Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy 2026

1. Policy Statement
2. Scope and Application
3. Definitions
4. Safeguarding Principles
5. Safeguarding Roles & Responsibilities
6. Abuse and Harm
7. Dealing with Concerns, Disclosures or Allegations
8. Responding to Concerns
9. Position of Trust
10. Legal and Governance Framework
11. Information Sharing and Reporting

Appendix:

1 Reporting and Managing Safeguarding Concerns within Bowls

2 Information sharing Golden Rules of Sharing Sensitive Information

1. Policy Statement

The Bowls Development Alliance (BDA) and the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of bowls are committed to ensuring that everyone who participates in bowls can do so in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in our sport is central to this commitment.

All children and young people have the right to be safe, supported and protected from harm, abuse and exploitation. They have the right to participate in bowls in an environment that is safe, welcoming and enjoyable.

The BDA and the NGBs recognise that safeguarding is a shared responsibility across bowls, and that children and young people must receive help and protection when they need it. The welfare of children and young people should always be the sport's first priority.

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy 2026

We acknowledge that some children face additional risks and barriers to recognising, reporting or disclosing abuse and may be additionally targeted. This may include, but is not limited to, deaf and disabled children, and children from Black, Asian and other minoritised ethnic communities and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

The BDA and the NGBs acknowledge their legal and moral responsibility, and that of its clubs and organisations, to safeguard all children and young people involved in bowls. Whilst safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, within the BDA and NGBs there is a team of individuals who have more specific responsibility in relation to safeguarding, namely the Board Champion and Safeguarding Team who manage both reactive and proactive safeguarding.

This policy, supported by associated procedures, guidance and codes of conduct, sets out our commitment to preventing harm, responding to concerns, and ensuring that all participants are protected from poor practice, abuse and exploitation.

This policy operates in line with safeguarding legislation, national standards and guidance, and the BDA and NGBs will work in partnership with statutory agencies and specialist organisations to ensure best practice is implemented, monitored and maintained.

This policy sits alongside the BDA Safeguarding Adult Policy to support a consistent and continuous approach to safeguarding and wellbeing as young people transition into adulthood.

2. Scope and Application

From the Board to staff, the BDA and NGBs place the welfare of children and young people at the heart of its culture and values. The BDA and the NGBs of the sport are responsible for promoting a safe, welcoming and enjoyable environment for all children and young people.

Nonetheless, safeguarding responsibilities are shared and proportionate, reflecting the role and activities of each organisation and individuals within the sport.

This policy applies to:

All BDA and NGB Board and staff members;

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy 2026

All individuals, clubs, associations and organisations delivering or participating in bowls under the jurisdiction of Bowls England, English Indoor Bowling Association, English Short Mat Bowling Association, British Crown Green Bowling Association and English Bowls Federation whether or not they are a member of the NGBs, including players, coaches, umpires, officials, volunteers, parents, and spectators.

The NGBs will take proportionate and appropriate action against any individual or organisation found to be in breach of this policy.

The BDA and NGBs welcome concerns raised in good faith and will always treat them seriously. No action will be taken against anyone raising a genuine concern, even if it is later found to be unsubstantiated. Malicious or deliberately false allegations are extremely rare, but when they do occur, they may be subject to disciplinary action.

This policy should be read alongside the following BDA/NGB documents:

Safe Recruitment Guidance

Safeguarding Reporting Procedures

Safeguarding Disciplinary Regulations

Safeguarding Adult Policy

Code of Conduct

Good Practice Guidance

Recognising Poor Practice Guidance

3. Definitions

Child / Young Person

In England, a child is defined by the Children Act 1989 as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.

- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

This definition is drawn from Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).

Child Protection

Child protection is part of safeguarding and refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Position of Trust

A Position of Trust exists where an adult, because of their role, has authority, influence, responsibility for, or regular contact with a child or young person. This includes coaches, officials, safeguarding officers, team managers, staff and volunteers.

Regulated Activity

Regulated Activity is work that a person who is barred from working with children must not do. It is defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and includes certain roles involving regular teaching, training, coaching, supervision or care of children.

Poor Practice

Poor practice is behaviour that falls below expected standards and may create an unsafe environment for children and young people. While poor practice may not constitute abuse, it should be addressed promptly as it can increase the risk of harm and undermine safeguarding culture.

4. Safeguarding Principles

The BDA the NGBs and all those involved in bowls will uphold the following principles:

- The welfare of children and young people is paramount.
- Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.

- All children and young people have the right to be safe and included. They will be listened to valued and respected.
- Everyone has a duty to recognise and report safeguarding concerns. Failure to report concerns in accordance with this policy, or our reporting procedures, or to a Club or County Safeguarding Officer, may result in disciplinary action.
- Adults (over 18s) in positions of trust must maintain clear, professional boundaries, and must not engage in any sexual or romantic relationship with a child or young person under 18 years of age. This applies regardless of consent, previous relationships and includes young people aged 16 and 17.
- Low-level concerns, poor practice, and early indicators of potential harm must be recognised, recorded and addressed promptly to prevent escalation and to foster an effective safeguarding culture.
- Safeguarding is essential to creating a safe and welcoming environment.

The BDA and the NGBs align with the principles of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) and the NSPCC Sport framework, including vigilance, respect, partnership and child voice.

Children and young people will be listened to and involved in decisions affecting them wherever appropriate.

5. Roles of the BDA, NGBs, County Associations and Clubs

Within the sport of bowls, some people and organisations have specific responsibilities.

The BDA and NGBs will:

- Reinforce the message that safeguarding is not optional and that everyone has responsibility to ensure children and young people are safe in bowls
- Prioritise children's and young people's welfare and ensure their voices inform decision-making.
- Provide expertise, support and resources to help the sport maintain the highest level of safeguarding practice in all areas of sport.
- Ensure systems are in place to identify, record, review and respond to low level safeguarding concerns, including monitoring for patterns of behaviour and escalating concerns where appropriate.
- Embed safeguarding through clear policies, procedures, codes of conduct and assurance activity.

- Commit to share information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their parents via leaflets, posters, group work, forums and one to-one discussions.
- Ensure all individuals in positions of trust complete required safeguarding training and vetting, monitored through NGB compliance processes.
- Respond promptly and proportionately to all concerns, recording and managing cases in line with NGB/BDA procedures and statutory guidance.
- Refer matters to the Police, Children's Social Care or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) when appropriate.
- Maintain safe systems, including secure information handling and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) compliance.
- Ensure strategic safeguarding leadership, and work collaboratively with Sport England, UK Sport and NSPCC Sport.
- Ensure all staff receive appropriate periodical safeguarding training.
- The NGBs may, following a case-by-case assessment, publish or otherwise communicate the outcome of safeguarding-related disciplinary decisions where it considers this to be necessary and proportionate for safeguarding purposes. In reaching this decision, the NGBs will balance the sensitivity of the matter with the need to protect participants, promote learning, and maintain confidence in safeguarding arrangements. All decisions will be consistent with UK GDPR Article 6 & 9 conditions.
- Any publication will be lawful, proportionate, and compliant with data protection and confidentiality requirements. Decisions relating to publication form part of the NGBs safeguarding risk-management function and do not constitute an additional sanction.

Affiliated Clubs and County Associations (where relevant) will:

- Adopt and promote the BDA Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.
- Appoint at least one trained Safeguarding Officer who has completed safeguarding officer training and refresher training every three years.
- Use the NGBs Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) system and follow safe recruitment requirements.
- Ensure individuals in positions of trust complete NGBs safeguarding training (reviewed every three years) and Enhanced DBS checks (renewed every three years).
- Follow NGBs Reporting Procedures.
- Maintain safe, positive, welcoming and inclusive environments.

- Record, manage and escalate low-level safeguarding concerns in line with NGB guidance and reporting procedures.
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately via NGB Reporting Procedures.

Non-Member Participants involved in Bowls activity, events, programmes or competitions, or acting under the jurisdiction or authority of the NGBs will:

- Comply with all NGB safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Promote a safe and welcoming environment.
- Where working in a Position of Trust / Regulated Activity:
  - Complete safeguarding training and refresher training every 3 years
  - Hold an Enhanced DBS check (renew every three years).
- Report safeguarding concerns immediately via NGB Reporting Procedures.
- Ensure appropriate insurance and safeguarding arrangements are in place when delivering bowls tuition or competitions independently. The NGBs may request evidence where relevant.
- Schools and colleges operate under the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory framework. NGB safeguarding procedures will complement these where BDA or NGB personnel or programmes are involved.

Failure to comply with safeguarding requirements, or any action that places a child at risk, may result in exclusion from bowls activities, events, programmes, or competitions, and referral to the relevant authorities or an employer, where appropriate.

6. Abuse and Harm

The following categories are taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

Physical

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, positioning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Signs and Indicators of Physical Abuse

Physical Signs

- There are injuries that the child or young person cannot explain or explains unconvincingly.
- The child or young person has injuries that have not been treated or have been treated inadequately.
- There are injuries on parts of the body where accidental injury is unlikely, such as the cheeks, chest or thighs.
- The child or young person has bruising that reflects hand or finger marks.
- The child or young person has cigarette burns or human bite marks.
- The child or young person has broken bones (particularly if the child is under the age of two);
- The child or young person has scalds, especially those with upward splash marks, tide marks on arms, legs or on the body caused from hot water.

Behavioural Signs

The following are possible indicators, but these behaviours can also be linked to adolescent behaviour and do not automatically mean a child or young person is being abused:

- The child or young person is reluctant to have parents contacted.
- The child or young person has aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts.
- The child or young person runs away or shows fear of going home.
- The child or young person flinches when approached or touched.
- The child or young person is reluctant to get changed for PE or sport.
- The child or young person covers up arms and legs with long-sleeved shirt or trousers even when it is hot.
- The child or young person shows signs of depression or moods that are out of character from their general behaviour.
- The child or young person is unnaturally compliant to parents or carers.

Sexual Abuse

This involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening or not.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration such as rape or oral sex, or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse, including via the internet.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males; women can also commit acts of sexual abuse as can other children.

Signs and Indicators of Sexual Abuse

Physical Signs

- The child or young person has pain, itching, bruising, or bleeding in the genital or anal area.
- The child or young person has any sexually transmitted disease.
- The child or young person has recurrent genital discharge or urinary tract infections without apparent cause;
- The child or young person has stomach pains or discomfort when they are walking or sitting down.

Behavioural Signs

- There are sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour.
- They make sexual drawings or use sexual language that is not appropriate for their age of development.
- The child or young person has an apparent fear of someone.
- The child or young person possesses unexplained amounts of money or receives expensive presents.
- The child or young person runs away from home.
- The child or young person takes a parental role at home and functions beyond their age level.
- The child or young person has nightmares or wets the bed.
- The child or young person is not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence);
- The child or young person is self-harming, self-mutilating, has suicidal thoughts or attempts suicide.
- The child or young person alludes to secrets they cannot reveal.
- The child or young person is reluctant to get changed for PE or sport.

- The child or young person displays sexualised behaviour or knowledge (particularly in young children);
- The child or young person has an eating disorder such as anorexia, bulimia or overeating.
- The child or young person abuses drugs or other substances.

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 also feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may also involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying) causing children to feel frightened or in danger frequently, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all maltreatment of a child though it may occur alone.

Signs and Indicators of Emotional Abuse

Physical Signs

- The child or young person fails to grow or to thrive (particularly if the child is thriving away from home, e.g.: on trips or matches)
- The child or young person suddenly develops speech disorders.
- The child or young person has delayed physical or emotional development.

Behavioural Signs

- The child or young person has compulsive nervous behaviour such as hair twisting or rocking.

- The child or young person is excessively deferent towards others, especially adults.
- The child or young person shows an excessive lack of confidence.
- The child or young person is unwilling or unable to play.
- The child or young person has an excessive fear of making mistakes.
- The child or young person shows an excessive need for approval, attention, and affection.
- The child or young person self-harms, self mutilates or attempts suicide.
- The child or young person shows an inability to cope with praise.
- The child or young person is reluctant to have parents contacted.
- The child or young person has developed an eating disorder, such as anorexia, bulimia or overeating.

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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of material substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers);
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Neglect or be unresponsive to a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs and Indicators of Neglect

Physical Signs

- The child or young person is constantly hungry.
- The child or young person is in an unkempt state, frequently dirty or smelly.
- The child or young person is losing weight or is constantly underweight.
- The child or young person is dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions.
- The child or young person has untreated medical conditions or not being taken for medical treatment of illness or injuries.

Behavioural Signs

- The child or young person is tired all the time

- The child or young person frequently misses school or is late.
- The child or young person fails to keep hospital or medical appointments.
- The child or young person is left alone or unsupervised on a regular basis.
- The child or young person has few friends.
- The child or young person is a compulsive stealer or scavenger, especially of food.

The NSPCC also identifies other forms of abuse that may affect children:

Bullying and Cyberbullying

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/

Child Trafficking

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-trafficking/

Grooming

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/grooming/

Criminal Exploitation and Gangs

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/gangs-criminal-exploitation/

Online Abuse

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/online-abuse/

Domestic Abuse

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/domestic-abuse/

Non-Recent Abuse

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/non-recent-abuse/

Female Genital Mutilation

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/

Child Sexual Exploitation

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-exploitation/

In addition to abuse, poor practice (which can also be known as low level concerns) is not acceptable and must be responded to appropriately. It should be reported in the first instance to the Club or County Safeguarding Officer and to the NGB Lead Safeguarding Officer or the BDA Safeguarding Manager.

Poor practice is behaviour:

- That may be on the fringe of abuse and/or if repeated would amount to abuse.
- Which may not be immediately dangerous or intentionally harmful but nevertheless harms or places a child at risk of harm or has a negative effect on their welfare and/or safety.
- That indicates an individual may pose an actual or risk of harm to a child.
- That is inconsistent or contrary with the NGBs codes of conduct and safeguarding standards, best practice, and guidance.

7. 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 organisation 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).

If an individual does not feel comfortable reporting directly to the Club or County Safeguarding Officer or prefers an alternative route, MyVoice provides the option to report concerns directly to the NGB and the BDA.

See Appendix 1 Reporting and Managing Safeguarding Concerns within Bowls

Working Together to Safeguard Children emphasises 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; this behaviour may be inadvertent or thoughtless but could ultimately 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 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).

8. 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.

Urgent Safeguarding Concerns

If a child is in immediate danger, is at risk of significant harm, or requires urgent medical attention, immediate action must be taken.

- Call 999 if emergency assistance is required.
- Contact Children's Social Care and/or the Police without delay where a child may be suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.
- Inform the Club Safeguarding Officer, County Safeguarding Officer or NGB Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible, provided this does not delay protective action.
- Record the concern and actions taken as soon as practicable.

- Do not assume that someone else has reported the concern.

The welfare of the child is paramount. Where there is any doubt, advice should be sought immediately from Children's Social Care, the Police, or the NGB Safeguarding Team.

Examples of concerns that might arise are:

- A parent who places excessive pressure on a child
- A coach with a win-at-all costs attitude
- An older player who intimidates or bully's others
- An official who places unfair pressure on a participant
- Changes in a child's behaviour or signs of inappropriate behaviour
- A child's sudden unexplained absence from bowls activities.

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 Safeguarding Officer (Club or County)
- If the disclosure happens while a club or organisation member is working in a school, college or on a local authority programme (e.g. 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 Lead 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 Safeguarding Manager 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 BDA Case Management Group or the NGB 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.

9. Position of Trust

The NGBs and BDA recognise that coaches, volunteers, officials and other adults working with children and young people occupy a position of trust.

There are particular safeguarding risks if someone is in a position of trust, which means they are in a certain role or setting where they have regular and direct contact with children. This is a legal term, and under the Police, Crime, Sentencing, and Courts Act 2022 those who train, supervise or instruct children in sport are in a position of trust.

Any sexual activity between a child and someone in a position of trust with them is unlawful, even if they are 16 or 17 years old (i.e. above the age of consent). This means sports coaches are banned from engaging in sexual activity with anyone under 18 in their care.

It is important that coaches and other officials maintain a healthy and professional relationship with all participants. Relationships between adults in positions of trust and children or young people should always be appropriate, positive and focused on the young person's welfare and development.

Concerns regarding potential abuse of a position of trust, grooming behaviour, inappropriate relationships or breaches of professional boundaries will be treated as safeguarding concerns and managed in accordance with this policy and relevant statutory guidance

10. Legal and Governance Framework

Statutory guidance takes precedence over this policy. The BDA and NGBs will always operate within the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, Children's Social care and the Police. This policy has been written based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect Children in England.

The relevant legislation includes:

- Children Act (1989) and Children Act (2004)

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Protection of Freedoms Act (2012)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Data Protection Act (2018) and UK GDPR
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Regulations
- NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

11. Information Sharing and Reporting

All safeguarding concerns must be reported in accordance with the NGBs Safeguarding Reporting Procedures. Reports will be managed promptly, sensitively, and in compliance with statutory requirements.

The BDA Safeguarding Manager or the NGB Lead Safeguarding Officer provide confidential advice, guidance, and support to anyone raising or managing safeguarding concerns. Information will only be shared where lawful and necessary to protect a child, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

The BDA or NGB have a legal duty to refer any individual working in Regulated Activity if there is evidence that they have harmed, or pose a risk of harming, children. Referrals will be made promptly and in accordance with statutory requirements, ensuring that individuals who pose a risk cannot continue in Regulated Activity.

All individuals delivering or participating in BDA or NGB activities, events, programmes, or competitions, whether they are a member or not, must follow the same reporting and referral procedures.

Schools and colleges operating under the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory framework must ensure BDA or NGB safeguarding procedures are considered when BDA or NGB staff or programmes are involved.

The BDA and NGB operate in anticipation of forthcoming mandatory reporting legislation. Failure to report serious safeguarding concerns is considered a breach of this policy and may result in disciplinary action or referral to statutory agencies.

The BDA and NGBs will review and update reporting procedures in line with statutory changes to ensure ongoing compliance and best practice.

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy 2026

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner in response to legislative, regulatory or organisational change, learning from safeguarding cases, or changes in national safeguarding guidance.

Policy Owner: Bowls Development Alliance (BDA)

Policy approved by: BDA

Date Policy approved:

Next review Date:

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy 2026

Appendix 1 – Reporting and Managing Safeguarding Concerns within Bowls

If you have any concerns about anyone involved in bowls, whether directly or indirectly, please report them as soon as possible.

In the first instance, any safeguarding concern should be reported to your Club or County Safeguarding Officer. However, if an individual does not feel comfortable doing so, or prefers an alternative route, MyVoice provides the option to report concerns directly to the NGB and the BDA.

Reports submitted through MyVoice are reviewed by both the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) Safeguarding Lead and the Bowls Development Alliance (BDA), helping to ensure that concerns are managed appropriately, consistently and in a timely manner.

Club and County Safeguarding Officers will be encouraged in due course to use MyVoice when submitting concerns, but Concerns can still also be reported to the NGB by telephone or email.

Report a Concern via MyVoice
MyVoice is a confidential reporting platform available to bowls club members and anyone with safeguarding concerns within bowls clubs in England.

Report your concern here

Alternatively, scan the QR code:

If a child is in immediate danger, is at risk of significant harm, or requires urgent medical attention, staff, volunteers and members must take immediate action.

Contact emergency services by calling 999 if a child is at immediate risk of harm or requires emergency assistance.

Where appropriate, contact Children's Social Care or the Police without delay.

If a Club Safeguarding Officer is implicated in the reported issue, the County Safeguarding Officer 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.

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy 2026

Appendix 2 – Information sharing Golden Rules of Sharing Sensitive Information

The Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information, it provides a framework to ensure personal information is shared appropriately.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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)

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy 2026

APPENDIX 3: PROCESS MAP – REPORTING A CONCERN

