



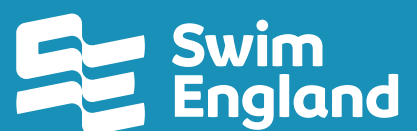
Wavepower

Swim England safeguarding policy

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Welcome to Wavepower, Swim England's safeguarding policy and procedures document.

Swimming and aquatic activity is one of the most popular recreational pastimes in the country, with millions of people of all ages enjoying the huge physical and mental health benefits it offers.

They all have a right to do so in a positive and enjoyable environment.

Whether you are a club officer, member, coach, teacher, swim school, operator, technical official, volunteer or parent/guardian, we all have a duty of care to ensure that this is the case.

Swim England is extremely committed to creating a culture in our sports and activities which makes everyone feel protected, included and welcomed – and that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all Members is ingrained throughout our affiliated clubs and Organisations.

Wavepower has been produced to help them achieve that goal and protect our Members across all of our sports.

Its aim is to safeguard both children and adults in line with current legislation, regulations and guidance and it must be adopted by all Swim England affiliated clubs and Organisations.

The management for safeguarding is not the sole responsibility of any one person at club, county, regional or national level so Wavepower provides comprehensive information in one place for everyone involved in aquatics.

It has been split into specific sections to make it concise, straightforward and easy to use.

Welfare Officers, and those with stated responsibilities for safeguarding, will find Wavepower helpful in guiding them to plan, prioritise and implement the various safeguarding activities which are necessary to protect our Members.

It provides mandatory requirements and examples of good practice and should be read together with the regulations contained in the Swim England Handbook.

What's new in Wavepower

Previously, Wavepower has been updated every three years. However, in order to better support our Members and Organisations, it will be reviewed annually with the capacity to be updated as and when necessary.

It is a living and breathing policy which means Wavepower is now a digital-only document which is available to download from the Swim England website.

Swim England will no longer provide a hard copy for every club and Organisation, although the Safeguarding and Welfare team will provide copies for use with screen-reading and other accessibility software on request.

Previous editions of Wavepower have described actions as 'guidance' or 'best practice' but this revised edition is now clearer on what needs to be done in order to safeguard Members.

While the majority of Wavepower develops previous Swim England safeguarding policy, there are some new key areas which are important to highlight. These are:

1. Adult safeguarding

Previously, Wavepower was the Swim England safeguarding policies and procedures document for child safeguarding and did not cover the important, and developing, area of adult safeguarding. For the first time, Wavepower now includes an adult safeguarding policy (see **"2.4 Adult safeguarding" on page 43**) as well as directions on reporting concerns about adults at risk of harm. Although all safeguarding concerns are reported to Swim England through the same route, there are some key differences in how consent is obtained from an adult to share concerns about the risk to them, as well as the statutory and external agencies that may be part of the support for concerns. We have worked closely with the Ann Craft Trust to develop these policies, and would like to thank them for their support.

2. Safeguarding in changing rooms

The previous version of Wavepower detailed a changing room policy which prohibited taking photographs with a camera or mobile device in changing areas. Swim England's position now is that all use of a mobile phone or device in a changing area is prohibited during Swim England regulated activity, and must be recorded and referred to Swim England if there is a concern that an image or video has potentially been captured. Use of a mobile phone or device where it is clear an image or video hasn't been taken (e.g. someone is witnessed talking on the phone) should be handled under your Organisation's code of conduct and behaviour protocols. Organisations should work with venues to clearly signpost this policy.

3. Approved training

From 1 January 2024, anyone who holds a role which Wavepower states requires safeguarding training will need to complete the Swim England Safeguarding course. Other approved external courses will only be valid until their expiry. The Swim England Safeguarding course is a bespoke course which covers the important and unique aspects of safeguarding in an aquatic environment. The course has been tailored to give club, county and regional officers, coaches, teachers, parents, guardians and volunteers the confidence to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse, how to report cases to Swim England and effectively deal with any safeguarding challenges. Mandating our own course is not unique and is a practice followed by other sport national governing bodies. Other safeguarding courses are, on the whole, generic but providing this course allows us to ensure a consistent message is delivered which is relevant to the aquatic sector. Members will need to complete this training once their existing safeguarding training certificate has expired, or within three years of their most recent safeguarding training (whichever is soonest).

4. Safer recruitment

Wavepower has clarified Swim England's position on safer recruitment of paid roles in regulated activity, and it is mandatory to follow the full safer recruitment actions contained in this policy. This includes having a written job role description, using an application form as part of the recruitment and interview process, checking the candidate's identity and obtaining a minimum of two references. For more information, see ["Safer Recruitment" on page 66](#).

5. The role of the Welfare Officer

Swim England has clarified the position on the independence of welfare officers. It is no longer 'best practice' but **mandatory** that the welfare officer of an Organisation is not related to, or in a close relationship with, either the chair/owner/proprietor, or any coach/swimming teacher of the Organisation they are the welfare officer for. This is to ensure independence and removing the potential for bias, or the perception of bias, when handling any safeguarding or welfare concern and to give Members the confidence to report any concerns they have to an Organisation.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that Wavepower is clear and accessible, if you have any questions regarding any aspect of this policy, or need support ensuring your Organisation is able to follow it, then please contact the Safeguarding and Welfare Team (see ["Contact information" on page 8](#)).

Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy:

- **'adult'** means any individual aged 18 or older;
- **'Adult at Risk'** means an adult at risk as defined in the Care Act 2014
- **'child'** means any individual under the age of 18;
- **'Member'** means any individual participating in aquatics under the jurisdiction of Swim England, including but not limited to Swim England members, volunteers, staff, board members, coaches and teachers, swim school members, and parents/guardians of child members;
- **'Safeguarding and Welfare Team'** means Swim England's national safeguarding team, which may be contacted at safeguarding@swimming.org;
- **'Subject of Concern'** means an individual against whom a safeguarding concern has been raised with Swim England;
- **'Welfare Officer'** means any welfare officer for a Swim England club, county or region, or affiliated organisation;
- **'Organisation'** means any company, unincorporated association, organisation or body affiliated to Swim England by any means, including, but not limited to swimming clubs, swim schools, county associations, and regions; and
- **'Regulated activities'** means activities that the Disclosure and Barring Service can bar people from doing. It is a criminal offence for a barred person to seek to work, or work in, activities from which they are barred. It is also a criminal offence for employers or voluntary organisations to knowingly employ a barred person in regulated activity.

For further details, please see the [UK Government DBS Guidance](#).

Responsibility for safeguarding within Swim England

The responsibility for safeguarding within Swim England belongs with everyone who works with, or has responsibility for, children and adults in our sports. Shown below are the groups within Swim England that have specific responsibility for safeguarding children and adults in our sports.

The Safeguarding and Welfare Team

This team is responsible for responding to referrals, and managing safeguarding and welfare cases. The team is also responsible for creating, updating and implementing Wavepower, and is actively involved in promoting and sharing best safeguarding practice with other sports organisations.

All Organisations, and Members can discuss their concerns with the Safeguarding and Welfare Team and will be offered advice and guidance on action to be taken in safeguarding and welfare issues.

Swim England's Safeguarding and Welfare Team is responsible for maintaining and embedding standards set out by the NSPCC, Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU), standards which are formally assessed by the CPSU on a yearly basis.

Case Management Group

The Case Management Group is a panel of individuals, including Safeguarding and Welfare Team members and other relevant Swim England team members, which monitors and manages safeguarding concerns being considered by Swim England. Where appropriate, it provides advice to the Lead Safeguarding Officer and may impose an interim order suspending an individual for up to 90 days.

Club/Organisation, County and Regional Welfare Officers

Welfare Officers play a vital role in safeguarding for the aquatics sports. They are often the first point of contact for Members and parents/guardians of Members who have a safeguarding concern and they ensure that any such concerns are addressed, escalated and reported Swim England by following the procedures and practices in Wavepower and the Swim England Handbook.

At the request of the Safeguarding and Welfare Team, County and Regional Welfare Officers can become directly involved with safeguarding issues, often to support a Club/Organisation Welfare Officer. They may meet with the individuals involved or lead meetings with parties to try to directly resolve the issues presented.

Role descriptions for Organisation, County and Regional Welfare Officers are shown in Wavepower (see pages from [“The role of the Welfare Officer” on page 75](#)).

All Welfare Officers can discuss concerns, request help or advice from the Safeguarding and Welfare team.

Disciplinary Officer

Swim England’s Disciplinary Officer shall represent Swim England at any judicial hearing. This includes hearings in respect of safeguarding concerns following an investigation commissioned by the Safeguarding and Welfare Team. Additionally, you may refer allegations of serious misconduct that are not related to safeguarding to the Disciplinary Officer, who will consider whether they warrant further investigation.

Contact information

National Governing Body (NGB)

Swim England

Pavilion 3, SportPark, 3 Oakwood Drive, Loughborough University, Leicestershire LE11 3QF
swimming.org

Safeguarding and Welfare Team

01509 640 700 (Option 1 for Swim England and then Option 3 for Safeguarding)
safeguarding@swimming.org

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks (DBS)

dbs@swimming.org

Office of Judicial Administration (OJA)

For all enquiries regarding the Judicial Complaints process, Medical Protocol and Coach Referral process

01509 640 764
judicial@swimming.org

Complaints

For complaints about the service we have provided to you
legal@swimming.org

Disciplinary Officer

For concerns that an individual has committed serious misconduct not related to safeguarding
discipline@swimming.org

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2.1 Building a safer culture

Everyone at Swim England is dedicated to making our sports and activities accessible, inclusive and safe for people of all ages and backgrounds.

We recognise we must continuously strive to improve in order to foster a positive culture and deliver for the people who are the lifeblood of our sports.

All those who work or volunteer directly with children and adults must ensure that:

- Members are treated with dignity and respect;
- good practice is promoted, in order to reduce the possibility of abusive situations occurring;
- they continually reflect upon their own coaching, supervisory style, philosophy and practices to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Members at all times, and encourage others to do the same;
- they know and understand Swim England's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures contained in Wavepower;
- they always work appropriately and openly with children and adults in the Organisation;
- they are an excellent role model, which includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children;
- they always put the wellbeing, health and safety of a Member before all other considerations, including the development of performance;
- they build a balanced relationship based on mutual trust, which empowers Members, including children and adults, to share in the decision-making process; and
- they refer and address safeguarding concerns appropriately.

In addition, coaches and teachers must:

- keep their technical skills and qualifications up to date;
- complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) with Barred List check upon commencing a new post and update that check at least once every three years;
- complete the Swim England Safeguarding course before commencement of the role and attend a refresher course after three years;
- have open and regular communication with parents/guardians of child Members;

- ensure that activities are appropriate for a Member's age, maturity, experience and ability;
- promote honesty, teamwork and a good sporting environment;
- follow Swim England guidance on coaching children and adults;
- follow the guidance from their awarding body relating to coaching/teaching children and adults; and
- have respect for, and encourage, Members having a life outside of aquatics, and account for such where necessary.

Swim England coaches, teachers, officials and helpers must not:

- take children or adults at risk to their home or other secluded places where they will be alone. This includes changing room cubicles;
- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games;
- ever use physical force on a child or adult, for example hitting or slapping a Member;
- share overnight accommodation with a child or adult at risk;
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching;
- make sexually suggestive remarks to children or adults at risk;
- reduce a child or adult at risk to tears as a form of control;
- use physical exercise or any form of humiliation as a punishment to a Member, for example making a Member perform sit ups or press ups on poolside in front of their peers;
- allow Members to use inappropriate language or behaviour unchallenged;
- allow allegations made by a Member to go unrecorded, or not acted upon;
- abuse their position of power or trust with children or adults;
- resort to bullying tactics or verbal abuse;
- cause a child or adult at risk to lose self-esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining the individual;
- spend excessive amounts of time with one Member to the detriment of the squad/team;
- do things of a personal nature for children or adults at risk that they can do for themselves;
- engage in a sexual, including online or non-contact in nature, relationship with a child aged 17 or under; and
- give a lift to, or otherwise transport, an individual child (unless they are a family member) when unaccompanied.

2.2 Safeguarding children

Key Principles

Safeguarding children in your Organisation is an integral part of your activities. It seeks to create a culture that provides a safe and happy environment in which children can learn to swim and develop to a level appropriate for their ability. The aquatic sports should be enjoyable and fun, including the competitive aspect at whatever level undertaken, giving each individual a sense of achievement and satisfaction from taking part.

Swim England is committed to ensuring that all children who participate in our activities are able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be safeguarded from harm.

The Children Acts 1989 and 2004, as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and the Government document 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023' are clear that safeguarding children is the responsibility of all, including those who are employed or volunteer with children in whatever capacity.

It is each sports organisations' responsibility:

- through safe recruitment practice, to ensure that those who are deemed to be unsuitable to work with children are not allowed to do so. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is an important and well known, but not sole, part of safe recruitment; and
- to report and safeguarding concerns to Swim England.

Swim England acknowledges, and requires Organisations to acknowledge, that they have a duty of care to safeguard children from harm. Organisations and their Members must follow the policies and procedures in Wavepower to safeguard children from harm and act appropriately if a child is identified as being at risk of harm.

The key principles of '**Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023**' are that:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and
- a child-centred approach is essential.

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility

Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe; this includes teachers, coaches and all who are employed or volunteer to work with children in the sport sector.

No single person can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Effective safeguarding requires clear local arrangements for collaboration between practitioners and agencies.

A child-centred approach

Effective safeguarding systems are child-centred. Failings in safeguarding systems are too often the result of losing sight of the needs and views of the children within them, or placing the interests of adults ahead of the needs of children.

In 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023', it states that children are clear about what they want from an effective safeguarding system:

- **Vigilance:** to have adults notice when things are troubling them.
- **Understanding and action:** to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon.
- **Stability:** to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them.
- **Respect:** to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not.
- **Information and engagement:** to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans.
- **Explanation:** to be informed of the outcome of assessments, decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response.
- **Support:** to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family.
- **Advocacy:** to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views.
- **Protection:** to be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination and the right to special protection and help if a refugee.

Duty of care

The Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their function and any services they contract out to others are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Organisations have a duty of care to their Members. Paid and volunteer staff have a duty to be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, how they should respond to child protection concerns and make a referral to the local authority Children's Social Care, Police, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or other agencies if necessary.

Swim England is the national governing body for swimming, para-swimming, diving, high diving, artistic swimming, water polo and open water swimming, and as such receives funding from Sport England. As a funded NGB we meet the standards for safeguarding and protecting children in sport.

Each Organisation has a duty of care towards its Members and must adopt Wavepower as a condition of its affiliation. All Swim England Members must comply with the Swim England Handbook and Wavepower.

To meet its safeguarding duty of care Swim England Organisations must:

- Follow the policies and procedures in Wavepower in full and use it as required.
- Promote and raise awareness of Wavepower to all of their Members.
- Ensure all of their Members are aware of their responsibilities and the procedures to be followed in the event of any concerns about a child or adult's safety or welfare.
- Promote a culture of listening to children and adults at risk.

Anyone involved in our sports can contact the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team, or their County or Regional Welfare Officer for advice or guidance on Safeguarding concerns. If these teams or contacts are unavailable for any reason, or failure to act immediately may place a child or adults at risk of harm, then immediate contact should be made with Police, Children's Social Care, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), NSPCC Child Protection Helpline, Adult Social Care, or other agencies as appropriate.

Definitions of abuse

Everyone involved in sport has a responsibility to be able to recognise and respond to signs and indicators of abuse and malpractice. In particular, each Welfare Officer should be aware of the definitions of abuse and must ensure individuals who hold a position of trust within the Organisation are familiar with this information.

What is abuse and maltreatment of children?

All incidents of abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child.

Abuse is:

- A form of maltreatment of a person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a person by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others.
- When someone fails to prevent harm to a child.

Who could abuse a child?

- A member of the child's family, a stranger, an acquaintance, or an institution.
- A fellow Member or a coach/teacher.
- An adult or a child.
- Peer on peer abuse.
- Anyone else.

Effect of abuse

- Abuse that is allowed to continue can be extremely damaging and can, if not responded to appropriately, cause problems for the person into adulthood.
- Present and future relationships can be affected as can trust in others.
- In some cases, abused children have become involved in drugs, alcohol abuse, criminality, suicide and, in extreme cases, they may go on to abuse other children.

Types of abuse

Physical abuse

Physical abuse happens when a child is deliberately hurt. This can cause injuries such as cuts, bruises, burns and broken bones. It can involve hitting, kicking, shaking, throwing,

poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating.

Physical abuse may also be caused when a parent/guardian, carer or other adult fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

An example of physical abuse may be the imposed use of performance enhancing drugs or persistent training, which is beyond the capacity of the individual leading to physical harm.

Emotional abuse

Also referred to as psychological abuse, it is the ongoing emotional maltreatment of a child. Emotional abuse is persistent and, over time, it severely damages a child's emotional health and development.

It may include:

- making children feel that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person;
- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of what they say or how they communicate;
- age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children – for example, interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction;
- a child seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; and
- bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

In a sporting context, emotional abuse could include, but is not limited to, a coach who continuously criticises, uses sarcasm and/or name calling or who generally belittles the child. Parents/guardians can emotionally abuse a child by having excessively high expectations which places unrealistic pressure on the child, or by constantly giving the child negative feedback.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse can include, but is not limited to, forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. It doesn't necessarily involve violence and the child may not be aware that what is happening is abuse.

There are two different types of child sexual abuse. These are called contact abuse and non-contact abuse.

Contact abuse happens when the abuser makes physical contact with the child. It includes:

- sexual touching of any part of the body, whether the child is wearing clothes or not;
- rape or penetration by putting an object or body part inside a child's mouth, vagina or anus;
- forcing or encouraging a child to take part in sexual activity; and
- making a child take their clothes off, touch someone else's genitals or masturbate.

Non-contact abuse involves non-touching activities. It can happen online or in person. It includes:

- encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts;
- not taking proper measures to prevent a child being exposed to sexual activities by others;
- showing pornography to a child;
- making, viewing or distributing child abuse images (this can include taking images of a child when they are getting changed in the changing rooms);
- allowing someone else to make, view or distribute child abuse images;
- meeting a child following face-to-face or online sexual grooming, with the intent of abusing them;
- sexually exploiting a child for money, power or status (child exploitation);
- persuading or forcing a child to send or post sexually explicit images of themselves. This is sometimes referred to as 'sexting';
- persuading or forcing a child to take part in sexual activities via a webcam or smartphone; and
- having sexual conversations with a child by text or online.

Abusers may threaten to send sexually explicit images, video or copies of sexual conversations to the child's friends and family unless they take part in other sexual activity. Images or videos may continue to be shared long after the abuse has stopped.

Neglect

Neglect is a persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs usually resulting in serious damage to their health and development.

Neglect may involve failure to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter;
- protect a child from physical and/or emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including leaving them with unsuitable carers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment;
- make sure the child receives a suitable education;
- meet or respond to a child's basic emotional needs.

An example of neglect could be that a coach or officer fails to ensure the safety of a child by exposing them to undue cold or to unnecessary risk or injury. Neglect often highlights a failure to fulfil a duty of care.

Bullying

Bullying is defined by the Anti-Bullying Alliance as:

"The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online."

It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, in extreme cases, causes them significant harm (including self-harm). Children who suffer from bullying may often bully others in turn.

Bullying can take a variety of forms, and often multiple forms simultaneously:

- **Verbal:** name calling, persistent teasing, mocking, taunting and threats.
- **Physical:** any degree of physical violence including hitting, kicking and pushing. Intimidating behaviour, theft or the intentional damage of possessions.
- **Emotional:** excluding, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation, setting people up and spreading rumours.
- **Cyber:** the misuse of digital technologies or communications to bully a person or a group, typically through messages or actions that are threatening and/or intended to cause offence, anxiety or humiliation.
- **Racist:** bullying based on ethnicity, skin colour, and language, religious or cultural practices.
- **Homophobic and transphobic:** bullying based on sexuality or gender identity.

- **Disablist:** bullying children who have special educational needs and disabilities.
- **Sexual:** unwelcome sexual advances, comments that intended to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation.
- **Discriminative:** bullying based on any perceived weakness or difference. This could be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or ability. It could also be factors surrounding the way someone looks or the clothes they wear, their family and social situation, hobbies and interests.

Bullying can occur between:

- An adult and child.
- Children (peer on peer).
- A parent/guardian and their own child.

The competitive nature of sport can create an environment which provides opportunities for bullying. Examples of bullying in our sports could be:

- a parent/guardian who pushes their child too hard;
- a coach who adopts a win-at-all-costs philosophy;
- a Member who intimidates others inappropriately; and
- an official who places unfair pressure on a person.

Bullying in our sports could include a child being ostracised by others in their lane, squad or age group, refusing to talk to them and/or encouraging others to treat them with contempt.

Please refer to [page 80](#) for information on how to manage bullying.

Harassment

Harassment is a criminal offence, and can be is when someone repeatedly behaves in a way that makes you feel scared, distressed or threatened.

[The National Website for Policing](#) says that:

Harassment may include:

- bullying;
- cyber stalking (using the internet to harass someone);
- antisocial behaviour;

- sending abusive text messages;
- sending unwanted gifts; and
- unwanted phone calls, letters, emails or visits.

It's harassment if the unwanted behaviour has happened more than once.

Sexual harassment is also unlawful, as a form of discrimination, under the Equality Act 2010.

The Act says it's sexual harassment if the unwanted behaviour:

- violates your dignity; or
- creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment (this includes the digital environment, online).

Some examples of sexual harassment could include:

- sexual comments, jokes or gestures;
- staring or leering at your body;
- using derogatory names such as 'slut' or 'whore';
- unwanted sexual communications, such as emails, texts or direct messages;
- sharing sexual photos or videos;
- groping and touching;
- someone exposing themselves; and
- pressuring you to do sexual things or offering you something in exchange for sex.

Some of these are also forms of sexual or indecent assault.

Harassment should be reported to the Police, and referred to the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team using the referral procedure, [see page 34](#).

Grooming

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) define grooming as **"when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited or trafficked"**.

It is a criminal offence to cause or incite a child under 16 years old to engage in sexual activity. This can occur where a communication with a child causes or incites some kind of sexual activity by the child e.g. naked or semi-naked posing.

It is also a crime for a person aged 18 or over to communicate with a child under 16 years old (who the adult does not reasonably believe to be 16 years old or over), if the communication is sexual or if it is intended to obtain from the child a communication which is sexual.

Children can be groomed face to face or online, by a stranger or by someone they know.

Groomers can identify as any gender and could be any age. They will hide their true intentions and may spend months or years gaining a child's trust and, in some cases, the trust of the child's family to allow them to be left alone with a child. Those who work with children may use similar tactics to gain the trust of the child and their colleagues.

Online contact and communication with children

When an adult communicates with children, they must do so in an appropriate and safe manner, whether that is in person, by phone or text, online or via a social networking/messaging website.

Wavepower provides guidance on how to react to a child if they disclose concerns or abuse to you in person. However, you may find that a Member uses other forms of communication to make a disclosure, even if you have followed Swim England guidance and not shared your phone, email address or social networking details with that person. Should that happen, we do not want you to stop that communication, but you should advise the Welfare Officer of the contact immediately and follow the guidance in Wavepower as to how to deal with any disclosure or concern raised.

Generally speaking, if you do not share your contact information with children, and take steps to make your social media accounts private, they will not find your phone number, email or social network site details. However, if this should happen and they are not disclosing concerns as outlined above, you must make them aware that you will not be communicating with them on this medium and inform the Welfare Officer immediately. The Welfare Officer will take action as required, ensuring contact by the Member is not repeated.

Mobile phones, social media, text messaging, email and other forms of electronic communication have become a regular feature of the sporting landscape and there is a need to define what is and what is not permissible when communication is required between adults and children.

[“2.3 Reporting a concern about a child at risk of harm” on page 34](#) provides guidance on how to react to a child if they disclose concerns or abuse to you in person.

Phoning, texting, emailing or messaging a child

Adults working or volunteering in any Organisation must not hold personal contact details belonging to children on any personal device, or be connected through any social media sites or apps. This includes apps such as WhatsApp where a child's number is displayed and visible to a group.

This is particularly important where any coach/teacher may hold a position of trust over a child.

Adults working or volunteering in any Organisation can hold the phone numbers and email addresses of Members' parents/guardians with their consent, in order to provide information to Members. It is then the responsibility of the parent/guardian receiving any such messages to inform the child.

There are a number of team communication systems used by Organisations, which allow a 'non-position of trust' administrator(s) to ensure messages sent on behalf of coaches or teachers to children are copied in to parents/guardians, or are openly visible on a team feed, which allows instant messaging. They also include 'push notifications' for immediate attention of a recipient. Systems such as this can prevent direct messaging from a person in a position of trust, preventing suggestions of misconduct, protecting all involved.

In limited circumstances, it may be necessary for coaches, team managers or chaperones to have mobile phone contact details of the Members, for example at an away camp for safeguarding reasons. In such circumstances, the individual holding the contact details must be Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked, have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training and have the consent of each Member's parent/guardian to temporarily hold that information for the purpose of the event. The Members' phone numbers must then be deleted as soon as possible after the event.

Apps or social media messaging which are not capable of storing messages, such as Snapchat, are NOT recommended in order to communicate with children, as they have limited safety functionality. Nor indeed are platforms that reveal children's numbers and online identities such as WhatsApp and Instagram.

Coaches aged 18 to 21

Swim England recognises that many young coaches and teachers aged 18 to 21 will have been Members themselves before becoming a coach or teacher, and will be friends with their fellow Members, some of whom will still be aged 16 or 17. It is therefore plausible that they will have the personal contact details for those Members, or be connected with them on social media sites. Swim England accepts it would be inappropriate to require young coaches or swimming teachers to remove the details of those Members from their contact lists or social media profiles.

Therefore, if a coach or swimming teacher aged 18 to 21 has phone and/or email details for Members, or is connected to them on social media, who are aged 16 or 17 upon undertaking

the role of coach or swimming teacher, Swim England does not expect them to remove those Members from their contact list, unless the coach or swimming teacher is the primary coach or teacher for any of the Members in question

The coach or teacher must inform the Welfare Officer and the Head Coach (if applicable) that they hold these contact details.

Use of social networking

Swim England recognises that the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, and instant messaging tools such as WhatsApp and Telegram, continue to grow rapidly and are used as the communication tools of choice by children.

Social networking sites provide a platform for uploading and viewing video clips, as well options for private messaging and public commenting.

Whilst the ever developing technologies provide exciting opportunities for our Members, they are accompanied by dangers and negative consequences if abused.

If 'out of sport' inappropriate social media activity emerges, Members are encouraged to report this directly to the social media platform provider, or seek advice from the [Professional Online Safety Helpline](#).

Use of social media by coaches, teachers, staff and volunteers

As a coach, teacher or other employee or volunteer of the Organisation, you should not be in contact with children (unless a family member) through social networking sites if they are a Member of the Organisation you work or volunteer for.

Should a child in your Organisation request to become 'friends' via your personal social networking site, you should decline if:

- you are in a position of responsibility in respect of that child;
- you hold a position of trust and/or responsibility at the club; or
- your contact with the child is through a Swim England club and the parent/guardian of the child does not give their consent to such contact.

Social networks should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise members or Swim England organisations and to do so may be in breach of Swim England Regulations.

The publishing of a photograph or video footage on any social networking site is governed by the same requirements as those contained in **“Photography of Members” on page 94**.

Coaches, teachers and other staff who are under 18

Swim England recognises that social networking sites can be a useful tool for teachers, coaches and other staff within the Organisation to share information with other teachers, coaches or staff. If, however, the teacher, coach or staff member is under the age of 18, whilst they may be a colleague, it is essential to mitigate the risks of such sharing.

Swim England recognises that to restrict the ability to share professional information with them from other coaches, teachers or staff may be detrimental in their professional development of their role at a Swim England Organisation.

Therefore, if a parent/guardian of a child in a position of responsibility gives consent, and the child themselves request to have contact with an adult Member of staff for the purposes of sharing professional information relevant to their role, the Organisation must:

- gain written consent from the parent/guardian and young person to have such contact, naming the individual adult and social networking site concerned;
- ensure the named adult signs an agreement to keep contact with the child to the discussion of matters relevant to the child’s role in the Organisation;
- ensure all such communications are shared with an identified third person (e.g. the child’s parent/guardian or Welfare Officer); and
- ensure that if the child or the adult is found to breach the above agreement, action is taken by the Organisation to address the concern and/or ensure that the breach is referred to Swim England or the statutory agencies if appropriate.

If the parent/guardian does not consent, or the child does not themselves request to have such contact, the usual requirements in this policy must still be adhered to.

Guidance on indecent / child abuse images of children

Risks

Some people have tried, and succeeded in, taking images (video and still photographs) of children in the process of changing, in changing villages or under/over changing cubicles. Some people, only known to each other through the sport have shared these indecent images with others. 'Indecent' is not defined in legislation but can include an image of a child in a state of undress in the changing room.

These images can be used to isolate and embarrass a child amongst their peer groups, exploit them and, in serious cases, make demands of children to carry out acts against their wishes. Any use of these child abuse images, or indeed the threat of such, can have devastating consequences for any child. It can significantly affect the mental health and social interactions of children, including trust amongst a peer group. Once the image is in the public domain, it is difficult to control, to know who has seen it and what has been done with it. This can lead to feelings of paranoia and isolation at a time when teenagers in particular need to build up their self-esteem during a crucial stage of their development. The risks to victims, bystanders and perpetrators are different but all three contain a degree of risk that can leave a child in a vulnerable state and can significantly affect their future. It is vital that children understand the legal implications and the impact on others.

Swim England's evidence is consistent with earlier NSPCC research that girls are more adversely affected by the risks than boys – it is not a gender neutral practice.

 **Swim England has a zero tolerance policy towards the use of mobile phones and other digital devices in changing rooms during Swim England regulated activity. Please see ["Safeguarding in changing rooms"](#) on page 82 for further details.**

Criminal Acts

- It is a criminal offence to take, make, distribute (send), upload and/or possess any indecent image of a child (including those taken/possessed by other under 18-year-olds). It is also an offence to request a child to take, make, distribute or upload such an image, or encourage another to commit an offence.
- **'Making'** includes opening, accessing, downloading and storing online content. **'Sharing'**

includes sending on an email, offering on a file share platform, uploading to a site that other people can access and possession with a view to distribute the image(s).

- An offence of '**voyeurism**' is committed if a person, for the purposes of their sexual gratification, observes or films another without their consent.
- It is an offence to send a message which is threatening, indecent, grossly offensive or false with intent to cause distress or anxiety.
- The offence of '**upskirting**' refers to an individual whom without consent operates equipment or records an image beneath a person's clothing to observe their genitalia or buttocks, whether covered or uncovered by underwear garments.

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) does not support prosecutions of children for taking indecent images of themselves due to the detrimental effect this can have on them especially if they are convicted. The label of a 'sex offender' would be applied to a child convicted of such offences and could be detrimental to their future health, wellbeing and affect their future employment. The NPCC position differs if a child takes indecent images of others.

Types of criminal acts and course of action

All use of images as detailed above are criminal offences, and, if deemed to be an 'experimental' act, then Children's Social Care, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Team and the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team must be advised. If the act is deemed to be 'aggravated' then it must be reported to the Police, Children's Social Care and Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team.

Experimental

If the concern relates to a Member of the Organisation aged 13 or above who has voluntarily (with no suggestion of coercion/exploitation/threats, etc.) taken an indecent image of themselves, and then shared this with another individual they are in a relationship with, we will determine whether the act may be seen as experimental (e.g. for teenagers within a relationship this might not be seen as unusual behaviour).

In this case, parents/guardians should be informed that the concern will not be referred directly to the Police (in line with Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP)/ NPCC guidance), but will refer the matter to the relevant Children's Social Care or the MASH Team, for assessment by them. This may be done without parental consent (for example, if it is a criminal offence which may lead to significant harm). This is to ensure that professionals can make a suitable decision around supporting and guiding each child, based on any background and to help parents/guardians manage that behaviour. Where both parties

(sender/recipient) are at the same Organisation, the Welfare Officers and other staff can also work with parents/guardians to monitor the children's behaviour, to prevent recurrence, in the environment of the Organisation.

The request to send an indecent image (child abuse image) is also an offence. If, however, a child aged 13 or over asks another child of the same age within a relationship context for such an image, without any aggravating factors (listed below), then the matter will be referred in accordance with the previous paragraph.

Aggravated

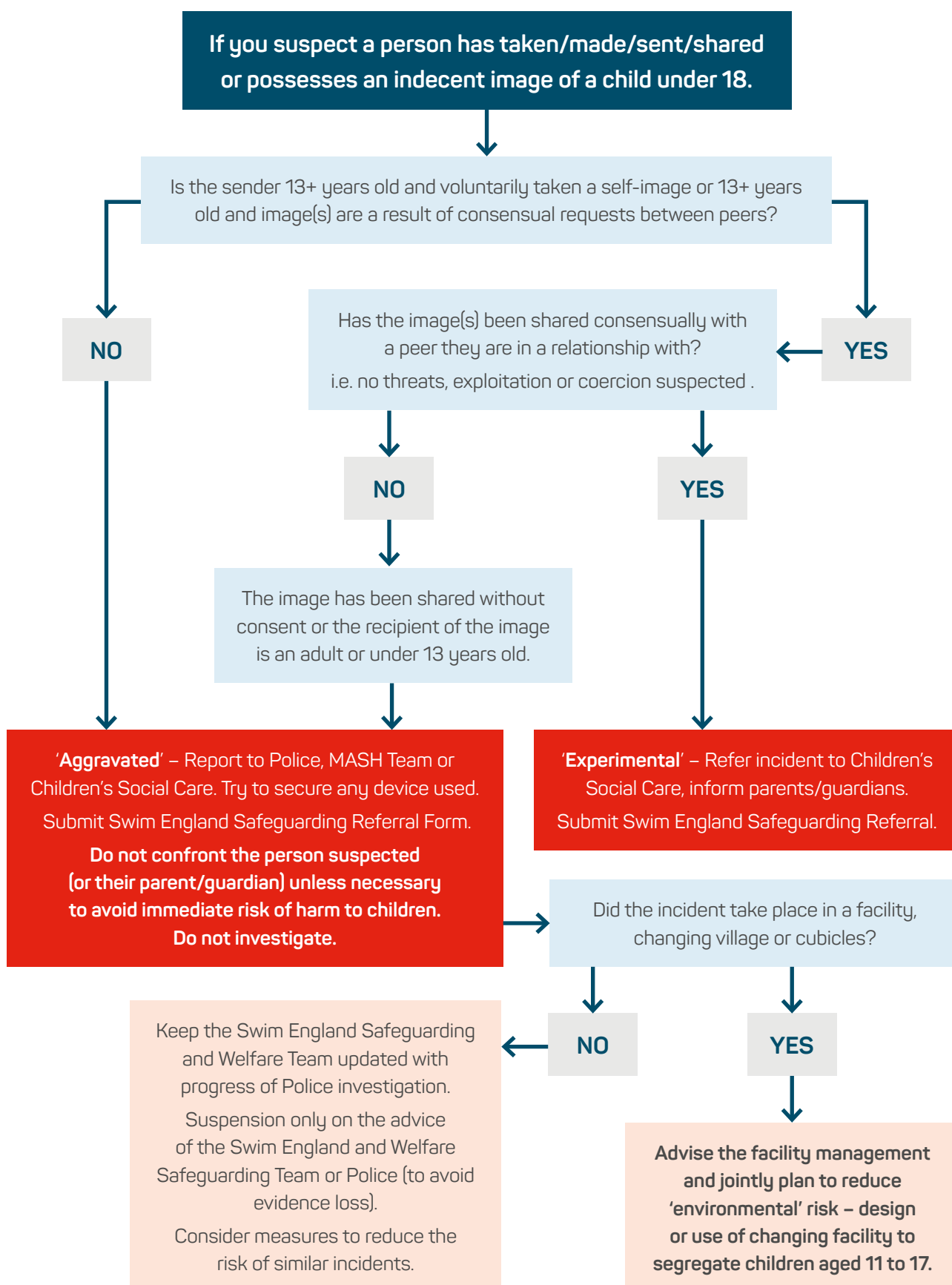
This term may be applied to any other situation not detailed above, such as incidents which include adult involvement and abusive or criminal behaviour by under 18s such as sexual abuse, extortion, threats or malicious conduct arising from personal conflicts. It also includes the creation, showing or sharing of images without the knowledge, or against the will, of the individual who is pictured (e.g. taking images under/over cubicles).

Aggravating factors to be considered also include:

- the age of the child (or children) involved;
- the circulation of images to peers, or with others they are not in a relationship with;
- the coercion or exploitation of a child by the use of rewards or threats to send/share the image;
- the number of 'victims' or repeat behaviour by any party;
- the wording or language which accompanies the image;
- the explicit or depraved nature of images beyond 'the norm'; and
- any other background information that may increase the risk of harm.

A request for an image under any of these circumstances can also be considered to be an aggravated act. In the case of an aggravated incident, the matter will be referred to Police and the MASH Team or Children's Social Care, by Welfare Officers or the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team, according to local arrangement.

Response to concerns regarding indecent/child abuse images



Action to be taken by the Organisation

A 'device' can include mobile phones, tablets, laptops, desktop computers, any type of camera or video camera, or any type of technology capable of taking, sharing or storing images or video footage.

Safeguarding children is paramount, if there is a strong suspicion that a device may contain an indecent image of a child then you should:

- Keep any information limited to those who 'need to know'. Advise the Leisure Centre Duty Manager of the incident (if appropriate), if you are still at the location and the concern falls under the 'aggravated' category above, you must contact the Police.
- Where the device is available, retain and secure the device if possible, and follow the reporting procedures [on page 34](#). This includes reporting the act immediately to the Police, if necessary, in order to secure evidence and/or protect a child from harm. You must also inform the Welfare Officer or Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team.

If, for example, a child denies they have any such image on their device or refuses to hand over the device and you are confronting them shortly after the incident has allegedly taken place, they can be asked to produce the device ideally with two appropriate adults present. It is vital they do not get the opportunity to delete any images or data themselves.

Where the device is not available, or where an incident comes to light after the event, then an immediate referral should be made to the Welfare Officer and Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team. If the incident takes place 'out of hours', and there are concerns that the image has been, or will be shared, you should contact the Police.

 **Under no circumstances should you attempt to look at or send any potential indecent/child abuse images, or make any effort to store the potential images on another device or cloud storage service.**

You must always seek advice from either the Police, or the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team, regarding the handling of any device that has been suspected of being used to take/make/send or contains an indecent image of a child under 18.

The absence of images being available to view on a device is not definitive evidence that an image hasn't been taken/made/sent or stored on a device.

Prevention of incidents

There are several ways that an Organisation can work to reduce the risk of an incident occurring, as detailed above and in **"Safeguarding in changing rooms" on page 82**.

Relationships with Members aged 17 and under

Relationship of trust

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 states: “It is an offence for a person aged 18 years or over to involve a child under that age in sexual activity where he or she is in a specified position of trust in relation to that child. This includes those who care for, advise, supervise or train children and young people.”

Following lobbying by the CPSU and sports national governing bodies, the law now applies to coaches within our sports. Swim England has adopted this policy into Swim England’s Codes of Conduct and the Swim England Code of Ethics, and any relationship of this nature may result in disciplinary action, as well as being reported to statutory agencies.

The power and influence a coach or teacher has in a professional relationship with a child cannot be underestimated. In addition to this, the child’s success or failure and team selection may be dependent on the coach. It is vital for all coaches and teachers, as well as other volunteers, to recognise the responsibility they have and ensure that they do not abuse that position of power and trust.

No sexual relationship should exist between Members under 18 years of age and their coach or teacher, and the relationship between coach or teacher and Member must be appropriate at all times.

Please note that whilst children aged 16 or 17 years can legally consent to sexual activity, in almost all provisions of legislation, such as the Children Act 1989, they are still classified as children.

The coach or teacher/Member relationship is a complex one for both parties. It is important that the coach acknowledges that children often develop feelings for people in positions of trust, often identified as ‘a crush’ or ‘hero worship’. In the case of a sports coach, this may result in admiration of the coach’s previous achievements, e.g. as a national level athlete or a representative of their country. If this should happen to you as a coach or teacher, always inform the Welfare Officer to note the matter, and ensure that concerns are discussed and managed in an open and transparent manner. The Welfare Officer will be able to advise you on how to manage the issue and any required actions. You and the Welfare Officer will be able to deal with such situations ensuring you and the child are safe from harm or allegation.

Coaches or teachers may develop stronger relationships with some children than with others. It would be unrealistic not to acknowledge that it is possible to like one person more than another. However, the professional nature of the coach or teacher's position requires them to never favour one Member, or group of Members, over another. It may be that an individual Member requires more attention for reasons identified by the coach or teacher (e.g. the Member is preparing for a national level event) but such preferential treatment or extra attention must be justifiable as being necessary for a Member's development, and should not be to the detriment of other Members.

Some coaches have considered it acceptable to give rewards to Members who do well, and it is acknowledged that in the vast majority of cases, gifts were given with no ulterior motive other than to reward success or improvement.

However, the giving of gifts or favours can be identified or misconstrued as part of the grooming process. Individual coaches must not give Members gifts in any form. It is recommended that if a coach or teacher feels that a Member has attained a level of achievement that should be rewarded, then it is the Organisation that should recognise that, on the coach or teacher's recommendation, and that any reward, gift or recognition given is then from the Organisation and not one individual.

Where a coach does wish to carry out a rewards system, they must inform the relevant personnel within the Organisation to make them aware of this, and provide details of the infrastructure around it. This may protect the coach or teacher from potential allegations of favouritism or grooming. In all cases, the reasoning behind creating the rewards system, and the justification for awarding a reward to an individual should be done on an open and transparent basis, for the sake of all concerned.

2.3 Reporting a concern about a child at risk of harm

All Members should be aware of how to report any concerns which they are aware of, however, it is especially important that Welfare Officers are aware of the reporting procedures for any child safeguarding concern.

Swim England is committed to ensuring that any child Member who attends a Swim England Organisation, event or activity will be safeguarded from harm. Protection and safeguarding of all of our Members is paramount and should be based on prevention and best practice. However, we recognise that not all risks can be removed and safeguarding concerns will continue to be raised both within, and outside of, any Organisation.

The following three stages of action must be taken for anyone who may have a concern or is made aware of a concern about a child Member's wellbeing:

Stage 1 – React to the concern, disclosure, suspicion or allegation in a timely and appropriate manner.

Stage 2 – Record the relevant information.

Stage 3 – Report the information to the appropriate person(s) and/or Organisations(s), subject to the above conditions being met, as detailed in this chapter.

You do not have to decide whether a concern or incident amounts to abuse or a failure to safeguard a child Member. You do have to refer that concern to the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team so they can make that decision.

Anyone with a concern relating to Members in aquatics can contact the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team for advice and guidance.

If you are experiencing, at risk of, or have experienced harm, or you are concerned that a child Member is experiencing, at risk of, or has experienced harm, please contact the Safeguarding and Welfare Team for advice on **01509 640700** (Option 1 for Swim England and then Option 3 for Safeguarding) or at safeguarding@swimming.org. The Safeguarding and Welfare Team will be able to provide advice even if you are not making a referral or are unsure whether to do so.

The online referral forms for both children and adults are available at:
swimming.org/swimengland/how-raise-concern-complaint

You may be concerned about harm to another person because of something you have seen or heard, information you have been told by others or because someone has confided in you about things that are happening or have happened to them.

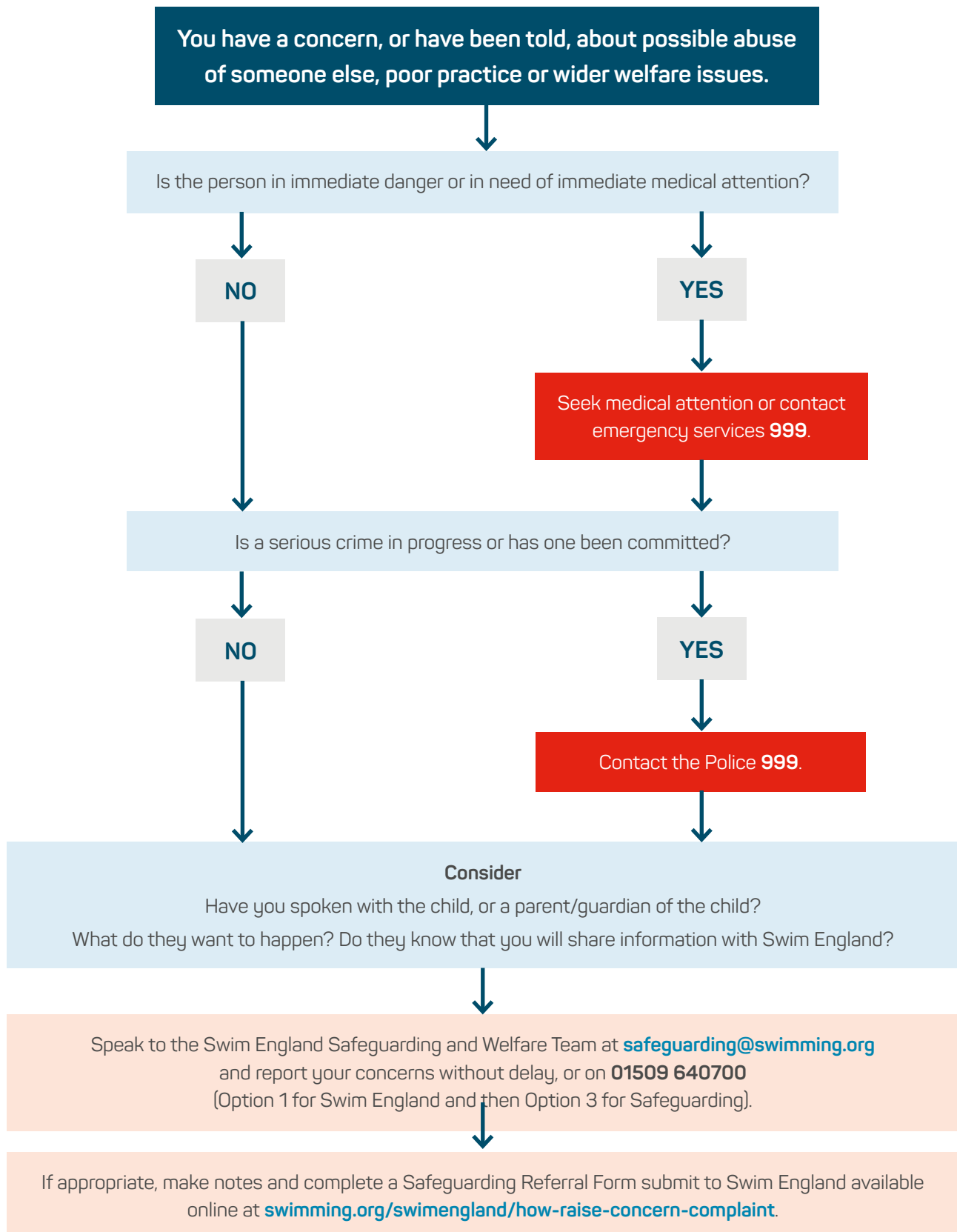
You must not keep safeguarding concerns to yourself.

If you have concerns or you are told about possible or alleged abuse, poor practice or wider welfare issues you must contact your Welfare Officer or the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team as soon as you can.

If you are concerned about harm being caused to someone else, please be aware that:

- it is not your responsibility to prove or decide whether a child Member has been harmed or abused;
- it is, however, everyone's responsibility to respond to and report concerns they have using the Swim England safeguarding referral form;
- if someone has a need for immediate medical attention you must always call an ambulance on **999**;
- if you are concerned someone is in immediate danger or a serious crime is being committed, you must contact the Police on **999** straight away;
- if appropriate, discuss your concerns with the child's parent/guardian, and seek to understand what they would like to happen. Inform them that you have to pass on your concerns to your Welfare Officer and Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team;
- do not contact the parent/guardian before talking to your Welfare Officer or the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team if the person allegedly causing the harm is likely to find out as a result; and
- do not confront the person thought to be causing the harm.

Flowchart 1 – Welfare Officer response to concerns about a child being harmed or at risk of harm



Responding to a direct disclosure

If a child discloses to you that they are being harmed or abused, or you are a Welfare Officer who receives information which gives rise to concern, you must:

- treat the disclosure seriously;
- remain calm;
- listen carefully to what is said, allowing the discloser to continue at their own pace;
- be sensitive;
- keep questions to a minimum, only ask questions if you need to identify or clarify what the person is telling you and do not ask leading questions;
- reassure the person that they have done the right thing in revealing the information;
- ask them what they would like to happen next;
- explain what you would like to do next in response to the concern;
- explain that you will have to share the information with the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team;
- act swiftly to report and carry out any required actions if you are a Welfare Officer; and
- record in writing what was said, using the child's own words, as soon as possible, along with any actions taken or proposed.

You must not:

- dismiss or ignore the concern;
- make negative comments about the alleged perpetrator;
- make assumptions or speculate;
- come to your own conclusions;
- probe for more information than is offered;
- make promises that cannot be kept, including that you will keep the disclosure secret when you can not;
- conduct an investigation of the case yourself;
- confront the person thought to be causing harm;
- take sole responsibility for the concern; or
- tell anyone else about the concern who has no need to be made aware of it.

How will Swim England respond?

Once a concern has been passed to the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team, it will coordinate the Swim England Child Safeguarding Procedure (see Flowchart 2, [page 41](#)).

The Safeguarding and Welfare Team will keep clear records of decision making, actions taken, and the outcomes achieved.

The Safeguarding and Welfare Team, where appropriate, in consultation with the Case Management Group, will take the following actions.

Immediate response

Initially, Swim England will ensure that any immediate actions necessary to safeguard anyone at risk have been taken.

If the risk is said to be due to the behaviour of any Member, the Safeguarding and Welfare Team shall seek to prevent that person making contact with the child being harmed.

If we have been contacted directly regarding a concern, we will request that the individual reporting the matter completes a Safeguarding Referral Form, if they have not already done so, as soon as possible. We shall then check that we can understand what is written on the form and that all the necessary parts have been completed. Where required, we may need to seek further information before taking additional action.

Where an individual reporting a matter requires assistance in completing the referral form, Swim England shall seek to assist the individual in doing so, which may include a Safeguarding and Welfare Team member completing the form over telephone.

Swim England shall inform, reassure, and advise the person making the report, for example on what to do and what not to do. We shall explain what will happen next and reinforce the need for confidentiality.

We shall then take the following preliminary actions:

1. We shall consider what we know about the situation, what the risks are, what is known of the views of the child and their parent/guardian.
2. We shall decide whether we need to contact the child's parent/guardian to obtain more information, determine their wishes, or explain what actions we may need to take. We shall also consider whether it is safe to do so.

3. We shall ensure that the child is given information about the process and what will happen next. We shall provide them with information about other organisations that can support them.

Taking action

In all situations we will ensure that, where the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team can act to prevent further harm, it has the information to do so. This includes supporting the child. Depending on the situation, the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team may need to pass information to and work together with other organisations such as the Police and the Local Authority safeguarding team.

Consult and decide

If necessary, the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team shall consult with the Local Authority and/or the Police.

Swim England shall contact the Police where:

- a serious crime has been committed; or
- a crime has been committed against a child Member whose parent/guardian has asked Swim England to make a report to the Police on their behalf because they are unable to themselves.

Further action

If Swim England believes a child to be at risk, we will additionally make a child safeguarding referral to the local authority. This includes all situations where there is domestic abuse within the household where the child lives.

Where the Safeguarding and Welfare Team considers it necessary, we may take action under its safeguarding regulations, published within the Swim England Handbook.

Such action may include but is not limited to:

- an investigation into the conduct of the Subject of Concern and the risk posed by them;
- imposing a temporary suspension where necessary to protect individuals or the integrity of an investigation.
- requiring supervision, mentoring, or retraining; and
- imposing a suspension for a specified term.

There may be times where, after a concern has been reported to us, that we need to undertake an investigation to determine what has occurred and whether someone poses

a risk to children or adults. The outcome of any such investigation will determine our next steps, which may include requirements to undergo further training or mentoring or, where absolutely necessary, a suspension from the aquatics sports.

If we consider that an investigation is necessary, we shall notify the individual, providing them with an outline of the nature of the concerns. This outline may be rather general in order to protect the identities of those raising the concerns.

When an investigation is required, we shall commission an independent safeguarding consultant, either directly or through Sport Resolutions, to look into the matter, based on an agreed terms of reference and investigation plan. We do allow discretion to the investigator to conduct the investigation as they see fit, however, an investigation will usually involve:

1. interviewing and taking statements from relevant complainants and witnesses;
2. disclosure to the subject of concern;
3. an interview with the subject of concern, allowing them to provide their account; and
4. consideration of any additional evidence provided by the complainant, witnesses or the subject of concern.

However, if an investigator considers it necessary, they may take or not take any step regarding an investigation.

Swim England expects anyone involved in an investigation in any capacity to comply with such and not to act in a way that will hinder or prejudice the investigation.

Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator will write an investigation report, detailing their findings and any recommendations made. This will be considered by the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team and, if risks are identified, we may take further action to minimise such risks, in line with the Safeguarding Regulations within the Swim England Handbook.

If the matter does not reach the threshold of a safeguarding concern, the matter will be referred back to the referrer and relevant Organisation for a local resolution as appropriate.

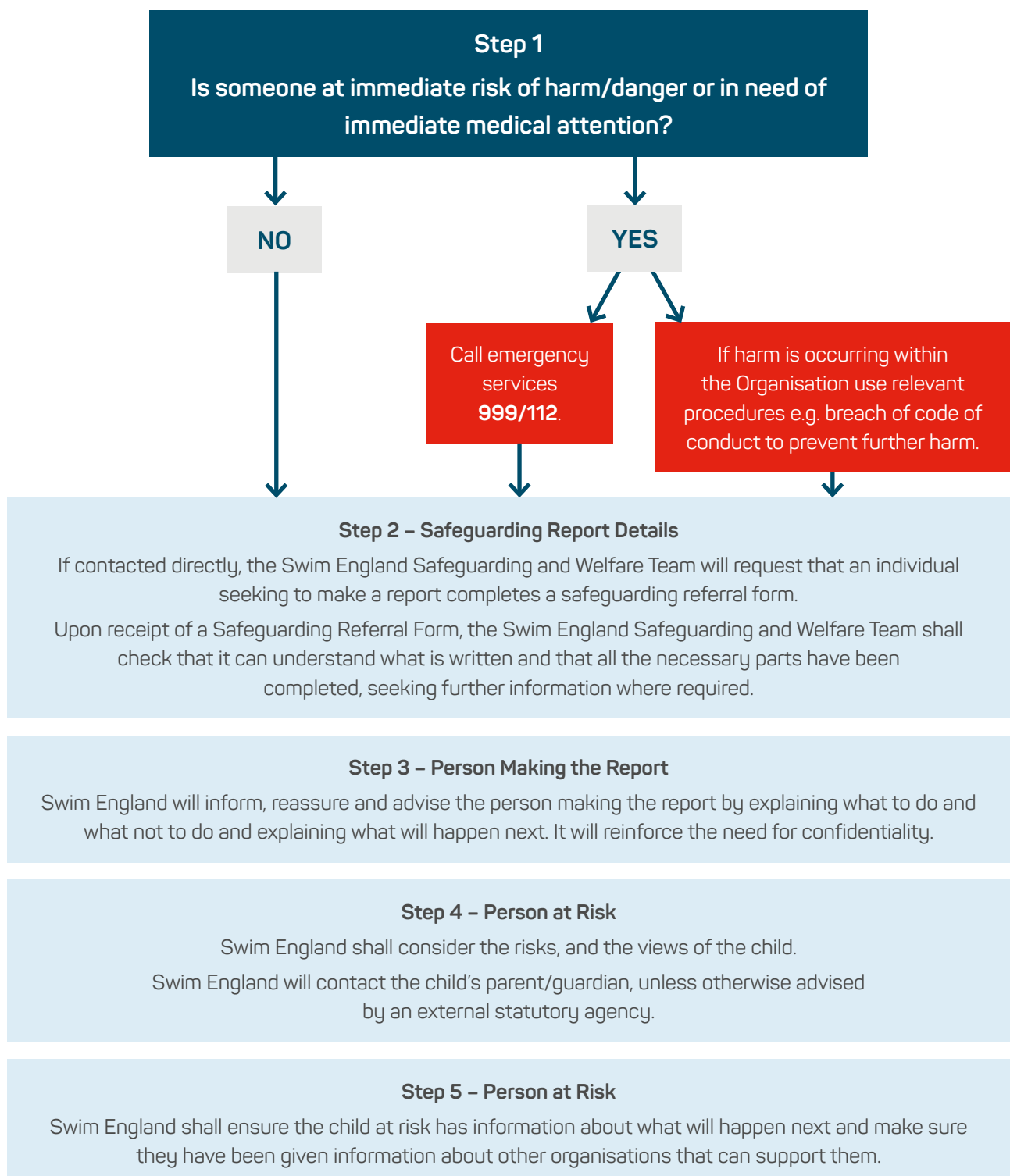
Any dispute within the club or alleged breach of a club's rules (including its Code of Conduct) should be resolved through the Club Complaints procedure detailed within the Swim England Handbook.

We may also signpost the individual to Swim England's Office of Judicial Administration, or in

the case of serious misconduct to our Disciplinary Officer, where we believe the matter does not amount to a safeguarding concern, but is still a breach of Swim England's Code of Ethics or Regulations.

Flowchart 2 – Swim England Child Safeguarding Procedure

Steps 1-5 Initial response (as soon as the Safeguarding referral is received)



Steps 6-13: Taking Action

Step 6 If a serious crime is suspected Swim England will contact the Police	Step 7 If we believe there is a child at risk of serious or significant harm Swim England will ensure a referral is made to the local MASH (multi-agency safeguarding hub)	Step 8 If harm is suspected of being caused within aquatics governed by Swim England	Step 9 Swim England will consult with and inform the child Participant (via their parent/guardian)
Criminal enquiry, investigation, proceedings.	Safeguarding process led by Local Authority.	Swim England will take short term steps within its regulations to prevent harm, under its safeguarding regulations and/or policies applicable to its staff.	Swim England will appoint a case officer who will maintain regular contact with the parent/guardian of any children who have been at risk of harm.
Possible outcomes: e.g. • Criminal Caution or Conviction • Police referral back to Organisation • Referral to Independent Barring Board • Unsubstantiated– no further action	Possible outcomes: e.g. • LA enquiries triggered • Other adults at risk identified • Multi-agency meetings to coordinate actions • New/changed care and support and protection plan for any child in need, or child protection case • NOT a child in need or child protection case – information and advice provided	Possible outcomes: e.g. • Informal resolution • Education and training • Formal warning • Dismissal • Role conditions applied • Contract ended • Unsubstantiated – no further action • Suspension from Swim England	Possible outcomes: e.g. • Child receives information about the process • Child supported to have their views and experience heard • Child supported to gain support from other agencies • Child continues to participate in Organisation/ sport
Step 10 Swim England shall coordinate its actions with those of other agencies. It shall attend and contribute to Child Safeguarding strategy meetings where necessary.			
Step 11 In the event of action taken under its Safeguarding Regulations, Swim England shall hold a Case Management Group meeting to consider any outcomes or risk management measures required.			
Steps 12 and 13 Recording and reporting. Ensure decisions made, actions taken, and outcomes logged and reported.			

2.4 Adult safeguarding

Introduction

Swim England is committed to safeguarding adults in line with national legislation and relevant guidance. Swim England has produced this policy to assist in safeguarding and protecting all adults in our sports.

Swim England believes that all our Members involved in the aquatics sports have the right to stay safe and have fun. Amongst other things, sport develops physical skills, self-esteem and the ability to be a team player, as well as providing an opportunity to achieve individual success. We will safeguard adults by endeavouring to ensure that our activities are delivered in a way which keeps all adults safe.

Swim England is committed to creating a culture of zero-tolerance of harm to adults. This requires the recognition of adults who may be at risk and the circumstances which may increase risk; knowing how adult abuse, exploitation or neglect manifests itself; and a necessity to report safeguarding concerns. This extends to recognising and reporting harm experienced anywhere, including within our activities, within other organised community or voluntary activities, in the community, in the person's own home and in any care setting.

Swim England is committed to implementing best safeguarding practices and to upholding the rights of all adults to live free from harm and abuse, including exploitation and neglect.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other Policies and Regulations that Swim England has in place, including, but not limited to:

- the Swim England Handbook (including the Swim England judicial and safeguarding regulations); and
- the Swim England Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Legislation and Principles

Key points

- Local Authorities have a legal duty to support Adults at Risk.
- Adults at Risk are defined within legislation.
- The law provides a framework for good practice in adult safeguarding, placing the overall well-being of the Adult at Risk at the centre of any intervention.

- The law emphasises the importance of person-centred safeguarding, referred to as 'making safeguarding personal', however, it also provides a framework for decision-making on behalf of adults who cannot make decisions for themselves.
- There is a framework for organisations to share concerns they have about Adults at Risk with the local authority, including information sharing and cooperation.

Legislation

Safeguarding of adults in England is covered by various pieces of legislation, including:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Care Act 2014
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulations

This body of legislation may be amended, repealed or added to from time to time.

In addition to the above, various other pieces of legislation inevitably touch on adult safeguarding such as legislation concerning assault, sexual offences, or fraud.

The principles underpinning adult safeguarding are:

1. **empowerment** – people should be supported and encouraged to make their own decisions with informed consent;
2. **prevention** – it is better to take action before harm occurs where possible;
3. **proportionality** – the least intrusive response that is appropriate to the risk presented should be taken;
4. **protection** – support and representation should be given to those in the greatest need;
5. **partnership** – local solutions should be provided by services working within their own communities. Such communities have a key role to play in prevention, detection and reporting; and
6. **accountability** – safeguarding should be delivered with accountability and transparency.

Who is an Adult at Risk?

An Adult at Risk is an individual aged 18 years and over who:

- a. has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs); and
- b. is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- c. as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

All three requirements must be met in order to be considered an Adult at Risk.

Local Authorities, health services, and the Police have specific responsibilities imposed by law to provide additional protection from abuse and neglect to Adults at Risk.

When a Local Authority has reason to believe there is an Adult at Risk, they have a responsibility to find out more about the situation and decide what actions need to be taken to support the adult.

Required actions may be taken by the Local Authority (usually social services) and/or by other agencies, for example the Police and health services. Swim England may need to take action as part of safeguarding an adult, for example, to use the disciplinary procedures in relation to a member of staff or Member who has been reported to be harming an adult Member. The Local Authority role includes having multi-agency procedures, which coordinate the actions taken by different organisations.

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. It can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it. Any or all of the following types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent, negligence, omission or ignorance.

There are different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and different circumstances in which they may take place.

Safeguarding legislation includes the following types of abuse:

- Physical
- Sexual

- Psychological
- Neglect
- Financial

Abuse can take place in any relationship and there are many contexts in which abuse might take place, for example, institutional abuse, domestic abuse, forced marriage, human trafficking, modern slavery, sexual exploitation, county lines, radicalisation, hate crime, mate crime, cyber bullying, and scams. Some of these are named specifically within home nation legislation.

Abuse can take place within a sporting context and anyone could be the cause of harm to another person. For example: a member of staff, a coach, a volunteer, a Member or a spectator.

Some examples of abuse within sport could include:

- harassment of a Member because of their (perceived) disability or other protected characteristics;
- failing to meet the needs of the Member, for example, training without a necessary break;
- a coach intentionally striking an athlete;
- one elite Member controlling another athlete with threats of withdrawal from their partnership;
- an official sending unwanted sexually explicit text messages to a Member with learning disabilities; or
- a Member threatening another Member with physical harm, bullying them, and/or persistently blaming them for poor performance.

Abuse or neglect outside sport could be carried out by:

- a spouse, partner or family member;
- neighbours or residents;
- friends, acquaintances or strangers;
- people who deliberately exploit adults they perceive as vulnerable; or
- paid staff, professionals or volunteers providing care and support.

Often the perpetrator is known to the adult and may be in a position of trust.

Signs and indicators of abuse and neglect

An adult Member may confide to a member of staff, coach, volunteer, or another Member that they are experiencing abuse inside or outside of the aquatics sports. Similarly, others may suspect that this is the case.

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. There may be other explanations, but they should not be ignored.

The signs and symptoms include but are not limited to:

- unexplained bruises or injuries, or lack of medical attention when an injury is present;
- a Member has belongings or money going missing;
- a Member is no longer attending or enjoying their sessions;
- a Member is losing or gaining weight or has an unkempt appearance. For example, this could be a Member whose hygiene deteriorates;
- a change in the behaviour or confidence of a Member. For example, a Member may appear quiet and withdrawn when their brother comes to collect them from sessions in contrast to their personal assistant whom they greet with a smile;
- self-harm;
- a fear of a particular group of people or individual; or
- another person always speaks for the Member and doesn't allow them to make their own choices.

Wellbeing principle

"The success of sport, in terms of helping people achieve their potential, making the most of existing talent, and attracting new people to sport relies on putting people – their safety, wellbeing and welfare – at the centre of what sport does."

The concept of 'wellbeing' is woven throughout UK legislation and is part of the law about how health and social care is provided. Our wellbeing includes our mental and physical health, our relationships, our connection with our communities and our contribution to society.

Being able to live free from abuse and neglect is a key element of wellbeing.

The legislation recognises that statutory agencies have sometimes acted disproportionately in the past. For example, removing an Adult at Risk from their own home when there were other ways of preventing harm.

For that reason any actions taken to safeguard an adult Member must take their whole wellbeing into account and be proportionate to the risk of harm.

Making safeguarding personal

The legislation recognises that adults make choices that may mean that one part of their wellbeing suffers at the expense of another – for example, they move away from friends and family to take a better job. Similarly, adults can choose to risk their personal safety; for example, to provide care to a partner with dementia who becomes abusive when they are disorientated and anxious.

None of us can make these choices for another adult. If we are supporting someone to make choices about their own safety, we need to understand ‘what matters’ to them and what outcomes they want to achieve from any actions agencies take to help them to protect themselves.

In effect, if an adult has the capacity to make a decision, that decision must be respected even where it may be ‘unwise’ or not considered to be in their best interests.

The concept of ‘Person Centred Safeguarding’, also known as ‘Making Safeguarding Personal’ means we should engage the person in a conversation about how best to respond to their situation in a way that enhances their involvement, choice and control, as well as improving their quality of life, wellbeing and safety. Organisations work to support adults to achieve the outcomes they want for themselves. The adult’s views, wishes, feelings and beliefs must be taken into account when decisions are made about how to support them to be safe. There may be many different ways to prevent further harm. Working with the person will mean that actions taken help them to find the solution that is right for them. Treating people with respect, enhancing their dignity and supporting their ability to make decisions also helps promote people’s sense of self-worth and supports recovery from abuse.

If someone has difficulty making their views and wishes known, they can be supported or represented by an advocate. This might be a safe family member or friend of their choice or a professional advocate (usually from a third sector organisation).

Mental capacity and decision making

We make many decisions every day, often without realising. UK law assumes that all people over the age of 16 have the ability to make their own decisions, unless it has been proved that they are unable to do so. It also gives us the right to make any decision that we need to make and gives us the right to make our own decisions even if others consider them to be unwise.

We make so many decisions that it is easy to take this ability for granted.

The law says that to make a decision we need to:

- understand information;
- remember it for long enough;
- think about the information; and
- communicate our decision.

A person's ability to do this may be affected by things such as learning disability, dementia, mental health needs, acquired brain injury and physical ill health.

Most adults have the ability to make their own decisions given the appropriate support. However, some people can only make simple decisions like which colour T-shirt to wear or can only make decisions if a lot of time is spent supporting them to understand the options. If someone has a disability that means they need support to understand or make a decision this support must be provided. A small number of people cannot make any decisions.

Being unable to make a decision is described as 'lacking mental capacity'.

A person's mental capacity can change. If it is safe and possible to do so, wait until they can be involved in decision making or can make the decision for themselves.

Consider the following:

- A person with epilepsy may not be able to make a decision following a seizure.
- Someone who is anxious may not be able to make a decision at that point in time.
- A person may not be able to respond as quickly if they have just taken some medication that causes fatigue.

Mental Capacity is important for safeguarding for several reasons.

- Preventing someone from making decisions they are capable of making is abuse. For example, a disabled adult may want to take part in an activity but their carer will not allow them to and will not provide the support they would need. Conversely the adult may not seem to be benefiting from an activity that other people are insisting they do.
- An adult may be being abused if they are scared of the consequences of acting against the wishes of the person abusing them. This is recognised in law as coercion and, in such a case, a person can be assumed not to have mental capacity because they cannot make 'free and informed decisions'.

- Mental Capacity must be considered when we believe abuse or neglect might be taking place. It is important to make sure an Adult at Risk has choices in the actions taken to safeguard them, including whether or not they want other people informed about what has happened. However, in some situations the adult may not have the mental capacity to understand the choice or to tell you their views.

Legislation describes when and how we can make decisions for people who are unable to make decisions for themselves.

The principles are the same:

- We can only make decisions for other people as a last resort where they cannot make the decision for themselves at the time it is needed. Therefore, if the decision can wait, we should wait, for example by obtaining assistance to help the person make their decision or waiting until they can make it themselves.
- If we have to make a decision for someone else then we must make the decision in their best interests (for their benefit) and take into account their overall wellbeing and what we know about their preferences and wishes.
- If the action we are taking to keep people safe will restrict them then we must think of the way to do that which restricts to their freedom and rights as little as possible while minimising the risks posed.

Many potential difficulties with making decisions can be overcome with preparation. A person needing support to help them make decisions whilst taking part in a swimming Club will ordinarily be accompanied by someone e.g. a family member or formal carer whose role includes supporting them to make decisions.

It is good practice to get as much information about the person as possible. Some people with care and support needs will have a 'One page profile' or a 'This is me' document that describes important things about them. Some of those things will be about how to support the person, their routines, food and drink choices etc. but will also include things they like and do not like doing. It's also important to have an agreement with the person who has enrolled the adult in the sports activity about how different types of decisions will be made on a day to day basis.

If a person who has a lot of difficulty making their own decisions is thought to be being abused or neglected, Swim England will need to make a referral to the Local Authority, and this should result in health or social care professionals making an assessment of mental capacity and/or getting the person the support they need to make decisions.

There may be times when we need to make decisions on behalf of an individual in an emergency.

Decisions taken in order to safeguard an adult who cannot make the decision for themselves could include:

- sharing information about safeguarding concerns with people that can help protect them; and
- stopping them being in contact with the person causing harm.

2.5 Reporting a concern about an adult at risk of harm

All Members should be aware of how to report any concerns which they are aware of, however, it is especially important that Welfare Officers are aware of the reporting procedures for any adult safeguarding concern.

Swim England is committed to ensuring that any adult Member who attends a Swim England Organisation, event or activity will be safeguarded from harm. Protection and safeguarding of all of our Members is paramount and should be based on prevention and best practice. However, we recognise that not all risks can be removed and safeguarding concerns will continue to be raised both within, and outside of, any Organisation.

When made aware of concerns about an adult Member, a Welfare Officer must share such concerns with Swim England where any of the following consent conditions apply:

1. the adult Member has consented to the information being shared;
2. the adult Member is believed to lack the mental capacity to decide on the next steps themselves (if in doubt, please refer to the Safeguarding and Welfare Team);
3. the adult Member or someone else is at risk of harm; or
4. where a concern has been reported to an external body (such as the Police in an emergency), this must be reported as soon as practically possible.

The following three stages of action must be taken for anyone who may have a concern or is made aware of a concern about an adult Member's wellbeing:

Stage 1 – React to the concern, disclosure, suspicion or allegation in a timely and appropriate manner.

Stage 2 – Record the relevant information.

Stage 3 – Report the information to the appropriate person(s) and/or Organisations(s), subject to the above conditions being met, as detailed in this chapter.

You do not have to decide whether a concern or incident amounts to abuse or a failure to safeguard an adult Member, or whether a person is an Adult at Risk. You do have to refer that concern to the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team so they can make that decision.

Anyone with a concern relating to Members in aquatics can contact the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team for advice and guidance.

If you are experiencing, at risk of, or have experienced harm, or you are concerned that an Adult Member is experiencing, at risk of, or has experienced harm, please contact the Safeguarding and Welfare Team for advice on **01509 640700** (Option 1 for Swim England and then Option 3 for Safeguarding) or at safeguarding@swimming.org. The Safeguarding and Welfare Team will be able to provide advice even if you are not making a referral or are unsure whether to do so.

The online referral forms for both children and adults are available at:

swimming.org/swimengland/how-raise-concern-complaint.

You may be concerned about harm to another person because of something you have seen or heard, information you have been told by others or because someone has confided in you about things that are happening or have happened to them.

You must not keep safeguarding concerns to yourself.

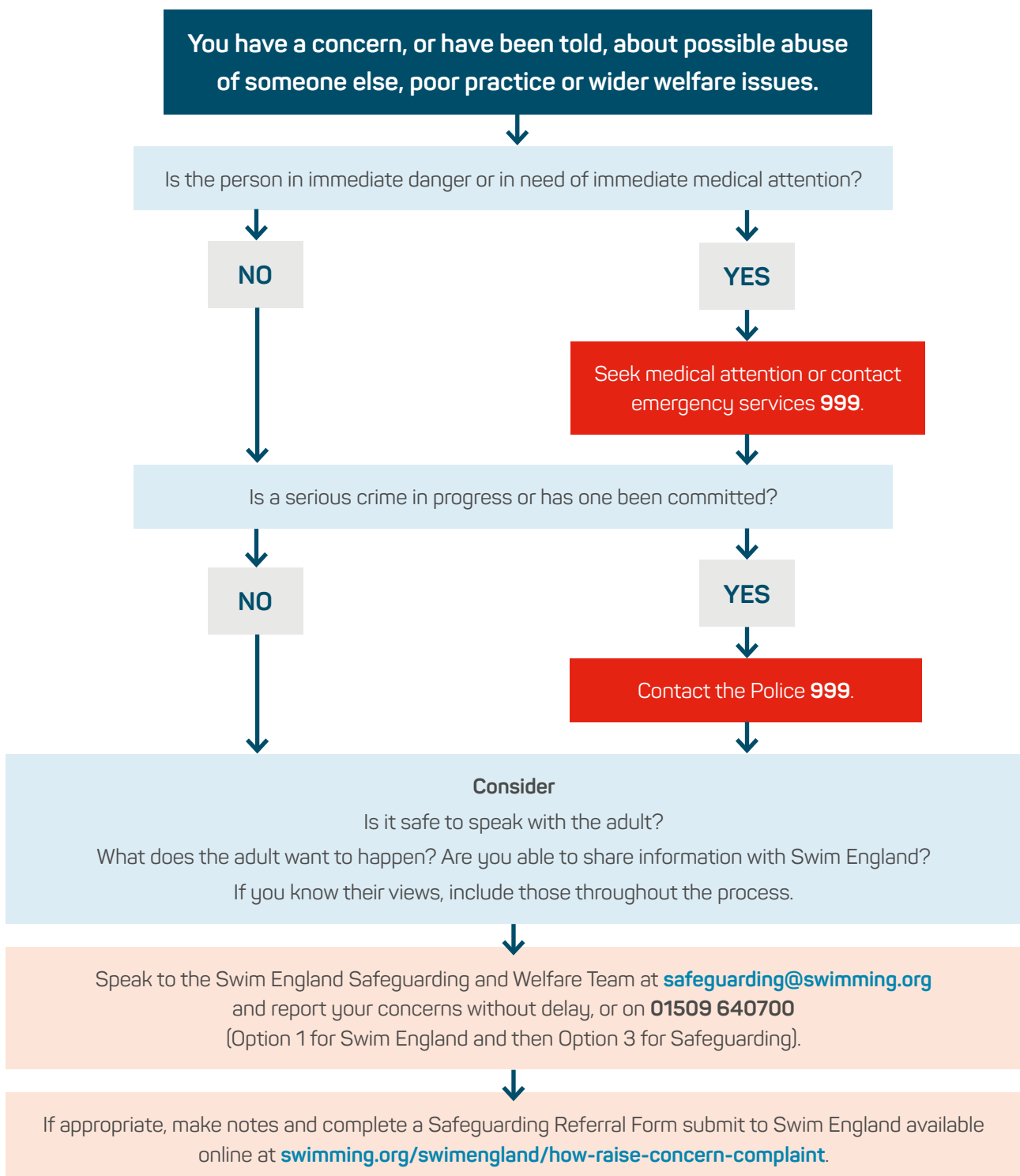
If you have concerns or you are told about possible or alleged abuse, poor practice or wider welfare issues you must contact your Club Welfare Officer or the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team as soon as you can.

If you are concerned about harm being caused to someone else, please be aware that:

- it is not your responsibility to prove or decide whether an adult Member has been harmed or abused;
- it is not your responsibility to make an assessment on whether an adult is classed as an 'Adult at risk';
- it is, however, everyone's responsibility to respond to and report concerns they have using the Swim England safeguarding referral form;
- if someone has a need for immediate medical attention you must also always call an ambulance on **999**;
- if you are concerned someone is in immediate danger or a serious crime is being committed, you must also contact the Police on **999** straight away;
- remember to be person-centred and to make safeguarding personal by discussing your concerns with the adult Member and seeking to understand what they would like to happen where it is safe for you to do so. Inform them that you have to pass on your concerns to your Welfare Officer and Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team;

- you must not contact the adult Member before talking to your Welfare Officer or the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team if the person allegedly causing the harm is likely to find out as a result; and
- you must not confront the person thought to be causing the harm.

Flowchart 3 – Welfare Officer response to concerns about an adult being harmed or at risk of harm



Responding to a direct disclosure

If an adult discloses to you that they are being harmed or abused, or you are a Welfare Officer who receives information which gives a cause for concern, you should:

- treat the disclosure seriously;
- remain calm;
- listen carefully to what is said, allowing the discloser to continue at their own pace;
- be sensitive;
- keep questions to a minimum, only ask questions if you need to identify or clarify what the person is telling you and do not ask leading questions;
- reassure the person that they have done the right thing in revealing the information;
- ask them what they would like to happen next;
- explain what you would like to do next in response to the concern;
- explain that you will have to share the information with the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team;
- ask for their consent for the information to be shared outside of Swim England;
- make an arrangement as to how you or the Club Welfare Officer can contact them safely;
- help them to contact other organisations for advice and support (e.g. Police, Domestic Abuse helpline, Victim Support). Some links to such support may be found within Appendix 2 of this Policy;
- act swiftly to report and carry out any required actions if you are a Welfare Officer; and
- record in writing what was said, using the adult's own words, as soon as possible, along with any actions taken or proposed.

You must not:

- dismiss or ignore the concern;
- make negative comments about the alleged perpetrator;
- make assumptions or speculate;
- come to your own conclusions;
- probe for more information than is offered;
- make promises that cannot be kept, including that you will keep the disclosure secret when you can not;
- conduct an investigation of the case yourself;

- confront the person thought to be causing harm;
- take sole responsibility for the concern; or
- tell anyone else about the concern who has no need to be made aware of it.

How will Swim England respond?

Once a concern has been passed to the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team, it will coordinate the Swim England Adult Safeguarding Procedure (see Flowchart 4, [page 60](#)).

The Safeguarding and Welfare Team will keep clear records of decision making, actions taken, and the outcomes achieved. They will also collect feedback from the adult.

The Safeguarding and Welfare Team, where appropriate, in consultation with the Case Management Group, will take the following actions.

Immediate response

Initially, Swim England will ensure that any immediate actions necessary to safeguard anyone at risk have been taken.

If the risk is said to be due to the behaviour of any Member, the Safeguarding and Welfare Team shall seek to prevent that person making contact with the adult being harmed.

If we have been contacted directly regarding a concern, we will request that the individual reporting the matter completes a Safeguarding Referral Form, if they have not already done so, as soon as possible. We shall then check that we can understand what is written on the form and that all the necessary parts have been completed. Where required, we may need to seek further information before taking additional action.

Where an individual reporting a matter requires assistance in completing the referral form, Swim England shall seek to assist the individual in doing so, which may include a Safeguarding and Welfare Team member completing the form over telephone.

Swim England shall inform, reassure, and advise the person making the report, for example on what to do and what not to do. We shall explain what will happen next and reinforce the need for confidentiality.

We shall then take the following preliminary actions:

1. We shall consider what we know about the situation, what the risks are, what is known of the views of the adult, whether they have given their consent to the report being made

and determine whether they might be considered to be an 'adult at risk'.

2. We will establish whether the person making the report believes that the adult has the mental capacity to make decisions about what safeguarding actions they want to be taken. We do not expect the reporting individual to assess this, only provide their opinion.
3. We shall decide whether we need to contact the adult to obtain more information, determine their wishes, or explain what actions we may need to take. We shall also consider whether it is safe to do so.
4. If safe to do so, we shall ensure that the adult is given information about the process and what will happen next. We shall provide them with information about other organisations that can support them.

Taking action

In all situations we will ensure that, where the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team can act to prevent further harm, it has the information to do so. This includes supporting the adult. Depending on the situation Swim England may need to pass information to and work together with other organisations such as the Police and the Local Authority safeguarding team.

Consult and decide

If necessary, the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team shall consult with the Local Authority and/or the Police.

Swim England shall contact the Police where:

- a serious crime has been committed;
- a crime has been committed against someone without the mental capacity to contact the Police themselves; or
- a crime has been committed against an adult Participant who has asked Swim England to make a report to the Police on their behalf because they are unable to themselves.

Swim England shall ensure a referral/report is made to the Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Team or Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) (where the adult Member lives) when it believes that an adult Member may be at risk and:

- the adult Member appears not to have the mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety and well-being;
- the risk is posed by a person employed or volunteering in work with adults with care and support needs (including within a sports organisation);

- there are other 'adults at risk' (e.g. another family member or another Member);
- the adult Member lives in Wales or Northern Ireland; or
- the adult Member lives in England or Scotland and they have asked Swim England to make a report or have given their informed consent to Swim England making it.

Further action

If Swim England believes a child to be at risk, we will additionally ensure a child safeguarding referral is made to the local authority. This includes all situations where there is domestic abuse within the household where the child lives.

Where the Safeguarding and Welfare Team considers it necessary, we may take action under its safeguarding regulations, published within the Swim England Handbook.

Such action may include but is not limited to:

- an investigation into the conduct of the Subject of Concern and the risk posed by them;
- imposing a temporary suspension where necessary to protect individuals or the integrity of an investigation.
- requiring supervision, mentoring, or retraining; and
- imposing a suspension for a specified term.

There may be times where, after a concern has been reported to us, that we need to undertake an investigation to determine what has occurred and whether someone poses a risk to children or adults. The outcome of any such investigation will determine our next steps, which may include requirements to undergo further training or mentoring or, where absolutely necessary, a suspension from the aquatics sports.

If we consider that an investigation is necessary, we shall notify the individual, providing them with an outline of the nature of the concerns. This outline may be rather general in order to protect the identities of those raising the concerns.

When an investigation is required, we shall commission an independent safeguarding consultant, either directly or through Sport Resolutions, to look into the matter, based on an agreed terms of reference and investigation plan.

We do allow discretion to the investigator to conduct the investigation as they see fit, however, an investigation will usually involve:

- interviewing and taking statements from relevant complainants and witnesses;

- disclosure to the subject of concern;
- an interview with the subject of concern, allowing them to provide their account; and
- consideration of any additional evidence provided by the complainant, witnesses or the subject of concern.

However, if an investigator considers it necessary, they may take or not take any step regarding an investigation.

Swim England expects anyone involved in an investigation in any capacity to comply with such and not to act in a way that will hinder or prejudice the investigation.

Upon completion of the investigation, the investigator will write an investigation report, detailing their findings and any recommendations made. This will be considered by the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team and, if risks are identified, we may take further action to minimise such risks, in line with the Safeguarding Regulations within the Swim England Handbook.

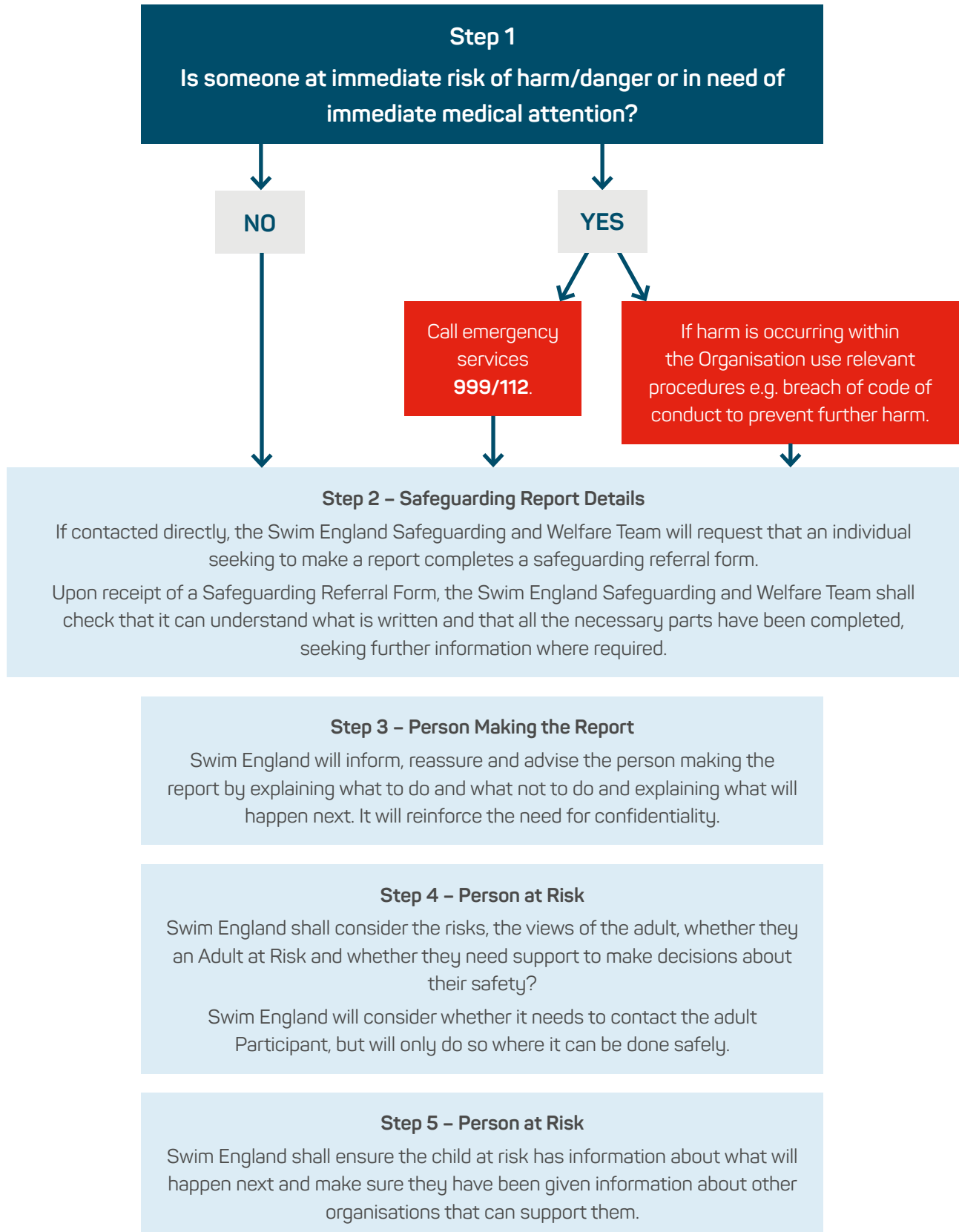
If the matter does not reach the threshold of a safeguarding concern, the matter will be referred back to the referrer and relevant Organisation for a local resolution as appropriate.

Any dispute within the club or alleged breach of a club's rules (including its Code of Conduct) should be resolved through the Club Complaints procedure detailed within the Swim England Handbook.

We may also signpost the individual to Swim England's Office of Judicial Administration, or in the case of serious misconduct to our Disciplinary Officer, where we believe the matter does not amount to a safeguarding concern, but is still a breach of Swim England's Code of Ethics or Regulations.

Flowchart 4 – Swim England Adult Safeguarding Procedure

Steps 1-5 Initial response (as soon as the Safeguarding referral is received)



Steps 6-13: Taking Action

Step 6 If a serious crime is suspected Swim England will contact the Police	Step 7 If we believe there is an 'Adult at Risk' Swim England will make a safeguarding adults report to the Local Authority	Step 8 If harm is suspected of being caused within aquatics governed by Swim England	Step 9 Swim England will consult with and inform the adult Participant
Criminal enquiry, investigation, proceedings.	Safeguarding adults process led by Local Authority.	Swim England will take short term steps within its regulations to prevent harm, under its safeguarding regulations and/or policies applicable to its staff.	Swim England will appoint a case officer who will maintain regular contact with the adult/s who have been at risk of harm.
Possible outcomes: e.g. • Criminal Caution or Conviction • Police referral back to Organisation • Referral to Independent Barring Board • Unsubstantiated– no further action	Possible outcomes: e.g. • LA enquiries triggered • Adult supported to 'make safeguarding personal' • Other adults at risk identified • Multi-agency meetings to coordinate actions • New/changed care and support and protection plan for any adult at risk • NOT an adult at risk – information and advice provided	Possible outcomes: e.g. • Informal resolution • Education and training • Formal warning • Dismissal • Role conditions applied • Contract ended • Unsubstantiated – no further action • Suspension from Swim England	Possible outcomes: e.g. • Adult receives information about the process • Adult supported to have their views and experience heard • Adult supported to gain support from other agencies • Adult continues to participate in Organisation/ sport
Step 10 Swim England shall coordinate its actions with those of other agencies. It shall attend and contribute to Adult Safeguarding strategy meetings where necessary.			
Step 11 In the event of action taken under its Safeguarding Regulations, Swim England shall hold a Case Management Group meeting to consider any outcomes or risk management measures required.			
Steps 12 and 13 Recording and reporting. Ensure decisions made, actions taken, and outcomes logged and reported.			

Recording, information sharing and confidentiality

“Data protection law will never get in the way of you sharing information to protect a child or young person at risk of harm, either to their physical or mental wellbeing. You will not get in trouble with the ICO for doing the right thing”.

John Edwards, Information Commissioner of the United Kingdom

Organisations have a duty to comply with the data protection legislation and regulations in place from time to time. Information about concerns of abuse includes personal data, potentially amounting to criminal offence data. It is therefore important to be clear as to the grounds for processing and sharing information about concerns of abuse.

Processing information includes record keeping. Records relating to safeguarding concerns will be accurate and relevant. Swim England stores all such concerns on encrypted servers with access limited to those who require it. Organisations must make arrangements to ensure that all safeguarding records are kept securely, with access limited only to those who need it.

Welfare Officers in Organisations must be able to access records in a timely manner, and these records must be organised, and easily searchable. Arrangements must be made to ensure that access to safeguarding records is transferred to any new Welfare Officers.

Welfare Officers must not use a personal email for their role, and the Organisation must arrange for a specific email address that must only be accessed by the Welfare Officer. Access to this email address must also be transferred to any new Welfare Officers, and log-in details (such as passwords, and two-factor authentication details) must be changed when there is a change to the Welfare Officer.

Sharing information, with the right people, is central to good practice in safeguarding. However, it must only take place where necessary and not excessively, and where considered necessary to ensure the safety of a Member.

Data protection legislation is not a bar to the handling of safeguarding information and sharing concerns with other organisations where required. Concerns will be shared internally to ensure that reports made to any individual within Swim England are referred to the Safeguarding and Welfare Team and to arrange Judicial Committees to consider safeguarding concerns.

If you are aware of a concern and are in doubt as to whether to share information, please seek advice from the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team or contact the Local Authority and explain the situation without giving personal details about the person at risk or the person causing harm.

Any decision to share or not to share information with an external person or organisation must be recorded together with the reasons to share or not share information.

Multi-agency working

Safeguarding legislation gives Local Authorities a leading role, however, it is recognised that safeguarding can involve a wide range of organisations.

Swim England may need to cooperate with the Local Authority and the Police, including but not limited to:

- providing more information about the concern you have raised;
- providing a safe venue for the adult to meet with other professionals, for example, Police, social workers or advocates;
- attending safeguarding meetings;
- coordinating internal investigations (e.g. complaints, disciplinary) with investigations by the Police or other agencies;
- sharing information about the outcomes of internal investigations; and
- providing a safe environment for the adult to continue their sporting activity / their role in the Organisation.

Information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding. When taking decisions about what information to share, you must consider how much information you need to release. Not sharing more data than is necessary is a key principle of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018, and you should consider the impact of disclosing information on the information subject and any third parties. Information must be proportionate to the need and level of risk.

The most important consideration is whether sharing information is likely to support the safeguarding and protection of a child or adult at risk. There will be incidents where sharing information with a person (or their parent/guardian) suspected of a criminal offence may compromise an investigation. Please seek advice from the Safeguarding and Welfare Team in such cases.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality must be maintained at all times when a concern has been raised and is being investigated. Organisations must only tell individuals who need to know and can help in managing the concerns. If the concern relates to a child, and their parents/guardians are not implicated in the concern, ensure they are made aware at the earliest opportunity. Please refer to **"2.4 Adult safeguarding" on page 43** for information on how to handle issues of consent to share information and confidentiality for concerns relating to adults.

Consider the best method of communication to maintain confidentiality and be mindful of the environment. For example, who else is around you, can you make a phone call without others overhearing your conversation?

If breached, confidentiality can put people at risk of further harm either by further inappropriate action of an individual(s) involved or other individuals who hear about the concern through rumours. Ultimately, any investigation may be impeded by misinformation or rumours.

Section 3

Essential Toolkit

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Safer Recruitment

Safer Recruitment in Wavepower applies to both voluntary and paid staff. All staff and volunteers for any Swim England Organisation must go through an appropriate vetting process prior to their appointment in order to establish their suitability to work with children and adults at risk.

In the recruitment of paid staff and volunteers, the wellbeing of all of our Members is paramount. Swim England is specifically committed to providing a safe environment for children and adults at risk in our Organisations and the requirements of the recruitment process outlined below will assist Organisations to ensure best practice is implemented to protect children and adults whenever a someone is appointed.

Role profile

For roles where individuals will be working in paid 'Regulated activity' (specific examples of these roles are list in the following DBS section, and as a rule are individuals who will require both an enhanced DBS and barred list check as part of their recruitment checks before commencing their role), the relevant person(s) in the Organisation must draw up a 'role profile' or job description in order to identify the main responsibilities of the job that is being recruited for. They will need to clearly identify the skills and experience required to fulfil the role and draw up a person specification.

A recruitment process must also be developed by each Organisation to ensure every applicant is treated in a fair and consistent manner.

Application form

For roles where individuals will be working in paid 'Regulated activity' (see above), the Organisation must develop and use an application form to collect the information required for the post in question. The form should be developed by more than one individual and must include verification of the applicant's identity.

Meeting and interviewing the applicant

It is vital that all applicants for a paid role working in 'Regulated activity' are interviewed and that the information obtained on the application form is explored appropriately. Questions asked of the applicant must be prepared in advance and it is important that each applicant has the opportunity to discuss their experiences and qualifications for the role. They should also be asked for examples of how they would manage some hypothetical safeguarding

situations and what they would do in that circumstance.

In assessing the applicant's suitability you must:

- consider their relevant qualifications and experience;
- consider their previous experience (if any) of working with children and adults at risk, inside or outside of a sporting environment;
- consider their attitudes and commitment to safeguarding;
- ask them if they have ever been refused work that involved having contact with children or adults at risk; and
- ask them if there is anything else that the Organisation should know that could affect their suitability to work with children or adults at risk, including any ongoing investigations.

References

For paid roles in 'Regulated activity', a minimum of two references must be obtained, even if the person is known to the Organisation. References must not be from a person who is related to the applicant.

One of the references should be from the applicant's current employer and, if possible, one reference from a sports organisation or club which they have been involved with.

If the applicant has not previously been involved with a sports organisation or club of any kind, then the applicant should be asked to provide a reference from someone who knows them personally, who has some knowledge of their attitude to wellbeing and safeguarding. Both references should contain a statement to illustrate that the referee is aware of the post the applicant is applying for.

All references must be followed up by contacting the referee prior to any offer of appointment being made.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process

The Organisation's Welfare Officer is responsible for ensuring DBS checks for your Organisation have been completed as part of the safe recruitment procedure. You should have already been contacted and given information on how to request a DBS check. If not, or if you require advice or guidance on how to carry out a DBS check, you will find information on the Swim England website at swimming.org/swimengland/disclosure-and-barring-services-check.

You can also contact **01509 640 727** or dbs@swimming.org with any questions you may have.

As soon as an applicant has been DBS cleared, you will receive the clearance letter from Swim England to confirm this.

Recruitment decisions

Organisations are required to consider all the information they have about an applicant at each stage of the recruitment process.

The information to consider will include:

- The application form.
- The interview.
- All qualifications seen and confirmed.
- The references including the follow up prior to recruitment.
- The outcome of the DBS check.

The decision can then be made either to appoint the applicant and agree a start date or to reject the application.

All new staff/volunteers must abide by Wavepower and be registered Members of the Organisation and Swim England.

Post-recruitment

It is important that, once a new role has been filled, the following actions are taken.

This includes:

- The expectations, role and responsibilities of the post should be clarified and put in writing to the new recruit.
- The recruit should be formally made aware of, and be asked to sign up to and abide by Wavepower.
- If they have not yet attended the Swim England Safeguarding course then the Organisation must ensure they attend this course as soon as possible.
- Any other training needs should be established and a plan made to meet those needs within an appropriate timescale.
- A period of mentoring, supervision and observation or monitoring should be put into place to support the new recruit.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) enables Swim England to make an informed recruitment decision around an individual's suitability to work with children and adults at risk. The Organisation's Welfare Officer will be responsible for coordinating the DBS checks for your Organisation as part of the safer recruitment procedure.

It is a requirement that any individual in England and Wales applying to be appointed or appointed to a role involving any Regulated Activity complete a Barred List Check. All Members shall participate in and comply with the procedures of the DBS and its checking services in relation to safeguarding matters and any subsequent procedures by Swim England.

Any individual who wishes to work with children or adults at risk is required to undertake a DBS check, which is to be renewed every three years. The minimum age for a DBS check is 16 years old.

There are three different levels of criminal record checks: basic check, standard check or enhanced check (with or without barred lists). As a Swim England Organisation, the minimum level of DBS check required, where applicable, is the enhanced disclosure (without barred list) check. However, for many roles within aquatics, the enhanced disclosure with barred list check would be required. Further guidance around DBS checks in sport can be found at: gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-guidance-leaflets.

Enhanced disclosure only check

This check is a record of all warnings, reprimands, cautions and convictions from local and national Police records. The check may also contain non-conviction information supplied by a Chief Officer, if they feel it is relevant to the role.

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, a person with a criminal record is not required to disclose any spent convictions unless the position they are applying for, or are currently undertaking, is listed as an exception under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975.

Before any Organisation considers asking a person to complete an application for an enhanced disclosure only check, they are legally responsible for ensuring they are entitled

to ask that person to reveal their criminal record. It is against the law to request this kind of check for an individual who is not eligible.

Individuals applying for committee roles such as Chairman, Club Secretary or Treasurer will only require an enhanced disclosure if that individual has an additional role which does meet the eligibility requirements.

In each case, you should assess whether or not the individual's role involves regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of a child, children, or adults at risk. If the individual's main role does not involve any of these activities, then you would need to consider any supplementary roles they may undertake. If the individual does have a supplementary role that involves the activities above, then the enhanced disclosure-only check would be for their supplementary role, rather than for their main role.

Enhanced disclosure with barred list check

This is the highest level of check. The check is a legal requirement for any individual applying for a position which is considered as a 'regulated activity'.

Eligibility for this check is not based on job title but is established by looking at the activities and responsibilities carried out by individual roles and depends on whether the individual will be working with adults or children.

The check will show whether the individual is barred from working with individuals at risk.

The DBS application process via Swim England will not allow you to request an enhanced disclosure with barred list check for a role that is not considered to involve regulated activity.

What level of DBS check do I need?

You need to check whether or not the role being applied for is categorised as a 'regulated activity'. The list provided can help you understand what kind of activities are considered to be regulated activities.

If the role is categorised as a regulated activity, you will need an enhanced disclosure with barred list check.

If the role is not categorised as a regulated activity, you may still need to request an enhanced disclosure only check, for applicants applying for a position which involves regularly caring for, training, supervising or being solely in charge of children or adults at risk.

To assist you with the above, Swim England has produced a list of relevant roles and their associated DBS requirements to help you decide if you need to request an enhanced disclosure only, a barred list check, or neither. See [page 72](#).

DBS checks for someone from overseas

The application process for DBS checks or 'Certificates of Good Character' for someone from overseas varies from country to country. You will have to apply in the country or to the relevant embassy in the UK. Further guidance can be found at:

gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants.

Duty to refer to DBS

Organisations who employ individuals, paid or unpaid, who carry out regulated activities are known as a regulated activity provider (RAP). Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 this brings a legal obligation upon the organisation. As a RAP, you have a legal duty to refer an individual to DBS when you have concerns that someone has either caused harm or has the potential to cause harm to vulnerable groups.

Referrals to DBS must be made when both conditions are met.

Condition 1

You withdraw permission for a person to engage in regulated activity with children and/or adults at risk. Or you move the person to another area of work that isn't a regulated activity. This includes situations when you would have taken the above action, but the person was re-deployed, resigned, retired, or left. For example, a teacher resigns when an allegation of harm to a student is first made.

Condition 2

You think the person has carried out one of the following:

- Engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults. An action or inaction has harmed a child or adult at risk or put them at risk of harm.
- Satisfied the harm test in relation to children and/or adults at risk. For example, there has been no relevant conduct but a risk of harm still exists to a child or adult.
- Been cautioned or convicted of a relevant offence (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations).

If you feel that you may need to make a referral to DBS, contact the Safeguarding and Welfare Team for support.

Update service

The update service is an online subscription, which allows DBS certificates to be kept up to date and reused when applying for similar roles within the same workforce or transferred over if an individual moves roles. This subscription service is free for Swim England volunteers or an annual subscription of £13 for paid members of staff. If an individual wishes to register to the update service they will have 30 days, from the date printed on the disclosure certificate, in which to register. After this date the individual will have to wait until they next go through a DBS check.

More information about the update service and how to register can be found at:

gov.uk/dba-update-service.

DBS Requirement Enhanced Disclosure with Barred List Check	
• Coach • Assistant Coach • Teacher • Assistant Teacher • Club Welfare Officer • County Welfare Officer • Regional Welfare Officer • Lifeguard • Chaperone • Team Manager	• Medical Staff (e.g. Doctor or Nurse) • Sport Psychologist • Tutor to children under 18 years of age • Host family/parent/guardian/carer Individuals who have responsibility for a child other than their own. If this is a private arrangement between parents/guardians, a DBS check would not be required. • Physiotherapist (including Sports Masseur) • Nutritionist
DBS Requirement Enhanced Disclosure only.	
• Pool Helper Supervised role manually assisting and supporting children in the water who are learning to swim or children with a disability.	• Poolside Helper Individuals not training to be or acting as a coach or teacher. Supervised poolside role acting as a helper to the qualified coaching and teaching staff in a training or supervisory capacity.

Please note: this list may be subject to change in accordance with government legislation or further guidance. Please contact the DBS and Services Coordinator if you are unsure whether a role within your organisation would require either an enhanced disclosure only check or an enhanced disclosure with barred list check at:

dba@swimming.org.

! Any person in a regulated activity who allows their DBS or Safeguarding training to expire will no longer be permitted poolside at competitions. For club/Organisation or swim school training or teaching activity the individual must be supervised until the DBS check has been completed.

Criminal record checks containing content

A DBS check containing content does not automatically prevent someone from working with children or adults at risk in the aquatics sports. For example, an individual with certain convictions may not pose any risk to children or adults. However, in order to work with children, a person with content on their DBS must be cleared by the Swim England Safeguarding Department prior to starting the role.

Where a check carried out in accordance with Wavepower, or any self-disclosure as part of safer recruitment procedures, reveals an adverse disclosure, the matter shall be considered by the Lead Safeguarding Officer at Swim England, who shall take one or more of the following actions:

- conclude that the adverse disclosure does not present safeguarding concerns and confirm that the individual can be deployed without restriction;
- request further information, including but not limited to obtaining an explanation for the adverse disclosure and/or references from the individual;
- require the individual to commission, at their own expense, a risk assessment prepared by a suitably qualified person (the terms of which, and the suitably qualified person to be agreed with Swim England); and/or
- refer the matter for consideration by the Case Management Group (including in the event that the Lead Safeguarding Officer cannot vote on the appropriate action).

Upon receipt of any further information sought in accordance with Wavepower, it shall be considered by the Lead Safeguarding Officer who shall:

- conclude that the adverse disclosure does not present safeguarding concerns and confirm that the individual can be deployed without restriction; or
- refer the matter for consideration by the Case Management Group (including in the event that the Lead Safeguarding Officer cannot vote on the appropriate action)

The Case Management Group shall review any decision made at the next appropriate Case Management Group meeting.

Approved safeguarding training

Swim England follows the recommendations of the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit with regard to safeguarding training for our Members with regular responsibility for children. All approved training must be completed every three years.

Training will outline the core principles of safeguarding good practice, responding to concerns and provide understanding of child protection legislation and responsibilities, and adult safeguarding legislation and responsibilities.

Approved training

From January 2024 all Swim England staff and volunteers who are required to complete safeguarding training for their role (these roles are specified in the table on [page 72](#)) must complete the Swim England Safeguarding training course every three years. Other approved external courses will only be valid until their expiry. This workshop is delivered by a Swim England tutor, uses learning scenarios and references Wavepower throughout. Further details on the workshop, availability and booking a workshop in your area can be found at swimenglandqualifications.com/cpds.

This training course is a bespoke course that has been designed specifically for aquatic environments.

Refresher training

Swim England offers a number of different themed modules for online refresher training. This online training is only suitable for individuals who have already completed the Swim England Safeguarding training.

Welfare Officer Training

Welfare Officer (Time to Listen) training must be completed by all Welfare Officers of Swim England, at club, county and regional levels before the start of the role. The course is designed to provide welfare officers with the knowledge and understanding to fulfil the role competently. The current course has aquatics specific content relevant to all Organisations. Please speak to your programme operator or regional office for the next available course. The online Swim England Good Governance and Welfare Officer workshop must be completed by all Welfare Officers of Swim England clubs, counties and regions as part of the Club Affiliation and Good Governance standards.

The role of the Welfare Officer

Every Organisation must have a minimum of one Welfare Officer. The Welfare Officer role is essential in providing a first point of contact for children and adults within the Organisation who have a safeguarding or welfare concern.

For Swim England Clubs that do not have any child Members, the named Welfare Officer may be the County Welfare Officer, if the Club has not appointed a Welfare Officer. The Club must inform all Members of the identity of the County Welfare Officer, and how to contact them.

In partnership with, but independent of, the Club committee/Organisational management, the Welfare Officer must also ensure that the Organisation is adopting and implementing the various safeguarding activities, which are necessary for it to demonstrate its duty of care to Members.

The importance of appointing the right person cannot be underestimated. The appointed individual may be involved in the most private aspects of Members' lives. They may have to take part in meetings and discussions with the Police and statutory agencies. They must show that they are able to handle matters of a safeguarding nature in an appropriate and confidential manner.

The core tasks of a Welfare Officer include:

- raising awareness of and assisting the Organisation in implementing Wavepower;
- assisting the Organisation in putting plans in place for child and adult safeguarding;
- introducing themselves to Members (and if children, their parents/guardians) and ensure they know who to contact and how to access the safeguarding arrangements at the Organisation;
- being the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, children and parents/guardians for any issues concerning welfare and safeguarding;
- ensuring that all incidents are correctly referred and reported in accordance with Wavepower;
- investigating to conclusion all welfare complaints raised to the Organisation;
- acting independently and in the best interests of any child or adult at the Organisation;
- ensuring that relevant Organisation Members, volunteers and staff have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check if appropriate and the opportunity to access appropriate safeguarding training. These must both be updated every three years;
- ensuring that Wavepower procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers are followed;

- being aware of, and have a note of contact details of Police, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Team, Adult Social Care, safeguarding partners, and the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team;
- ensuring the Organisation has Codes of Conduct in place for staff, volunteers, coaches, competitors and parents/guardians;
- ensuring confidentiality is maintained and information is only shared on a 'need-to-know' basis; and
- reporting to (where appropriate) and advising the Organisation's committee or management on issues of safeguarding.

How to appoint a Welfare Officer

- The Organisation should follow the safe recruitment guidance in Wavepower.
- The position of the Welfare Officer is one that requires an enhanced disclosure with barred list DBS check.
- The Welfare Officer should be an appropriate person willing and able to fulfil the commitments of the role.

The Welfare Officer must be someone who:

- is able to act independently and in the best interests of the child or adult at risk;
- is not an active teacher or coach in the setting;
- is not related to, or in a relationship with, an active teacher or coach in the setting;
- is not related to, or in a relationship with, the Chair of the Club Committee or Owner/ Proprietor of the Swim School, where they are the Welfare Officer;
- is able to attend the club frequently;
- has the time to fulfil the role and is prepared to complete all of the core tasks;
- can satisfy the requirements, core skills and knowledge areas needed for the role;
- is prepared to undergo the training required;
- is an Adult.

These requirements are to avoid difficulties that could arise should someone wish to refer a concern to the Welfare Officer but feels unable to do so, or the Welfare Officer feels unable to deal with the concern, due to a conflict of interest.

Should a conflict of interest arise, the Welfare Officer must contact your regional team or Swim England via clubdevelopment@swimming.org to discuss this situation to seek further advice.

The names and contact details of the Welfare Officer(s) must be clearly communicated and publicised to all Members. This ensures that should anyone at the Organisation have a concern they are clear on whom they can refer that concern to.

The email address used by the Welfare Officer must not be a personal email account, and should be formatted in a way that references both the role of welfare officer and the Organisation.

The role of the County Welfare Officer

The County Welfare Officer is appointed by the county, and is required to offer support to clubs as and when required by the clubs or on the request of the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team.

The core tasks of the County Welfare Officer include:

- raising awareness and assist the county in implementing Wavepower;
- assisting the county in putting plans in place for safeguarding;
- being the first point of contact for county staff, volunteers, children and parents/guardians for any issues concerning welfare or potential or alleged abuse;
- ensuring that all incidents are correctly referred and reported in accordance with Wavepower;
- ensuring that all relevant county Members, volunteers and staff have a DBS check if appropriate and the opportunity to access appropriate safeguarding training;
- ensuring that Wavepower procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers are followed;
- being aware of, and have a note of contact details of Police, LADO, MASH Team, safeguarding partners and the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team;
- assisting the county and supporting clubs within the county to ensure that Codes of Conduct are in place;
- sitting on, or being in attendance at as necessary, the county management committee to advise on safeguarding issues;
- ensuring confidentiality is maintained and information is only shared on a 'need-to-know' basis;
- maintaining an up-to-date list of Welfare Officers in the county;
- ensuring awareness of your role and contact details by Welfare Officers in your county; and

- being available to assist clubs in your county as requested, and monitor/review club arrangements for safeguarding children as requested by the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team.

The role of the Regional Welfare Officer

The Regional Welfare Officer, appointed by the relevant Swim England Region, will be required to offer support to clubs and Welfare Officers in their region as and when required or on the request of the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team.

The core tasks of the Regional Welfare Officer include:

- raising awareness and assisting the Club/County Welfare Officers in implementing Wavepower;
- assisting the club/county in putting plans in place for safeguarding;
- maintaining contact with Club and County Welfare Officers to ensure that all relevant Members, volunteers and staff have a DBS check if appropriate, and the opportunity to access appropriate safeguarding training;
- ensuring that Wavepower procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers are followed by clubs and counties;
- being aware of, and have a note of contact details of Police, LADO, MASH Team, safeguarding partners and the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team;
- assisting and supporting clubs in the region to ensure Codes of Conduct are in place;
- sitting on, or being in attendance at as necessary, the regional management committee to advise on safeguarding issues;
- ensuring confidentiality is maintained and information is only shared on a 'need-to-know' basis;
- maintaining an up-to-date list of Welfare Officers in your region;
- ensuring awareness of your role and contact details by Welfare Officers in your region; and
- being available to assist clubs in your region as requested, and monitor/review club arrangements for safeguarding children as requested by the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team.

Skills and qualities required for all Welfare Officers:

- Have a child-centred approach.
- Basic administration and record-maintenance skills.

- Excellent communication skills.
- Confidence when referring cases externally.
- The ability to ensure policies and procedures are effectively implemented.

Training required:

Specific Welfare Officer Training is required for this role. Welfare Officers may have completed either the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit or UK Coaching Time to Listen Welfare Officer training course. Courses are run by the Swim England Regions and details can be found by contacting your Regional Office. This training must be refreshed every three years.

The Swim England Safeguarding training course, which must be refreshed after three years.

Managing bullying

Swim England is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our Members so they can learn to swim or train in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable within our sports.

What is bullying behaviour?

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as “**the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online**”.

Bullying can include:

- **Verbal:** name calling, persistent teasing, mocking, taunting and threats.
- **Physical:** any degree of physical violence including hitting, kicking and pushing.
- **Intimidating behaviour,** theft or the intentional damage of possessions.
- **Emotional:** excluding, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation, setting people up and spreading rumours.
- **Cyber:** the misuse of digital technologies or communications to bully a person or a group, typically through messages or actions that are threatening and/or intended to cause offence, anxiety or humiliation.
- **‘Banter’:** can include any of the above types of bullying in a way that may not be intended to cause harm to someone, but doesn’t account for the impact such behaviour can have on an individual.

Procedures

Report all bullying incidents to an adult at the Organisation.

That adult must then inform the Welfare Officer. The Welfare Officer and the Organisation will then decide the appropriate method for dealing with the situation, either as a breach of Code of Conduct, or as a welfare complaint. After a local resolution the conclusion must be referred to the Safeguarding and Welfare Team.

Any serious or aggravating factors around bullying can be referred directly to the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team in the first instance.

Advice can be sought from the County or Regional Welfare Officer (if appropriate) or the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team at any time.

Prevention

Everybody within the Organisation has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying. It is mandatory for all Organisations to adhere to the Swim England Code of Ethics and accompanying Codes of Conduct. Wavepower provides Code of Conduct templates for Organisations to use and adapt. All Organisation Members must sign a copy of the Code of Conduct when they join an Organisation so they are aware and understand acceptable standards of behaviour.

Organisations must promote and implement the Codes of Conduct and the Managing Bullying section of Wavepower.

Safeguarding in changing rooms

Our experience shows that incidents of sexual assault and the taking of indecent images still occurs in changing rooms.

It is imperative all Members of the Organisation, including employees and volunteers, understand the individually harmful and legal consequences of a person being sexually assaulted, or having indecent images of them taken. Such behaviour is illegal and will not be tolerated in any form.

We strongly recommend that Organisations engage locally with pool providers to create simple barrier systems, or make use of natural barriers between cubicles (e.g. lockers) to enable mixed 'changing villages' to be used only as separate changing areas for either sex. Children of different sexes should change in separate areas, never in the same cubicle, or adjoining cubicles. This will help in preventing crimes involving covert use of cameras or phones.

❗ Mobile phones and devices should not be used under any circumstances in a changing room area during Swim England regulated activity. This should be supported by clear signage in changing rooms confirming a zero-tolerance approach to the use of mobile phones in changing areas.

All use of mobile devices in a changing room must be reported to the Organisation Welfare Officer and venue.

The Welfare Officer should decide whether or not the breach of Wavepower is a safeguarding concern (such as the reported taking of images/video, or the placing of a phone over/under a changing cubicle) and if so, this must be referred to the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team as soon as possible. If the breach of this policy is not deemed to be a direct safeguarding concern (such as a Member using their phone to make a phone call in a changing area) then this should be dealt with under the Organisation's behaviour and code of conduct process. If a potential crime has been committed, this must be reported to the Police immediately, and the venue must be informed.

Responsibility

Under the duty of care to safeguard children, the Organisation has a responsibility for the wellbeing of children in the changing rooms. This does not mean that parents/guardians have no responsibility, but parents/guardians are often not in the pool complex at the time

when children are swimming and training to exercise their duty of care. For this reason, Organisations must be clear to parents/guardians under what circumstances they require parents/guardians to remain at the pool throughout a session. For example, children who require assistance with changing, or for those children with a disability who may require additional help that the Organisation is unable to provide.

While a child is training or being taught, they remain under the responsibility and duty of care of the person who is teaching or coaching them at that time. If a Member leaves the pool area, the coach or teacher should be aware of this. If they fail to return within a reasonable time, or appear to be upset upon leaving the poolside, the coach/teacher must request that a suitable person checks on them. It is best practice for two persons to look for the Member (the second person could be a senior Member or a parent/guardian). See [“Missing children” on page 85](#).

If a complaint is received about an incident that has occurred in the changing room between a Member of the Organisation and any other person, the Organisation has a duty to act upon that concern as appropriate, following the guidance [on page 34](#). If the incident involved possible risk to children or adults at risk, you must also to make pool management aware.

If the incident involves a person not associated with the Organisation, the pool manager must be made aware and consideration given as to whether the statutory agencies need informing.

Information for Organisations regarding changing facilities

- Ensure that parents/guardians are made aware that changing facilities at venues may be shared by both Organisation Members and members of the general public.
- Ensure parents/guardians are made aware of the type of changing room in use, i.e. separate for male and female or mixed changing villages (and what segregation measures are in place).
- Ensure that the behaviour of Members in changing rooms is part of the Member’s Code of Conduct and any behaviour contracts, where appropriate. Masters (adult) Members should be encouraged to use their own area wherever possible, when changing at the same time as children. Where this is not possible adults are to be reminded to change in an appropriate fashion, and to be mindful that they are changing with children.
- Ensure parents/guardians are aware that they should not be alone in the changing room whilst children are changing, unless their child is of an age where help is required from parents/guardians or if the child requires additional specific assistance. This is generally at an age that is stipulated by the pool hirer, usually seven or eight years of age. In such circumstances, the parent/guardian must be the same gender as the child, unless the

facility has family changing facilities or is a mixed changing village.

- When organising an event where other Clubs or Swim Schools are involved, ensure that parents/ guardians and competitors are advised (via the event information) whether or not the facilities are likely to be open to the general public at any time during the event.

Swim England does not advise that adults supervise changing facilities as that places them and the children at risk of harm and allegation. Organisations may however place an officer or appointed poolside helper on the outside of the doors in and out of the changing rooms to allow Members to call for assistance if required. Designated Organisation officers may also walk through public areas (including village changing areas), particularly if the changing space is shared with members of the public, in order to safeguard Members. This approach has proved helpful to many Organisations when children have reported incidents of bullying or general behaviour issues between Members in the changing rooms.

Missing children

It is hoped that no child will ever go missing from an aquatics activity. If they do, remember most children are found within a few minutes of their disappearance. This policy must be followed if any child leaves a training session where the coach, teacher or those responsible for the activity do not know their location during the times the session is due to have run and where it is not confirmed that their parent or guardian is aware of their location.

If a child for whom your Organisation has responsibility goes missing, the following actions should be taken.

- Ensure other young people are looked after appropriately while you organise a search for the missing young person.
- Inform the young person's parents/guardians if they are present at the event, or nominate an appropriate person to telephone them and advise them of the concern. Reassure them that you are doing all you can to locate their child, asking for any information they may have.
- Either the parent/guardian or the Organisation should try and contact the child on their mobile phone.
- Divide up available responsible adults to search specific areas. It is best to take a short time to organise the search properly so that all places are searched fully.
- Search the area in which the child has gone missing, including changing rooms, toilets, public and private areas and the facility's grounds.
- Request that all those searching report back to you or to a nominated adult at a specific location and time. Record who searched which areas.
- This nominated person should also be making a note of the events, including a physical description of the young person including approximate height, build, eye colour, hair colour and style as well as the colour, brand and type of clothing they were wearing, and where they were last seen, as this will be required by the Police.

If the search is unsuccessful you should then report the concern to the Police.

- The Police may recommend further action to be taken before they get involved; you should follow any guidance they provide.
- If the Police decide to act upon the concern, follow their guidance in respect of further actions to take, if any.

At any stage of the investigation, if the child is located, ensure that you inform all adults involved including the parents/guardians, searchers and Police if by then they are already involved.

If there is an ongoing concern about the safety of a child, refer the concern as practicable to the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team.

Late collection of children

Occasionally there may be times when the late collection of children is unavoidable, or parents/guardians may be delayed, or unable to collect their child from training, or after an event, on time. Parents/guardians should inform the appropriate officer of the Organisation if they are going to be delayed and come to an agreement with the Organisation on the best appropriate action.

If a parent/guardian arrives to collect a child and the officers are concerned at their ability to take appropriate care of the child (i.e. they are considered to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs) the Organisation should gain advice from the Police or Children's Social Care.

Emergency procedures

In the event that a child has not been collected at the expected time and no contact has been made by the parent/guardian.

The Organisation should:

1. Use the emergency numbers they have for the child to try to arrange for a nominated person to collect them.
2. If there is no answer from those contacts ask the child if they have contact numbers for any other family members who may be able to help.
3. If there is no reply or response from the above and after 20 minutes you are unable to contact anyone else the Organisation can seek advice from Police or Children's Social Care or Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
4. If the child has to be transported to a place of safety by an adult in an emergency situation it is recommended that two Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked adults from the Organisation transport the child. In all cases the child must be seated in the back seat. Please see the Transporting Children section for further guidance.
5. Do not leave a child alone, unless they are over 16 and parents/guardians have agreed with the Organisation previously that their child can make their own way to and from training.
6. Until a child is collected, to maintain the wellbeing of all concerned, two appropriate adults (ideally who hold a DBS check) or parents/guardians must remain with the child.

You must avoid:

- Asking the child to wait in a vehicle.
- Waiting with the child at the Organisation on your own.
- Sending the child home with another person without permission.

Repeated incidents

Parents/guardians who repeatedly fail to collect a child on time or who have not arrived after a reasonable period of time, and have given no prior notice or informed the Organisation that they are going to be delayed, may be failing in their duty of care to their child. The Welfare Officer and another Organisational representative should arrange to meet with the parent/guardian and discuss the matter. It may be that the parent/guardian can be assisted in arriving promptly. For example making arrangements with another parent/guardian.

If the situation doesn't improve, the Welfare Officer should either contact the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team, Children's Social Care or MASH Team for further advice.

Transporting children

This advice should be read in conjunction with the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit document '[Safe sport events, activities and competitions](#)' (2017).

How a child is going to get to and from an Organisation must be agreed with parents/guardians when a child joins an Organisation.

- Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring appropriate transport arrangements to and from any training session or competitive event, except when the Organisation is providing transport for the team.
- Arrangements made between parents/guardians to transport the children of other Members are at the sole discretion of the parents/guardians concerned.
- The driver is responsible for ensuring that a child has, and uses, a seat belt. You should not use vehicles without seat belts or exceed the recommended number of passengers for the vehicle.

Some children are capable of taking themselves home alone, and each situation should be assessed as they arise in an appropriate manner, and parental consent must be given. When considering if it is appropriate for a child to take themselves home on their own several factors should be considered by the parent/guardian and the Organisation, for example how far they have to travel, are there any busy roads or unlit/dangerous routes.

It is not the responsibility of the coach or other poolside staff to transport, or arrange transport for Members to and/or from any training session, event or gala. If a child is not collected on time please refer to the Late Collection of Children section of this policy.

When transport is provided by the Organisation e.g. by minibus or coach, the Organisation should ensure written consent is obtained by each parent/guardian.

Contact details for the parents/guardians should be checked to make sure they are up to date.

Where the Organisation has agreed to transport the team to an event, the Organisation will provide parents/guardians with written details of:

- The type of transport being provided, e.g. coach, minibus, etc.
- The departure time and the expected time of arrival back.

- The venue for Members to meet the coach and, if different, the venue from which they can be collected upon their return.
- The contact number of a nominated officer at the event for emergency use only.

Supervision of children when away from the organisation

The Team Manager, Coach and Chaperone policy is part of Swim England's commitment to providing a safe environment for all Members. The policy was created in line with the CPSU's Safe Sport Events, Activities and Competitions guidance.

The policy provides the following:

- Supervision requirements for teams and individuals attending camps or competitions to ensure athletes and staff are adequately supported.
- The expectations of recognising additional considerations when managing a team of athletes with regards to their age and experience, the environment in which the activity is taking place and the qualifications and checks required for those acting in a supervisory role.
- Details the ratios of staff to athletes that must be implemented at both local or international competitions or camps that is outside the normal Organisation's activity.

What is local, single day activity?

A competition or training/one day camp with no club organised overnight stay and is not part of the normal programmed club activity. The activity must take place within areas covered by Swim England, Swim Wales or Scottish Swimming.

What is the minimum supervision requirement for local single day activity for athletes under 18 years of age?

Two qualified supervisory roles (one Coach minimum Level 2 and one Team Manager minimum TM1) for up to 10 athletes*. Thereafter a ratio of 1:10 must be applied.

*For teams of up to 10 athletes there must be a minimum of two supervisory roles in place, however, an Organisation with fewer than three swimmers may risk assess the situation to enable appropriate support for the athletes.

What is International activity and where is an International Permit required?

Activity that takes place outside of the areas covered by Swim England, Swim Wales and Scottish Swimming.

An International Permit is a mandatory requirement by British Swimming and Swim England that gives permission to a team competing or training overseas. The permit should ideally be applied for at the time of planning an overseas trip but as a minimum before the deadline of 28 days prior to travel.

What is the minimum supervision requirement for any activity with overnight stay/s for athletes under 18 years of age?

Two qualified Team Managers (TM2) and one qualified coach (Level 2 or above) for up to 20 athletes**. Thereafter a ratio of 1:10 must be applied.

**The policy recognises that smaller groups will travel i.e. fewer than eight athletes. In these instances, a ratio of one Coach (Level 2 or above) and one Team Manager (TM2) may be acceptable as long as the affiliated Organisation has a robust risk assessment in place that addresses the risks and decisions for not having three supervisory roles. There must be clear reporting procedures in place in the event that the Team Manager has to leave the venue.

What is a Chaperone?

The Chaperone will take on the role of a responsible parent /guardian for a Member under 18 years of age who requires one-to-one support. This role is in addition to the supervisory roles of the Coach and Team Manager and should not be considered when applying the ratios.

A Chaperone within water polo training is someone on poolside whose only duty is to ensure the safety of the junior players by providing extra supervision, especially if male and female players are training together. This does not replace the need for a Team Manager at competitions.

Further information and guidance:

- CPSU's '[Safe Sport Events, Activities and Competitions](#)' document.
- Guidance regarding [International Permits](#).
- Swim England [Coaching Policy 2022](#) and FAQs.
- Swim England [Team Manager, Coach and Chaperone policy 2023](#) FAQs.

Emergency plan

In the event of an emergency, the event team must:

- Establish what the emergency is and obtain the details of those involved.
- Establish if anyone is hurt and call for medical assistance if required.
- Establish what action needs to be taken to manage the emergency, ensuring the wellbeing of all Members attending the event.
- If emergency services are present ensure all instructions from them are followed.
- If a Member requires medical treatment or to attend another venue, such as a Police station, ensure a Member of the event team will chaperone them.
- Ensure all other Members are safe and supervised by event staff.
- If necessary contact the Organisation's nominated home contact and ask them to notify

parents/guardians of any relevant information.

- If necessary contact the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team for advice and guidance.
- Ensure a written record is recorded as soon as possible of what has happened and the actions taken.

Photography of Members

We recognise that parents/guardians and children generally welcome opportunities to celebrate or publicise their involvement and achievements when taking part in sport by photographing children at events.

Organisations may also want to promote their activities to encourage participation.

Swim England does not advocate the banning of photography or the use of images and videos of children.

This section will help you to ensure you are taking all necessary steps to protect children and young people from the inappropriate use of their images in resources and media publications, on the internet and elsewhere.

This section applies to all images and videos, which are not suspected of falling under the guidance on indecent/child abuse images of children, taken on any type of camera or recording device (including mobile/smart phones). It applies to all training sessions, activities and events run by an Organisation.

What are the risks?

Children may be identified, contacted or groomed.

Including the child's personal information (full name, address) alongside their image can make them identifiable and therefore vulnerable to individuals looking to locate, contact or 'groom' children for abuse.

Even if personal details are kept confidential, other details identifying the Organisation, school or club, or their favourite sportsperson or team, can also be used to groom the child.

There's increased risk of identification of, and contact with, a child:

- by someone in circumstances where there are legal restrictions – such as if the child is in local authority care or placed with an adoptive family; or
- where it's potentially dangerous to reveal the child's whereabouts to an estranged parent due to previous concerns about domestic violence.

Someone might make inappropriate or illegal images of children.

Photo or video content may itself be inappropriate, or images may be used inappropriately or out of context:

- Some individuals deliberately target the aquatic sports and set out to take inappropriate photos in ways that are potentially illegal and harmful, such as:
 - > images of children changing;
 - > photos taken in the toilets; or
 - > using a camera at ground level to photograph up girls' skirts.
- Images that appear ambiguous can be used inappropriately and out of context by others (for example, images from behind a starting block, or children climbing in or out of the pool).
- Images can easily be copied and edited, perhaps to create child-abuse images.
- Images shared privately online can be re-shared, possibly entering the public domain on websites or social media.

Minimising the risks

Organisations benefit from using images of young Members to promote and celebrate activities, events and competitions. Some coaches also find it helpful to use photographs or videos as a tool to support a young athlete's skills development.

However, the use of photos and videos on websites and social media, and in posters, the press or other publications, can pose direct and indirect risks to children and young people if not managed correctly.

Organisations wishing to use or permit the use of images of children involved in their activities must therefore follow Wavepower in order to safeguard them.

The publishing of a photograph of a child Members, either on a noticeboard or in a published article or video recording (including video streaming) of a competition, must only be done with parental consent, and consent from the child, and in line with Wavepower.

A parent or guardian has a right to refuse to have their child photographed. A child also has a right to refuse to be photographed. The exercise of this right of refusal should not be used as grounds for refusing entry into a competition. Therefore, any photo that may go to press or on a noticeboard, be it through a Member of the Organisation or an official photographer, must receive appropriate consent before being published or displayed.

In the case of any event or competition where the host Organisation has an official photographer, or for example intends to stream the event or competition online, all parents/

guardians and Members who are attending must be made aware of this in the event details. If photos are to be published anywhere, each individual and/or their parent/guardian must be given the opportunity to withhold their consent. Their right to do so must be specifically drawn to their attention.

All photographs for publication must observe generally accepted standards of decency:

- Action shots should be a celebration of the sporting activity and not a sexualised image in a sporting context.
- Action shots must not be taken or retained where the photograph reveals a torn or displaced swimming costume.
- Poolside shots of children must be above the waist only in a swimming costume. Full length shots are permitted if the children are fully clothed.
- Photographs must not be taken from behind the starting blocks or that show children climbing in and out of the pool.
- Published photographs may identify the individual by name and Organisation but must not state the Member's place of residence or school attended. Swim England does not wish to stop parents/guardians photographing their child if they wish, but all Organisations must ensure they do all they can to safeguard every child's wellbeing, helping parents/guardians understand why they should refrain from including other individual children in such shots.

The official photographer

In some cases, the Organisation will ask a Member or officer to act as an official photographer for an event and in some cases they may employ a specialist photographer. Their role is to take appropriate photos that celebrate and promote one of our sports.

When taking any image, they must be asked to:

- Focus on the activity rather than the individual child.
- Include groups of children rather than individuals, if possible.
- Ensure all those featured are appropriately dressed.
- Represent the broad range of children participating in one of our sports.

Organisations must screen applicants for their suitability (just as they would check any other Member of staff or volunteer working with children) and then provide training and information on the Organisation's child safeguarding policies and procedures.

The official photographer (whether a professional photographer or a member of staff) must receive clear instructions at an early stage, and the Organisation must establish and clarify the following points as part of the commissioning and contracting of an official photographer:

- Inform parents/guardians and children that a photographer will be in attendance.
- Ensure parents/guardians and children consent to both the taking and publication of films or photos.
- Check the photographer's identity, the validity of their role, and the purpose and use of the images to be taken.
- Issue the photographer with identification, which must be worn at all times.
- Provide the photographer with a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of image content and their behaviour.
- Clarify areas where all photography is prohibited (toilets, changing areas, first aid areas, and so on); for more on this see ["Safeguarding in changing rooms" on page 82](#).
- Inform the photographer about how to identify – and avoid taking images of – children without the required parental consent for photography.
- Don't allow unsupervised access to children or one-to-one photo sessions at events.
- Don't allow photo sessions away from the event – for instance, at a child's home.
- Clarify issues about ownership of and access to all images, and for how long they'll be retained and/or used.

Responding to concerns

All staff, volunteers, children and parents/guardians must be informed that if they have any concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography (in terms of the way, by whom, or where photography is being undertaken), these should be reported to the event organiser, an appointed Welfare Officer, or another official.

These concerns must be dealt with according to the safeguarding reporting process outlined in Wavepower.

Ensure that your club or event organiser, and Organisation Welfare Officer is informed. Concerns about professional photographers should also be reported to their employers.

If there are concerns or suspicions about potentially criminal behaviour this must include referral to the Police.

General images of events

At many events, organisers will wish to take wide-angle, more general images of the event, the site, opening and closing ceremonies, and so on.

It's usually not reasonable, practical or proportionate to secure consent for every participating child in order to take such images, or to preclude such photography on the basis of the concerns of a small number of parents.

In these circumstances, organisers must make clear to all Members and parents that these kinds of images will be taken, and for what purposes.

What to do when parental consent is not given

Organisations have a responsibility to put in place arrangements to ensure that any official or professional photographers can identify (or be informed about) which children should not be subject to close-up photography. This should be done in consultation with parents.

You should consider:

- providing some type of recognisable badge, sticker or wrist band; and/or
- a system for the photographer to check with the activity organiser and/or team manager to ensure it's clear which groups or individuals should not feature in images.

Secure storage of images

Images or video recordings of children must be kept securely:

- Hard copies of images must be kept in a locked drawer.
- Electronic images must be in a protected folder with restricted access.
- Images should not be permanently stored on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks or mobile phones.

Avoid using any personal equipment to take photos and recordings of children – use only cameras or devices belonging to your Organisation.

If you're storing and using photographs to identify children and adults for official purposes – such as identity cards – ensure you comply with the legal requirements for handling personal information. For guidance on the Data Protection Act and other privacy regulations, visit the [Information commissioner's office \(ICO\) website](#).

Photography by parents and spectators at events

Most spectators – especially competitors' family and friends – will want to take photos or videos at sports events.

As part of their planning process, Organisations must follow Wavepower, and factor in any additional facility or venue policies, as well as determine what stance to take on when photography by the public is allowed.

Although parental consent is not required for photography by the public, event organisers should make the photography policy clear to all Members and parents ahead of the event.

Getting the message across

There's a range of ways event organisers can inform stakeholders about their photography policy, including:

- pre-event registration, consent or information forms;
- packs and leaflets for all event staff and volunteers, Members and parents;
- pre-event induction or training for staff and volunteers;
- event programmes;
- posters and signage around the venue;
- public-address announcements during the event.

Guidance on filming children during training sessions

Filming during training sessions is not appropriate unless there is a legitimate need or purpose for the filming. For example wishing to film children to assist in their stroke technique.

If there is a legitimate need or purpose, parents/guardians must be provided with full information such as when the filming is proposed, its purpose, who is filming, how the film will be used or published and an agreement on what will happen once the film has served its purpose. This allows parents/guardians to provide informed consent or otherwise. Written consent to the filming must be requested from the Member and their parents/guardians. Invite parents/guardians to be present at the filming; if this is impractical, allow them to view the film before publication.

Lane sharing between adults and children

Swimming is a physical sport and like many physical activities there are inherent risks in taking part. We are committed to ensuring that any risks to all Members are kept to an absolute minimum.

We recognise that children and adults may train together if they are of a similar standard. However, it is necessary to consider the implications of children and adults sharing lanes in order to safeguard children in our sports.

Unfortunately, whilst incidents within training sessions are rare, Swim England has identified some problems arising from training activities and warm ups where adults and children swim in the same lane. This includes allegations of sexual and physical assault, both intentional and accidental. Such situations have caused considerable concern and distress for the children and sometimes also for the adults involved. Swim England has a duty of care to all Members alongside a duty to safeguard Members under the age of 18.

Organisations may arrange to have adults training separately to children. However, in some situations, it is neither appropriate nor possible for swimmers of different ages to train separately. This could include the development need of older children to train alongside adults, where training together can greatly enhance the experience for both parties, or at times where lane availability is limited.

Safeguarding can even be made more effective by allowing an appropriate mix of adult swimmers and older children, which can actively prevent bullying and sexual advances between older children themselves. Co-training can also aid the vital transition between juniors and adult swimming.

In such situations, Organisation officers and coaches must consider the risk involved and put procedures in place to ensure training activities are organised and concluded in as safe an environment as possible, minimising both the health and safety risks and any child welfare risks that these situations may pose.

When lane sharing between children and adults is unavoidable, Organisations must conduct a thorough risk assessment.

Particular attention should be given to the mix of swimmers in each lane and the following factors must be taken into consideration:

- Suitability of lane supervision at Organisation sessions involving under 18s.
- The ages and sex of the swimmers.
- The relative sizes and abilities of the swimmers.
- The swimmers' lane discipline and precision of strokes.
- Any lane etiquette guides e.g. overtaking.
- The presence of lifeguards.
- The width of each training lane.
- The number of swimmers in each lane.
- Whether the session is open to spectators.

This list is not exhaustive but is intended to provide Organisations with a starting point for evaluating the risks to swimmers, and highlights certain factors they should be considering to ensure their training sessions are incident free.

For clarity, adults who are training with younger swimmers do not require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, unless they are also taking part in an eligible role (see [“The Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)” on page 69](#)).

When using changing facilities together please refer to [“Safeguarding in changing rooms” on page 82](#).

Children and adults training and competing together in water polo

We recognise that during water polo training sessions and competitions, it is likely that children and adults, male and female players, may take part in activities together.

Often, senior water polo players will teach the junior players how to deal with certain situations in the sport. This is a commonly accepted way of passing on knowledge and skills. The junior players benefit from this approach as they learn from the older players, and their skills improve due to the experience of training at a higher level. The training of adults and children in the same session can be seen as contrary to child safeguarding recommendations. It is therefore necessary to have good practice guidelines in place to both prevent and deal with any concerns that arise.

It is also acknowledged that water polo is a contact sport and, as such, not all risks can be removed in terms of physical contact or allegations. However, best practice can minimise the risks and ensure the sport is safe for all.

Those responsible for the water polo activity must take appropriate, proportionate and necessary action at the time to prevent a risk of significant harm to any child.

Training sessions

All teachers, coaches, referees and chaperones must be Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked in line with the guidance provided in Wavepower.

Any senior player who has water-based contact with any junior player must also be DBS checked if they are acting in a coaching capacity. Advice on what constitutes a coaching capacity, based on how often that role is fulfilled, can be obtained from the DBS guidance (see ["The Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)" on page 69](#)).

In all sessions where junior and senior players are training together, it is best practice to minimise risk to have a chaperone on poolside, whose only duty is to ensure the safety of the junior players by providing extra supervision. This person(s) must not have any other duties. They should not have any direct access to the junior players and should report any concerns to the coach. Smaller Organisations must have a lifeguard able to fulfil this function if no other solution is available.

The coach is responsible for ensuring all sessions are planned and well organised.

In all sessions where male and female players train together, it is best practice to minimise risk to have a chaperone on poolside as described above.

Junior players and senior players should not train together when there is a substantial age difference, unless the situation is unavoidable due to time, space, competition rules which cover the situation and/or acceptable training practices. If they do train together, the coach must be aware of the heightened risks and must address those risks accordingly.

The session must be appropriate for the ages and abilities of all Members.

All coaches, junior and senior players must be made aware of, and adhere to, the Codes of Conduct in training at all times.

During sessions, the coach may add to or vary the standard rules of a game for the purposes of training, to benefit all Members or to meet a duty of care.

The coach should make appropriate considerations when planning drills to ensure minimum contact between junior and senior players. If possible, all contact drills should be undertaken by same gender juniors with seniors completing the drills separately.

Games and competitions

The coach has a duty of care to take all factors into account when selecting a team, including, but not exclusively, the age, gender, physical capability and skills of all players in the team and of the opposition's team.

Where junior males and females play together the coach must be aware of the heightened risk that this may present. To minimise any risk it would be best practice to have a chaperone on poolside whose only duty is to ensure the safety of the junior players by providing extra supervision.

Section 4

Codes of Conduct

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Any dispute within the club or alleged breach of a club's rules (including its Code of Conduct) should be resolved through the Club Complaints procedure detailed within Regulation 103 of the Swim England Handbook.



Code of Conduct – athletes (under 18)

This code is something that you as an athlete should refer to in relation to your rights as an athlete, the respect you should expect but also that which you demonstrate to other members, what is expected of you in terms of listening and being listened to and your behavior as a member of the club.

As a member of our club, you have the right to:

- Feel safe and know how you can raise concerns.
- Be listened to.
- Be involved and contribute towards decisions within the club or activity.
- Be respected and treated fairly by every member of the club.
- Feel welcomed, valued and not judged based on your race, gender, sexuality, faith, ability or any other relevant characteristic.
- Be encouraged and developed with our help and support.
- Be looked after if there's an accident or injury and have your parents/guardians/emergency contact informed, where appropriate.

As a member of our club we expect you to:

- Be aware of Wavepower and adhere to relevant guidance.
- Adhere to the Swim England regulations, Code of Ethics, Club Constitution and rules.
- Listen to your coach or teacher, behave responsibly and speak out when something isn't right.
- Never leave the premises (at either training or a competition) without agreeing it with your coach, teacher or team manager first. This is just as important for our adult members as well as those under 18.
- Make it to training and competitions on time and if you're running late, let a member of the club know.
- Make your coach or teacher aware if you have any difficulties attending training or competitions.
- Bring the right kit to training and competitions.

- Take care of equipment and premises as if they were your own.
- Support and encourage your team mates.
- Respect volunteers and competitors at competitions.
- Respect the committee members, coaching and teaching team and volunteer helpers at all times.
- Get involved in club decisions, it's your sport too.

We expect certain standards of behaviour from our members. By becoming a member of the club and therefore agreeing to this Code of Conduct you agree to:

- Follow the rules of the club, squad or activity at all times.
- Respect and celebrate differences in the club and you will not discriminate against anyone else on the grounds of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, faith, ability, or any other relevant characteristic.
- Understand that the use of abusive or inappropriate language, bullying, physical violence or any other behaviour which hurts others will not be tolerated by the club.
- Respect the privacy of others especially in the changing rooms.
- Not use any mobile device, at any time, in the changing areas.
- Report any concerns you have about someone taking photographs or footage of others in the changing areas.
- Report any incidents of abuse, bullying or other unacceptable behavior to the Welfare Officer, even if you're just a witness.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action being taken against you by the club committee and any behaviour which may be a criminal offence will be reported to Police and any other relevant authority, by the club.

Signature of the child

Signature of parent/guardian

Date

Sign your agreement at
swimming.org/wavepower.

Digital and print versions are available.

Code of Conduct – athletes (18 and over)

This code is something that you as an athlete should refer to in relation to your rights as an athlete, the respect you should expect but also that which you demonstrate to other members, what is expected of you in terms of listening and being listened to and your behavior as a member of the club.

As a member of our club, you have the right to:

- Feel safe and know how you can raise concerns.
- Be listened to.
- Be involved and contribute towards decisions within the club or activity.
- Be respected and treated fairly by every member of the club.
- Feel welcomed, valued and not judged based on your race, gender, sexuality, faith, ability, or any other relevant characteristic.
- Be encouraged and developed with our help and support.
- Be looked after if there's an accident or injury and have your emergency contact / next of kin informed, where appropriate.

As a member of our club we expect you to:

- Be aware of Wavepower and adhere to relevant guidance.
- Adhere to the Swim England regulations, Code of Ethics, Club Constitution and rules.
- Respect your coach or teacher, behave responsibly and speak out when something isn't right.
- Let someone know if you are leaving the premises (at either training or a competition). This is just as important for our adult members as well as those under 18 to know that you are safe at all times.
- Let someone know if you're running late, particularly at a competition where it may impact on other members.
- Let someone know if you have any difficulties attending training or competitions.
- Support and encourage your team mates.
- Respect volunteers and competitors at competitions.

- Respect the committee members, coaching and teaching team and volunteer helpers at all times.
- Get involved in club decisions, it's your sport too.

We expect certain standards of behaviour from our members. By becoming a member of the club and therefore agreeing to this Code of Conduct you agree to:

- Follow the rules of the club, squad or activity at all times.
- Respect and celebrate differences in the club and you will not discriminate against anyone else on the grounds of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, faith, ability, or any other relevant characteristic.
- Understand that the use of abusive or inappropriate language, bullying, physical violence or any other behaviour will not be tolerated by the club.
- Respect the privacy of others especially in the changing rooms.
- Not use any mobile device, at any time, in the changing areas.
- Report any concerns you have about someone taking photographs or footage of others in the changing areas.
- Report any incidents of abuse, bullying or other unacceptable behavior to the Welfare Officer, even if you're just a witness.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action being taken against you by the club committee and any behaviour which may be a criminal offence will be reported to Police and any other relevant authority, by the club.

Signature of athlete/Member

Date

Sign your agreement at

swimming.org/wavepower.

Digital and print versions are available.

Code of Conduct for parents/guardians

As a registered Swim England Member, and parent/guardian of a Member (under 18 years of age) at the Club, or a parent/guardian of a Club Member (under 18 years of age) but not a registered Swim England Member yourself, you are required to agree to this code of conduct.

As a parent/guardian you have the right to:

- Be assured that your child is safeguarded at all times during activity with the club.
- Know who the Welfare Officer(s) is/are and how to contact them.
- Be informed of Wavepower and appropriate safeguarding and welfare reporting procedures.
- Know that any concerns about your child's welfare will be listened and responded to.
- Know that anyone training or looking after your child at a club activity has the appropriate qualifications, checks and training.
- Be informed of any problems or concerns relating to your child raised by their coach.
- Know how to access the club policies, rules and procedures including the club complaints process and who to contact.
- Provide your consent or otherwise for photography and trips away.

As a parent/guardian of a Club Member (under 18 years of age) we expect you to:

- Make sure your child has the right kit for training and competitions.
- Ensure your child arrives to sessions on time and is picked up promptly.
- Let the club know if you're running late to collect your child, if your child is going home with someone else or you have made alternative arrangements.
- Complete all consent, contact and medical forms and update us straight away if anything changes.
- Respect the decisions made by your child's coach or teacher but understand you have the right to raise any concerns regarding your child. We will arrange a mutually convenient time so you can talk to us.
- Remember that children get a wide range of benefits from participating in one of our sports, including making friends, having regular exercise and developing new skills. It's not all about winning.

- Not enter poolside or interrupt training or competitions unless in an emergency situation.
- Talk to your child and ensure they understand the rules of the club and the sport.
- Ensure your child understands the Athlete Code of Conduct.

We expect certain standards of behaviour from all club members as well as parents/guardians/grandparents.

By agreeing to this Code of Conduct you agree to:

- Behave positively as a spectator at training or competitions and treat others with respect.
- Give encouragement to your child well and provide support when they are struggling.
- Respect and celebrate differences in the club and not discriminate against anyone else on the grounds of gender, race, sexual orientation, faith, ability, or any other relevant characteristic.
- Respect anyone competing for other teams at competitions.
- Respect all volunteers, committee members, coaches and teachers at the club.
- Understand that the use of abusive or inappropriate language, bullying, physical violence or any other behaviour which hurts others will not be tolerated at the club.
- Report any incidents of abuse, bullying or other unacceptable behavior to the Welfare Officer, even if you're just a witness.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action being taken against you by the club committee and any behaviour which may be a criminal offence will be reported to Police and any other relevant authority, by the club.

Continued breaches of this code of conduct by a parent/guardian (whether a member or not) may require the club to stop your child's continued participation in club activity

Name of child/children

Signature of parent/guardian

Code of Conduct for coaches and teachers

This code is something that you as a member of the coaching or teaching team should refer to in relation to your rights in your role, the respect you should expect but also that which you demonstrate to all members, what is expected of you in terms of listening and being listened to and your behavior as a member of the club.

As a coach or teacher, you have the right to:

- Be supported in your role and respected and treated fairly by the club.
- Be informed of Wavepower and appropriate reporting procedures.
- Know who the Welfare Officer(s) is/are and how to contact them.
- Be informed of the club complaints process and who to contact at the club.
- Be aware of the club rules and procedures.
- Be involved and contribute towards decisions within the club.
- Have access to ongoing training and CPD in all aspects of your role.

As a coach or teacher of the club we expect certain standards of behaviour from our members. By becoming a member of the Organisation and therefore agreeing to this Code of Conduct you agree to:

Rules and Regulations	Coaching and Behaviour	You the person
Adhere to and implement Wavepower.	Respect your position of trust to maintain appropriate boundaries and relationships with athletes, not using your position to obtain personal benefit or reward.	Champion everyone's right to take part and celebrate difference in our club or activity by not discriminating against anyone else on the grounds of gender, race, sexual orientation, faith, ability, or any other relevant characteristic.

Rules and Regulations	Coaching and Behaviour	You the person
Adhere to the Swim England Equality and Diversity Policy.	Not engage in any behaviour that constitutes any form of abuse.	Champion everyone's right to take part and celebrate difference in our club or activity by not discriminating against anyone else on the grounds of gender, race, sexual orientation, faith, ability, or any other relevant characteristic.
Adhere to the Swim England regulations, Code of Ethics, Club Constitution and rules.	Refer all safeguarding and welfare concerns to the Welfare Officer.	Challenge and address instances of poor, negative, aggressive or bullying behaviour amongst children. Seek advice from the Welfare Officer where necessary.
Adhere to any conditions for teaching and coaching under the pool hire agreement.	Respect children's trust and rights whilst being honest and open with them.	Keep your coaching and/or teaching qualifications and CPD up to date.
Keep children safe in your sessions with appropriate staffing ratios, using safe methods of instruction and techniques and by putting their safety first.	Lead by example creating and promoting positive behavior and a safe culture.	Complete Swim England safeguarding training every three years.
Ensure any equipment used is fit for purpose, safe to use and accessible.	Encourage children to behave in a positive manner and follow the rules of the club and sport.	Ensure you have a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate (renewable every three years).
Follow the club procedures should a child have an accident or suffer an injury.	Ensure team/squad selection is clear and transparent and be fair and equal when making decisions.	

Rules and Regulations	Coaching and Behaviour	You the person
	Use positive and constructive methods when teaching and coaching and ensure programmes are appropriate for the age, ability and experience of the child.	
	Always put the wellbeing, health and safety of the child before all other considerations including the development of performance.	

Breaches of the Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action being taken against you by the club committee under the judicial regulations or if you are employed under your contract of employment. Continued issues and repeated breaches may result in your dismissal from the club. Any criminal offence will be reported to Police and any other relevant authority, by the club.

Signature of the coach/teacher

Printed name

Position in the club

Date

Sign your agreement at
swimming.org/wavepower.

Digital and print versions are available.

Code of Conduct for committee members, officials and volunteers

As a volunteer at the club, we understand you have the right to:

- Be supported in your role and respected and treated fairly by the club.
- Know who the Welfare Officer(s) is/are and how to contact them.
- Be informed of Wavepower and appropriate reporting procedures.
- Be informed of the club complaints process and who to contact at the club.
- Be aware of the club rules and procedures.
- Be involved and contribute towards decisions within the club.
- Feel welcomed, valued and listened to.

As a volunteer of the club we expect certain standards of behaviour from our members. By becoming a member of the club and therefore agreeing to this Code of Conduct you agree to:

Rules and Regulations	Volunteering and Behaviour	You the person
Adhere to and implement Wavepower.	Refer all safeguarding and welfare concerns to the Welfare Officer.	Champion everyone's right to take part and celebrate difference in our club or activity by not discriminating against anyone else on the grounds of gender, race, sexual orientation, faith, ability, or any other relevant characteristic.
Adhere to the Swim England Equality and Diversity Policy.	Respect children's trust and rights whilst being honest and open with them.	Challenge and address instances of poor, negative, aggressive or bullying behaviour amongst children. Seek advice from the Welfare Officer where necessary.

Rules and Regulations	Volunteering and Behaviour	You the person
Adhere to the Swim England regulations, Code of Ethics, Club Constitution and rules.	Treat all personal information about members or their families on a confidential 'need-to-know' basis unless information sharing with others is required to protect and safeguard a child from harm.	Keep any qualifications and CPD up to date relevant to your role.
Adhere to any conditions stipulated under the pool hire agreement.	Encourage children to behave in a positive manner and follow the rules of the club and sport.	Complete Swim England safeguarding training every three years as applicable to your role.
Keep children safe in sessions and at competitions with appropriate staffing ratios.	Adhere to your role responsibilities allowing others to adhere to theirs.	Ensure you have a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (renewable every three years) as applicable to your role.
Ensure any equipment used is fit for purpose, safe to use and accessible.	Promote a positive and welcoming environment and culture within the club.	
Follow the club procedures should a child have an accident or suffer an injury.	Always put the wellbeing, health and safety of the child before all other considerations including the development of performance.	
Ensure any complaints raised to you are appropriately referred under the Swim England Club Complaints process.		
Support the club as required in completing and maintaining minimum affiliation standards.		

Breaches of the Code of Conduct will result in disciplinary action being taken against you by the club committee under the judicial regulations. Continued issues and repeated breaches may result in your dismissal from the club. Any criminal offence will be reported to Police and any other relevant authority, by the club.

Signature of the volunteer

Printed name

Position in the club

Date

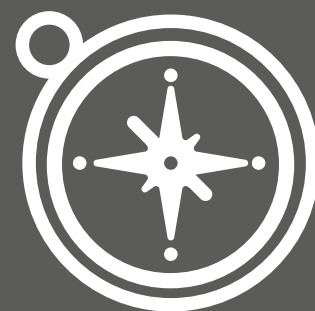
Sign your agreement at
swimming.org/wavepower.

Digital and print versions are available.

Section 5

Additional Policies and Signposting

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Swim England Weighing athletes policy

Swim England has a primary duty of care to safeguard the physical and emotional health of our members, a responsibility heightened if the member is under 18 years of age.

We recognise that in some situations, where the appropriate policies and procedures are in place, weighing athletes can be a useful tool to contribute to tracking changes in health, growth, aiding performance and progression. However, the need for this policy is to prevent potential areas of concern due to some of the related psychological distress, which may come from weighing athletes such as disordered eating, anxiety and depression.

With these factors in mind, athletes under the age of 18 should not be weighed unless they are on a nationally supported talent pathway. For clarity, a nationally supported talent pathway is one that is delivered by the national governing body and enables access to appropriate nutrition, medical and sports science support.

Full policy available here: swimming.org/library/documents/6134/download.

Swim England Team Manager, Coach and Chaperone policy

Swim England delivers team manager training in order to equip clubs and volunteers with the skills needed to ensure a safe and effective environment at all competitions and camps outside of your normal club training environment.

The existing team manager training covers two modules. Module one for local single day activity and module two for overnight stays and competitions / training camps overseas.

Within the team manager training, guidance is shared on the recommended ratios of team managers and coaches to athletes in both scenarios and this has been developed alongside the current Wavepower guidance and the NSPCC Safe Events, Activities and Competition Guide.

The current ratios for both modules has been revised following feedback from clubs over the unobtainable numbers that are required for larger teams, the increased cost associated with the increased numbers and also the restrictions placed on clubs by the meet organisers.

Full policy available here: swimming.org/library/documents/6101/download.

Swim England Privacy policy

Swim England respects your privacy and is committed to protecting your personal data. This privacy policy will inform you as to how we look after your personal data when you visit our website (regardless of where you visit it from) and tell you about your privacy rights and how the law protects you.

In this privacy policy we explain how we collect and use your personal information. 'We' are The Amateur Swimming Association (Swim England) Limited (hereinafter referred to as Swim England) and we are the data controller for the purposes of the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation.

Full policy available here: swimming.org/library/documents/6023/download.

Swim England Whistleblowing policy

The Policy outlines the process by which any individual involved in the sport of swimming, open water swimming, diving, para-swimming, water polo, artistic swimming and high diving (together the 'Sports') can raise genuine concerns about wrongdoing or illegal or unethical conduct, whether suspected or confirmed, with Swim England for review or investigation without fear of reprisals, even if the concerns turn out to be mistaken, unless the concerns raised are not genuine or were raised maliciously.

Full policy available here: swimming.org/library/documents/6011/download.

Swim England Complaints policy

Swim England's Complaints Policy may be used if you are unhappy with the services that we have provided to you. From a safeguarding perspective, you may make a complaint if you feel that we have breached our policies, regulations and procedures. Such a complaint should detail which of such you feel that we have breached and why.

The Complaints Policy is focused on whether Swim England has followed its regulations and procedures and can not be used to challenge an outcome from a safeguarding investigation. Such a challenge must be made as an appeal under the Judicial and Safeguarding Regulations.

Full policy available here: swimming.org/library/documents/6007/download.

Swim England Handbook

Swim England's Handbook, published annually and updated from time to time, contains Swim England's Regulations. These Regulations include the Code of Ethics, Judicial Regulations and Safeguarding Regulations, which all Members must follow.

Full document available here: swimming.org/swimengland/swim-england-handbook.

Useful links

NSPCC – Child Protection in Sport Unit:

the cpsu.org.uk

Ann Craft Trust: Safeguarding Adults at Risk:

anncrafttrust.org

CEOP – Child Exploitation and Online Protection:

ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre

UK Safer Internet Centre: Professionals Online Safety Helpline:

saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline

Anti-Bullying Alliance:

anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Mind: The Mental Health Charity:

mind.org.uk

Sport England Club Matters:

sportenglandclubmatters.com

Working Together to Safeguard Children:

gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

Information sharing advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers:

gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice



Section 6

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