if it's aim is to: develop sports skills or techniques, treat an injury, prevent an injury or accident from occurring or meet the requirements of the sport. The adult should explain the reason for the physical contact to the child, reinforcing the teaching or coaching skill. Unless the situation is an emergency, the adult should ask the child for permission.

A coach should not have a sexual relationship with anyone that they are coaching who is below the age of 18 years.

The Coach should hold an appropriate qualification, comply with minimum age requirements, have relevant insurance cover, have completed a criminal records disclosure that is acceptable to the NGB (if they are coaching children unsupervised on a regular basis) and have read and understood this Safeguarding Children Policy, the Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy plus the following policies of their NGB:

- Code of conduct for coaches

- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Dealing with Concerns, Disclosures or Allegations

Abuse can and does occur in a variety of situations, which may include sport or other social activities. Most children are abused by someone known to them. This may be within or outside of the bowls context. Concerns may arise from a child or adult expressing concerns or by something observed that raises issues. These may be about a child, a perceived risk to children or the behaviour of a member of a bowls club or organization towards a child.

It is important that those involved in bowls are vigilant about concerns, and that appropriate action is taken. The relevant Safeguarding Officer should be informed about any concerns or allegations (club or county level initially).

Working Together to Safeguard Children emphasizes the responsibility to inform appropriate agencies of possible abuse so that they can then make enquiries and take any action necessary to protect the child. This applies both to suspicions of abuse occurring within the context of bowling activities or in another context affecting a child within the bowls family.

It is not the responsibility of those working in bowls to make judgements as to whether or not abuse is occurring. It is however part of their duty of care to act on any concerns about a child's welfare related to their own observations or things they have been told.

Not all concerns about a child relate to abuse – many relate to lower-level concerns or poor practice and can be dealt with internally, using disciplinary structures, with the support of the NGB if appropriate. Listening to and logging lower-level concerns is important as it may be inadvertent or thoughtless but could be ultimately intended to enable abuse.

All information received and discussed about a child must be treated in confidence and only shared with those individuals within the organisation with a designated safeguarding role. They may then need to seek advice or inform the statutory agencies e.g., Children's Social Care or the Police. This may be through the **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** in the local authority where the child lives. Calls to the police should use 101 unless it is an emergency situation requiring a 999 call. The NSPCC CPSU Helpline (0800 800 5000 email help@nspcc.org.uk) can be contacted to talk through any concerns that arise. This can be done anonymously. Children themselves can be directed to Childline (0800 1111).

Responding to a Concern

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare you should inform the club's or organisation's Safeguarding Officer. Do not investigate your concerns or keep them to yourself. It is NOT your responsibility to decide if a situation is poor practice, abuse or bullying, but it IS your responsibility to report your concerns.

Examples of concerns that might arise are:

- a parent who pushes too hard
- a coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy
- an older player who intimidates (inappropriately)
- an official who places unfair pressure on a person
- changes in a child's behaviour / observation of inappropriate behaviour
- sudden unexplained absence from bowls

Disclosures by a child

If a child talks about a concern or abuse to a club or organisation member, the member should be advised to:

- stay calm and keep an open mind,
- listen very carefully to what is being said and take the child seriously,
- as soon as possible record in writing what was said using the child's own words,
- do not make promises that cannot be kept, such as promising not to tell anyone else and explain who needs to know (Safeguarding Officer),
- ask only open questions e.g., 'Is there anything else you want to tell me?' or 'What did you mean by the word xxxxx?'
- do not ask leading questions that may compromise any future actions e.g. 'Did they hit you?'
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing telling you,
- give careful consideration as to whether the parents/carers of the child involved should be informed of the concern at that stage, if they are responsible for the abuse or are unable to respond to the situation appropriately then this could put the child at greater risk,
- report the disclosure to your club Safeguarding Officer,
- If the disclosure happens while a club or organisation member is working in a school, college or on a local authority programme (eg providing bowls coaching or introductory sessions), they should additionally inform the designated safeguarding lead or similar who will follow their procedures.

Allegations about an individual

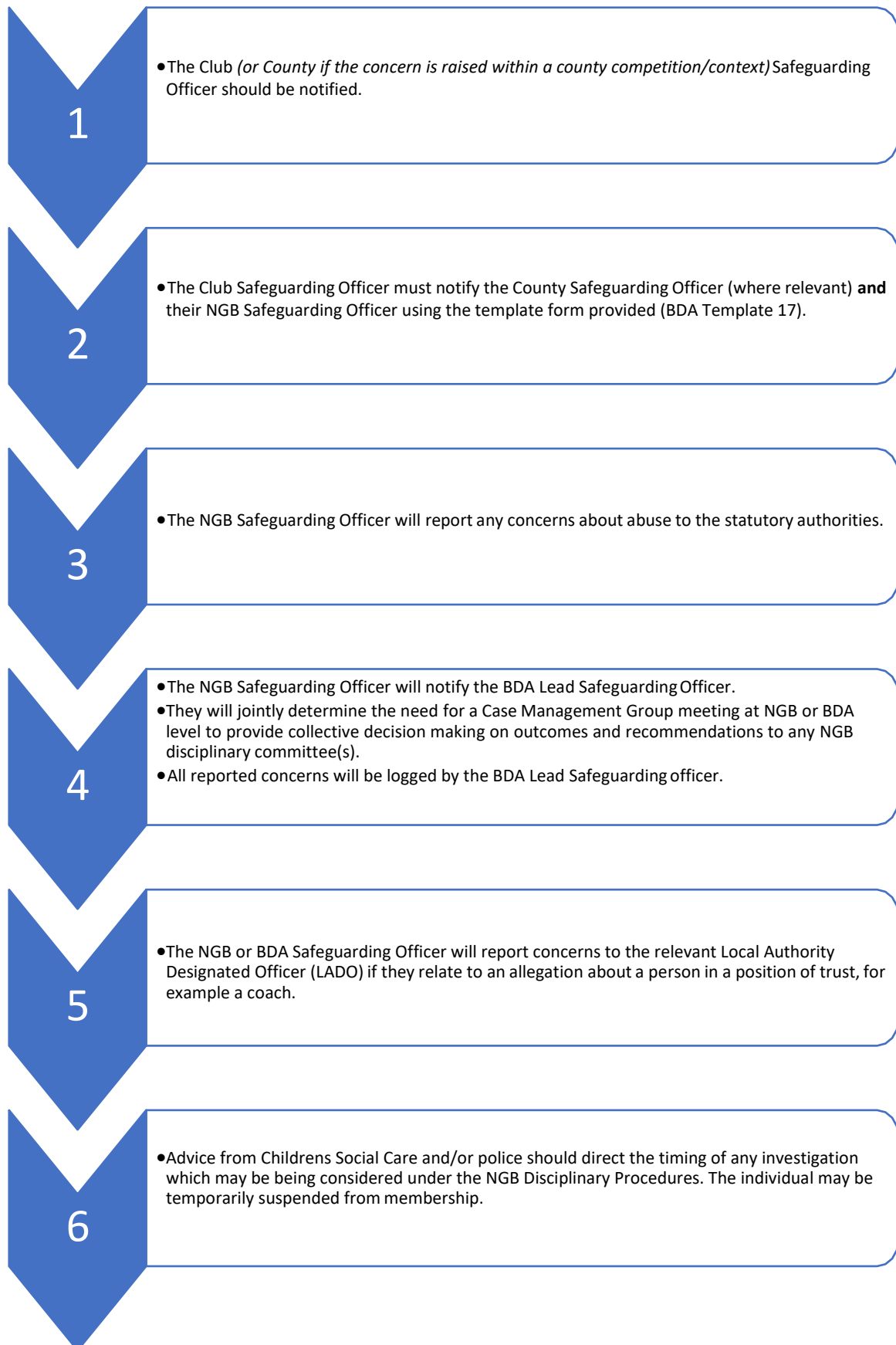
To retain the integrity of the sport of bowls, given that individuals can and do play, coach or officiate within more than one code, it is important that all organisations apply the same procedures regarding allegations.

If there is an allegation about an individual that relates to their behaviour towards, suitability to work/ volunteer with or participate alongside children, (including observed behaviour, information about a police investigation, court case or conviction) the club or association should ensure this is reported to the Safeguarding Officer at the club or county association. They should then inform the Safeguarding Officer at their NGB, who will:

- ascertain the source of the information; e.g., self-disclosure, word of mouth, online, newspaper, police or offender management services (youth offending team, probation service, mental health team),
- speak to the individual concerned about the allegation,
- ask the individual to stop working/volunteering/participating with children immediately whilst a full investigation is carried out. This is a neutral action, not intended to assign guilt and is to protect all parties involved,
- work with the BDA Lead Safeguarding Officer to conduct an investigation to gain the fullest available information; this may involve interviewing the individual concerned, witnesses of any observed behaviour or obtaining information from official sources,
- conduct a risk assessment using the template from the BDA website which will consider the risks posed and any safeguards that are or could be put into place
- consider temporary suspension of membership if it is not possible to ensure that the individual would not have access to children within the club(s) concerned while investigations take place
- the NGB(s) Case Management Group or BDA Case Management Group (depending on the level of concern) will assess whether it is appropriate for the person to return to working/volunteering/participating with children and how this will be managed. They will assess on a case-by-case basis any support needed for the person about whom the allegations have been made. An independent person may be appointed to give this support.
- use the relevant disciplinary policy and procedures for the NGB(s) involved, if necessary, where sanctions may be applied if the balance of evidence suggests a risk exists which cannot be managed within the sport.

The joint publication by the CPSU and NACRO on making safe and fair membership decisions in sports organisations (see footnote 7) provides excellent detailed guidance with key reference to the **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**.

Appendix 1 – Reporting and Managing Safeguarding Concerns within Bowls



If a Safeguarding Officer at any of the stages above is implicated in the reported issue,

the Safeguarding Officer at the next stage should be informed instead. If this is not possible, another appropriate senior official of the relevant NGB or the BDA should be informed.

All concerns or allegations must be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Until the allegations are substantiated only those directly involved in investigating the case should be informed. If the allegation is shown to be unfounded, confidentiality must still be maintained.

In line with all data protection procedures, all confidential records kept by the NGB must be kept securely online or in a locked cabinet or a computer with password access, stored for a minimum period of 7 years, with limited access to authorised people only.

Appeals

If an individual member is unhappy with the conclusions of an investigation into alleged safeguarding concerns, they can appeal the decision using the Appeals procedure contained within the relevant NGB Disciplinary Procedure or BDA Complaints Procedure.

Appendix 2 – Information sharing

Golden Rules of Sharing Sensitive Information

1. The Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information, it provides a framework to ensure personal information is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the young person (and / or their family where appropriate) about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice if you are in any doubt. Advice could come from the NGB or BDA Safeguarding Officer, NSPCC, Local Authority Children's Social Care Dept (Social Services) or the Police. It may be possible to gain the advice without disclosing the identity of the young person.
4. Share with consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgment, that lack of consent can be overridden in the interest of the young person. You will need to base your decision on the facts of the situation.
5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the young person and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. **Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure:** Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, share only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it - whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose. (Inform your NGB Safeguarding Officer of your actions)

The Bowls Development Alliance is participating in the Sport England Case Management Project which requires sharing of anonymised case management data with Sport Resolution & the National Safeguarding Panel

Appendix 3 – Linked Policies

Topic	BDA Document Location
Whistle Blowing	3-Whistleblowing-Guidelines.pdf (bowlsdevelopmentalliance.com)
Anti-Bullying Policy	Anti-Bullying-Policy.pdf (bowlsdevelopmentalliance.com)
Complaints and Appeals	Complaints Procedure - Bowls Development Alliance
Disciplinaries in relation to safeguarding issues	Under construction
Safeguarding Adults at Risk	Resources - Bowls Development Alliance
Safe and Fair Membership	Under construction
Data Protection – Information Sharing – Privacy	Privacy Policy – Bowls Development Alliance
Safe Recruitment	2-Safe-Recruitment-Guidelines-.pdf (bowlsdevelopmentalliance.com)
Health & Safety	Under construction
Equality	Equality Policy – Bowls Development Alliance

Appendix 4 – Support lines

Support Organisation	Topic(s)	Contact Details
Ann Craft Trust	Adult Safeguarding (plus safeguarding children)	0115 951 5400 anncrafttrust.org.uk
Anti – Bullying Alliance	Support with bullying issues	aba@ncb.org.uk
ASSIST	Support for families who have experienced trauma	01788 560 800 assisttraumacare.org.uk
Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP)	Police organization dealing with online grooming/exploitation	ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/
Childline	All aspects of child welfare – contact mainly for child to use	0800 1111 childline.org.uk
Child Protection in Sport Unit (part of NSPCC)	Advice on safeguarding in sport	cpsu@nspcc.org.uk
Citizens Advice Bureau	Free information and advice on legal, money and other problems	03444 111 444 citizensadvice.org.uk/
Family Rights Group	Advice and support to families whose children are involved with social services	0808 801 0366 frg.org.uk
Karma Nirvana	Support and advice for honour based abuse and forced marriage	0800 5999 247 karmanirvana.org.uk
Kidscape	Help for adults concerned about children who are being bullied	020 7823 5430 kidscape.org.uk
National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO)	Advice on working with those with criminal convictions	0300 123 1889 nacro.org.uk/contact-us/
National Association for People Abused in Childhood	Support for adult survivors of all types of childhood abuse	0800 801 0331 napac.org.uk
Rape Crisis	information for survivors of sexual violence and their friends and family	rapecrisis.org.uk/get-help/find-a-rape-crisis-centre
Samaritans	An organisation providing volunteers to listen when people need help	Freephone 116 123 www.samaritans.org
Stonewall	Information and support for LGBTQ+ communities and their allies. 0800 0502020	0800 0502020 stonewall.org.uk
Stop Hate Crime	Challenges all forms of hate crime and discrimination	0800 138 1625 talk@stophateuk.org
Thinkuknow	Advice and support for young people, parents and carers concerned about online safety	www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Key abbreviations found in this document

BDA	Bowls Development Alliance
BCGBA	British Crown Green Bowls Association
BE	Bowls England
CMG	Case Management Group
CPSU	Child Protection in Sport Unit
CSC	Children's Social Care (formerly known as Social Services)
DBS	Disclosure & Barring Service (formally known as CRB)
DFE	Department for Education
EBF	English Bowling Federation
EIBA	English Indoor Bowling Association Ltd
ESMBA	English Short Mat Bowling Association
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LSO	Lead Safeguarding Officer (BDA)
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
NGB	National Governing Body
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
SO	Safeguarding Officer (NGBs, Counties and clubs)
SP	Safeguarding Partnership (formerly the Local Safeguarding Children Board - LSCB)

Version History

First Approved:	January 2020
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Date of next review:	October 2024

Review History

Date of Review	Comments
January 2020	Version 1 reviewed and approved for use
May 2021	Reviewed and approved for use
October 2022	Fully revised to create separate policies for safeguarding children and adults

Revision History

Version	Change Log	Date
1	Initial release of policy	January 2020
2	Fully revised to create separate policies for safeguarding children and adults	October 2022