

From: Brian Turner

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Subject: Observations following the Whyte Report to Sport England

Recommendations for League clubs re safeguarding

Although some clubs already provide parts of the information below on their websites it is my view that every club affiliated to the League ought to have clear guidelines as to the safeguarding information they need to publish on their website and club notice boards. The BDA does publish a checklist for clubs (see below) Failure to provide this information should incur a financial penalty. I would also advise that we agree a code of conduct or etiquette to be followed during all league competitions/games.

The following recommendations about safeguarding are given following a review of current provisions by Chester and District Bowling League clubs websites and recent publications re safeguarding by Sport England, BCGBA and the BDA.

1. The following information and documents should be posted on the Chester and District Bowling League and Chester Seniors League websites:
 - a) A copy of the League safeguarding policy and a link to the appropriate supporting information/templates/guidance as recommended by BCGBA/BDA and posted on their websites.
 - b) Contact details of the safeguarding officer(s) for each club affiliated to the League.
 - c) Links to the Sport England, BCGBA/BDA/CCCGBA websites and extracts from their recent posts following the Whyte Report as appropriate.
 - d) An agreed code of conduct/etiquette to be followed during all league competitions/games.

2. All clubs affiliated to the Chester and District League and Chester Seniors League should be required to post the following on their own club website and club notice boards.
 - a) The name(s) and contact information for the club safeguarding officer(s).
 - b) Copies of safeguarding policies, advice about how to raise a concern and details of the procedures to be followed.
 - c) An agreed code of conduct/etiquette to be followed during all league competitions/games.

The Whyte Report

Following substantial complaints about misconduct in a range of sports organisations but especially in gymnastics, Sport England and UK Sport

asked Anne Whyte QC to investigate the allegations. Her final report with detailed recommendations was published in June 2022. In January 2023 Sport England published a policy response.

The executive summary of the Whyte report to UK Sport and Sport England on misconduct in British gymnastics opens with the following statements:

Para 1 notes

Sport should be a positive and safe experience, regardless of age and ability. It should not involve conduct or practices that cause emotional or sexual harm. It should not cause physical harm beyond unavoidable hazards. Keeping participants safe requires everyone engaging in sport to maintain appropriate standards of behaviour. Where there are concerns that standards of behaviour have been breached, individuals should feel able to make disclosures to this effect. It is important that clubs and National Governing Bodies ("NGB") deal with alleged breaches properly in order to provide the sports community with the necessary confidence that concerns are taken seriously and managed fairly.

Para 2 notes

... The management of safeguarding concerns and complaints by BG and its clubs has not been consistently appropriate or rigorous, ... Many gymnasts, especially elite gymnasts, have felt unable to raise complaints with appropriate authorities including BG. Some parents, carers or guardians have felt the same. This reticence, whilst a common feature of competitive sport, has been particularly pronounced in gymnastics.

Para 11 notes

... One wonders how many sporting scandals it will take before the government of the day appreciates it needs to take more action to protect children who participate in sport, a sector where coaches do not have a central regulator and where most complaints lack independent resolution.

Para 14 notes

The unacceptable culture described in this report (and in other similar reviews in other countries) will not be fully eradicated until the national and international leadership within the sport publicly recognise its existence and take (and are seen to be taking) active and transparent steps to eradicate it.

As a result of the recommendations outlined in the Whyte report, Sport England and UK sport have issued new detailed guidance concerning safeguarding to all National Governing Bodies (NGBs). It is required that all NGBs adopt appropriate procedures based on these recommendations – this includes the BCGBA and those affiliated to it.

As a consequence of the Whyte report recommendations about actions that needed to be undertaken by NGBs were revised. Sport England effectively required all NGBs to review their safeguarding policies and in January 2023 published the following Policy response statement:

Policy response

In January 2023, we, along with UK Sport, published a policy response that was based on learnings and insight from the Whyte Review.

In total, the response included 19 commitments that spanned the areas of coaching and workforce support, performance athlete support, good governance, dispute resolution and creating safer environments for participants.

These commitments include:

- the continued development of the Safeguarding Case Management Programme to help organisations access expert support in relation to safeguarding
- Sport Integrity, the independent disclosure and investigations service, becoming mandatory for all UK Sport funded sports
- the funding of a national network of welfare officers to promote good practice and safe sport at a local level.

Whilst the main focus is upon elite sport and protections for elite athletes in effect Sport England and UK Sport are setting standards that all NGBs accredited to Sport England/UK sport **must adopt**. It is for these reasons that the BCGBA has now posted on its website the following statement. Particular sentences have been highlighted.

SAFEGUARDING

The Bowls Development Alliance (BDA) works in partnership with the **BCGBA** and other National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of bowls to build a safe environment for young people and adults to enjoy playing bowls. All partners are committed to ensuring that support is available to every affiliated club so systems can be put in place to make bowls an enjoyable and safe experience for all.

Everyone in bowls has a part to play in safeguarding young people and adults at risk. We have created a variety of guidance documents, templates and educational resources, alongside the core safeguarding policies, to make it easier for clubs and volunteers to embed good safeguarding practices throughout.

If you have any concerns about the welfare of an adult or child in bowls, whether the issue is inside or outside the sport, talk to your club, county or NGB Lead Safeguarding Officer. You can also contact the BDA Lead

Safeguarding Officer for advice. – See contact details on the Safeguarding Contacts tab.

If you have **immediate concerns** about the welfare of a child, contact the police on 101 or 999 in an emergency, you can also ring the **NSPCC** free helpline on 0808 800 5000.

If you have **immediate concerns** about the welfare of an adult, contact the police on 101 or 999 in an emergency. Support is also available via the [Ann Craft Trust](#) on 0115 951 5400.

Concerns might include:

- Evidence of abuse or neglect of a bowls participant
- Poor practice in coaching e.g. unnecessary touching, unnecessary messaging or use of inappropriate language
- Individuals exploiting their position to gain access to children
- Discriminatory language or behaviour
- Bullying of adults by their peers
- Breaking of the club code of conduct in relation to a safeguarding issue

The BCGBA as a member of the Bowls Development Alliance (BDA) has approved policy documents and safeguarding templates which it expects every bowling club to adopt. The BDA has since Feb 2022 also published 6 Safeguarding Bulletins giving guidance on particular issues. The BDA guidance includes some 18 documents including advice and policy templates recommending (or really requiring) all bowls clubs to adopt where appropriate. The CCGCBA has on its own website various policy documents and templates that all Cheshire bowling clubs are expected to adopt.

It may be the case that most Chester bowling clubs because they do not have under 18s sections believe that they do not have safeguarding issues in their club as they are dealing with reasonable adults. I hope that this is the case. However, we should all be aware of the growing number of club members who have health issues relating to physical disabilities, dementia or other medical issues such as having a colostomy bag which may require understanding and appropriate support during competition.

Whilst I have seen numerous examples of exceptional concern and a willingness to adjust to a competitor's disability, I have witnessed several albeit rare instances when this has not been the case. On occasions language has become somewhat heated/abusive or reasonable adjustments have not always been made for a player with a disability or medical condition. It is now clear that in some instances the BCGBA

would regard such behaviour as not only inappropriate but coming within the category of abuse.

We must in my view make it clearer to all players of whatever age or gender that such inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated whether whilst playing on the green or observing. Inappropriate actions or behaviour and could result in punitive action by League officers. We should set out more clearly a code of conduct or rules of etiquette that must be followed. In 2022 I gave members of my team such guidance and have even spoken to several members explaining when their conduct was inappropriate and that it would in future lead to disciplinary action

Recommended documentation

The BDA has published the following range of recommended policy documents and templates which can be found on the BDA website [Resources - Bowls Development Alliance](#). Clearly not all of these documents will be appropriate for us but we should consider putting those that are appropriate on both the League website and advising clubs to do the same.

Policy documents

Safeguarding children in bowls policy

Safeguarding adults in bowls policy

Safeguarding bulletins

Safe 1 Feb 2022 Safe 2 April 2022

Safe 3 June 2022 Safe 4 Aug 2022

Safe 5 Oct 2022 Safe 6 Dec 2022

Safeguarding guidelines

1. Safeguarding Officer Role Description
2. Safe Recruitment
3. Whistleblowing
4. Confidentiality and Information Sharing
5. Travelling and Staying Away
6. Transport
7. Managing Challenging Behaviour
8. Physical Contact
9. Safeguarding Support Helplines
10. Photography and Filming
11. Supervision of under 18s
12. Banter v Bullying
13. Safe use of changing facilities and toilets

14. Social Media guidelines
15. Safeguarding for Parents/Carers and Under 18s
16. Anti – Bullying Policy

Safeguarding for Parents/Carers and Under 18s

1. Safeguarding Advice for Parents and Carers
2. Safeguarding Advice for Young Bowlers (U18)

Safeguarding templates

1. Safeguarding contacts
2. Members code of conduct
3. Full code of conduct
4. Code of conduct poster
5. Safeguarding reporting form – person of concern
6. Safeguarding reporting form- adult alleged victim
7. Safeguarding reporting form – child alleged victim
8. Club safeguarding checklist
9. Filming consent
10. Photographic permissions – child bowlers
11. Parent/carer consent form for events
12. Bowls events list for children planning checklist
13. Safeguarding contact details poster
14. Application for coach or other volunteer
15. Club website audit checklist