



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



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.