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# WELFARE OFFICER GUIDANCE

**GUIDANCE FOR SUPPORTING  
A SUCCESSFUL SPORTS CLUB WITH WELFARE**

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# INTRODUCTION

This is a guidance document prepared by **Club Development** for sports clubs in Scotland. This document emphasises the role and duties of a Welfare Officer within the committee of a club. Many sports clubs are governed by voluntary members and use committees and meetings to assist in the effective management of their club. This resource gives information on the role of a Welfare Officer, including what the role entails, how an individual might go about the role and the skills and qualities required to carry out the role effectively. Special thanks should go to Pallavi Gangaiah for her expertise and support in developing this guidance.

## ABOUT THE ROLE OF A WELFARE OFFICER

It is the responsibility of all athletics clubs providing activity for children and young people under 18 years of age to have a designated Club Welfare Officer (CWO) who holds primary responsibility for managing and reporting concerns about children and for putting into place procedures to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults in the club. All clubs have a duty of care to everyone who is affected by their activities. They need to ensure that U18s and Adults at Risk are in a safe, welcoming environment. Appointing a CWO means there is a dedicated individual who people can go to regarding a concern or worry.

It not only helps protect participants against abuse of any kind, but aids in educating coaches, volunteers and committee members on good practice, processes & procedures, and what to do if they have any concerns about someone's safety. While a CWO doesn't have to be a safeguarding expert, they need to be passionate about protecting the vulnerable and ensure that their club adheres to scottishathletics' policies and procedures.

The CWO will typically report to the Chairperson and their duties should take approximately 2-3 hours per week, although this will depend on the nature of the athletics club. It is also important to note that, while the CWO is the first point of contact on issues relating to safeguarding, safeguarding is the responsibility of all management committee members. Furthermore, if your club is registered with the Office for Charities in Scotland (OSCR), all Trustees are expected to be au fait with their guidance on safeguarding.



*Please note this publication is a general summary produced by Club Development. It should not replace legal advice tailored to your club's specific circumstances.*

# DUTIES OF A WELFARE OFFICER

A CWO, with the support of the management committee, has the responsibility to:



## Support club

Assist the club to fulfil its responsibilities to safeguard children and young people.



## Implement policies

Implement effective Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Procedures and keep them up to date.



## Deal with issues

Deal effectively with breaches of the codes of conduct, poor practice, or allegations of abuse.



## Be first point of contact

Be the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents and children/young people and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns when identified. They should also be the first point of contact with **scottishathletics** and work with the **scottishathletics'** Safeguarding Team.



## Promote safeguarding

Promote safeguarding within the club and work with others to advance safeguarding, making sure the club's volunteers/staff, parents/carers, adults and children are aware of: how to contact the CWO; the codes of conduct for working with children/adults at risk; how to respond to safeguarding concerns.



## Ensure compliance

Ensure that members of the club/volunteers/staff who are working with children and/or adults at risk are recruited safely and in line with legal requirements. Similarly, they should also ensure confidentiality is maintained.

# DUTIES OF A WELFARE OFFICER

A CWO, with the support of the management committee, has the responsibility to:



## Report to committee

Regularly report to the club's management committee on safeguarding matters.



## Ensure compliance

Ensure that members of the club/volunteers/staff who are working with children and/or adults at risk are recruited safely and in line with legal requirements.



## Keep up to date

Keep up to date with developments in safeguarding and attend the relevant safeguarding courses for the role of CWO



## Be first point of contact

Implement scottishathletic's reporting and recording procedures and promote their best practice guidance/code of ethics and behaviour within the club and anti-discriminatory practice.



## Promote safeguarding

Promote safeguarding within the club and work with others to advance safeguarding, making sure the club's volunteers/staff, parents/carers, adults and children are aware of: how to contact the CWO; the codes of conduct for working with children/adults at risk; how to respond to safeguarding concerns.



## Maintain records

Maintain records of club coaches' and officials' licenses, safeguarding training and criminal record checks and confidential records of reported safeguarding concerns and actions taken.

# ESSENTIAL SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES OF A WELFARE OFFICER

Based on the duties and responsibilities of the role, the CWO should have the following things:

- 1 A child-focused approach
- 2 Basic administration and computer skills
- 3 Basic organisation and record keeping abilities
- 4 Relevant advice and support-provision skills
- 5 Communication skills, including use of social media
- 6 The ability to promote organisation's policy, procedures and resources
- 7 An ability to be tactful and discrete
- 8 The ability to resolve conflict
- 9 An engaging and supportive personality
- 10 An approachable, caring and trustworthy personality

# PERSON SPECIFICATION - PERSONAL SKILLS

It is desirable for a CWO to:

1

Have an interest in safeguarding and welfare matters

2

Be friendly and approachable with the ability to communicate well with adults and children

3

Be willing to challenge opinion, where necessary, and to drive the safeguarding agenda

4

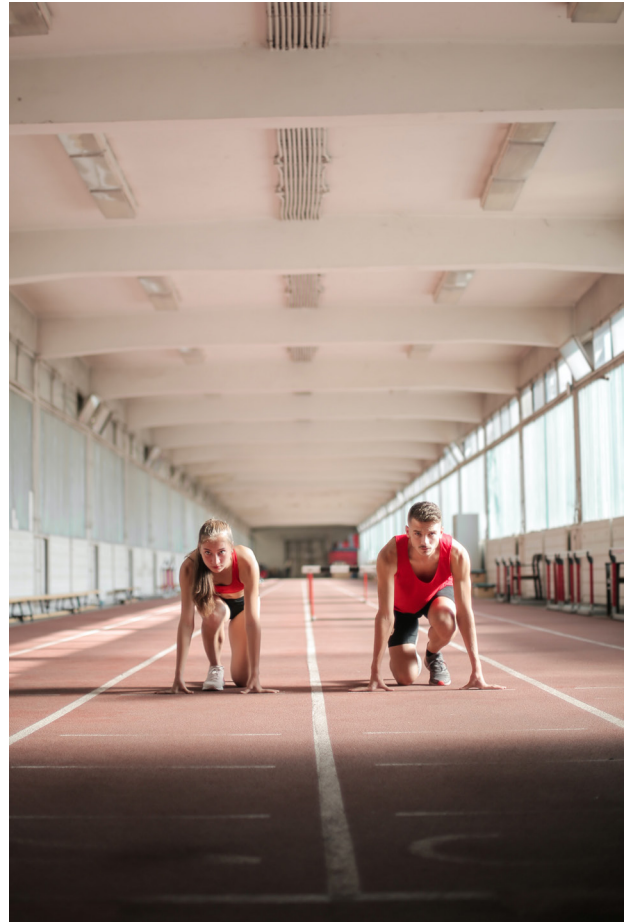
Have strong listening skills and the ability to deal with sensitive situations with empathy and integrity

5

Understand the importance of confidentiality and when information may need to be shared to protect the best interests of a child or an adult at risk

6

Have the confidence and ability to manage situations relating to the poor conduct/behaviour of others towards a child or an adult at risk and know when to ask for support.



# PERSON SPECIFICATION - KNOWLEDGE

It is also desirable if the CWO has knowledge of:

1

National Governing Body's Child Welfare Policy & Procedures

6

Local arrangements for managing safeguarding children and reporting procedures

2

Core legislation, government guidance and national framework for child protection

7

What constitutes poor practice and abuse – behaviour that is harmful to children

3

Roles and responsibilities of local statutory agencies (social services, police, NSPCC and Area Child Protection Committees)

4

Role and responsibilities of both the National Governing Body and the club in safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and the boundaries of the club welfare officer role.

5

Awareness of equalities issues and child protection





# CLUB WELFARE OFFICER ROLE DESCRIPTION

**VOLUNTEER ROLE TITLE:** Club Welfare Officer (Alternative titles include Club Safeguarding Officer)

**PURPOSE OF THE ROLE:** The job is to assist with the safeguarding and protecting of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Assist the club to fulfil its responsibilities to safeguard children and young people.
- Assist the club to implement the child welfare section (including training) of the development plan (link to development plan page in Organizing and Governance).
- To be the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents and children/young people where concerns about children's welfare, poor practice or child abuse are identified.
- Be the first point of contact with the Child Welfare Officer at your National Governing Body.
- Implement the National Governing Body's reporting and recording procedures.
- regularly report to the club's organizing committee on safeguarding matters.
- maintain records of safeguarding training attended by club members.
- make sure the sports volunteers/staff, parents/carers adults and children are aware of:
  - how to contact the CWO
  - the codes of conduct for working with children/adults at risk
  - how to respond to safeguarding concerns
- Maintain contact details for local social services, police and the Area Child Protection Committee.
- Promote the National Governing Body's best practice guidance/code of ethics and behavior within the club and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained.

# CLUB WELFARE OFFICER ROLE DESCRIPTION

## SKILLS & ABILITIES:

- Basic administration skills
- Ability to maintain records
- Ability to provide basic guidance
- A child focused approach
- Good communication skills

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

- Have an interest in safeguarding and welfare matters
- Be friendly and approachable with the ability to communicate well with adults and children
- Be willing to challenge opinion, where necessary, and to drive the safeguarding agenda
- Have strong listening skills and the ability to deal with sensitive situations with empathy and integrity
- Have an understanding of the importance of confidentiality and when information may need to be shared in order to protect the best interests of a child or an adult at risk
- Have the confidence and ability to manage situations relating to the poor conduct/behavior of others towards a child or an adult at risk and know when to ask for support.

# CLUB WELFARE OFFICER APPOINTMENT & TRAINING CHECKLIST

If a club is looking to appoint a welfare officer, or an individual at a club who is considering if the role is for them, it's important to know what is expected. The person should be approachable, be comfortable talking to young people and Adults at Risk. The individual is not expected to be a Safeguarding expert, but they should be passionate about making sure every child and Adult at Risk is in a safe environment within the club.

If an individual has been chosen, the club will need to provide support and the officer should be put on some training. **scottishathletics** would recommend the following training:

## Training Checklist

1. Ensure that the Club Secretary updates the club management area of the myAthletics portal with the contact details (name and email address), of the official Club Welfare Officer.
2. Apply for a UKA Enhanced DBS
3. Complete the Safeguarding in Athletics Online Education Resource. This can be accessed by booking online through Athletics Hub.
4. Attend a sportscotland Child Protection & Wellbeing in Sport (CWPS) Training course. This is a 3 hours face-to-face course costing £30. Further information on the course and sign up information is available at <https://sportscotland.org.uk/safeguarding-in-sport/child-wellbeing-and-protection/training/child-wellbeing-and-protection-in-sport-training-cwps/>.