

Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby: Safe and Sound

Safeguarding
Children and Adults
Policy and
Guidance



Foreword

As the National Governing Body (NGB) for wheelchair rugby, Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby (GBWR) is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, enjoyable and inclusive environment for everyone who wants to be part of our sport. GBWR has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that the highest possible standard of care is provided for all involved in the sport and to that end we have developed the GBWR Children and Adults Safeguarding Policy – **Safe and Sound**. Through the communication and implementation of **Safe and Sound** we aim to embed best safeguarding practice into all aspects of our sport.

All of us who work directly with participants within the wheelchair rugby community are in a position of trust and we must ensure that we act at all times in the interests of those whose care and safety is entrusted to us. We all have to be mindful that some people use their position within sport and other organisations to gain access to those who may be additionally vulnerable to win their trust before abusing it for inappropriate or illegal purposes. We are all responsible for promoting a safe environment within our sport and for ensuring that anyone holding a position of trust who seeks to behave in a harmful or inappropriate way is deterred, identified and appropriately managed.

The **Safe and Sound** policy and guidance sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to ensure a safe and sound environment where we promote the welfare of all participants in accordance with the statutory guidance supporting implementation of the Children Acts, 1989 and 2004, and the Care Act 2014¹. It is important that all those delivering a safe and sound wheelchair rugby environment fully understand their responsibilities and that they feel properly supported.

It attempts to achieve a balance between establishing a sufficient control to minimise risk of abuse to children and adults, while not overburdening our volunteers. It includes the mandatory legal requirements, and also highlights signs which should raise concerns about inappropriate behaviour and potential abuse as well as practices which should be avoided, in the best interests of children and adult participants and those responsible for their care. The policy is supported by the GBWR **Safe and Sound** Toolkit which has been designed to help clubs create safe and welcoming environments where everyone can enjoy playing our sport.

David Pond
GBWR Chief Executive
June 2018

¹ HM Government 2015. *Working Together to Safeguard Children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* (updated 16 February 2017) and HM Government 2014. *Care and Support Statutory Guidance* (updated 12 Feb 2018).

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Safeguarding Policy Statement

GBWR is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and adults at risk² in the sport and to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment. We accept our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and adults involved in our activities and services.

GBWR will also encourage and support partner organisations to adopt and demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice of equality as set out in this policy and procedures.

The policy statement is based on the following key principles:

- The welfare of children and young people is paramount
- GBWR is committed to ensuring that safeguarding of children is central to the development of the sport
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- All allegations, safeguarding concerns and suspicions of harm will be taken seriously and responded to quickly, fairly and appropriately and support provided for anyone who in good faith reports concerns
- It is everybody's responsibility to work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of children and young people
- The interest of those who work or volunteer with participants within our sport will be protected and support through appropriate guidance and training will be provided
- Personal information will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with UK legislation,, which requires that the Police, Adult/Children's Social Care and or other statutory agencies be informed where there are concerns that a child or adult is at risk of harm or it is believed that a crime has been committed.
- All participants, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status have the right to be protected from abuse and poor practice and to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment
- GBWR will seek to ensure that our activities are inclusive and make reasonable adjustments for any ability, disability or impairment, we will also commit to continuous development, monitoring and review.
- The rights, dignity and worth of all participants will always be respected.
- We recognise that ability and disability can change over time, such that some participants may be additionally vulnerable to abuse, for example those who have a dependency on others or have different communication needs.
- We recognise that a disabled adult may or may not identify themselves or be identified as an adult 'at risk'.
- We all have a shared responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants and will act appropriately and report concerns whether these concerns arise within our sport's activities, for example inappropriate behaviour of a coach, or in the wider community.

² Current terminology is 'Adults at Risk' under the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance but this term will be used interchangeably with the terms 'vulnerable adults' and 'adults who are additionally vulnerable' throughout this document to reflect the language commonly used in the GBWR context. GBWR recognises that many disabled adults would not self-identify as 'at risk' or as being vulnerable – labelling individuals can be both stigmatising and unhelpful.

- All allegations will be taken seriously and responded to quickly in line with this Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- GBWR recognises the role and responsibilities of the statutory agencies in safeguarding both children and adults and is committed to complying with the procedures of the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB).

In addition, GBWR will be guided by the following principles set out in the Care and Support Statutory Guidance (2018) which should underpin the safeguarding of adults:

- **Empowerment** - People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
“I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.”
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
“I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.”
- **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
“I am sure that the professionals will work in my interests, as I see them, and they will only get involved as much as needed.”
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
“I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want.”
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
- **Helpful and necessary**- “I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me.”
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.
“I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.”

Legislation and Statutory Guidance

The practices and procedures within this policy are based on the principles contained within the UK and legislation and Government Guidance and GBWR have taken the following into consideration:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Families Act 2014
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Care Act 2014
- Criminal Justice Act 1988
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998

- Data Protection Act 1994 and 1998
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (Statutory Guidance - updated Feb 2017)
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2015 (updated 12 February 2018)
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Children and Adults at Risk

“Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility

Everyone who works with children – including teachers, GPs, nurses, midwives, health visitors, early years professionals, youth workers, police, Accident and Emergency staff, paediatricians, voluntary and community workers and social workers – has a responsibility for keeping them safe.”

Working Together to Safeguard Children – March 2015

1. Who is a child?

1.1 Children are defined in the Children Act 2004 as people under the age of 18 years. For the purpose of this policy this definition applies. It should be noted that the Children and Families Act 2014 extends support and protection up until the age of 25 years for those with recognised disabilities and additional support needs and seeks to safeguard and support young people more effectively through the transition into adulthood.

2. Can children play in the adult wheelchair rugby game?

2.1 A player aged between 16 and up to 18 may play in the full adult game subject to the following:

- the recommendation of the GBWR Lead Safeguarding Officer (LSO)
- Completion of consent form and copy of proof of age provided to GBWR. Consent form available from GBWR website.
- the written approval of the CEO

2.2 Due to the absence of a youth league, a player aged between 11 and up to 16 may train with adults and may only play in Division 2 of the adult game subject to the following:

- the recommendation of the GBWR LSO
- the completion of the GBWR Parental Consent Form by the child’s parent or guardian
- the written approval of the CEO

2.3 A player aged between 11-18 who is part of the GBWR Talent Pathway Programme may be permitted to play in the full adult game. A parental consent form must be submitted to GBWR and written approval of the CEO.

2.4 Children aged 8-11 years are permitted to take part in wheelchair rugby activity through the GBWR led youth programme. However, they are not permitted to play in adult club environments or competitions.

2.5 A club’s management team including the Club Welfare Officer (CWO) must have assessed and continue to monitor and assess the child training and or playing in adult games. Those responsible for the management of adult teams which include children must at all times be mindful of their safety and wellbeing and ensure that a suitable adult from within the team and management act as a mentor. Please refer to the GBWR ‘Code of Conduct for Adults’ and the ‘Coaching and Volunteer Safeguarding Booklet’.

3. *Who is an Adult at Risk?*

3.1 The Care Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as anybody over the age of 18 who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and/or
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

This may include people with learning disabilities, sensory impairments, mental health needs, older people and people with a physical disability or impairment. It may also include people who are affected by the circumstances that they are living in, for example experiencing domestic violence. This list is not exhaustive. An individual's level of vulnerability to harm may vary over time depending on the circumstances they are in and their needs at that time.

3.2 Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons.

3.3 It is clear from these definitions that the majority, if not all of those adults who play wheelchair rugby potentially fall within the definition of an adult at risk and it is important that all in the sport are mindful of that. Equally, any adult may experience life events which increase their vulnerability (relationship breakdown, bereavement, isolation or illness for example). GBWR recognises that a disabled adult may or may not identify themselves or be identified as an adult 'at risk'. Good practice protects everyone involved in wheelchair rugby and assumptions should not be made about individual support needs.

3.4 Whilst this policy refers to both children and adults throughout, there are instances in which concerns and incidents involving adults may vary slightly from those involving children. In particular, and in contrast to the situation when dealing with children, it is essential to obtain an adult's consent before referring the matter to any of the statutory agencies, where their safety and welfare is not at immediate risk as outlined in the principles set out in our policy statement. For further advice and guidance please contact the GBWR LSO (see Appendix 3).

How to put this Policy into Practice:

Roles and Responsibilities – how we will work together

In order to operate within the legal and regulatory framework, GBWR and its member clubs will work together, each with a clear role, in order to create and maintain a safe and sound environment where both children and adults are protected. Below we have set out the key responsibilities of the governing body and our clubs:

GBWR

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will appoint a Lead Safeguarding Officer to manage its safeguarding programme• Is committed to working in partnership with clubs, the statutory agencies and the and the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit• Will manage the Criminal Records Checking process through the Disclosure and Barring Scheme• Will co-ordinate the implementation of GBWR's safeguarding framework through Club Welfare Officers (CWO) and will provide or signpost all individuals with safeguarding responsibilities to appropriate training and support• Will respond to and manage concerns and incident referrals in accordance with GBWR regulations, policies and procedures |
|---|

- Will establish a Case Management Group to support appropriate management safeguarding referrals
- Will instigate appropriate disciplinary action in relation to those who breach GBWR regulations
- Will seek to ensure that each club has its own clear safeguarding policy and plan or/and adheres to the GBWR Safe and Sound Safe guarding policy
- Will conducts an annual safeguarding survey for all CWOs and a full safeguarding audit on a minimum of 50% of clubs per year to ensure compliance and consistently high standards [this may be outsourced]

The Club

- Will appoint a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) See appendix 1 for CWO role description (and ideally a deputy to ensure cover during periods of absence).
- Will ensures the CWO attends mandatory Safeguarding training and meetings (and responds to GBWR safeguarding communications promptly and appropriately)
- Will ensure that all club members are aware of who their CWO is and how they can contact them.
- Will keep all members, parents and children informed of CWO appointments or changes
- Will publish and promote the club’s own safeguarding policy and practice in line with the GBWR policy and procedures and ensure it is available to everyone.
- Will ensures that everyone involved with the club is aware of their safeguarding responsibilities
- Will ensure that the club’s volunteer workforce and any paid staff are appropriately vetted (in line with GBWR safe recruitment and deployment procedures) and follows GBWR policies, procedures and practice guidance.

The Volunteer

- Our volunteers are our sport’s greatest assets. It is essential that all volunteers and staff work together to create a safe, friendly, open and welcoming environment.
- Must always treat children, vulnerable adults and all members with respect and in accordance with the sport’s core values
- Must ensure that, if necessary, they have completed an appropriate DBS check.
- Must make themselves familiar with and ensure that they understand and comply with GBWR and their club’s safeguarding policy and procedure
- Must undertake any training required for their role
- Must adhere at all times to the GBWR ‘Coaching and Volunteer safeguarding booklet’

Best Practice Guidance

This guidance is offered to provide information on a number of matters which clubs and individuals may find useful in helping to create safe and welcoming environments for children and vulnerable adults. Further guidance is available via the GBWR LSO, the Regional Development Officers (RDOs) and from the GBWR Safe and Sound Toolkit

1. Safe Environments

1.1 A safe environment is one where the possibility of abuse is openly acknowledged; volunteers are DBS checked, carefully selected and appropriately trained; and those who raise and report safeguarding concerns are confident that these will be treated seriously and in confidence and responded to appropriately.

2. Communication

2.1 Open and clear communication is key to ensuring a safe environment. This includes information given to parents, carers and guardians and the frequency of such; the use of appropriate materials and resources to provide information to children and vulnerable adults; listening to the views of all club members but ensuring the voices of children and young people are heard in relation to matters which affect them and being clear about how to communicate in the event of an emergency. Messages relating to children, sent via electronic media (telephone, mobiles, emails,

social media/on-line forums and texts) should be through their parents and guardians. For more information on communication please refer to the GBWR 'Coach and Volunteer safeguarding booklet' and the GBWR 'Social Media Guidance'

3. *Safe Recruitment*

3.1 GBWR relies upon its volunteer base to both manage our sport and deliver many of our activities. Without a dedicated volunteer resource, the sport could not survive and nor would it have progressed as quickly or as far as it has.

3.2 Nevertheless, the recruitment and selection of employees and volunteers is the most critical time when child and vulnerable adult safeguarding issues must be addressed. It is important that appropriate checks become routine 'procedure' - an accepted and welcomed practice - rather than be seen as an invasive, bureaucratic process that questions the integrity or motive of even the most willing of volunteers. We must all invest in ensuring that only appropriate adults with the right values and motivation are working to support young people and all of those involved in our sport.

3.3 For guidance regarding the safe selection and recruitment of staff and volunteers, clubs should consult their Regional Development Officer, their CWO and/or GBWR's Lead Safeguarding Officer (LSO). They will be able to offer support to the club regarding risk assessment and appropriate induction processes. GBWR have developed a 'Safe recruitment guidance' which can be followed when recruiting staff and volunteers, this includes a safer recruitment flowchart. Please see the GBWR website for more information. It is the club's responsibility to ensure the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers within their own club.

3.4 GBWR will ensure that GBWR employees and GBWR appointed volunteers who are recruited to positions can expect a detailed Job Description to ensure that there is very real clarity about roles and responsibilities. The responsibility for supplying this information rests with the individual with responsibility for making the appointment.

3.5 The Job Description will carry a statement detailing the degree of contact with children and/or vulnerable adults, and any need for references or safeguarding checks to be undertaken prior to commencing the role.

3.6 Certain roles which require employees and volunteers to work with children and/or vulnerable adults will be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and this will be detailed in the Job Description for the role. The GBWR LSO will regularly assess which staff need to be DBS checked. The DBS process must be undertaken in accordance with GBWR and Government regulations.

3.6.1 The LSO will manage DBS applications. Any disclosures from DSB certificates will be referred to the GBWR Case Management Group. Applicants will be updated at regular intervals through this process.

3.6.2 All DBS information will be held centrally by GWBR Member Secretary. The information held will include the storage of 5 essential pieces of information:

Name

Date of Birth

Date of issue

Date of update required

Any disclosures

All information will be stored in accordance to the GBWR 'Sensitive Information Storage Policy'

3.6.5 DBS updates are required every 2 years unless the individuals have subscribed to the updates service. GBWR CAN NOT accept DBS certificates from any organisation where the individual has not subscribed to the update service.

3.6.4 It is the responsibility of the CWO and club chairperson to ensure all volunteers are DBS checked where appropriate. For more information on who requires a DBS check please contact the LSO.

3.6.5 GBWR clubs will be required to undertake DBS checks for their CWO (and any appointed deputy CWO) and club coach as a minimum in order to affiliate with GBWR. The GBWR LSO will manage the application process. DBS checks are free for volunteers but the cost of administering the application is the club's or individual's responsibility.

4. *Safeguarding Training*

4.1 As part of club affiliation requirements all CWO's and club coaches must, within 6 months of being appointed, attend a sports coach UK 'Safeguarding and Child Protecting Children in Sport' (SPC) course or a recognised and certificated basic awareness in child protection training (e.g. an LSCB or Local Authority workshop or professional safeguarding training). GBWR clubs are required to fund this course and provide appropriate evidence of training completion.

4.2 The Sport Coach Uk 'Safeguarding and Child Protection in Sport' course needs to be updated every 3 years (SPC or SPC2 Refresher training). This is the responsibility of each club to manage and arrange updates.

4.3 GBWR's LSO will manage training requirements for GBWR staff and additional learning opportunities/training for club CWOs in accordance with the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit training guidance. GBWR has developed a bespoke 'Time to Listen' full day workshop which is mandatory for CWOs in our sport. For more information contact GBWR's Workforce development Officer.

5. *Supporting Children and Adults*

5.1 GBWR's core business is to provide positive and enjoyable sporting opportunities for disabled children and adults. It is important that staff and volunteers recognise the different levels of support that individuals require. This means being aware and alert and ensuring that the right level and type of information, help and assistance is available to each individual. Those with disabilities may be additionally vulnerable because they may:

- have additional support needs
- be subject to greater negative experiences
- not be believed
- not want to raise issues due to the fear of being excluded
- have medical needs that are used to explain abuse
- have an increased possibility of isolation
- may have communication differences/difficulties
- have reduced networks of support or increased isolation

5.2 It is therefore important for those working with disabled children and volunteers to seek the individual's and, where appropriate, the parent or guardian's views and informed consent about the

support needs for the individual. Always talk to the individual and be sure they know and understand what you are going to do and why you are doing it.

6. *Supervision*

6.1 When working with children or adult participants, volunteers and employees should avoid situations where they are working in isolation and out of sight of other adults. Where an individual requires DBS clearance for their role and it is yet to be received, they must not work alone or unsupervised. GBWR acknowledges that occasionally there may be no alternative - for example, an athlete may fall ill and have to be taken home but this should be agreed with the CWO and parents/carers wherever possible.

7. *Staff – Child Ratios*

7.1 There should always be a minimum of one DBS cleared coach when working with children or adults.

7.2 There should be a member of staff/volunteer for every 8 children or adults participating

7.3 Where participant numbers lower than 8, two staff members/volunteers are required to avoid lone working

7.4 Children and adults with a lower level of functionality/increased support needs may require increased staff/volunteer numbers

8. *Training and Competition*

8.1 The individual who is responsible for organising the training or competition is responsible for ensuring that all involved adhere to the GBWR Codes of Conduct (available via the GBWR website) and that coaches, volunteers and any other helpers are either Members of GBWR or registered with any partner organisation involved.

8.2 Game Officials have a particular responsibility to ensure that on the court children and adult participants remain safe. If an official believes that an individual's welfare or safety is unduly compromised then it is the official's duty to stop the game and ask the individual to come off the court.

8.3 Where there are mixed teams there should always be both male and female support available.

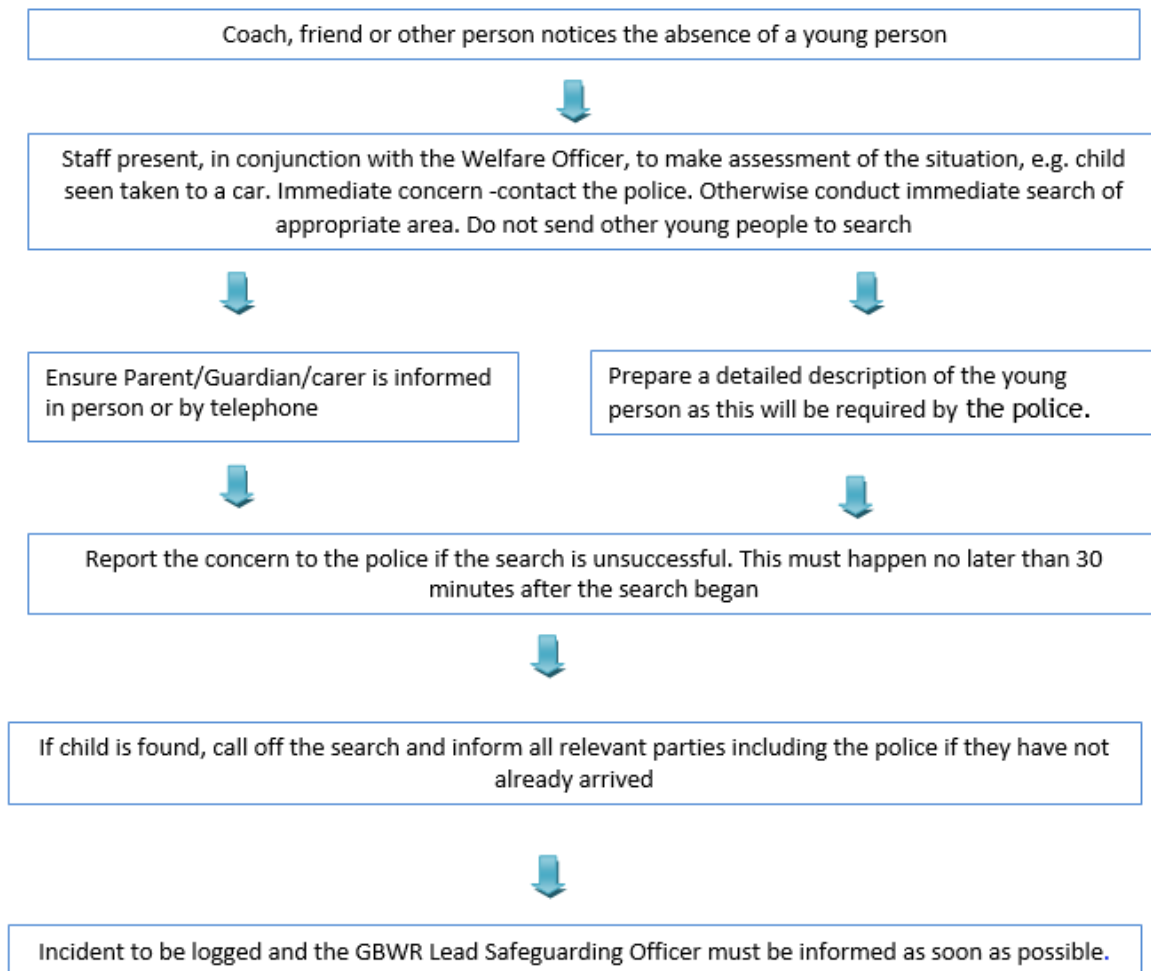
8.4 If you are responsible for organising an event ensure that an appropriate accreditation system is in place for parents, relatives, carers and bona fide press photographers. Please see the GBWR 'Guidance for hosting and away trips'

8.5 Everyone should remain alert for people who do not appear to be relatives or friends of participants but seem to be taking photographs and or video images. Such situations should be reported to a GBWR staff member immediately. Where volunteers have no connection with either the sport or participants their motivation for involvement should be explored at the point that they register as a Club volunteer.

8.6 In the rare event that a participant goes missing from a club, event or away trip, the following guidelines have been devised to outline the actions that should be taken. At the point that a player has been identified as missing the club/event organiser should:

- Ensure that other players in the group are looked after appropriately while a search for the person concerned is conducted.
- Inform the parents/carer if they are present or nominate an appropriate person to telephone them and advise them of the concern. Reassure them that everything is being done to locate the person.
- Organise all available responsible adults by areas to be searched. It is best to take a short time to organise the search properly so that all places are searched fully.
- Search the area in which the participant went missing including changing rooms, toilets, public and private areas and the club grounds.
- Request all those searching report back to a nominated adult at a specific point.
- Make a note of the circumstances in which the player has gone missing and where he/she was last seen
- Ideally preparation for any event or away trip should include an up to date photograph of each participant attached to the relevant application and consent forms. Prepare a detailed physical description of the player including:
 - Approximate height
 - Build
 - Hair and eye colour
 - Clothing he/she was wearing, as this will be required by the police
 - Any diversity issues/visible identifying features
- Report the concern to the police if the search is unsuccessful. This must happen no later than 30 minutes after the person's disappearance is noted, even if the search is incomplete.
- Follow police guidance if further action is recommended and maintain close contact with the police
- Ensure that you inform all adults involved including the parents/carers, searchers and police if at any stage the player is located

If a player or young volunteer (under age of 18) is suspected of being missing, the flow chart below must be followed



9. Inappropriate Relationships with Participants

9.1 An adult in a position of trust must not enter into a sexual relationship with a child in their care. Sexual intercourse, sexual activity, or inappropriate touching by an adult with a child under the age of 18 years is a criminal offence, even where there is apparent consent from the child.

9.2 The Sexual Offences act 2000 outlines that it is an offence for adults in a position of trust to have a sexual relationship with a young person under the age of 18 years. This may result in GBWR referring the adult to the Disclosure and Barring Service for consideration. This could result in an adult being barred from working with children or vulnerable adults by the DBS.

9.3 No-one in a position of trust should encourage a physical or emotionally dependent relationship to develop between them and a child or adult in their care; this is often referred to as grooming. Adults must never send participants inappropriate or sexual messages or images by text or other electronic media.

9.4. All coaches and volunteers at club level are considered to be in positions of trust as the majority of participants will be considered to be either children or adults with higher levels of vulnerability and additional support needs. Any intimate or suspected inappropriate interaction/relationships between staff and volunteers and participants will be taken seriously and considered as a safeguarding concern until assessed or investigated. Where concerns arise, support will be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) before any action is taken.

10. Good Role Models

10.1 The paid and volunteer workforce should consistently display the highest standards of personal behaviour and appearance. They must not make sexually explicit comments to any participants (even where this is intended as 'banter') and any language which causes them to feel uncomfortable or lose confidence or self-esteem is unacceptable, as is the use of obscene or foul language.

11. Photographic Images

10.1 GBWR supports the taking of appropriate images of children and all who are involved in the game. There are, however, risks associated with the use of photographic images and informed consent is essential. The photography registration form is available via the GBWR website.

12. Website and Social Media

11.1 Websites and social media can be a very positive and accessible way to communicate and children are particularly attracted by these. There are however risks and clubs are legally responsible for their website content and there should be nothing included that could put a participant at risk either directly or indirectly. It is important to note that it is not acceptable to share sexually explicit or inappropriate material via any form of media with participants. Please refer to the GBWR 'Social Media Guidance'.

13. Alcohol

13.1 It is important that clubs adopt a responsible attitude towards the use of alcohol. It is important to be aware that it is against the law:

- To sell alcohol to someone under 18
- for an adult to buy or attempt to buy alcohol on behalf of someone under 18
- for someone under 18 to buy alcohol, attempt to buy alcohol or to be sold alcohol

- for someone under 18 to drink alcohol in licenced premises, with one exception – 16 and 17 year olds accompanied by an adult can drink but not buy beer, wine and cider with a table meal

13.2 As role models adults should avoid excessive drinking in the presence of children. Where events and activities are specifically facilitated for children and young people no alcohol should be sold or consumed. Under 18's are not permitted to consume alcohol at GBWR events or club sessions.

13.3 There should always be adults with designated safeguarding and support responsibilities who abstain from drinking alcohol throughout an event to supervise and support participants in their care.

14. Parents

Parents should hopefully take a keen interest in their children's sporting activities, parents should ask questions and support their child and the club. But parents should also respect the role of the coach and ensure their child is able to participant without fear of parent's unwanted involvement or over encouragement. Please see GBWR's 'Parent's guidance' for more information.

Identifying concerns about the welfare and safety of children and adults at risk

1. Everyone's responsibility

We all have a responsibility to ensure that we provide a safe environment for those who want to be part of our sport. This means that we must reduce the potential for vulnerability and be alert and respond quickly and appropriately to any concerns we may have about a child or adult. Please see the Incident Record Form and the GBWR 'Whistle blowing policy' on GBWR website.

2. Reducing the potential for vulnerability and harm

2.1 We all want safe environments where everyone can enjoy our sport. Creating a safe environment means:

- Acting in accordance with the GBWR core values: *enjoyment; respect; excellence; teamwork; trust; inclusiveness*
- Being open to the reality that some children and adults can and do suffer abuse
- Acknowledging the increased vulnerability of specific individuals
- Acknowledging the impact of our own experiences, values and prejudices (positive and negative) which can block acknowledging concerns and taking action
- Encouraging all partners to take a proactive role in creating safe environments in order to create high quality communication, advice and support frameworks
- Ensure that coaching and care ratios are appropriate for the number of individuals and that the needs mix of attendees has properly been assessed
- Promoting a safe workforce through ensuring that all those working with/supporting participants are registered and are subject to appropriate safe recruitment checks irrespective of their role is paid or volunteering
- Promoting, respecting and valuing diversity and difference
- Creating an open culture which encourages feedback where issues can be discussed without fear

Ensuring that safeguarding is core business and is considered and addressed in all relevant procedures eg transport; accommodation; photography and filming; medical

Ensuring that Club Welfare Officers and deputies are carefully chosen and access CWO 'Time to Listen' safeguarding training and that they are visible and accessible for all participants and those working with them

3. [How do we know when to be concerned?](#)

3.1 Harm in the context of this policy is an action or behaviour which has a negative impact upon a child or adult's physical, or emotional health or wellbeing. This might be referred to as abuse, bullying or neglect. Harm might just start as poor practice such as shouting, ridiculing, excessive training, ignoring health and safety guidelines, failing to adhere to Safeguarding and other related policies or poor management of training or competition. There is sometimes a fine line between what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and it is important that everyone, but especially, coaches, athletes, officials and staff, understand where the boundaries lie. It is important that we promote a culture of check and challenge where concerns are openly discussed and addressed at the earliest stages. It is important to recognise signs of harm and indications that behaviours are having a negative impact upon participants as often victims feel isolated and unable to speak out.

4. [Categories of Child Abuse](#)

4.1 The Children Act (1989) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015, updated Feb 2017) state that there are four main types of abuse - **Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect**. In general terms, abuse may be the action or inaction by, for example, a coach, volunteer or paid helper, family member or another young athlete.

- **Physical Abuse** is just what the term implies - hurting or injuring a person, for example, by hitting them. In a sporting context it might also occur if a person is forced to train beyond his/her capabilities, or the intensity of training disregards a disabled person's impairment. Physical abuse may also occur through encouraging the inappropriate use of substances to stimulate performance.
- **Sexual Abuse** occurs when a person knowingly or unknowingly takes part in something that meets the sexual needs of the other person or persons involved - it could include sexually suggestive comments, on-line grooming and direct sexual contact. In a sporting context it could involve inappropriate photography or videoing, for the gratification of the viewer.
- **Emotional Abuse** occurs when a person is not given help and encouragement and/or is constantly derided or ridiculed or ignored. Conversely, it can also occur if a person is over-protected. In a sporting context this is present in the unrealistic expectations of parents and coaches over what an athlete can achieve, or the undermining of an athlete through ridicule or failing to support their progression in the sport. Bullying is likely to come into this category. Any alleged abuse or bullying which is linked to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 (e.g race, gender identity/reassignment, sexuality, religion/belief, disability) will be taken very seriously and responded to as such. This is unlawful and there will be zero tolerance within the sport. In the case of learning disability, emotional abuse can occur through failing to communicate important information accurately or appropriately, providing misleading statements or failing to ensure a person understands the information given. Psychological Abuse **is part of** often includes emotional abuse and can include: threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidating, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

- **Neglect** usually means failing to meet a person's basic needs such as food, warmth, adequate clothing, medical attention etc. It could also mean failing to ensure they are safe or exposing them to harm. In a sporting context it may be when an athlete's personal or intimate requirements are ignored, particularly if they are disabled, or where an athlete is not cared for in a way appropriate or according to their needs.

5. Categories of Adult Abuse

5.1. The Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance (updated 12 Feb 2018) recognise a broad range of categories of abuse relating to adults who are at risk or additionally vulnerable. Section 14 of the government guidance considers the different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and the different circumstances in which they may take place. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to a safeguarding concern arising either inside the sport or in external circumstances.

Patterns of abuse vary and include:

- serial abuse, in which the perpetrator seeks out and 'grooms' individuals. Sexual abuse sometimes falls into this pattern as do some forms of financial abuse
- long-term abuse, in the context of an ongoing family relationship such as domestic violence between spouses or generations or persistent psychological abuse
- opportunistic abuse, such as theft occurring because money or jewellery has been left lying around

Organisations should not limit their view of what constitutes abuse or neglect, as they can take many forms and the circumstances of the individual case should always be considered. Exploitation, in particular, is a common theme in the following list of the types of abuse and neglect.

Physical abuse including:

- assault
- hitting
- slapping
- pushing
- misuse of medication
- restraint
- inappropriate physical sanctions

Domestic violence including:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional abuse
- so called 'honour' based violence

Sexual abuse including:

- rape

- indecent exposure
- sexual harassment
- inappropriate looking or touching
- sexual teasing or innuendo
- sexual photography
- subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts
- indecent exposure
- sexual assault
- sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting

Psychological abuse including:

- emotional abuse
- threats of harm or abandonment
- deprivation of contact
- humiliation
- blaming
- controlling
- intimidation
- coercion
- harassment
- verbal abuse
- cyber bullying
- isolation
- unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks

Financial or material abuse including:

- theft
- fraud
- internet scamming
- coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions
- the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

Modern slavery encompasses:

- slavery
- human trafficking
- forced labour and domestic servitude.
- traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment

Discriminatory abuse including forms of:

- harassment

- slurs or similar treatment:
 - because of race
 - gender and gender identity
 - age
 - disability
 - sexual orientation
 - religion

Organisational abuse

Including neglect and poor care practice within an organisation, which could include a club or sport where poor practice is condoned, or risks are identified and not appropriately addressed leading to foreseeable harm. It has most commonly arisen in institutions or specific care settings such as a hospital or care home or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and acts of omission including:

- ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs
- failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services
- the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

Self-neglect

This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. A decision on whether a response is required under safeguarding will depend on the adult's ability to protect themselves by controlling their own behaviour. There may come a point when they are no longer able to do this, without external support.

Incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more. Professionals and others should look beyond single incidents or individuals to identify patterns of harm. Repeated instances of poor care may be an indication of more serious problems and of what we now describe as organisational abuse. In order to see these patterns, it is important that information is recorded and appropriately shared.

Domestic abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

A new offence of coercive and controlling behaviour in intimate and familial relationships was introduced into the Serious Crime Act 2015. The offence will impose a maximum 5 years' imprisonment, a fine or both.

The offence closes a gap in the law around patterns of coercive and controlling behaviour during a relationship between intimate partners, former partners who still live together, or family members, sending a clear message that it is wrong to violate the trust of those closest to you, providing better protection to victims experiencing continuous abuse and allowing for earlier identification, intervention and prevention. Coercive control is a pattern of behaviour which seeks to take away the victim's liberty or freedom, to strip away their sense of self. It is not just an individual's bodily integrity which is violated but also their human rights. Domestic abuse is perpetrated by both genders and in same sex relationships. It is also prevalent in relationships between young people which they may not recognise as harmful or abusive.

The offence criminalising coercive or controlling behaviour was commenced on 29 December 2015.

Financial abuse

Financial abuse is the main form of abuse investigated by the Office of the Public Guardian both amongst adults and children at risk. Financial recorded abuse can occur in isolation, but as research has shown, where there are other forms of abuse, there is likely to be financial abuse occurring. Although this is not always the case, everyone should also be aware of this possibility. Potential indicators of financial abuse include:

- change in living conditions
- lack of heating, clothing or food
- inability to pay bills/unexplained shortage of money
- unexplained withdrawals from an account
- unexplained loss/misplacement of financial documents
- the recent addition of authorised signers on a client or donor's signature card
- sudden or unexpected changes in a will or other financial documents

Note: *This is not an exhaustive list, nor do these examples prove that there is actual abuse occurring. However, they do indicate that a closer look and possible investigation may be needed.*

6. Bullying and Harassment

6.1 What are bullying and harassment?

- **Bullying:** offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.
- **Harassment:** unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

(ACAS 2013)

6.2. Bullying is not a category of abuse under statutory guidance but can have a profound impact upon the welfare of children, young people and others who are additionally vulnerable. There is no legal definition of bullying, however, it's usually defined as behaviour that is repeated, intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally and often aimed at certain groups, e.g. because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. It takes many forms and can include physical assault, threats, teasing, name calling (including 'nicknames' imposed by a group) and name calling.

6.3. Behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may be considered firm management by another. Most people will agree on extreme cases of bullying and harassment, but it is sometimes the 'grey' areas that cause most problems. In the sporting context the abuser may well be another young person or vulnerable adult. Bullying can occur where there is inadequate supervision. In this context it may be during a training or tournament camp, or in the changing area and in low staffed environments. Increasingly bullying and harassment takes the form of cyberbullying through the use of social media such as the internet and mobile phones.

7. Signs of Indicators of Harm

7.1 Although sometimes recognising signs of harm, abuse, bullying and neglect, is not always easy, it is important to remain alert and not to ignore concerns. GBWR understands that our staff and volunteers are not experts at such recognition and as we know not even professionals working in this complex area always recognise a situation where harm may occur or has occurred. Please use the examples below as some indicators that should be taken seriously and followed up with the CWO or the GBWR LSO:

- A marked change in an individual's usual routine or behaviour
- Being disruptive during sessions
- Being quiet, withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Avoiding eye contact
- Becoming aggressive or unreasonable
- Having unexplained cuts, bruises or bites, particularly on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- Starting to bully others
- A child who displays sexual behaviour or uses sexual language inappropriate for their age
- Being frequently dirty, hungry or inadequately dressed
- Seemingly afraid of or intimidated by parents or carers
- Being frightened to communicate or say what is wrong
- The individual says that he or she is being abused, or another person says they believe (or actually know) that abuse is occurring

7.2 Children and adults with learning disability or communication difficulties/differences (e.g. autism, Asperger's, deafness) are particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have additional difficulties in communicating what is happening to them or interacting socially. Dependency on others for primary needs such as feeding, clothing and intimate care may also make any individual feel powerless to report abusive treatment. A fear of retribution for 'telling' can be a powerful 'silencer'. Difficulty in identifying abusive situations or behaviour may allow it to continue. Please don't wait until you are certain. Report concerns or seek advice as soon as possible.

7.3. There may be a number of reasons why a child or adult participant displays concerning behaviour or their behaviour changes. In the first instance it is advisable to discuss with the CWO

who will decide whether in the first instance it is appropriate to discuss the concerns with the parent or carer or seek further support through the LSO.

What to do if you are concerned?

1. If a child or adult discloses information to you:

- Stay calm
- Reassure them that they are not to blame and that they were right to tell you
- Keep questions to a minimum
- Tell the individual that you will have to inform others to help stop the abuse/harmful behaviour
- Ensure the safety of the individual
- Make brief accurate notes at the earliest opportunity
- Seek advice and support immediately from the CWO, GBWR LSO or your Line Manager/team manager.

If you are concerned that any of these individuals are implicated or involved then contact the GBWR Chief Executive immediately

- If you feel that a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate risk of harm then a statutory agency (children's or adult social care services or police) should be contacted immediately. If the concern is about an adult then their consent should be obtained if possible before doing so (see Appendix 2 – if you believe there is an immediate risk seek help without delay).
- Don't express your own thoughts or emotions
- Do not promise confidentiality or make promises you may not be able to guarantee.

How GBWR will respond to suspicions or concerns?

1. Report it

1.1 The wellbeing of the child or adult at risk will be paramount to any GBWR response to suspicions or concerns about their welfare. GBWR encourages and supports everyone to report any suspicions or concerns they may have about the wellbeing of a child or adult participant and will take appropriate action to respond to and manage such concerns. This may mean notifying the statutory agencies of any allegation and seeking professional support and advice where appropriate (this can be on a 'no name basis' if necessary). Please see 'Incident Record form' available on the GBWR website.

2. Referral Process (Sharing safeguarding concerns)

2.1. As soon as the GBWR LSO receives verbal or written notification of an incident, allegation, concern or disclosure, GBWR will assume management of the case (providing it is not already being responded to by the statutory authorities. Once GBWR assumes management the individual or club should take no further action until advised to do so by GBWR or the relevant authority.

2.2 All safeguarding investigations will be overseen by the GBWR Case Management Group (CMG). The CMG will comprise the GBWR LSO, a Trustee and one or more independent panel members with professional safeguarding experience.

2.3 If appropriate, based on safeguarding thresholds, the CMG will make a referral to the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) where concerns arise around a position of trust, to the Police or to Adult/Children's Social Care who will advise and/or manage any subsequent investigation.

2.4 Where the referral does not meet a threshold for statutory agency referral, the CMG will advise and instigate further investigation before deciding upon the appropriate course of action.

3. Those under investigation

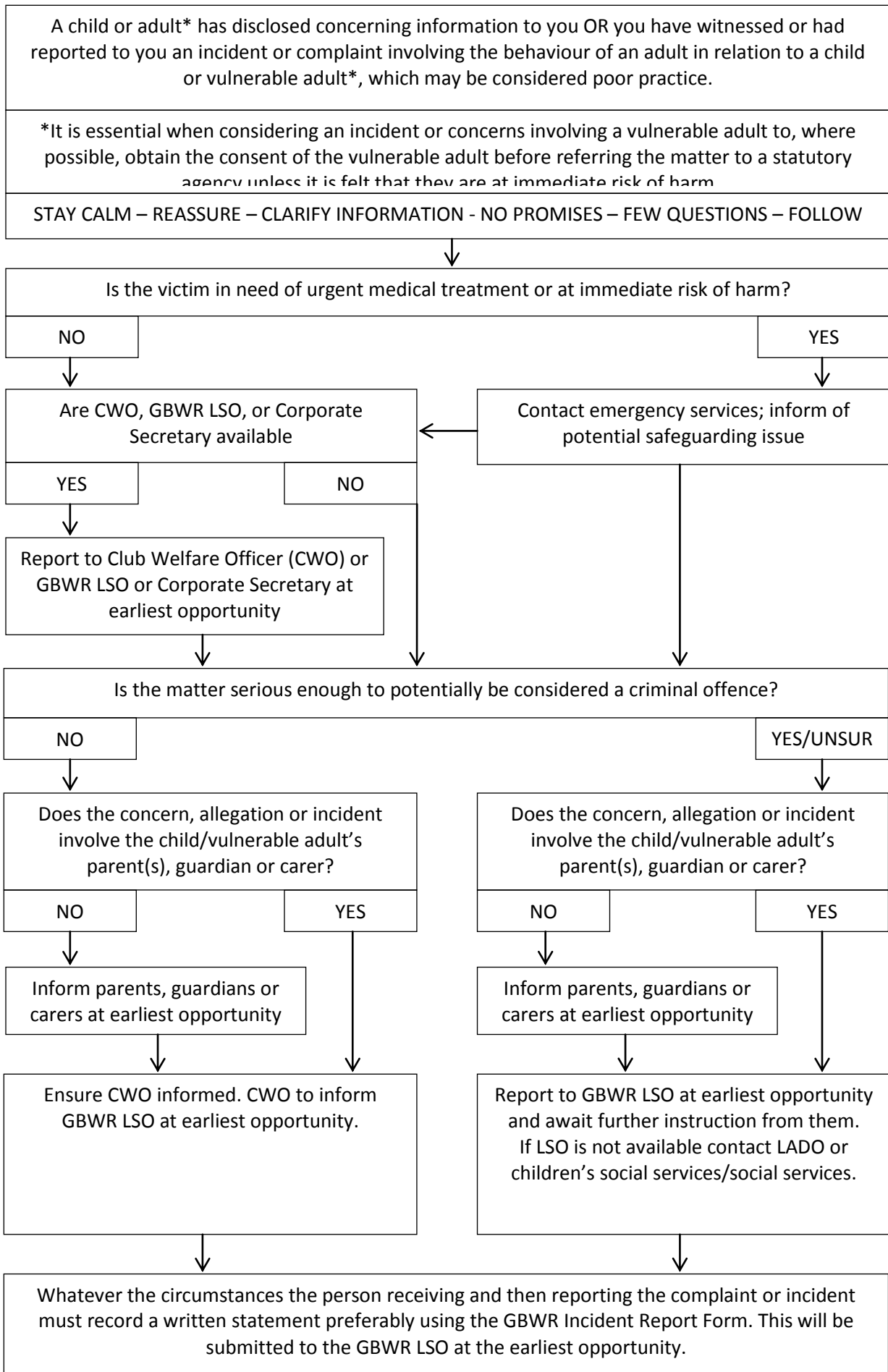
3.1 GBWR is committed first and foremost to protecting the interests of children and vulnerable adults. In the case of a referral being made to GBWR or the statutory agencies, individuals who are the subject of concerns will be notified by GBWR and made aware of the Safeguarding procedures for dealing with referrals. They may at any time request an update on the progress of the referral. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible.

4. Suspension

4.1 In the case of an employee being the subject of safeguarding concerns it is likely that he or she would be suspended, and thereby temporarily barred from attending club or GBWR events, pending the outcome of any investigation.. Suspension is a neutral act intended to protect all parties. It must be emphasised that suspension is not in any way an indication of presumed guilt.

4.2 If a referral is passed back to GBWR from statutory agencies, GBWR then have the right to conduct their own investigation, regardless of the outcome of any investigation carried out or action instigated by statutory agencies.

Reporting Flow-Chart



Appendices:

1. Club welfare officer role description: for clubs recruiting CWO's
2. Consent issues when working with adults at risk
3. Useful contacts

Appendix 1

Club Welfare Officer Role Description

Core Duties

- Assist the club to fulfil its responsibilities to safeguard children and adults at club level.
- Assist the club to implement GBWR's Safe and Sound Safeguarding policy at a club level and where appropriate to develop the clubs own safeguarding plan.
- Be the first point of contact for staff/volunteers, parents and children/young people where there are concerns about a child or vulnerable adult's welfare, poor practice or child abuse.
- Support the club management to ensure the club follows GBWR's safe recruitment policy when recruiting volunteers
- Be present at training and competition on a regular basis
- Promote a positive and proactive approach to safeguarding to all coaches, volunteers and participants where concerns are addressed openly and support is visible and easily accessed

Responsibilities

- The Club Welfare Officer (CWO) is responsible for following GBWR's safeguarding policy and procedures, in particular the reporting procedures. This means ensuring that the all concerns are welcomed and responded to positively and appropriate records are maintained, CWOs will ensure that information is assessed and clarified promptly and carefully, and that further information is gathered as appropriate.
- The CWO must report any concerns to the Lead Safeguarding officer (LSO) at the first appropriate opportunity.
- In the absence of contact with the LSO, the CWO will seek support an advice from a statutory agencies (such as the LADO, local adult/children's social care services or the police) or the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000.
- The CWO will be the first point of contact for the LSO within your club.
- The CWO wmust maintain contact details for local Adult and Children's Social Care Services, Police, and the LADO. Contact details for local/national external helplines should also be maintained and publicised within the club.
- The CWO will promote and implement GBWR's Anti Bullying policy
- The CWO will promote and implement GBWR's Social Media Guidance
- The CWO will promote and ensure adherence to GBWRs Code of Conduct by all club volunteers and players
- The CWO should be aware of current platforms for Bullying and Abuse such as social media and the use of technology for appropriate contact.

- The CWO will need to ensure that everyone is aware of appropriate safeguarding training relevant to their roles and will work with the club management committee to ensure that safeguarding training requirements are met.
- The CWO will ensure confidentiality is maintained and GBWRs guidance on information sharing is adhered to.
- the CWO will promote inclusive and anti-discriminatory practice. The club must ensure that it has made clear its commitment to anti-discriminatory practice, procedures and plans for safeguarding children and adults.
- The CWO needs to act professionally at all times and must act in the best interests of children and adult participants at all times.

Club Welfare Officer Check List	
GBWR Associate club member registration form and payment.	Sign-up at https://gbwr.azolve.com/
An Enhanced DBS check	The GBWR RDO will liaise with the CWO to register an individual on the system. The RFU Lead safeguarding officer will verify the check. When payment is approved by GBWR the check will take place by the RFU safeguarding. Once you receive your DBS certificate this must be seen and signed off by the RDO.
Sports Coach UK 'Safeguarding and Protecting Children' course	Send a copy of your certificate to the Lead Safeguarding officer
GBWR / NSPCC Time to Listen course	This is delivered by the Lead Safeguarding Officer and will be certificated
It is the responsibility of the Club Welfare officer to ensure GBWR Safe and Sound Safeguarding policy is available in the club folder and promoted to all members.	Please contact Daniel Hook if you wish this to be sent to you.
The CWO should be present at training on a regular basis to provide a visible and accessible source of support for all participants and volunteers.	Ideally 1 training session per week

Appendix 2

Consent issues where concerns relate to an adult (someone aged 18 and over):

The Care and Support statutory guidance (HM Government, 2014) advises that the first priority in safeguarding adults should always be to ensure the safety and well-being of the individual.

Making Safeguarding Personal is a person centred approach which means that adults are encouraged to make their own decisions and are provided with support and information to empower them to do so. This approach recognises that adults have a general right to independence, choice and self-determination including control over information about themselves.

Those working with adults felt to be at risk should strive to deliver effective safeguarding consistently with both of the above principles. They should ensure that the adult has accessible information so that they can make informed choices about safeguarding: what it means, risks and benefits and possible consequences. GBWR does not expect staff or volunteers to support an adult who is felt to be vulnerable or at risk through this decision making process but expects them to inform a CWO or GBWR LSO without delay so that they can clearly define the various options to help support the adult at risk to make a decision about their safety.

Adults may not give their consent to the sharing of safeguarding information for a number of reasons. For example, they may be unduly influenced, coerced or intimidated by another person, they may be frightened of reprisals, they may fear losing control, they may not trust social services or other partners or they may fear that their relationship with the abuser will be damaged. Reassurance and appropriate support may help to change their view on whether it is best to share information.

The CWO, GBWR LSO or those from the sport seeking to support the adult should consider the following and:

- Explore the reasons for the adult's objections – what are they worried about?
- Explain the concern and why you think it is important to share the information
- Tell the adult with whom you may be sharing the information with and why
- Explain the benefits, to them or others, of sharing information – could they access better help and support?
- Discuss the consequences of not sharing the information – could someone come to harm?
- Reassure them that the information will not be shared with anyone who does not need to know
- Reassure them that they are not alone and that support is available to them.

If, after this, the adult refuses intervention to support them with a safeguarding concern, or requests that information about them is not shared with other safeguarding partners, in general, their wishes should be respected. However, there are a number of circumstances where those seeking to support the adult can reasonably override such a decision, including:

- It appears that the adult lacks the mental capacity to make that decision (this must be properly explored and assessed by professionals not by our staff. If we believe this to be the case, GBWR has a duty to refer to the statutory agencies to seek assessment of mental capacity and this should be recorded in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005)
- Emergency or life-threatening situations may warrant the sharing of relevant information with the emergency services without consent
- Other people are, or may be, at risk, including children

- Sharing the information could prevent a serious crime
- A serious crime has been committed
- The risk is unreasonably high and meets the criteria for a multi-agency risk assessment conference referral
- Staff or adults in a Position of Trust are implicated
- There is a court order or other legal authority for taking action without consent

In such circumstances, it is important to keep a careful record of the decision making process. Staff and volunteers should seek advice from the GBWR LSO in line with this policy before overriding the adult's decision, except in emergency situations. Decisions will be made based upon whether there is an overriding reason which makes it necessary to take action without consent and whether doing so is proportionate because there is no less intrusive way of ensuring safety. Legal advice will be sought where appropriate. If the decision is to take action without the adult's consent, then unless it is unsafe to do so, the adult should be informed that this is being done and of the reasons why.

If none of the above apply and the decision is not to share safeguarding information with other safeguarding partners, or not to intervene to safeguard the adult:

- Support the adult to weigh up the risks and benefits of different options
- Ensure they are aware of the level of risk and possible outcomes
- Offer to arrange for them to have an advocate or peer supporter
- Offer support for them to build confidence and self-esteem if necessary
- Agree on and record the level of risk the adult is taking
- Record the reasons for not intervening or sharing information
- Regularly review the situation
- Try to build trust to enable the adult to better protect themselves.

It is important that the risk of sharing information is also considered. In some cases, such as domestic violence or hate crime, it is possible that sharing information could increase the risk to the adult. GBWR will always seek to work with safeguarding partners to work jointly to provide advice, support and protection to the adult in order to minimise the possibility of worsening the relationship or triggering retribution from the abuser.

Appendix 3

Useful Contacts:

GBWR Lead Safeguarding Officer
Gill Camina
safeguarding@gbwr.org.uk

GBWR Deputy Safeguarding Officer
Julie Bunnage
Julie.bunnage@gbwr.org.uk
07903313481

GBWR Corporate & Membership Secretary
Daniel Hook
danielhook@rfu.com
0208 8317 7645

NSPCC Helpline
0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk

Child Protection in Sport Unit
0116 234 7278
www.thecpsu.org.uk

ChildLine
0800 1111

Disclosure and Barring Service
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about>

National Whistleblowing Helpline
0800 028 0285