

Support in developing your sports association's safeguarding policy?

1. What is a Safeguarding Policy?

A safeguarding or child protection policy is a statement that makes it clear what an organisation or group will do to keep children safe. All recognised and registered National Governing Bodies of Sport (Sports Associations) will be required to ensure that all their coaches, leaders and volunteers meet His Majesties Government Of Gibraltar (HMGOG) & Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority (GSLA) Safeguarding criteria (i.e. coaches must possess accredited coaching qualification minimum Level 1). They must also be Royal Gibraltar Police Vetted or produce recent vetting documentation from their country of origin and must also have taken part in a recognised safeguarding and protection children workshop (GSLA Safeguarding children and young people in sport or the Care Agency Tier 1 Safeguarding Training).

2. Gibraltar sports and Leisure Authority Safeguarding policy and criteria.

Sports associations will also be required to submit an up-to-date safeguarding policy (latest September 2018), and an equity policy stating the organisation's commitment to enabling opportunities and protecting children of all abilities. The overall aim of the policy is to keep children and young people safe, and how to identify and respond to concerns and complaints raised.

3. Things to consider & discuss before putting together your Policy.

- What are the potential risks to children and young people involved in your sport/leisure Association? Who may pose a risk? What situations may increase risk? And how to reduce risks. (Discuss as a committee and make notes).
- How do you check people who work or volunteer for your association currently and new starters? (Recruitment policies to include qualifications, experience, Police vetting and ensuring that all who work or volunteer are safeguarding trained).
- What are the different ways someone might raise a concern? (Gibraltar is a small place, please think carefully about confidentiality).
- What is abuse and what is bad practise? What are the thresholds? What are the actions? (You will probably need different actions for each one). These could include training, codes of practise to ensure quality and good practise and referral pathways.
- How does this policy link up with other policies and procedures?
- Does the International Federation or the National Association that you are affiliated too have a safeguarding policy where you could extract relevant information that could be implemented in Gibraltar? (Why recreate the wheel).
- Ensure that concerns are recorded in writing and dated with agreed actions. Think about timescales for contacting those involved and dealing with safeguarding issues.
- Ensure that your association has a clear safeguarding referral system and action pathways.

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4. Practical tips.

- Tailor your policy and procedures to suit the needs of your organisation.
- Use words and phrases that your members will understand.
- Involve people from different parts of the association to make sure the policy is relevant for everyone.
- Think about how you can involve children and incorporate their perspective, possibly by arranging a meeting with junior members to hear their feedback on any issues they may have.
- Aim to keep your policy under 4 sides of A4 paper and include simple flowcharts to show clear actions and pathways (you may need additional rules and codes of practise to support your safeguarding policy).
- What is your safeguarding aim? Identify your association, its purpose and function. Set out the organisation's commitment to keeping children safe and how, in broad terms, the organisation will meet this commitment.
- All voluntary organisations have a duty in law not to harm or endanger anyone as a result of their activities (or inactivity). This is termed 'Duty of care' and has been developed through the courts over many years. Your responsibility as a Governing Body/Sports Association is to consider the duty of care owed to your members and in particular your junior members.

5. Links to relevant guidance.

Briefly state the main law and guidance that supports the policy in Gibraltar and duty of care:

- HMGOG - Children's Act 2009
- HMGOG - Executive Child Protection Committee (CPC)
- Changes in HMGOG Safeguarding Policy 2017
- Are you a member of an International Federation? If so, you may wish to adopt some of their rules and policies.

6. The policy and pulling it together.

Ask yourself the questions below:

- Be clear about who the policy applies to.
- Does the Safeguarding Policy cover all children and young people under the age of 18? (You may need to highlight vulnerable children and young people).
- Does it apply to young adults and all adults in the organisation?
- Does the safeguarding policy only apply to coaches and volunteers who work directly with children, or do you recommend all sports umpires and official working with under 18's meet the safeguarding policy in full or partially?
- What about those who have occasional contact with children such as a caretaker?
- How will you ensure all members are aware of your safeguarding policy?
- How will you elect/select your welfare officer? Do you have a definition of the role, or the criteria for who can be the Welfare lead officer?
- Who will consider the complaint? Committee members? How many? Are these people trained and are they independent to the concern/enquiry?
- How will you ensure confidentiality?

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- How will you record decisions made in connection with safeguarding issues? What is the timescale for disseminating information to parties involved?
- What is the threshold between identifying a safeguarding issue and reporting to the police/social services or identifying and addressing bad practice within your association? Also what are the timeline thresholds for either action?

The answers to the above questions form part of your Sports Associations Safeguarding Policy.

7. Thresholds.

All safeguarding complaints if deemed bad practice rather than abuse must be lodged with GSLA Safeguarding panel. All abuse must be reported to the relevant professional agency and the GSLA Safeguarding panel. **(NO ACTION IS NOT AN OPTION).**

8. Accessibility and awareness of the policy.

- Once your organisation has an agreed policy, there should be a plan of action to make sure all coaches, volunteers, parents/guardian and children are aware of, understand and can access and understand how to action the safeguarding policy.
- Make sure your policy is accessible to people with communication difficulties or different language needs (Take advice from Supported Needs and Disability Office).
- Dates for reviewing your policy.

9. Other Sports Association policies and procedures that will support your safeguarding policy.

- Health and Safety procedure (Risk assessment).
- Coaches register to include details of qualifications of coaches, date and type of police vetting i.e. association lead of SARS and safeguarding training undertaken, also with date.
- Membership registration.
- Equity policy (1 paragraph).
- Association rules (1 side of A4 or even a code of conduct that all members sign up to).
- Details of activities and sessions available (supported by website and social media sites).
- Planning templates to include evaluation for coaches.
- Safeguarding referral forms.
- Accident/incident report (Processes and procedures).
- Emergency contact list.
- Policy on photography and social media posting.
- Be sure this policy is referred to in your Sports Association Constitution.

10. Congratulations on designing your Sports Associations Safeguarding Policy.

If you have considered and answered the questions above and set criteria for what you would like to achieve, you have just drafted your first safeguarding policy! Congratulations.

For further information and advice on producing the safeguarding policy, please contact the Sports Development and Training Unit on email sportsdevelopment@gsia.gi