



SAFEGUARDING GUIDANCE

NOVEMBER 2024 (VERSION 2)



An open letter from Bowls England Chief Executive, Jon Cockcroft

I'd like to thank you for your efforts in creating a safe and inclusive environment for all participants. Safeguarding is essential to creating a positive and healthy setting for everybody in our sport. By working together, we can ensure everybody feels safe and supported to reach their full potential.

Bowls England is determined to ensure no one in sports and physical activity; whether they are a volunteer, participant, spectator or elite athlete, should ever have to worry about abuse or harassment.

Building on our open culture where communication and reporting of safeguarding concerns are encouraged is of vital importance. Members, bowlers, coaches, parents and administrators all play a role in ensuring a safe and positive experience for all, and Bowls England is here to support you all.

I urge you to actively support and promote safeguarding initiatives within our sporting community. By working together, we can foster an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and safe to pursue their passion for our sport.

This Safeguarding Guidance document is intended to support our Affiliated Clubs on their safeguarding journey. Please take the time to read the document, which we trust will help you understand why safeguarding is so important, help demystify the subject and give you practical advice to use in the future.

Yours faithfully,

Jon Cockcroft



Introduction

Bowls England are committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive community where everyone can feel valued, safe, and respected. We believe that a safe environment is essential for encouraging participation, building trust, and promoting positive experiences for all members.

To achieve this, we're providing comprehensive training and resources to support Safeguarding Officers in their role. We're also encouraging open communication and creating clear reporting channels to ensure that any concerns or incidents are addressed promptly and effectively.

To ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all participants, Bowls England has set a deadline of May 2025 for all Affiliated Clubs and Counties to have a designated Safeguarding Officer. We are confident that a significant number of our Affiliated Clubs do now have Safeguarding Officers in place, however there is still work to do to comply with this mandate.

Therefore, this document aims to clarify the process and requirements for compliance, providing answers to common questions and references to helpful resources. By working together, we can create a welcoming and positive space where everyone feels empowered to participate and enjoy the benefits of our community.

We work closely with the Bowls Development Alliance, Coach Bowls and external agencies such as Lime Culture, The Ann Craft Trust and the NSPCC to ensure our resources and support are current, user friendly and offer a first-class level of support.

Understanding Safeguarding

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is about creating a safe and welcoming environment for everyone involved, from young players to adult bowlers. It's about taking steps to prevent and address any kind of harm or abuse. This includes supporting coaches and volunteers to spot potential problems, making sure Bowls England routes to reporting are clearly understood, and encouraging a culture of respect and fairness throughout the bowling community.

Who does safeguarding apply to?

While safeguarding is often associated with children, it's equally important for adults. Studies indicate that 47% of adults show characteristics of vulnerability and therefore may be at risk, highlighting the necessity of protecting all members.

What is not safeguarding?

Safeguarding focuses on protecting individuals from harm, not on resolving broader issues like club culture or personality conflicts. These issues can often be resolved through a club code of conduct agreed upon by members. If this fails, Bowls England Regulation 9 must be followed.

How does safeguarding apply to small clubs?

There is a misconception that smaller Affiliated Clubs are immune to safeguarding issues. However, it's crucial to understand that safeguarding encompasses a broad range of concerns that could vary from discrimination, abuse or financial abuse through to unspent criminal convictions. Bowls England have seen many case studies showing how 'safe' clubs are often the most vulnerable.

Why do Bowls England expect Affiliated Clubs to have Safeguarding Officers?

All major sports governing bodies mandate that Affiliated Clubs have designated Safeguarding Officers. This is standard practice and a clear expectation from the sports governmental body (Sport England). The absence of Safeguarding Officers is likely to create a gap that may be exploited by individuals seeking to harm our sport's members.

Safeguarding Officers

What is the role of a Safeguarding Officer?

The Safeguarding Officer plays a vital role in creating a safe and inclusive environment for everyone involved in the sport of bowls. A key responsibility of the Safeguarding Officer is to record and report safeguarding concerns to Bowls England. Also to cultivate a positive environment of safety and respect within the bowls community.

Who can be a Safeguarding Officer?

Anyone passionate about creating a safe and positive environment in our sport can become a Safeguarding Officer, subject to checks. This vital role requires dedication to protecting participants, the ideal candidate possesses:

- A commitment to safeguarding the wellbeing of members and participants
- A willingness to take part in development opportunities to support one's understanding of how to make an impact in this area
- A clear Enhanced DBS check, recorded by Bowls England
- Experience working with people in a safeguarding context is desirable

Does the Safeguarding Officer need to be a member of the bowls club?

While a love for bowls is a plus, it's not essential. Affiliated Clubs may welcome applications from anyone with a strong background in safeguarding, welfare, or education. Their expertise in protecting vulnerable individuals is what truly matters and our recommended training provider, Coach Bowls, run provide training on the specifics of bowls to ensure they are comfortable in the role. Suitable individuals for the role may be (but not limited to):

- Teachers and School Staff
- Nurses and Healthcare Professionals
- Social Workers
- Police Officers
- Mental Health Professionals
- Safeguarding Officers from other sports or organisations/clubs

It is encouraged that Affiliated Clubs extend an honorary membership to the Safeguarding Officer, granting them access to the club's facilities and fostering a sense of belonging within the bowls community, this will also allow them to meet members and to form trust.

Two character references must be provided using the Bowls England template. These references will be verified by a designated committee or board member.

The steps to becoming a Safeguarding Officer

Here's a breakdown of the steps involved in becoming a Safeguarding Officer:

1. Nomination

Many Affiliated Clubs actively seek individuals who share their commitment to safeguarding. If approached to become a club's Safeguarding Officer, it's a fantastic opportunity to make a real difference.

2. Understand the Role

Before accepting the post, it is strongly recommended that individuals complete the BDA's Safeguarding Introduction Course. This free, 20-minute online module provides a solid foundation in safeguarding principles.

3. Enhanced DBS Check

An Enhanced DBS check is required for this role. Please refer to page 10 for links to the Bowls England website where individuals can apply for the check.

4. Official Appointment

After completing the introductory course and obtaining an approved Enhanced DBS certificate, the individual will be officially named the Club Safeguarding Officer. The clubhouse poster should be updated to inform the club's membership (see poster templates attached and on our website).

5. Stay Connected

To stay updated on training and best practices, individuals should sign up for Bowls England's Safeguarding Bulletin (see page 10 for the link). They may also find the resources from the Bowls Development Alliance helpful, as they work closely with Bowls England.

6. Complete Safeguarding Officer Training

The Safeguarding Officer Training Course must be completed within six weeks of appointment. Bowls England recommends the Coach Bowls' online course. Those with existing safeguarding qualifications should contact the Bowls England Safeguarding Team with details. If appointed out of season, the Safeguarding Officer Training Course must be completed before the next season begins.

7. Ongoing Commitment

Bowls England will offer free safeguarding refresher sessions throughout the year to keep officers updated on the latest knowledge and best practices. Safeguarding Officers are required to renew their official training every three years.

How many Safeguarding Officers are needed per Club?

While only one Safeguarding Officer is mandatory, good practice in larger Affiliated Clubs suggests having multiple which may include having a split of genders to aid inclusivity. A general guideline suggests that one Safeguarding Officer can effectively support between 100 and 150 members. However, the specific number may vary depending on the individual needs and circumstances of each Club.

Can Affiliated Clubs share a Safeguarding Officer?

Affiliated Clubs within a County can explore sharing a Safeguarding Officer. This can be a great option for smaller Affiliated Clubs, although an agreement should be set to ensure Affiliated Clubs understand their joint responsibilities.

Affiliated Clubs may operate in venues that accommodate multiple sports and share a Safeguarding Officer. This is acceptable as long as the Bowls England Safeguarding Team has the necessary information about the Officer's qualifications and contact details.

Does the Safeguarding Officer role require a DBS check?

Bowls England require all Safeguarding Officers require an in-date Enhanced DBS certificate.

The DBS check must be performed under either Bowls England or any other bowls code. The certificate will be valid for 3 years. However, individuals registered with the Government Update Service may be eligible for an automatic renewal.

The Bowls England website provides clear instructions and helpful links to the DBS for further information.

What training will the Safeguarding Officer require to be equipped for the role?

We strongly believe in equipping our Safeguarding Officers with the knowledge and skills they need to deliver the best possible experience.

In order to become officially appointed as Safeguarding Officer, the individual must complete a set of training as detailed in the 'The steps to becoming a Safeguarding Officer' section. If the individual already has safeguarding training, let the Bowls England Safeguarding Team know so they can assess the qualifications.

Bowls England will also provide annual training so that Officers can stay up to date on the latest safeguarding practices (details coming soon).

How can a Safeguarding Officer keep their Club Committee informed?

Safeguarding is a collaborative effort, and the Safeguarding Officer plays a vital role in keeping the committee updated. Ensure safeguarding is a standing item on the agenda at every committee meeting, ideally, the Safeguarding Officer will be invited to attend the meetings which allows them to directly address the committee, answer questions, and provide updates. If attending meetings isn't always feasible, the Safeguarding Officer can submit a written report to the Chair who can then present the report during the meet.



The Committee will not be privy to individual case details in order to maintain confidentiality as to not prejudice the integrity of the case.

How should safeguarding be incorporated into a Club's Constitution?

It is mandatory that every Club and County has the below in their constitution (Bowls England Regulation 2.5.2): 'We adopt and follow all policies and guidelines approved by Bowls England and UK Anti-Doping. We follow all procedures set out in Bowls England Regulation 9, 9A and 9B. We will abide with all sanctions, recommendations and/or decisions from the Case Management Panel or National Disciplinary Panel.'

How can the Safeguarding Officer contribute to a more inclusive Club?

The Safeguarding Officer plays a vital role in creating a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment for all current and potential members. At Bowls England, we believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to enjoy this wonderful sport. That's why we've developed a comprehensive Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and various resources to help Affiliated Clubs attract and support members from diverse backgrounds.

How can Affiliated Clubs champion good safeguarding practices?

Help identify areas for improvement within the club, ensuring a culture of inclusivity and safety for all members, regardless of age or background. Use our posters and resources to display Safeguarding Officer contact details, ensuring quick access to support if needed. Work closely with Bowls England to ensure the club adopts and promotes the latest safeguarding policies and procedures.

Who is responsible for covering the costs associated with becoming a Safeguarding Officer?

The Club has the responsibility to cover the cost of an individual becoming a Safeguarding Officer, and their ongoing training and development in line with Bowls England requirements.



Safeguarding Officer Procedural Guidance

Using the Bowls England Safeguarding Concern Template, complete key details using the below techniques:

Listen actively

Individuals should give their full attention, showing they care.

Keep a record

Document what they said in their own words, as soon as possible.

Ask open-ended questions

Use phrases like "can you tell me more" or "how did that make you feel".

Validate their feelings

Let them know they're not alone and that they can trust the process. Remember Officers can promise confidentiality, not secrecy due to the nature of the situation.

Discuss options

If they're hesitant about raising the concern, talk about the potential risks of not reporting. Remember to gain consent to share the information with Bowls England. If they don't consent, anonymised information must still be shared with the Bowls England Safeguarding Team.

Inform Bowls England

Engage with the Bowls England Safeguarding Team to bring matters to their attention. Remember, a Safeguarding Officer's key responsibility is to report concerns; they are not required to investigate. No concern is too small; at Bowls England, we take all concerns seriously.

Remember:

- The Safeguarding Officer's job is to report concerns; they do not have to investigate themselves,
- The Bowls England Safeguarding Team will work with the Safeguarding Officer to ensure that the process is clear and that they are comfortable,
- Maintain confidentiality to avoid prejudicing the integrity of the case. This includes discussing details of the case with the Club Committee or others,
- No concern is too small. The Bowls England Safeguarding Team takes all concerns seriously.

In Case of Emergency

If someone has immediate concerns about a child's or an adult's safety, they should not hesitate to call 999.



Safeguarding within Counties

County Safeguarding Officers play a vital role in supporting and empowering Club Safeguarding Officers. Here are some suggestions on how to best support them:

Building a Strong Network

Maintain regular contact with Club Safeguarding Officers to foster a sense of community and facilitate open communication.

DBS Checks and Training

Ensure all Club Safeguarding Officers have up-to-date Enhanced DBS certificates and receive refresher training every three years to guarantee they possess the latest knowledge and skills.

Providing Resources and Support

Be readily available to answer questions and offer advice on safeguarding procedures.

Facilitate knowledge exchange by sharing successful strategies and resources from across the County.

If an Affiliated Club's Safeguarding Officer changes, the County Safeguarding Officer can offer guidance, support, and assistance with recruiting a replacement.

Collaboration and Reporting

Report any changes in Club Safeguarding Officers (resignations, new appointments, temporary vacancies) to the Bowls England Safeguarding Team. This ensures accurate records, facilitates communication, allows for a coordinated response, and promotes a safe environment across the sport.

By taking proactive steps, County Safeguarding Officers can create a strong support system for their Club counterparts, fostering a culture of safety and well-being within the bowls community.

Safeguarding Resources

Training

- BDA - Safeguarding Introduction Course
<https://uk.surveymonkey.com/r/BDAIntroductionToSafeguarding>
- Coach Bowls - Safeguarding Officer Training
<https://www.coachbowls.org/safeguarding-officer-training/>

DBS

- DBS Information, Guidance & Applications
<https://www.bowlsengland.com/dbs/>

Safeguarding Bulletin

- Sign up to Bowls England's Quarterly Safeguarding Bulletin
<https://www.bowlsengland.com/safeguarding-newsletters-and-bulletins/>

Templates, Guidance and Posters

Documents are attached below, and also on the Bowls England Website

- Safeguarding Officer poster for Clubhouses (SG01)
- How to Respond to a Safeguarding Concern guidance (SG02)
- Safeguarding Concern Template (SG03)
- The Four 'R's of safeguarding (SG04)
- Information Sharing guidance (SG05)
- Safeguarding Recruitment Poster (SG06)
- Steps to Becoming a Safeguarding Officer Guidance (SG07)
- Safeguarding Officer Job Description (SG08)
- Applicant Reference Pack (coming soon)

Key Contacts

Bowls England Safeguarding Team

Safeguarding Support

01929 500 490

Safegaurding@BowlsEngland.com

Bowls Development Alliance

Safeguarding Support across all bowls codes

07340 170 052

HelenPrice@bowlsdevelopmentalliance.com

The Police

This is the number for emergencies in the UK, use it if there is a life-threatening situation or a crime is happening right now
999

This is the number for non-emergency police reporting in the UK, use it for reporting a crime that has already happened where there is no threat to life, or for general police inquiries
101

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)

Advice & support for volunteers in sports clubs

0116 234 7278

cpsu@nspcc.org.uk

The Ann Craft Trust

Safeguarding, safety & wellbeing support

0115 951 5400

ann-craft-trust@nottingham.ac.uk

WE ARE COMMITTED TO SAFEGUARDING OUR COMMUNITY

Our Club is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all members. To ensure this, we have appointed a dedicated Safeguarding Officer



OUR CLUB SAFEGUARDING OFFICER IS:



URGENT CONCERNS

If there is immediate risk of harm, call the police without delay on 999

Our Safeguarding Officer plays a crucial role in maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for all our members. If you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or are worried about another member, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Alternatively, you can also reach out to the Bowls England Safeguarding Team for support and guidance using the QR code here



See BowlsEngland.com for more information



Safeguarding@BowlsEngland.com



01929 500 490

HOW TO RESPOND TO A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

Reacting calmly and responding empathetically is crucial to reassure the individual and create a safe space for them to share their concerns



Listen actively

Individuals should give their full attention, showing they care

Keep a record

Document what they said in their own words, as soon as possible

Ask open-ended questions

Use phrases like "can you tell me more" or "how did that make you feel"

Validate their feelings

Let them know they're not alone and that they can trust the process. Remember Officers can promise confidentiality, not secrecy due to the nature of the situation

Discuss options

If they're hesitant about raising the concern, talk about the potential risks of not reporting. Remember to gain consent to share the information with Bowls England. If they don't consent, anonymised information must still be shared with the Bowls England Safeguarding Team

Inform Bowls England

Engage with the Bowls England Safeguarding Team to bring matters to their attention. Remember, a Safeguarding Officer's key responsibility is to report concerns; they are not required to investigate. No concern is too small; at Bowls England, we take all concerns seriously

See BowlsEngland.com for more information



Safeguarding@BowlsEngland.com



01929 500 490

BOWLS ENGLAND SAFEGUARDING TEAM



Safeguarding@BowlsEngland.com



01929 500 490



**BOWLS
ENGLAND**

Section D - Concern Details

Date of concern : / /

Name of person(s) completing the form :

Concern category(s) :

☐ Physical abuse	☐ Financial abuse	☐ Neglect / Self-Neglect
☐ Sexual abuse	☐ Modern slavery	☐ Discrimination
☐ Emotional abuse	☐ Domestic abuse	☐ Radicalisation

Other :

Location(s) :

Name(s) of witness :

Alerted authorities :

☐ Police	☐ Local Authority	☐ Ann Craft Trust
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Other :

Details of what happened :

Action(s) taken to date :

Requested action(s) :

Any other information :

In emergencies call 999 immediately

*Please send the completed form to the Bowls England Safeguarding Team via
Safeguarding@BowlsEngland.com*

SAFEGUARDING CONCERN TEMPLATE

Safeguarding Officers should use this document to record all safeguarding concerns. Please send the completed form to the Bowls England Safeguarding Team via Safeguarding@BowlsEngland.com



Date : / /

Section A - Club Details

Club Name : _____
County : _____
Safeguarding Officer Name : _____
Phone number : _____
Email address : _____

Section B - Details of Persons Concerned

Does the individual consent to their personal data being shared with the Bowls England Safeguarding Team?
If not, please anonymise answers to this form.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of person(s) concerned : _____

D.O.B : / /

Is the individual : ☐ Subject to care and support from the local authority ☐ Experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or neglect ☐ Unable to protect themselves from the risk of, or experience of abuse or neglect

Other : _____

Is the individual considered to be at risk currently : ☐ Yes ☐ No

Section C - Details of Person(s) whom an allegation(s) has been made

Name of person(s) : _____

D.O.B : / /

Address : _____

Email address : _____

Role within Club : _____

Is the person currently a Club member : _____

WE ARE COMMITTED TO SAFEGUARDING OUR COMMUNITY



REMEMBER THE FOUR 'R's

RECOGNISE

Be aware of the signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, such as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse

RESPOND

Keep calm and reassure the individual, if you believe there to be immediate danger, call 999

REPORT

Report the safeguarding concern to your Club Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible or submit your concern to the Bowls England Safeguarding Team via BowlsEngland.com

REFER

The information should be referred to the Bowls England Safeguarding Team immediately, await a prompt response

For more information visit the Bowls England Website
using this QR code



See BowlsEngland.com for more information



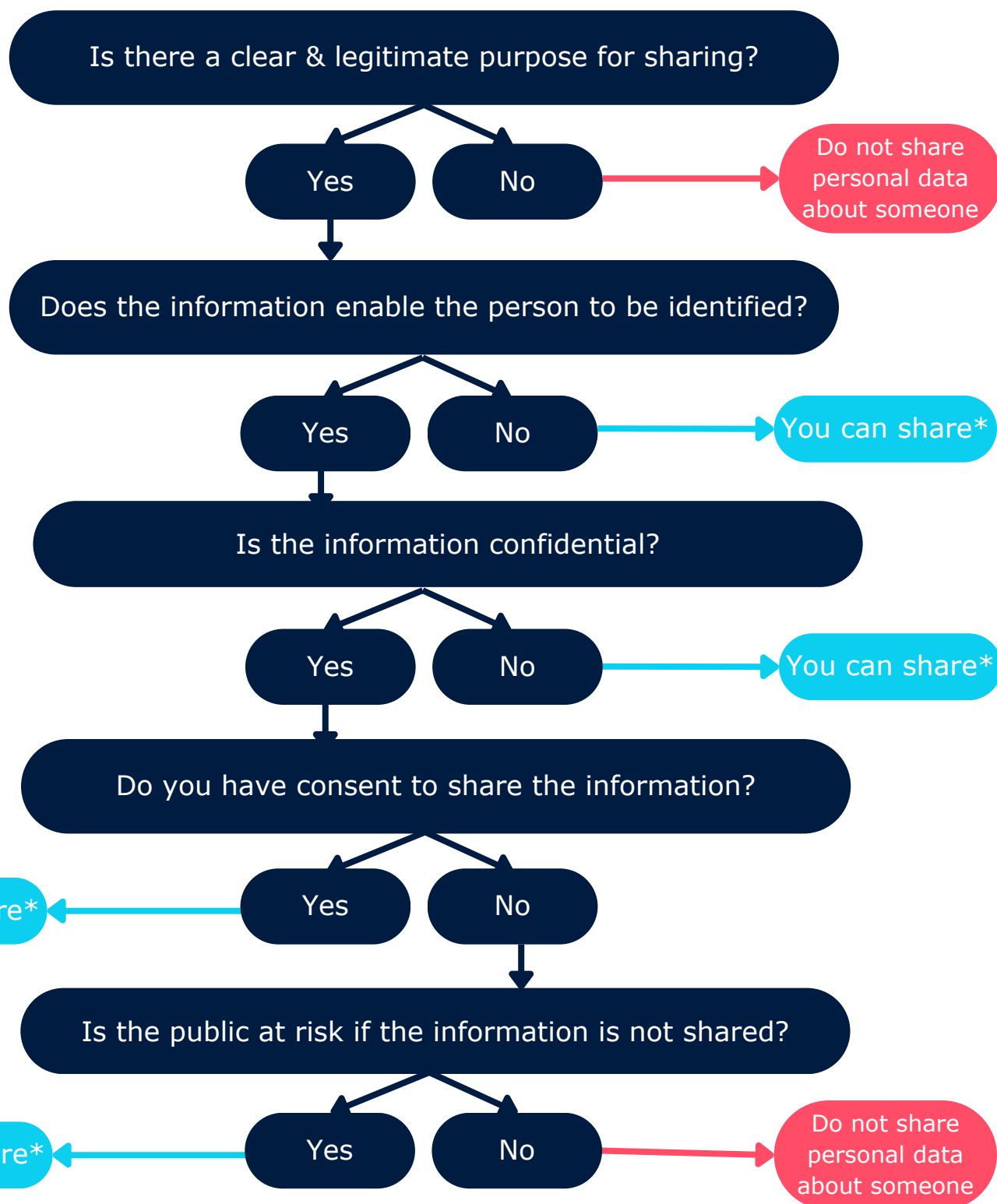
Safeguarding@BowlsEngland.com



01929 500 490

SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION SHARING GUIDANCE

The safety and well-being of everyone involved in bowls is a top priority for Bowls England. If you have a safeguarding concern, when considering a disclosure of personal information please follow the below guide



* Ensure only factual & necessary information is shared with individuals on a need-to-know basis. All decisions must be recorded.

See [BowlsEngland.com](https://www.bowlsengland.com) for more information



Safeguarding@BowlsEngland.com



01929 500 490

CLUB SAFEGUARDING OFFICER NEEDED

Are you passionate about creating a positive impact? We need your help! Volunteer with us and make our club a safe and inclusive place for all.



Role of a Safeguarding Officer:

- **As a Safeguarding Officer, be the club's go-to for concerns and report incidents to the Bowls England Safeguarding Team for support**
- **Collaborate with the club's committee to foster a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all. Remember, everyone plays a part!**

Requirements of the Role:

- **Effective communicator**
- **Ability to collate information**
- **Confidentiality**
- **Enhanced DBS check**
- **Safeguarding Awareness training**

Visit the Bowls England website for more information



Bowls England Safeguarding Team



Safeguarding@BowlsEngland.com



01929 500 490

STEPS TO BECOMING A SAFEGUARDING OFFICER



1. Nomination

Many clubs seek individuals committed to safeguarding. Becoming a Safeguarding Officer is a great opportunity to make a difference.

2. Understand the Role

Complete the free Bowls Development Alliance Safeguarding Introduction Course before accepting the role.

3. Enhanced DBS Check

Get an Enhanced DBS check through Bowls England.

4. Official Appointment

Become a Club Safeguarding Officer after completing the course and DBS check. Update the clubhouse poster.

5. Stay Connected

Sign up for the Bowls England Safeguarding Bulletin and explore the resources from the Bowls Development Alliance.

6. Complete Safeguarding Officer Training

Complete the Safeguarding Officer Training Course within six weeks. Use Coach Bowls' online course or contact the Safeguarding Team if you have qualifications.

7. Ongoing Commitment

Attend free refresher sessions and renew training every three years.

See BowlsEngland.com for more information



Safeguarding@BowlsEngland.com



01929 500 490



Safeguarding Officer Job Description

Safeguarding in Bowls England

Bowls England is determined to ensure no one in sports and physical activity; whether they are a volunteer, participant, spectator or elite athlete, should ever have to worry about abuse or harassment.

Building on our open culture where communication and reporting of safeguarding concerns are encouraged is of vital importance. Members, bowlers, coaches, parents, and administrators all play a role in ensuring a safe and positive experience for all, and Bowls England is here to support you all.

The role of a Safeguarding Officer

The Safeguarding Officer plays a vital role in creating a safe and inclusive environment for everyone involved in the sport of bowls.

Key responsibilities of the Safeguarding Officer:

- act as a first point of contact for any safeguarding concerns
- listen to concerns and respond with empathy and understanding
- record and report safeguarding concerns to the Bowls England Safeguarding Team
- ensure Bowls England & the Bowls Development Alliance's guidance is followed
- maintain up-to-date safeguarding training*
- hold an in-date Enhanced DBS check*
- maintain confidentiality
- maintain contact with the Bowls England Safeguarding Team, primarily through the Safeguarding Register*
- cultivate a positive environment of safety and respect within the bowls community
- assist the Affiliated Club to identify areas for development to ensure a safe, welcoming and inclusive space

*see additional guidance at BowlsEngland.com/safeguarding



Role Requirements

This vital role requires dedication to protecting participants, the ideal candidate possesses:

- A commitment to safeguarding the wellbeing of members and participants
- A willingness to take part in development opportunities to support one's understanding of how to make an impact in this area
- A clear Enhanced DBS check, recorded by Bowls England
- Experience working with people in a safeguarding context is desirable

Essential skills

- Effective communication
- Adaptable
- Good administration / documentation abilities
- Ability to maintain confidentiality
- Ability to promote Bowls England & the Bowls Development Alliance's policies and procedures
- Enthusiastic about creating a safe and positive environment in our sport

Further reading

The Bowls Development Alliance offers a short, interactive introduction to safeguarding which is ideal for any bowls club member who wants to know more about safeguarding.

<https://uk.surveymonkey.com/r/BDAIntroductionToSafeguarding>

Coach Bowls now offers a comprehensive Safeguarding Officer Training course. It covers both basic and intermediate safeguarding for adults and children, club safety, roles and responsibilities, and support resources. This course replaces the previous 'Time to Listen' course, which focused solely on child safeguarding.

<https://www.coachbowls.org/safeguarding-officer-training/>

Bowls England will offer free safeguarding refresher sessions throughout the year to keep officers updated on the latest knowledge and best practices.