

Club Welfare Officer Guidance



Understanding Safeguarding

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is about creating a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone involved children, young people and adults alike – who participate in or support the sport. It's about taking steps to prevent and address any kind of harm or abuse. This includes supporting coaches and volunteers to spot potential problems, making sure British Orienteering routes to reporting are clearly understood, and encouraging a culture of respect and fairness throughout the orienteering community.

Who does safeguarding apply to?

While safeguarding is often associated with children, it's equally important for adults. Studies indicate that 47% of adults show characteristics of vulnerability and therefore may be at risk, highlighting the necessity of protecting all members.

What is not safeguarding?

Whilst Safeguarding focuses on protecting individuals from harm, it does not cover every issue in club life, for example personality differences and broader cultural concerns should be handled through the agreed Code of Conduct which members have signed up to.

How does safeguarding apply to small clubs?

There is a misconception that smaller Affiliated Clubs are immune to safeguarding issues. However, it is crucial to understand that safeguarding encompasses a broad range of concerns that could vary from discrimination, abuse or financial abuse through to unspent criminal convictions.

Why does British Orienteering expect Affiliated Clubs to have Club Welfare Officers?

All major sports governing bodies mandate that Affiliated Clubs have designated Club Welfare Officers. This is standard practice and a clear expectation from the sports governmental body (Sport Councils). The absence of Club Welfare Officers is likely to create a gap that may be exploited by individuals seeking to harm our sport's members.

Club Welfare Officers

What is the role of a Club Welfare Officer?

The Club Welfare Officer plays a vital role in creating a safe and inclusive environment for everyone involved in the sport of orienteering. A key responsibility of the Club Welfare Officer is to record and report safeguarding concerns to British Orienteering. Also to cultivate a positive

environment of safety and respect within the orienteering community. While safeguarding is the responsibility of EVERYONE within the club (led by the whole committee), having a club welfare officer(s) ensures the club has a dedicated resource with the primary responsibility for managing and reporting concerns about children, young people or adults at risk.

Club Welfare Officers play a key role in ensuring that club members have a safe and positive experience at their club. Club Welfare Officers are key to all members knowing what to do and who to speak to if they have a safeguarding, discipline or conduct concern. They are also key to managing lower-level club issues and disputes, and/or flagging concerns for early intervention to prevent escalation and behaviours which prevent enjoyment of the sport. Club Welfare Officers also form part of the club committee and perform a key role in implementing good safeguarding governance locally, in clubs

Who can be a Club Welfare Officer?

Anyone passionate about creating a safe, inclusive and positive environment in our sport can become a Club Welfare Officer, subject to checks. This vital role requires dedication to safeguarding the wellbeing of members and participants, the ideal candidate possesses:

- **Essential:**
 - a clear Enhanced DBS check (or equivalent), recorded by British Orienteering
 - excellent listening skills and an empathetic personality
 - person-centred approach
 - ability to promote British Orienteering's policy, procedures and resources
 - willingness to reach out to the Lead Safeguarding Officer for support and advice
 - willingness to take part in relevant training and development to ensure required knowledge level is reached
 - understanding of the importance of confidentiality, tactfulness and discretion
 - confident when dealing with sensitive and difficult situations
 - ability to keep good records
- **Desirable:**
 - experience working with people in a safeguarding context
 - background in safeguarding, welfare and/or education

What can be gained from this role?

- Playing a lead role in providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for all.
- Personal development opportunities to improve confidence, communication, dealing with difficult and sensitive situations, networking and partnership working skills.
- A chance to attend training and gain safeguarding qualifications and experience.
- Employment and career development prospects.
- A sense of achievement, fulfilment and the opportunity to give back to your local community.
- The opportunity to meet new people and make new friends.

Recruiting a Club Welfare

While a passion for orienteering is a plus, it's not essential. Affiliated Clubs may welcome applications from anyone with a strong background in safeguarding, welfare, or education. Their expertise in protecting vulnerable individuals is what truly matters.

How many Club Welfare Officers are needed per Club?

While only one Club Welfare Officer is mandatory, good practice in larger Affiliated Clubs suggests having multiple which may include having a split of genders to aid inclusivity. A general guideline suggests that one Club Welfare Officer can effectively support between 100 and 150 members. However, the specific number may vary depending on the individual needs and circumstances of each Club.

How can a Club Welfare Officer keep their Club Committee informed?

Safeguarding is a collaborative effort, and the Club Welfare Officer plays a vital role in keeping the committee updated. Safeguarding should be a standing item on the agenda at every committee meeting, the Club Welfare Officer should be invited to attend the meetings which allows them to directly address the committee, answer questions, and provide updates. If this isn't feasible, the Club Welfare Officer can submit a written report to the Chair who can then present the report during the meeting.

Who will support this role?

This role will be supported by other members of the organisation with a responsibility to support its safe running, including the Chair, relevant committee/board members, the Secretary, Volunteer Coordinator, any other Welfare Officers and other relevant volunteers or staff. You can also contact the LSO at British Orienteering at any time.

Steps to becoming a Club Welfare Officer

1. Nomination

Many Affiliated Clubs actively seek individuals who share their commitment to safeguarding. If approached to become a club's Welfare Officer, it's a fantastic opportunity to make a real difference.

2. Understand the Role

Before accepting the post, it is strongly recommended that individuals complete the British Orienteering [eLearning Introducing Safeguarding Course](#). This 45-minute online module provides a solid foundation in safeguarding principles.

3. Enhanced DBS Check

British Orienteering require all Club Welfare Officers require an in-date Enhanced DBS certificate, or equivalent. In Northern Ireland, this is the Access NI check and in Scotland, this is membership of the PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) scheme.

Unless the CWO has contact with children, more than 3 times a month, they are only eligible for the Enhanced DBS Check without a barred list check. However, if they do have contact with children more than 3 times a month, or overnight (during the hours of 2am and 6am), they must have an Enhanced DBS check with a children's barred list check. Please refer to [dbs-disclosure-process](#) for more information.

Once obtained, a copy of the certificate should be forwarded onto the British Orienteering Lead Safeguarding Officer. Once cleared by the LSO, the individual can be officially named the Club Welfare Officer.

The vetting check must be performed under British Orienteering. The certificate will be valid for 3 years. In Scotland, the PVG is slightly different as it is an ongoing membership.

4. Complete Welfare Officer Training

The Club Welfare Officer should complete the UK Coaching Safeguarding & Protecting Children and the UK Coaching Welfare Officer Training – Time to Listen courses within 10 weeks of appointment. This ensures that they have a strong foundation to respond confidently and appropriately to concerns. Please refer to the [Safeguarding Minimum Training Standards](#) for up to date guidance.

Refresher training is required every three years and additional updates may be provided via the British Orienteering newsletters and workshops to keep individuals updated on the latest knowledge and best practices.

Club Welfare Officer – roles and responsibilities

Alternative titles: Club Safeguarding Officer, Association Welfare Officer

About the role

The person within a sports club with primary responsibility for managing and reporting concerns to regional and/or national safeguard leads about children, young people and adults at risk and for putting safeguarding procedures in place within the club.

Duties and responsibilities:

Creating a Safe and Positive Environment

- Work with others in the club to ensure a positive, person-centred environment.
- Promote inclusive and anti-discriminatory practice across all activities.
- Uphold and role model the organisation's values and code of conduct.

Safeguarding Responsibilities

- Assist British Orienteering in fulfilling its safeguarding responsibilities at club level.
- Implement and embed British Orienteering's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Promote British Orienteering's Code of Conduct within the club.
- Ensure all participants, volunteers, staff, and parents/carers know how to report safeguarding concerns.

Responding to Concerns

- Act as the first point of contact for staff, volunteers, parents/carers, children, young people, and adults at risk regarding welfare concerns, poor practice, or abuse.
- Recognise signs of poor practice and abuse.
- Respond appropriately and efficiently to safeguarding concerns or allegations in line with procedures.
- Maintain confidential records of all safeguarding concerns and actions taken.
- Ensure appropriate confidentiality at all times.

Collaboration and Reporting

- Work closely with the Lead Safeguarding Officer to ensure best practice.
- Implement British Orienteering's reporting and recording procedures.
- Sit on the club's management committee, working alongside committee/trustees to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities.
- Represent the organisation at external safeguarding meetings if required.

Training and Development

- Undertake relevant safeguarding training and maintain up-to-date knowledge.
- Ensure adherence to British Orienteering's safeguarding training requirements.

Required knowledge:

- Ability to recognise and define poor practice and different forms of abuse.
- Understanding of how to respond appropriately to allegations, disclosures, or concerns about abuse.
- Knowledge of British Orienteering's safeguarding policies, procedures, and responsibilities for protecting children, young people, and adults at risk.
- Understanding of the boundaries of the club welfare officer role and how it relates to other staff and volunteer roles within the club.
- Basic knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of statutory agencies such as Children's Services, Social Care, the Police, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the NSPCC, and Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships/Boards.
- Basic knowledge of core legislation, government guidance, and national safeguarding frameworks relevant to children, young people, and adults at risk.
- Ability to embody and promote the club's core values and safeguarding principles.
- Awareness of contextual safeguarding (e.g. peer influence, online environments, community risks) and wider societal issues affecting the welfare of participants.

Training should be provided to support the person in this role with their safeguarding knowledge – refer to [British Orienteering Safeguarding Minimum Training Standards](#) for further information.

For further information, contact the Lead Safeguarding Officer at British Orienteering, on 07891 091 662 or safeguarding@britishorienteering.org.uk

Recognising, responding, reporting and recording

1. What do I do if someone discloses something to me;

- ✓ If urgent, e.g. a child is at risk, speak to the Police or Children's Services
- ✓ Pass the information onto the Lead Safeguarding Officer (telephone 07891 091662)
- ✓ Telephone helplines: NSPCC (0808 800 5000)

2. Actions to avoid – do not;

- ✗ Share information with those who don't need to know it
- ✗ rush into actions – consult with the club welfare officer if you are not sure what to do next
- ✗ make promises you cannot keep (e.g. don't tell a child you will keep their concern a secret).
- ✗ Take sole responsibility – pass concerns on to the Lead Safeguarding Officer.



(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bvJ5uBlGYgE>)

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