



Irish Women's Bowling Association Safeguarding Children Policy

This policy includes procedures and guidance for reducing safeguarding risks and dealing with concerns or allegations of abuse. The Irish Women's Bowling Association (IWBA) recognises and acknowledges its responsibility as a Governing Body, to establish a policy which promotes and encourages its affiliated member organisations and clubs to adopt this policy and the highest possible standards of care towards children participating in the game of bowls.

Policy statement

The IWBA believes that everyone, whether administrator, official, coach or bowler, has a duty of care to safeguard all children from harm and that children have a positive experience within the sport. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of children with a disability and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. The IWBA will ensure the safety and protection of all children whilst in the care of the IWBA through adherence to the Safeguarding guidelines adopted by the IWBA.

Principles

The following principles form the basis of the policy:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Everyone in the IWBA has a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer. They are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred, but it is their responsibility to ensure they report any concerns or allegations of abuse to statutory authorities.

Policy aims

The aim of the IWBA **Safeguarding Children Policy** is to promote good practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of IWBA.
- Allowing all those in the IWBA to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues.

Glossary of Terms

Abuse

Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (updated 2017) formally recognises five types of abuse: (although all cases will still be categorised as one of the main 4)

- **Physical Abuse** is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.
- **Sexual Abuse** occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- **Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

- **Neglect** is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.
- **Exploitation** is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature

In addition to these IWBA recognise that we have a responsibility to:
 “protect children from bullying and to have policies and procedures in places to do so”
 (Co-operating to Safeguard Children, updated 2017)

Age of consent

On 30 June 2008, the House of Lords passed the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008. This legislation consolidates sexual offences law in Northern Ireland into one legal statute and modernise, strengthen and harmonise the body of offences and penalties

between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom. The Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008 became operational on 4th February 2009.

This legislation effectively brought Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the UK in terms of the law relating to when young people are deemed to be able to consent to sexual activity. Specifically, the age of consent has been reduced from 17 years old to 16 years old. It has also introduced new offences of sexual abuse against children under the age of 13. The age of consent to sexual activity remains 17 in the Republic of Ireland. But the IWBA like all other sports will require all our leaders/coaches not to breach their position of trust by developing a sexual relationship with a young person under 18. This would be in breach of our code of conduct.

Children & Young People

A child or young person is defined by the law in both jurisdictions as a person who has not attained the age of 18 years. For the purposes of this document the term children & young people applies to all under the age of 18.

Promoting good practice

Abuse, particularly child abuse, can evoke strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur in many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer may have regular contact with children and young persons and will be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases or cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child joins a club activity having been subjected to abuse or harm outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving self-esteem. In such instances the club activity organiser must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure that they receive the required support.

Good practice guidelines

Officials and members should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote individual welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice for safeguarding children means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting a child's welfare first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. adult members must not have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Ensuring those in positions of responsibility maintain healthy, positive and professional relationships with all bowlers. Coaches and others in positions of authority and trust in

relation to bowlers aged 16 and 17 years must not engage in sexual relationships with them while that unequal power relationship exists.

- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme. Care is needed, for example, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when a child is constantly moving. Young people and their parents should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, club members, coaches or officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that at bowling events or overnight and away trips, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act *in loco parentis*, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if officials or club members are required to transport young people in coaches, minibuses or cars.

Practices to be avoided when working with children

• Avoid spending time alone with children away from others for example, taking or dropping children off to an event or activity by yourself.

The above should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club or the parents/carers. For example, if they sustain an injury and need to go to hospital, or a parent/carer etc., fails to arrive to pick them up at the end of a session.

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should **never** be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate physical contact.
- Allow players to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a player, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child.
- Do things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for officials, coaches or bowlers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are very young or have a disability. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the players involved and any recommended protective equipment worn. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with them

about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained or have inadequate protective equipment to fulfil the duty.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the appropriate safeguarding officer and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents/guardians of children are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a player.
- If they seem distressed in any manner.
- If a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Safe Recruitment Procedures for coaches/volunteers working with young people

- Volunteers and coaches will be carefully selected, trained and supervised. The office bearers of the IWBA/club (dependent on the level the person is recruited to) committee must vouch for new volunteers/coaches' potential involvement and their participation must be ratified by the unanimous approval of executive group/remaining coaches.
- All new coaches/volunteers working in regulated activity must complete our sports own application form that includes a self- declaration section.
- Individuals must complete and the Access NI Enhanced Disclosure Certificate process to enable the IWBA to administer an Access NI check (proof of identity MUST be provided and the relevant document completed and returned to the IWBA Designated Liaison Person / Safeguarding Lead Officer/ DSCO).
- Declaration of past convictions or cases pending and agreement to have an Access NI check completed, is of course a pre-requisite to approval to coach/volunteer to work with young people.
- ALL volunteers/coaches must agree to abide by the IWBA's Safeguarding Policy, and all are required to sign the Code of Conduct.
- Any concerns or objections with regard to suitability of a coach should be submitted to the IWBA designated person. These matters will be raised with the IWBA Case Management Team with appropriate action taken including a formal response in writing to the concerned party if required. Clubs should not deal with concerns about a coach in isolation.

Inducting new volunteers/officials/staff/coaches

The following information is current best practice advice provided by the IWBA for associations and clubs.

Effective Management of Volunteers or staff: Good management of volunteers will contribute to safe activities for children. Good management will also create an atmosphere where volunteers feel valued, are listened to and where issues can be dealt with quickly by systems already in place. We would wish to advise clubs of the following:

1. **Volunteers should be made aware of how to access training.** IWBA require all those coaching/instructing children to attend safeguarding training. In addition to this we would ask clubs to ensure all their volunteers are made aware of IWBA reporting procedures that have been sent out to clubs and placed on our web site.
2. **Clubs should take time to induct volunteers** on IWBA policies and procedures. A sample induction checklist is available on the IWBA website.
3. **Clubs should introduce a system for reviewing a volunteer's role.** Clubs may consider doing this on an annual basis, perhaps as part of pre-season planning. This will help to ensure clubs get the best out of volunteers and will provide volunteers

with the opportunity to progress to new roles that accommodate their own particular skills and aptitude. This should assist the clubs to retain volunteers in fulfilling roles”.

Training for volunteers/coaches

The IWBA will:

- Promote governing body approved coaching sessions for volunteers/coaches.
- When appointing volunteers/coaches consider their current or previous experience either playing or coaching bowling.
- Education and training in the basics of safeguarding will apply to all coaches/volunteers/management committee members working with the children or young members.
- Safeguarding training should include:
 - Basic awareness of Safeguarding issues
 - Our organisation’s safeguarding policies and procedures including our code of conduct
- Training will be carefully selected to ensure it is sufficient. For instance a one-hour training session is unlikely to be very useful. A minimum of three hours is required for basic awareness raising, and we will seek that training from a specific training provider with experience and knowledge of good practice in sport.
- Ensure that all new coaches have attended safeguarding awareness workshop within six months of taking up their post. This opportunity should also be made available to parents and other volunteers to enable a culture of a child-focused club to prevail.
- Ensure all volunteers should receive induction and training appropriate to their role. Training should be updated and reviewed regularly for new volunteers and in line with changing legislation. AS a minimum the IWBA would expect all those working with children to refresh their safeguarding knowledge every 3-5 years.

Use of photographic/filming equipment at sporting events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of children. Officials and all club members should be vigilant and allowing only those with a justifiable reason for taking photographs to do so. Any concerns should to be reported to the club or IWBA Safeguarding Officer. For advice on best practice guidance when taking images or posting them on social media please contact the IWBA safeguarding officer.

Appointment of Safeguarding Officers

The IWBA recognises its duty to appoint/elect a Safeguarding Officer with responsibility for implementing safeguarding best practice and responding to any child protection concern at their Annual General Meeting. It also recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse a child in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. Ideally the appointee could be a teacher, youth organisation leader or a person who will be well versed in working with children with an understanding of safeguarding issues. It is more important though that the person is committed to ensuring a safeguarding culture is consistently established within the sport. The Safeguarding Officer will be a member of the IWBA council, and at association/club level be members of the GP or management committee or have access to the committee and its accompanying documents, to ensure that children’s interests are kept on the IWBA agenda, and influence the decisions of, the IWBA.

The IWBA requires the designated Safeguarding Officer to:

- Attend a recognised 3-hour good practice and safeguarding awareness-training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child protection.
- Receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the safety of a young person.
- Gain national first aid training (where necessary).
- Attend update training when necessary. Information about meeting training needs can be obtained from, the NSPCC, and Sport NI.
- Have knowledge of the IWBA's Safeguarding policy and Statutory guidelines.
- Have knowledge of categories and indicators of abuse.
- Assist with the ongoing development and implementation of the IWBA's safeguarding training needs.
- Provide information and advice on safeguarding within the organisation.
- Communicate with parents and/or agencies as appropriate.
- Be aware of national and local services responsible for safeguarding, i.e. the Gateway teams and adult services, etc.
- The IWBA will encourage member clubs to adopt these policies, procedures and guidelines to inform and promote good practice with regard to safeguarding.
- Support member clubs to adopt and implement the IWBA policy.
- Support member clubs in the appointment of a Safeguarding Officer. These individuals will be checked using Access NI as part of the process of ensuring there is no known reason why that person may be unsuitable to take on this role.

Responding to allegations or concerns

Most safeguarding issues that the IWBA or our member organisations/club's will be required to deal with will be issues of poor practice, these can often be dealt with by the IWBA or even the club, but the IWBA or club can still consult with statutory authorities or the NSPCC for any clarification about a concern they may have around poor practice that could be abusive.

The IWBA will assure all officials or members that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against an official/member of the IWBA/Associations/club's there may be three possible different types of investigation depending on the threshold of the concern:

- A criminal investigation.
- A HSCT investigation.
- An IWBA disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of a Police or Health and Social Care Trust investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision. The threshold for decision making for IWBA disciplinary or misconduct investigation is based on the civil threshold of balance of probability and the welfare of the child is paramount.

Reasonable Grounds for concern

There are many reasons a coach/volunteer may be concerned about the welfare or protection of a child or young person. Statutory authorities should always be informed when

a person has reasonable grounds for concern that a child may have been, is being, or is at risk of being abused or neglected”.

It is important to remember that children/young people are sometimes abused by members of their own family, by peers or by others outside the family environment such as strangers, workers or trusted adults. The following are examples of reasonable grounds for concern:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way.
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse.
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused.
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed.
- An account from a person who saw a child being abused.

Wherever appropriate, any issues should be checked with the parents/guardians when considering whether a concern exists, unless doing so may further endanger the child or the person considering making the report. It is important to remember that abuse is not always committed through personal contact with a child or young person, sometimes it is perpetrated through social media or the use of information and communication technology.

If concerns arise about poor practice/abuse the IWBA ‘*Process for Responding to Concerns*’ flowchart should be followed.

Concerns about poor practice:

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the designated Safeguarding Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.
- If the allegation is about poor practice by the IWBA Safeguarding Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the Irish Women’s Bowling Association President who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Concerns about internal suspected abuse:

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either an official or a member of the IWBA should be reported to the IWBA Safeguarding Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other person who may be at risk.

If suspicion of abuse is reported:

- The IWBA Safeguarding Officer will refer the allegation to the Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) who may involve the Police.
- The IWBA Safeguarding Officer will make an immediate proposal about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further Police and HSCT inquiries. This will be decided by the IWBA Case Management Team (CMT)
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible (if doing so does not place the child at further risk) following advice from HSCT.
- The IWBA Safeguarding Officer while maintain confidentiality should also notify the Irish Women’s Bowling Association President they are dealing with a safeguarding concern with external agencies. The IWBA President will deal with any media enquiries when briefed to do so.
- If the IWBA Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the IWBA Secretary or in his absence another senior office bearer who will refer the allegation to the HSCT as soon as possible.
- Irrespective of the findings of the HSCT or Police inquiries the IWBA Case Management Team (CMT) will assess all individual cases to decide whether an

official or a member can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police. In such cases, the IWBA CMT must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout. Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

It is not the responsibility of anyone within the IWBA or its member organisations to decide whether or not abuse has taken place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

Duty to refer to Disclosure and Barring Service (NI only)

Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order, all organisations have a duty to refer information to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in certain circumstances. In all cases there are two conditions, both of which must be met, to trigger a referral to the DBS by a regulated activity provider.

A referral **MUST** be made to the DBS if the IWBA:

- a. withdraws permission for an individual to engage in regulated activity, or would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which is not regulated activity; because
- b. they think that the individual has:
 - engaged in relevant conduct;
 - satisfied the criteria set out in the Harm Test; or
 - received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.

If both conditions have been met, the IWBA must refer the information on to the DBS.

The referral must be made to the DBS when the IWBA has (in following with good practice) gathered sufficient evidence as part of its investigations to support its reasons for withdrawing permission for the person in question to engage in regulated activity, consulted with the relevant social services or police if appropriate.

The IWBA must also be informed if any club removes an individual from engaging in regulated activity for reasons outlined above to enable the IWBA to consider the information and decide about the persons coaching award.

Additional information on the DBS and the referral process can be found on the DBS website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The IWBA Safeguarding Officer.
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused/harmed (unless to do so would place the person at more risk).
- The person making the allegation.
- HSCT/Police.

- The IWBA President.
- Seek HSCT advice on who should approach the person to have allegedly caused the harm or abuse (or parents if the person the complaint is about is a child).

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to IWBA Safeguarding Officer and if appropriate designated people, in line with data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff/volunteer/player).

Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the HSCT or the Police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person's behaviour. Anyone who is a barred individual is automatically excluded from working with children in bowls.

It is possible that non-recent allegations of abuse can be made a number of years after the actual incident. This may be because of a change in circumstances for either the survivor or the alleged perpetrator. If there are grounds for concern, then statutory authorities must be informed (Police or /HSCT Gateway Teams). The following points should also be considered;

- Clearly establish with the adult complainant if there may be any children currently at risk of harm from the person they are saying abused them as a child.
- Advise the person making the complaint that they should inform the Police. Encourage them to do so while acknowledging the brave steps they have already taken in beginning to talk about their experience as a child. It is important that the person knows that there is a likelihood that an abuser will not have stopped abusing after their individual abuse ended and if the person harmed them they could be continuing to cause harm to others. This needs to be done without reinforcing the inappropriate guilt the survivor may already have for not coming forward earlier.
- If the complainant refuses to talk to the statutory authorities but has provided you with enough identifying factors then this information **MUST** be shared with the police. This breach of the complainants' confidence is only appropriate if there is any potential that the alleged perpetrator is still a risk to children or could face prosecution (i.e. they are alive). Remember, the welfare of any children currently at risk is paramount. This must take priority over any request of confidentiality from the person providing you with the information/complaint. This should be explained to them at the earliest possible stage
- Offer support to the complainant when making a formal complaint to the police.
- Signpost the complainant to support agencies that can provide counselling for example; In Northern Ireland - NEXUS <http://www.nexusni.org/>
Belfast 028 9032 6803
L'derry 028 7126 0566
Enniskillen 028 6632 0046

When an adult making a complaint chooses not to report the matter to the police and you have already discussed the possibility of any child still being at risk you **MUST** follow the IWBA reporting procedures and inform the Police or Gateway Team immediately of any identifying features of the allegation including the name of the alleged abuser. The person making the complaint should be informed that this is the organisation's moral and legal responsibility (Criminal Law Act 1967). If the individual wishes to remain anonymous this should be respected but again explaining that without any further

cooperation, there may be little action the Police can take to protect others. Encourage them to talk directly to the Gateway Teams, if not the Police, in order to enable social services to consider if there is any action they can take to protect children at risk, as their threshold for intervention is lower than the evidence required for any criminal justice prosecution.

Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment (e.g. a parent or carer):

- Report your concerns to the IWBA Safeguarding Officer, who should contact the Health and Social Care trust (HSCT) or the Police as soon as possible.
- If the IWBA Safeguarding Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact the HSCT or the Police immediately.
- HSCT and the IWBA Safeguarding Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.
- The Irish Women;s Bowling Association Case Management Team should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident plays a role in the IWBA and act accordingly (following advice from HSCT).
- Maintain confidentiality, information should be shared on a **need to know** basis only.
- See below regarding information needed for the HSCT.

Information for the HSCT or the Police about suspected child abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the allegation/concern, which should include the following:

- The alleged victims name, age and date of birth if under 18.
- Their home address and parents/carers telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Stick to the facts
- Avoid opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The victim's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Are the parents/carers already aware of the concern
- If so how and what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the alleged victim was not the person who reported the incident, have they been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been named as the person the allegation is against? Record details.
- Where possible referral to HSCT or the Police should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

See sample incident reporting form

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact the HSCT or the Police directly. Alternatively, you may want to contact the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0800 800 5000.

Clubs with under 18's should also promote advice lines for young people such as:
Childline on 0800 1111.

Responding to Bullying Behaviour

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (www.endbullying.org.uk) defines bullying as the repeated behaviour that intentionally hurts, harms use of power, by one or more persons, intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights or needs of another or others.

It can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal (e.g. racist or sectarian remarks, threats, name-calling)
- Emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of his peer group).

The risk of bullying behaviour and harassment by adults and by children must be addressed by taking active steps to prevent it occurring and to intervene promptly and decisively when it comes to light.

If the bullying is taking place within bowling, the parent and child should be reassured that it will be dealt with as a priority and should be asked for their views on what would be helpful to deal with the situation.

The designated safeguarding officer (DSO), having spoken to the child who has experienced the bullying behaviour and the child's parent/carer, should also speak to the person(s) who is alleged to have displayed bullying behaviour) and obtain their account of what has happened or is happening. This should be noted in writing and the parents/carers of the person(s) displaying the bullying behaviour should be informed. The person(s) the allegation is against and his or her parents/carers should be asked for their views on what should be done to prevent any bullying behaviour and to repair the damage that has been done.

Apart from very minor incidents that have been directly observed by a coach/club official and dealt with at the time, all bullying behaviour that takes place at should be discussed with the club safeguarding officer to decide how best to proceed ASAP but at the most within five working days.

The bullying behaviour should be discussed, and the details of a draft plan drawn up to address the situation with those concerned. This may include meeting with young people in the club and, taking into account any suggestions made by them or consulting with their parents/carers. Though open discussions are beneficial to resolving conflict and poor behaviour they should only be held with the agreement of the person who experienced the bullying behaviour to ensure they are comfortable with this approach and have confidence in the clubs safeguarding officer's facilitation of the discussion.

The club's actions should include:

- Details of any acknowledgment that hurt has been caused and an understanding of its impact
- Details of any support for the person who has experienced the bullying behaviour e.g. use of buddy scheme, extra input from the DSO, referral to another service
- Details of any consequences for the person(s) displaying the bullying behaviour, in addition to acknowledging their behaviour, with reference to the code of conduct
- Details of any support for the person(s) who displayed the bullying behaviour, with reference to the behaviour code
- Details of any further discussions or work to be done with others in the group, including children who may have observed or encouraged the bullying behaviour as bystanders

