

PLEASE NOTE THIS NEWSLETTER HAS BEEN SENT TO ALL SOGB SWO'S
SWO January 2026 Newsletter

Happy New Year!

I hope you all had a joyful and somewhat restful festive break.

The SOGB Safeguarding Team are so excited to see what 2026 brings, from National Summer Games, new and exciting e-learning opportunities, more face-to-face interaction and support visits for clubs, athlete engagement in safeguarding and welfare and much more.

2025 was a year full of policy and resource development and implementation, streamlining processes such as DBS and reporting, taking on a new case management system, and supporting clubs up and down the country to put best practice in place when it comes to safeguarding and welfare. This year we will continue to support clubs, introduce new opportunities, and listen to the needs of our members.

A lot of the changes to process, new resources, and information we sent out last year were a result of member needs and communication. We learnt from cases, listened to volunteers and athletes and used this to put things that you needed and that worked in place. So, a huge thank you for your engagement throughout 2025. It was much appreciated.

2025 also saw our first engagement with the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport unit (CPSU) and Ann Craft Trust (ACT) Framework submissions. Both of these frameworks look at our safeguarding compliance and best practice and grade us on it. They are also required for us to secure vital funding from UK Sport. So, how did we do?

CPSU Framework Submission

The initial outcome was "Conditionally Met", with only a few small areas requiring tweaks to reach a fully met rating. The SOGB Safeguarding Team met with staff from the CPSU to discuss the review of our framework submission and provided updates and assurances to ensure we are fully compliant. The CPSU were very impressed with our submission and have given us the opportunity to provide additional evidence to reach the fully met rating. Due to this, we are now eligible for levels 2 and 3 of the assessment in 2026 where we will be able to showcase some of the above and beyond work we do in the safeguarding space. We couldn't be prouder of this achievement and would like to thank you for your

hard work and dedication in safeguarding which contributed hugely to our success with this framework.

ACT Framework Submission

The Ann Craft Trust framework submission went in late November, and we are still awaiting an official outcome. We will update you as soon as we hear something, but we are hopeful that the outcome will be a positive one.

2025 Safeguarding Statistics

We thought it was important to share with you some of our safeguarding statistics from 2025, so you get an idea of the sorts of things that come into our workstream.

Case Management

Over the course of 2025, the SOGB Safeguarding Team managed **23** safeguarding cases, **4** of which remain open.

The below data outlines the type, severity, and status of the 2025 safeguarding cases.

5 Low Level Cases - Cases that required some SOGB Safeguarding Team intervention and support

8 Medium Level Cases - Cases that required extensive SOGB intervention and support

10 High Level Cases - Cases that require extensive SOGB intervention and support, and also external referral to the Police and/or Social Care Services

Safeguarding Themes/Types of Abuse

The above cases included the below types of abuse/concern

Sexual Abuse (including verbal/physical/online) **15**

Physical Abuse **4**

Psychological Abuse (including Self-harm/Suicidal ideation) **2**

Neglect **1**

Bullying **1**

Advice and Guidance

We have handled **56** advice and guidance queries from members in relation to athlete welfare concerns, safety issues, online risks, risk assessments, training support, external support services, and events and competitions.

DBS/PVG Checks

The SOGB Safeguarding and Volunteer Support Teams have processed 166 DBS applications, and 6 PVG applications.

Training

We have funded **11** UK Coaching Time to Listen Courses for Club Safeguarding and Welfare officers.

Delivered **5** Safe Hands training sessions for athletes and volunteers (this covers appropriate touch, consent and safe interactions).

33 Volunteers have completed the SOGB Children Safeguarding Course

29 Volunteers have completed the SOGB Adult Safeguarding Course

SOGB Safeguarding Team have delivered **2** sessions to the Athlete Leadership Team about an Athlete to Volunteer transition program

We will soon be releasing a new e-learning which is a safeguarding refresher that focuses on positive safeguarding culture. Once that is out, we will get to work on a basic safeguarding refresher course for volunteers.

Both courses will be **FREE OF CHARGE** to members and will form part of your safeguarding training pathway which is vital in ensuring you are appropriately trained to spot issues, know what to do about them and work towards making safer environments for all.

Policy, Procedure, Guidance and Resources

In 2025 we brought you new Safeguarding and Welfare Policies and procedures for both Children and Adults, updated concern reporting forms, new and updated DBS guidance, a new whistleblowing policy, safer recruitment resources, a club policy template, a refreshed event safeguarding briefing, and updated risk assessment templates for activities, events and athletes.

In 2026 we plan to build on this to ensure you are fully equipped to implement top level safeguarding standards in your clubs with ease and simplicity.

Get Involved

Last year, we learnt a lot from you, from our cases, and from our processes being tested, and a lot was reviewed and refreshed because of this. We want to continue to work closely with our membership, Volunteers and Athletes alike to understand the pressure points with safeguarding, what gaps there may still be and how best to work with you and for you to ensure that safeguarding and welfare are at the heart of everything we do.

With that in mind, we will be setting up a consultation group for those who would like to feed directly to our workstream, advise on developments, and provide feedback on our work.

If you would like to be involved in this, please email me directly at adam.leathwood@sogb.org.uk

National Summer Games

2026 will see the return of the National Summer Games, we are super excited about the Games and the opportunities they will bring to our Athletes and Volunteers. The SOGB Safeguarding Team is already underway with planning and preparation focusing on event safeguarding support and logistics.

We anticipate that there will be opportunities for volunteers to take on roles including Event Safeguarding and Welfare Officers, Safe Space Facilitators, and Wellbeing Support Volunteers.

If you would like to be involved in safeguarding support during the National Summer Games, please email me at safeguarding@sogb.org.uk and we'll keep you informed of any and all opportunities to be more involved.

SOGB Event Volunteer Safeguarding Brief

A reminder that the Event Safeguarding briefing has been updated. The Safeguarding briefing is designed to inform event volunteers of key

safeguarding information and how to raise concerns. With the National Summer Games happening this year, there may be an increase in pre-game events in your area. If so, and you are supporting them, make sure you have the presentation ready for your event, you can find it [HERE](#)

SOGB Safeguarding Number

Just a reminder that the SOGB Safeguarding support line has been updated, the new number is: 07383 389663 and is operational Mon-Fri 9-5. SOGB does not have an out of hours Safeguarding line. In the event of an incident that occurs out of hours, please ensure you follow steps to ensure the safety of all in the immediate, take action to refer to local authority or police where necessary and then pass this information onto the SOGB Safeguarding Team via our reporting form found [HERE](#)

External Updates

CPSU

Mandatory Reporting Child Sexual Abuse

The new [Crime and Policing Bill](#) will come into law in the coming weeks; part of this bill outlines new responsibilities regarding the reporting of child sexual abuse. This includes Sports Coaches, and anyone who works with children in the sport sector.

The CPSU are offering FREE Mandatory Reporting Webinar, so access this click [HERE](#)

Safeguarding Checklists

The CPSU has been working on several checklists which aim to strengthen safeguarding and to support organisations and clubs to all the basics and more, so you can concentrate on your sessions with confidence. These checklists range from Day-to-Day checklists, Overnight Trip Checklists, through to Leisure Sector Checklists, all of which can be found [HERE](#)

How to Respond to Child Abuse Concerns

Listening to and responding to abuse concerns can be a daunting prospect, but it is important that you know how to do this effectively and what steps to take. The SOGB Safeguarding Procedures outline listening to and responding to

disclosures in detail on PG.10, Sec 5.2 of our [Children's Safeguarding Procedures](#)

The CPSU has released some simple do's and don'ts in this area which can easily be shared and embedded in your environment, click [HERE](#) to find out more.

Ann Craft Trust

2025 Reflections

In December 2025 ACT had a review of their year focusing on adult safeguarding in sport, which included stats on the safeguarding framework which we completed on November, a celebration of achievements within 10 years of working in sport, connecting people, organisations and athletes, extensive training opportunities, various conferences and podcasts, and lots more. To read about their year and the achievements, resources and key info, click [HERE](#)

Predatory Marriage

Predatory Marriage is a type of abuse whereby someone targets a vulnerable person in order to obtain control of their finances/assets through marriage. Predators target vulnerable people in society, as they can potentially take advantage of them more easily. This is a potential risk for some of our athletes who may not receive robust levels of support or those who may live alone. While the laws are currently unclear and up for debate, there is support available. You can find more information and support on the subject [HERE](#)

Policy/Procedure Snippet

SOGB Safeguarding Threshold Guidance

The [SOGB Safeguarding Threshold Guidance](#) is a key document which aims to inform you of what the different levels of safeguarding concern look like and the types of behaviours or concerns that would constitute a specific level of concern. There are three levels of concern, which are:

- Advice and Guidance
- Level 1
- Level 2

Level 2 being the highest and characterised by the requirement for referral to an external service such as the Police or Social Care Support. These definitions have been taken directly from national safeguarding legislation and guidance. The guidance covers concerns both inside and outside of sport. While not exhaustive, the guidance does provide examples of behaviours and concerns that apply to each threshold.

What is important to remember is that **every safeguarding concern that involves an SOGB Athlete and/or SOGB Volunteer should be reported to the SOGB Safeguarding team** regardless of level. This is so the team can ensure that the appropriate steps have been taken, that anyone effected is provided with the right level of support, that you the referrer are protected and supported where required and for data analysis which informs our future resources, member support, information and improvement in our safeguarding practices.

If you have any questions on this, please email safeguarding@sogb.org.uk

Time to Listen Course

If you are a new SWO, or if you have not yet completed the 'Time to Listen' training course, SOGB may be able to help you access the course.

Having this training or an equivalent is vital in ensuring you are sufficiently trained and skilled to perform the role of SWO at Special Olympics.

Having an appropriately trained SWO at every club will soon be a requirement of accreditation, so make sure you get yourself on this training or an equivalent course as soon as possible.

SOBG can provide funding for you to complete this course, so get in touch if you need it.

There are plenty of online classrooms delivering the Time to Listen course, you can check these out [HERE](#)

If this training is something you're interested in completing and would like to discuss this further, please email me at adam.leathwood@sogb.org.uk