

Children's Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

Title	Children's Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures
Version	1
Published	20/08/2025
Author	Safeguarding Lead
Review Date	20/08/2026

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1. Introduction

Special Olympics Great Britain (SOGB) provides sporting opportunities across Great Britain to both Children and Adults with intellectual disabilities. Within the clubs, regions and nationally these children and adults with intellectual disabilities are referred to as 'Athletes'. This policy relates directly to children (those under the age of 18 years), for the purpose of this policy children will be referred to as Athletes throughout.

SOGB is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing and protection of all Athletes in its care. SOGB recognises the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect Athletes from harm, abuse and exploitation.

Sport can and does have a very powerful and positive influence on people, especially children with an intellectual disability. Not only can sport provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement, but it can also help those who participate to develop an expansive range of life skills such as self-confidence, increased self-esteem and new skills, in addition to promoting good health.

These positive effects can only happen if sport is in the right hands i.e. in the hands of those who prioritise the wellbeing and safety of all the Athletes in their care and those that adopt practices that support, protect and empower Athletes.

All Athletes regardless of disability, age, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation or socio-economic status have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse.

Protecting Athletes from abuse and harm of any kind is of paramount priority for everyone involved in any capacity with SOGB.

This procedure document sets out how all Staff (paid or unpaid), Volunteers, Athletes, Unified Partners and any other stakeholders connected to SOGB should recognise and respond to allegations or concerns of harm, abuse, exploitation or neglect of SOGB Athletes and outlines safeguarding procedures that when implemented should keep SOGB Athletes safe and protected from harm.

Whilst external partners such as the Police and Local Authorities play a lead role in safeguarding children by protecting them from harm, safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and everyone at SOGB has a role to play in protecting Athletes from harm.

2. Policy Statement

SOGB is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and young people and to the principle that 'welfare of the child is paramount'. It is recognised that children and young people are an especially vulnerable group, and it is vital that the appropriate safeguards are in place for their protection. This document should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Children's Policy Statement.

As an organisation that provides sporting opportunities for children, young adults and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID) ("**SOGB Members**"), SOGB also recognises the responsibility to promote safe practice and to protect SOGB Members from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation and is committed to

the wellbeing and protection of SOGB Members in line with national legislation and relevant national and local guidelines.

SOGB is committed to creating a culture of zero-tolerance of harm to children and maintaining a safe, open, listening and positive environment for all.

For the purposes of the Safeguarding Children Policy Statement (the “**Policy**”), a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday, as defined by the Children Act 1989 & 2004.

SOGB’s commitment to safeguarding children and young people includes:

- recognising that the welfare of the child or young person is paramount;
- ensuring that the safeguarding of children and young people is of high priority within the organisation;
- ensuring all children or young people who come into contact with SOGB and its Staff, coaches and Volunteers have the right to protection from harm, abuse, exploitation and neglect regardless of their age, disability, race, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, religion, faith or beliefs;
- ensuring the rights, dignity and worth of a child or young person are always respected and that safeguarding and welfare is always person-centred;
- where possible and appropriate, empowering children and young people to make choices that lead to personal growth whilst also ensuring their safety through person-centred risk management procedures;
- ensuring that the correct procedures are followed regarding reporting serious incidents to the Charity Commission;
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, families and other agencies including Police and Local Authorities/Social Services to promote the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people and share information as appropriate including with the Disclosure and Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland and the Charity Commission if a serious incident report is required;
- promoting the safeguarding and welfare of SOGB Members by providing opportunities for them to take part in sport safely, and respecting and promoting their rights, health and wellbeing;
- providing, promoting and implementing appropriate procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people and protect them from abuse, with a clear line of accountability for the implementation of these procedures (abuse can fall into many categories including: physical; domestic; sexual; psychological; organisational; neglect and acts of omission);
- ensuring safe recruitment, selection and vetting practices are always followed and to continually assess the suitability of Staff and Volunteers;
- providing, promoting and implementing a comprehensive and mandatory safeguarding and welfare training programme for all Staff, Trustees, Coaches and Volunteers;
- ensuring all concerns, suspicions and allegations of misconduct or abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately;
- requiring all Staff, Trustees, Coaches and Volunteers to report safeguarding and welfare concerns, as is their responsibility and duty, and maintaining a clear approach to and procedure for the responding, reporting, recording and referring of any allegations of misconduct or abuse; and

- promoting a culture where concerns can be shared without any fear of retribution.

3. Definitions and Role Descriptions

SOGB strives to ensure that Athletes are protected and kept safe from harm whilst participating in SOGB . We will endeavour to promote high standards of care for all participants. For effective implementation of this procedure document, the SOGB delivery network must work in partnership, each with a role to ensure the protection of the Athletes in their care. For the purpose of this procedure document and associated guidelines, the following definitions and role descriptions will apply:

- **Lead Safeguarding (Welfare & Safety) Trustee** Every member of the SOGB Board of Trustees has a duty towards the welfare of SOGB's members and people. The Lead Safeguarding (Welfare & Safety) Trustee is appointed by the Board to take a lead in the areas of safeguarding, welfare, safety & health. They will have enhanced knowledge and experience of safeguarding and will provide support, guidance and advice to the SOGB Safeguarding Team.
- **Director of Operations** is responsible for Organisational Compliance with Safeguarding Policies and Procedures and also ensuring there is promotion of a positive culture of safeguarding across the organisation. In addition, they ensure that the Safeguarding Lead is appropriately resourced to implement good safeguarding practice across the organisation.
- **Safeguarding Lead** is responsible for the oversight of safeguarding policies and procedures; they are the strategic lead for safeguarding for SOGB and provide operational support and advice in all areas of safeguarding across the organisation.
- **Safeguarding Support Officer** is responsible for supporting the Safeguarding Lead with initial enquiries of safeguarding concerns, allegations and disclosures and will manage a safeguarding case load. They are a point of contact for our membership for general safeguarding advice and guidance and will also support the management of SOGB's safer recruitment processes.
- **Safeguarding and Welfare Officer (SWO)** is the nominated person acting on behalf of SOGB whose responsibility it is to deal with Athlete wellbeing/Athlete protection/safeguarding matters at Region and/or Club level. SWO's will liaise with the SOGB Safeguarding Team in relation to safeguarding reports/concerns that occur in their Region/Club. In addition, SWO's are responsible for ensuring that the latest SOGB updates in policy, guidance and good practice are implemented at club level.
- **Registered Volunteer** means any registered SOGB Volunteer who is engaged in SOGB activity.
- **Board** means the whole Board of Trustees of SOGB.
- **Athlete** means child with an intellectual disability who takes part in the sporting activities of SOGB.
- **Club** means an accredited club whose Athletes or Volunteers are Special Olympics Athlete Member or Volunteers registered with SOGB.
- **Coach** means any member who has undertaken formal training and has gained and holds a current Coach qualification at any level and is registered with SOGB.
- **Regulated Activity** is defined by DBS as undertaking certain roles that involve working with children such as teaching, coaching, instructing and providing care. *see sec.9 Safer Recruitment
- **Safeguarding** the proactive policies and procedures in place that promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all Athletes at SOGB.
- **Child Protection** is one aspect of the safeguarding umbrella specific to children who are considered to be at risk of, or suffering significant harm.

- **Child** The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as anyone who is under 18 years old.

4. Recognising Abuse

SOGB recognises that abuse can take many different forms, to ensure that all Athletes are protected from harm, Staff and Volunteers at SOGB need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect. SOGB have a duty to provide Staff and Volunteers with training and information regarding safeguarding issues and procedures that promote good practice but that also highlight unacceptable types of behaviour that are considered abusive and harmful. Below are some important definitions in relation to abuse and types of abuse.

4.1 Abuse in Sport

Abuse of Children can occur in any environment, including the home, at school or in a sports club although, statistically, children are more likely to be abused by people they know and trust. Sporting environments are often described by Athletes as being like a family, therefore, we must remain vigilant to signs of abuse within SOGB as well as recognising it is everyone's responsibility to protect and safeguard SOGB Athletes, inside and outside of the sport.

SOGB acknowledges that its activities can create opportunities for vulnerable Athletes to be exposed to abuse or exploitation Therefore, it is vital that those who have regular contact with Athletes recognise the signs and indicators that an Athlete may be experiencing abuse and know the appropriate steps to take to report these concerns. Coaches, instructors and other Volunteers may be best placed to help in identifying concerns, and indicators of possible abuse or neglect at an early stage, and by referring those concerns to a SWO and/or the appropriate statutory organisation they could play a vital part in preventing harm and protecting Athletes from abuse and/or exploitation.

Sexual Abuse - When a child or young person is sexually abused, they're forced, tricked or manipulated into sexual activities. They might not understand that what is happening is abuse or that it is wrong for the abuser to do this to them. They may be afraid to speak up or may act as if what they're experiencing is normal. Both responses are valid and understandable for a child in such a situation. Sexual abuse can happen anywhere – and it can happen in person or online. Sexual abuse of children can be contact abuse and non-contact abuse, defined as follows:

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4.2 Types of Abuse

There are 4 types of abuse recognised for children, they are:

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Contact abuse is where an abuser makes physical contact with a child or forces the child to make physical contact with someone else. This includes:

- sexual touching of any part of a child's body, whether they're clothed or not
- using a body part or object to rape or penetrate a child
- forcing a child to take part in sexual activities
- making a child undress or touch someone else.

Contact abuse can include touching, kissing and oral sex – sexual abuse isn't just penetrative.

Non-contact abuse is where a child is abused without being touched by the abuser. This can be in person or online and includes:

- exposing or flashing
- showing pornography
- exposing a child to sexual acts
- making them masturbate
- forcing a child to make, view or share child abuse images or videos
- making, viewing or distributing child abuse images or videos
- forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or conversations online or through a smartphone.

Grooming and child sexual exploitation although defined slightly differently to sexual abuse are also forms of child abuse and more information about them can be found [here](#):

Emotional/Psychological Abuse - Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child. Emotional abuse is often a part of other kinds of abuse, which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own.

Examples of emotional abuse are:

- humiliating or constantly criticising a child
- threatening, shouting at a child or calling them names
- making the child the subject of jokes, or using sarcasm to hurt a child
- blaming and scapegoating
- making a child perform degrading acts
- not recognising a child's own individuality or trying to control their lives
- pushing a child too hard or not recognising their limitations
- exposing a child to upsetting events or situations, like domestic abuse or drug taking
- failing to promote a child's social development
- not allowing them to have friends
- persistently ignoring them
- being absent
- manipulating a child
- never saying anything kind, expressing positive feelings or congratulating a child on successes

- never showing any emotions in interactions with a child, also known as emotional neglect.

Neglect - The ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and is the most common form of child abuse. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care. This can put children and young people in danger. And it can also have long term effects on their physical and mental wellbeing. There are four main types of neglect defined below:

- **Physical neglect**
A child's basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter, are not met or they aren't properly supervised or kept safe.
- **Educational neglect**
A parent doesn't ensure their child is given an education.
- **Emotional neglect**
A child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need. This could be through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them.
- **Medical neglect**
A child isn't given proper health care. This includes dental care and refusing or ignoring medical recommendations.

Physical Abuse - is any intentional act causing injury or trauma to a child by way of bodily contact. It involves deliberately aggressive or violent behaviour that results in bodily injury.

Examples of physical abuse include:

- hitting with hands or objects
- slapping and punching
- kicking
- shaking
- throwing
- poisoning
- burning and scalding
- biting and scratching
- breaking bones
- drowning.

It's important to remember that physical abuse is any way of intentionally causing physical harm to a child or young person. It also includes making up the symptoms of an illness or causing a child to become unwell.

4.3 Additional Safeguarding Themes

Prevent

SOGB Staff and Volunteers need to be aware of the Government's Prevent Agenda: The Prevent Agenda was set up in 2006 by the Labour government as part of the wider counter-terrorism strategy called CONTEST. It is a UK-wide strategy that aims to prevent people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The strategy's three objectives are:

- To challenge the ideology that supports terrorism.
- To protect vulnerable people.
- To support sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation.

It is vital that any extremist views that an Athlete, volunteer or Staff member holds or expresses are explored, challenged and if appropriate, reported through the correct channels.

*More information on the Prevent Agenda can be found in Appendix II

4.3.1 Increased Vulnerabilities of Children

Children can be identified as having increased vulnerability in a variety of settings and under several different circumstances, as follows:

- Children with physical, and/or intellectual disabilities
- Children experiencing poor mental health
- Sick children in a hospital setting, hospice or a children's home
- Children in families where domestic abuse/violence is present
- Children in families where drug/alcohol use is affecting parenting
- Children in families where parents/guardians/carers have mental health issues/learning difficulties/disabilities which cause make coping with parenthood difficult
- Children growing up with parents in prison
- Children in families where the child is a "young carer" for a parent/guardian/carer who is physically ill, has poor mental health or has a physical or intellectual disability
- Children who are primary carers of younger children
- Looked after children
- Children living in un-registered private fostering arrangements
- Children who experience bullying
- Children of young/unsupported parents
- Children living in poverty/poor housing

4.3.2 Online safety

At SOGB we recognise that:

- The online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however, it can also present risks and challenges
- We have a duty to ensure that all Athletes involved in SOGB are provided with the right knowledge and tools to protect themselves from potential harm online
- We have a responsibility to ensure Athletes are kept safe from online risks and harm while in attendance at all SOGB activity including but not limited to; club activity, events, competitions, SOGB Social events, media events and any SOGB online activities.

We will seek to keep Athletes safe by:

- Ensuring that our Safeguarding Team has the appropriate knowledge and training to respond to any online safety concerns effectively
- Providing clear and specific directions to Staff and Volunteers on how to behave online through our codes of conduct and related policies
- Providing support and training for all Staff and Volunteers on dealing with all forms of abuse, including bullying/cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation
- Supporting and encouraging Athletes to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others

- Developing online safety resources for Athletes and families and signposting Athletes and families to already existing online safety resources, information and support
- Developing clear and robust procedures to enable SOGB to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an Athlete, volunteer or member of Staff
- Working in partnership with Athletes, their families and other agencies to promote Athlete welfare and to support Athletes to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

4.3.3 Doping in sport

As a sporting organisation, SOGB needs to ensure Staff, Volunteers and Athletes have an awareness of doping in sport, to understand its potential impact on Athletes health and to understand the legalities surrounding it.

In competitive sports, doping is the use of banned athletic performance-enhancing drugs by athletic competitors. The term doping is widely used by organisations that regulate sporting competitions. The use of drugs to enhance performance is considered unethical, and therefore prohibited, by most international sports organisations, including the International Olympic Committee and International Paralympic Committee. Furthermore, Athletes (or athletic programs) taking explicit measures to evade detection exacerbate the ethical violation with overt deception and cheating.

SOGB strictly prohibits the use of any performance enhancing drugs (doping) in any SOGB related activity. Any suspicion of doping will be investigated and disciplinary action may be taken against those who are involved. For more information about doping in sports visit The World Anti-Doping Agency Website [here](#).

It is the responsibility of Athletes, coaches and member organisations to know if any medication or substance used by an Athlete is on the Prohibited List. Where a prescribed medication contains a substance that appears on the list, a Therapeutic Use Exception (TUE) is needed. Failure to apply for a TUE may result in an anti-doping violation. More information on this can be found here: [Virtus banned substances which are prescribed medicines](#).

5. Responding to Concerns

A set procedure for responding to safeguarding and welfare concerns about an Athlete makes sure that everyone is clear on what action to take in the event of a concern being raised. The procedure is based on five steps: **Recognise, Respond, Record, Report, Refer**.

The following principles underpin the procedure:

- The wellbeing of the Athlete is the paramount consideration. Those who recognise indicators of abuse or other safeguarding concerns must act in the immediate to ensure the safety of the child at risk. This may involve calling emergency services if there is an immediate risk of harm present.
- Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of their children and where possible the SOGB Safeguarding Team in liaison with the club SWO's should work in partnership with parents /carers when there are concerns.
- Where the concern about a child's wellbeing suggests that they are in need of protection, the information must be passed on to the appropriate service, e.g. the Police/Social Care with or without the parent/carers consent for the purposes of the child's protection. All allegations of abuse must always be taken seriously.
- It is not the responsibility of the SOGB Safeguarding Team or the Region/Club to investigate allegations of abuse or decide whether a child has been abused. The responsibility to investigate allegations, incidents and concerns of abuse sits with external services such as the Police and/or Social Care and

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). There may be scenarios in which external services request that the SOGB Safeguarding Team carry out enquiries into the allegations or concerns and report back their findings. In addition, if a concern, incident or allegation does not meet the threshold for external intervention, it may then fall to the SOGB Safeguarding Team to make its own enquiries and findings.

5.1 Recognising Safeguarding Concerns

Volunteers, Athletes and Staff may recognise or be informed of safeguarding concerns in different ways.

This could include:

- A direct disclosure by a child
- Through observation of a child , demonstrated by a change in their behaviour, appearance or nature
- Direct observation of an abusive act
- Information that is shared from another individual or organisation

It is vital that everyone at SOGB understands the basic indicators and themes present in safeguarding concerns so they are able to recognise them if seen. See section 4. Types of Abuse in this document.

5.2 Responding to a Disclosure/Concern

When there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse, everyone must be clear about their role. All Staff and Volunteers (paid or unpaid) need to act impartially, and must respond appropriately and proportionally to the facts and information they have. It is essential that all Staff and Volunteers adhere to the following procedures:

- Ensure the immediate safety of the Athlete and any others. Where appropriate, call 999 for emergency services if there is a medical emergency, danger to life or risk of imminent injury and/or abuse, or if a crime is in progress.
- Take steps to preserve any physical and/or digital evidence if a crime may have been committed.
- React calmly so as not to frighten the child .
- Consider what requirements a child may need to communicate effectively (e.g. what support needs do they have, what is the nature of their intellectual disability, do they use sign language, communication aids, is English their first language, do they have a known support person who could assist with their communication, etc.)
- Listen to the child and take what they say seriously. Do not show disbelief. Reassure them that they are not to blame and were right to tell someone.
- Avoid asking any questions. If necessary, only ask enough questions to gain basic information to establish the possibility that abuse may have occurred. Only use open-ended, non-leading questions e.g. Who? What? Where? When?
- It is important to explain to the child who you may need to share information with and why. Do not promise to keep information a secret.
- Do not introduce personal information from either your own experiences or those of others.
- Pass on the information to the Safeguarding and Welfare Officer/SOGB Safeguarding Team or the appropriate external service e.g. children services or the Police without delay.
- If the person who has been accused is known to you or SOGB you must not inform them that an allegation has been made. You must avoid “alerting” the person accused as this may adversely affect any future investigation. You must report any allegations about SOGB Staff and Volunteers to the Club SWO as soon as possible. If the Club SWO is involved in the concerns or has a known conflict of interest, you must report this as soon as possible to the SOGB Safeguarding Team.

Any safeguarding concern about an Athlete should be considered in line with the relevant wellbeing indicators and where applicable may be discussed with parents/carers as long as doing so does not put the Athlete at further risk of harm.

Common sense is advised in these situations and the best interests of the child will be considered to ensure the most appropriate support for each child is in place. Where possible, a child's wishes should inform next steps, however, this may be overridden if the child's wishes are not realistic, proportionate, or in the best interests of the child's safety.

SOGB does not undertake Child protection investigations (Section 47 Children Act 1989) or section 42 Inquiries (Care Act 2014) – Statutory agencies (Police, social care, and the NSPCC) undertake this role. Therefore, you must NOT investigate any allegation of abuse.

5.3 RECORD

Make a written record of the information as soon as possible using the SOGB Safeguarding and Welfare Incident Report Form, completing as much of the form as possible. Records made must:

- Be factual - only record what you have been told or have observed. Do not record how you feel or what you think might have happened.
- Be clear – the report could be used in further investigations as evidence or in a court of law, so it needs to be clear and easy to understand.
- Detailed – as much detail as you can remember from the disclosure or incident, including details about any alleged perpetrator/s, the Athletes' presentation, e.g. were they crying, withdrawn, shaking etc, exactly what was seen or heard including dates and times. Also include things like location, context (build up), any potential witnesses to the incidents/concerns.
- If someone has been hurt in the incident, include a description of any physical marks (including the location of them on the body) or any visible bruising or injuries DO NOT remove any clothing or take any photos.
- Include any actions taken by yourself and/or others – e.g. were emergency services called, who have you informed, was the person removed from the area, etc.
- The information in the form will help the SOGB Safeguarding Team and/or Club SWO decide what action to take next.

5.4 REPORT

Inform your Safeguarding and Welfare Officer (SWO) as quickly as possible. If your Club/Region SWO is unavailable, you should contact the SOGB Safeguarding Team on 07383 389663 during the hours 9-5 Monday to Friday. Alternatively, you can email safeguarding@sogb.org.uk

Reporting safeguarding concerns should not be delayed by the gathering of information to complete all sections of the form.

Sharing Concerns with Parents/Carers

Where there are concerns that the parents/carers may be responsible for, or have knowledge of the abuse, sharing concerns with the parents/carers may place the child at further risk. In such cases, the decision to inform parents would sit with the investigatory body e.g. the Police, Children's Services. If the concerns do not meet threshold for external intervention and the above services are not involved, advice must be sought from the Club SWO and where possible, the SOGB Safeguarding Team.

5.5 REFER

If abuse has taken place or there is a suspicion of abuse, then this must be referred to the appropriate external services, this could be the Police force located in the area where a crime may have been committed, local children services, or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in cases where there is a risk posed by a person in a position of trust. See below for information on how to contact external services:

The Police

For emergencies, e.g. if a crime is being committed or has recently been committed call: 999

For non-emergencies, for example if a crime has been committed but there is not a live risk of harm present call: 101

Children's Services

To you find the service you require, click the relevant link below:

England and Wales

Children: <https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

Scotland

Children: <https://www.mygov.scot/report-child-abuse/>

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) *England and Wales

The role of the LADO is to investigate concerns that relate to people in a position of trust where there has been an allegation or suspicion that they have abused their position of trust in a harmful way.

A referral to the LADO would typically be made by the SOGB Safeguarding Lead, however there are circumstances whereby LADO referrals may be made by external services, organisations and Staff/Volunteers. It is critical that the SOGB Safeguarding Lead is made aware of any LADO referrals so they are able to take appropriate action where required. LADO referral pathways and contact information is typically found on Local Authority websites and should be easily located using an internet search engine. Search your local authority and "LADO".

LADO Referrals need to be made within 1 working day of the concern being received.

Charity Commission

Referrals to the Charity Commission are required where there has been:

- Any incident that results in, or risks, significant harm to people who come into contact with your charity through its work
- Allegations or incidents of abuse or mistreatment of people who come into contact with your charity through its work

A Charity's Trustees will normally decide when to report a Serious Incident to the Charity Commission and the referral would typically be made by the Organisation's Safeguarding Lead in liaison with the Lead Safeguarding (Welfare & Safety) Trustee. Details of reportable serious incidents can be found [HERE](#).

Staff and Volunteers should ordinarily follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, anybody can refer their concerns directly to Children's Social Services, the LADO and/or the Police if:

- the situation is an emergency and the SWO or SOGB Safeguarding Team are all unavailable;
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the Athlete's safety; or

- for any other reason they make a judgement that a direct referral is in the best interests of the Athlete.

5.6 Allegations Against Staff/Volunteers

When an allegation is made against a member of Staff or volunteer, they have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress (see Disciplinary Policy). Where a member of Staff or volunteer feels that there are poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in a club then they should raise them with the Club SWO. If, however, they feel that their concerns have not been addressed then they should raise them with the Safeguarding Lead or Director of Operations using the whistleblowing guidance highlighted within this policy.

Any allegation about a member of Staff or SOGB Volunteer must be initially reported to the Club SWO, who will gather initial information and then report the allegation to the SOGB Safeguarding Lead. The SOGB Safeguarding Lead in liaison with the Director of Operations will assess the allegation.

In order to assess the allegations against a member of Staff or volunteer, it will be judged against the relevant criteria highlighted below. This applies to all cases in which it is alleged that an individual who works or Volunteers with Athletes has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed an Athlete or may have harmed an Athlete;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to an Athlete; or
- Behaved towards an Athlete in a way that indicates they may pose a risk.

Allegations made about a club SWO should be reported directly to the SOGB Safeguarding Lead

Dependent on the findings of the initial assessment of the allegation, the allegation may be escalated to the Incident Management Group (IMG sec.5.6.3) or referred externally e.g. to the LADO and/or Police. More information about the assessment of allegations can be found in the SOGB Threshold Guidance.

While any enquiries or investigations take place in relation to an allegation about a member of Staff or a volunteer, an interim suspension may be put in place for that person(s). An interim suspension is a non-punitive act that is designed to ensure the safety of all, including the accused while enquiries/investigations can take place.

5.6.1 DBS Referrals

The SOGB Safeguarding Lead in consultation with the IMG, has a duty to refer any member of Staff or volunteer who reaches relevant conditions to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). DBS referral conditions are as follows:

Condition 1

- Due to a person's behaviour and/or actions you withdraw permission for the person to engage in regulated activity with children, or you move the person to another area of work that isn't regulated activity. This includes situations when you would have taken the above action, but the person was re-deployed, resigned, retired, or left. For example, a coach resigns when an allegation of harm to an Athlete is first made against them.

Condition 2

You have reason to believe the person has carried out one of the following:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children. An action or inaction has harmed a child or put them at risk or harm or;
- satisfied the harm test in relation to children. E.g. there has been no relevant conduct but a risk of harm to a child still exists; Or
- been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence.

Relevant conduct is:

- endangers a child or is likely to endanger a child
- if repeated against or in relation to a child would endanger the child or be likely to endanger the child
- involves sexual material relating to children (including possession of such material)
- involves sexually explicit images depicting violence against human beings (including possession of such images)
- is of a sexual nature involving a child

A person's conduct endangers a child if they:

- harm a child
- cause a child to be harmed
- put a child at risk of harm
- attempt to harm a child
- incite another to harm a child

5.6.2 Scotland

Referrals to the Children's List

Where SOGB takes disciplinary action to remove a member of Staff/Volunteer from regulated work as a result of harmful behaviour towards an Athlete, then they have a duty to refer the member of Staff/Volunteer to Volunteer Scotland so that consideration can be given to whether that individual should be barred from any kind of regulated work with children. The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 stipulates that organisations must refer to Volunteer Scotland the case of any member of Staff/Volunteer who (whether in the course of their role within the organisation) has:

- Harmed a child;
- Placed a child at risk of harm;
- Engaged in inappropriate conduct involving pornography;
- Engaged in inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature involving a child;
- Given inappropriate medical treatment to a child;

AND as a result:

- SOGB has dismissed the member of Staff/Volunteer;
- The member of Staff/Volunteer would have been dismissed as a result of the incident had they not resigned, retired or been made redundant;
- SOGB has transferred the member of Staff/Volunteer to a position in SOGB which is NOT regulated work with children;
- The member of Staff/Volunteer would have been dismissed or considered for dismissal where employment or volunteer role was not due to end at the expiry of a fixed term contract; or
- The member of Staff would have been dismissed or considered for dismissal had the contract not expired.

SOGB will also refer the case of a member of Staff/volunteer where information becomes available after the member of Staff/Volunteer has:

- Been dismissed by SOGB;
- Resigned, retired or been made redundant;
- Been transferred to another position in SOGB which is not regulated work with children; and
- Where SOGB receives information that a member of Staff/volunteer who holds a position of regulated activity has been listed on the Children's List, the member of Staff/volunteer will be removed from the regulated activity with children.

5.6.3 Role of the Incident Management Group (IMG)

The primary role of the IMG is to offer advice and guidance in relation to the management of safeguarding concerns and cases that reach a threshold of level 2 (see [SOGB Threshold Guidance](#)) and to support the SOGB Safeguarding Team in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. The IMG can agree to implement interim suspensions, and permanent expulsion orders from SOGB activity. The IMG do not override or replace external services such as Police, children services or the LADO.

5.7 Organisational Reporting and Accountability

All safeguarding reports whether externally referred or not must be shared with the SOGB Safeguarding Team within 24 hours of being completed via safeguarding@sogb.org.uk by the club SWO.

The data in these reports will be analysed and used to drive improvement in good practice throughout the organisation. They will inform training needs, resources and updates to procedures.

A safeguarding report highlighting the types of abuse reported, actions taken, training provided and recommendations for improvement across the organisation will be created and presented to the Board of Trustees at each of their meetings. This ensures that at every level of the organisation there is a good awareness of the safeguarding landscape at SOGB and that there is also safeguarding responsibility and accountability at every level.

6. Communication and Security of Documents

No document, once completed, which contains the personal information of an individual (e.g. incident form, self-declaration form) will be transmitted by email except where secure emailing software is utilised. Such documents will be sent to the recipient by mail or email and clearly marked 'Private and Confidential'. Where information is kept as a computer record, the information will be kept on a secure cloud storage and only accessed by those authorised to see it in the course of their duties. Any printed document, once completed, relating to safeguarding or PVG/DBS issues will be uploaded to the secure cloud storage and then destroyed in line with UK GDPR regulations.

7. Information Sharing

The [Data Protection Act 2018](#), along with the [UK GDPR](#) legislation requires that Staff and Volunteers be informed about how their personal information will be used. For the purposes of Safeguarding and Welfare matters the SOGB Safeguarding Team, and Club SWO's may share information about an individual with each other where they have been alerted to concerns of a safeguarding and/or welfare nature. There may also be occasions whereby a child's personal data may be shared with external services such as the Police, children services, DBS/PVG and the LADO *see section 5 Refer.

Additionally, SOGB may be required to share information with Special Olympics International and other statutory/regulatory organisations and/or National Governing Bodies of Sport where an individual member is believed to be under criminal investigation for matters pertaining to Safeguarding and Welfare.

In the event that such sharing is deemed necessary, it will only be carried out by a member of the SOGB Safeguarding Team and/or nominated Safeguarding and Welfare Officers (SWO) of SOGB. Any information shared would typically be done with the consent or knowledge of the person, however, in cases where this could negatively impact an external investigation or place someone at risk, the person may not be made aware. SOGB may also be required to share personal information with the Health & Safety Executive, insurers and the Charity Commission in relation to any accidents or incidents that lead to serious injury or death.

8. Suspension/Expulsion of Membership and Disciplinary Action

There may be situations where an interim suspension or permanent expulsion may be necessary in order to protect Athletes, Volunteers and Staff from harm, including the protection of those accused from further allegation. *see sec 5.6 allegations against Staff/Volunteers.

Interim suspensions from SOGB activity or permanent expulsion from SOGB altogether, will be considered under the following circumstances:

- a. We receive information from Disclosure Scotland or the Disclosure and Barring Service that a Staff member or volunteer of SOGB is being considered for barring or has been barred from working with children; or
- b. We receive information from the Police, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) (Scotland) or any external Agency that raises a significant concern about a Staff member or volunteer of SOGB.
- c. There is an incident or concern received regarding the inappropriate conduct of a Staff member or volunteer of SOGB towards an individual/Athlete.

The SOGB Safeguarding Lead, in liaison with the Incident Management Group (IMG) will review the information received and make a decision on whether an interim suspension or permanent expulsion is reasonable, proportionate and ensures that risk is mitigated. Any permanent expulsion from SOGB would be in line with SOGB safeguarding and disciplinary policies.

In cases where there is to be a Police, LADO or Children's Services investigation, then a disciplinary investigation and decision to permanently expel will only be carried out at the conclusion of the investigation. Findings and outcomes from the investigation will be used to make a decision. The subject of such an investigation may be placed under an interim suspension as soon as SOGB is made aware of such an investigation. An interim suspension is a non-punitive act that is designed to ensure the safety of all, including the accused while enquiries/investigations can take place.

8.1 Appealing a Decision

Where the decision to permanently expel a person from SOGB has been made, an appeal can be submitted by the person. The appeal must be made within 5 days of the decision being communicated and must be submitted in writing to the person who made the decision against which the appeal is being made. The appeal will be heard by the SOGB Chief Executive or the Chair of Trustees. Once the appeal hearing is completed, the individual will be informed in writing of the decision taken and that decision will be final.

9. Safer Recruitment

SOGB understands that our Athletes are at an increased risk of harm and that those with intellectual disabilities are targeted more often by people who may wish to harm them. We have a duty to protect all Athletes from harm and from those that may wish to do harm, therefore, we follow up to date and robust safer recruitment procedures that are in line with current standards and best practice. Our safer recruitment processes minimise the risk of people who wish to harm others from entering our organisation. SOGB will endeavour to employ 'safe' Staff and allow 'safe' Volunteers to work with Athletes.

Safer recruitment at SOGB means we will:

- Ensure that all vacancies outline the organisation's commitment to safeguarding.
- Ensure that all job descriptions include safeguarding information and responsibilities appropriate for the role.
- Include safeguarding specific questions in interviews and have at least one safer recruitment trained person on interview panels.
- Request that applicants provide us with a CV which includes their employment history and that any gaps in that history are explored.
- Request that applicants provide a minimum of two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children.
- Request that applicants provide evidence of identity and qualifications (where appropriate to the job role).
- If offered employment, be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)/Disclosure Scotland (PVG) regulations as appropriate to their role. This will include an enhanced DBS/PVG check and a barred list check for those engaged in Regulated Activity; For those registered with the DBS update system a DBS number must be provided and sight of the related certificate so it can be checked by SOGB Staff. For those who are not on the DBS Update Service SOGB will have to apply for a new DBS check.
- If offered employment, provide evidence of their right to work in the UK.
- Monitor through the use of probation periods the suitability of the person in their role and explore any concerns with them directly.
- Carry out additional or alternative checks for applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK.
- All new members of Staff and Volunteers will be provided with basic safeguarding awareness training and SOGB's Safeguarding Policy and SOGB Code of Conduct.
- SOGB will maintain a record of recruitment checks undertaken.

Recruitment of Volunteers

The safer recruitment standards outlined above are transferrable to volunteer roles, and SOGB advises that all recruitment of volunteer roles, especially those that are for roles that carry a duty of care and/or place people in a position of trust follow the above guidance. DBS and PVG checks are mandatory for certain roles, see the [List of Roles that Require a DBS/PVG](#) document for more information.

Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

Section 122 of the Police Act 1997 advises that it is a requirement that all registered bodies must treat DBS applicants who have a criminal record fairly and not discriminate automatically because of a conviction or other information revealed. SOGB has developed and released two guidance documents in relation to the recruitment of ex-offenders. They are [Recruitment of Ex-offenders Statement](#) and the [Adverse DBS Disclosures Guidance](#). The documents outline how the recruitment of ex-offenders is considered, the processes whereby

criminal convictions and/or barring decisions are reviewed and what thresholds and safeguards there are in place to ensure that people with convictions that pose risk are not recruited.

10. Whistleblowing Statement

It is important that people within SOGB have the confidence to come forward within the organisation to speak or act if they are unhappy with anything. Whistleblowing occurs when a concern is raised about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrongdoing within the organisation. When disclosing a concern, a Member must reasonably believe two things:

1. that they are acting in the public interest; and
2. that the disclosure may fall under one or more of the headings listed below. This is not an exhaustive list, but the types of concerns that you may want to raise with us by whistleblowing could include:

- Any activity you suspect is criminal;
- Any activity you suspect breaches our policy on safeguarding;
- Any activity you suspect seriously puts health and safety at risk;
- Any activity you suspect may be fraudulent;
- Any activity you suspect may damage the reputation of SOGB;
- Any activity you suspect breaches our policy on bribery and corruption;
- Any activity you suspect may damage the environment;
- Any activity you suspect may lead to a miscarriage of justice;
- Any failure to comply with legal or regulatory obligations;
- Any failure to meet professional requirements; and
- Any attempt to conceal one or more of these activities.

Please speak to the Director of Operations or Chief Executive (CEO) if you are unsure whether something that you are concerned about is covered by this policy.

The NSPCC whistleblowing advice line Call: 0800 028 0285 or E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk will support Staff who have concerns about how a child protection issue is being handled their own or another organisation.

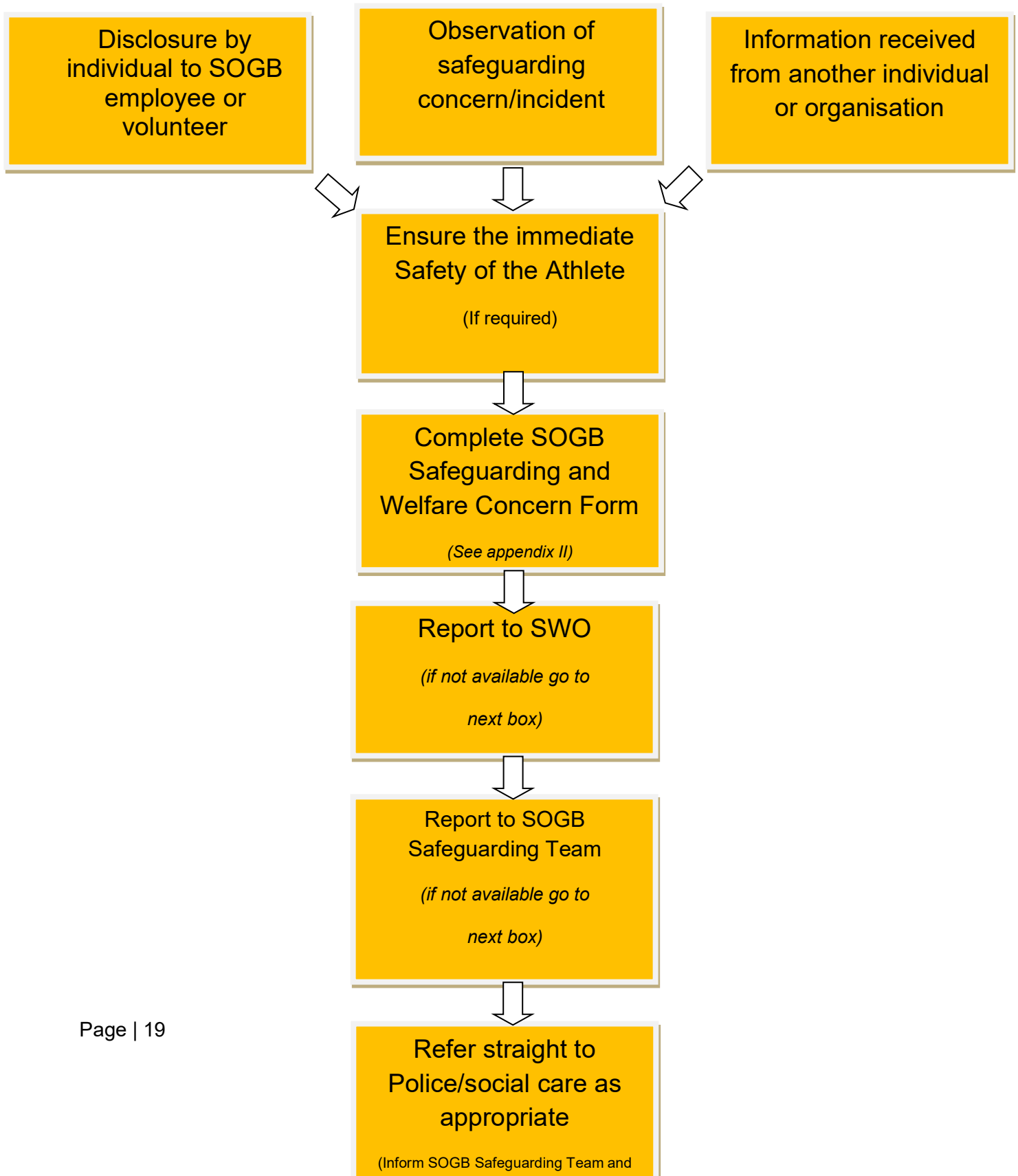
The charity Public Concern at Work offers advice to employers as well as workers. Its website (www.pcaw.org.uk) includes helpful frequently asked questions (FAQs) for employers and details of its consultancy service. You can get advice by telephoning 020 7404 6609.

11. Review

These procedures will be regularly reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in legislation and guidance on the protection of children or following any policy changes within SOGB.
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the Safeguarding and Welfare of children with an intellectual disability within SOGB.
- In all other circumstances, at least every three years.

APPENDIX I - RESPONDING TO CONCERNS FLOWCHART



APPENDIX II - RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(Department for Education, 2018\)](#)
- [What to do if you are worried a child is being abused – Advice for practitioners \(Department for Education, March 2015\)](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)
- [The Children Act 2004](#)
- [The Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [The Protection of Children Act 1999](#)
- [Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 Section 5b \(as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015\)](#)
- [Information Sharing \(2018\)](#)
- [Standards for Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport England/Wales](#)
- [Making barring referrals to the DBS \(Guidance\)](#)

ADDITIONAL LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE RELEVANT TO WALES AND SCOTLAND

- [Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004 published by the Welsh Government in 2007](#)
- [The Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)
- [The Children Act 1995 \(Scotland\)](#)
- [Protection of Vulnerable Groups \(PVG\) \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)
- [Disclosure Scotland Act 2020](#)
- [Respect for All: Scotland National Approach to Anti-bullying](#)
- [National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland](#)
- [Scotland is getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) Scottish Government, 2015](#)

LINKS: related legislation, policies, procedures and protocols

RELATED DOCUMENTATION	Found at
Safeguarding and protecting people for charities and trustees	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees
Preventing Bullying	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
Channel Duty Guidance HM Government	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/651e71d9e4e658001459d997/14.320_HO_Channel_Duty_Guidance_v3_Final_Web.pdf

PREVENT Strategy HM Government	<u>Prevent strategy 2011 - GOV.UK</u>
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Safeguarding Children, Welsh Government	Safeguarding children at risk of abuse or neglect GOV.WALES
Sexual Offences Act	Sexual Offences Act 2003
Types of abuse	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/
When and how to share information	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-sharing-for-practitioners-and-managers
Regulated Activity with Children	Regulated activity with children in England and Wales - GOV.UK
Charity Commission Reporting	How to report a serious incident in your charity - GOV.UK
SOGB Recruitment of Ex-offenders statement	https://resources.specialolympicsgb.org.uk/sogb/document/2025/02/28/e08328e4-24a6-434d-866e-21328b63a9f0/Recruitment-of-Ex-offender-Statement-.pdf
SOGB Adverse DBS Disclosures Process	https://resources.specialolympicsgb.org.uk/sogb/document/2025/01/28/fc678f75-9cf0-4c26-8bff-92a59a982c39/SOGB-Adverse-DBS-Disclosures-Process.pdf

APPENDIX III RELEVANT SAFEGUARDING CONTACTS

- **Vanessa Snell - Director of Operations** Organisational Compliance with Safeguarding for SOGB
Email: Vanessa.Snell@sogb.org.uk
- **Adam Leathwood - Safeguarding Lead** Strategic and operational safeguarding lead for SOGB
Email: Adam.Leathwood@sogb.org.uk
- **Safeguarding and Welfare Officer (SWO)** the nominated person acting on behalf of SOGB or network deliverer whose responsibility is to deal with Athlete wellbeing/Athlete protection/safeguarding matters at Region and Club level.
Contact details for SWO's sit within Regions/Clubs:
<https://www.specialolympicsgb.org.uk/find-a-club>

SOGB Safeguarding Team Phone Number: 07383 389663 – not for urgent concerns – available during normal office hours