

Surf Life Saving GB

Safeguarding Policy

Version:

Version 1.0

Review cycle:

Three-yearly (or earlier if required)

Next scheduled review:

May 2029

This policy applies to all SLSGB staff, member surf life saving clubs, accredited training centres (ATCs), and individual members and volunteers. It sets out what safeguarding means, what we all must do, and who to contact if you have a concern.

1. Introduction

What is Safeguarding?

1.1 Safeguarding at Surf Life Saving GB involves fostering psychologically safe and inclusive environments, while actively preventing and responding to concerns of abuse and harm affecting children, adults, and communities who engage with our organisation — including members, staff, and volunteers.

1.2 Definitions: Key words and terms can be found in Appendix 1.

2. Policy Statement

Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the SLSGB's commitment to safeguarding everyone with whom we interact in our surf lifesaving clubs, events, partnerships and communities.

Scope

2.2 This policy applies to all individuals involved in our work including staff, volunteers, members and officials.

2.3 Parents, carers, spectators, partners and wider communities who engage with SLSGB are also expected to access and support this policy.

2.4 This policy applies to all activities, partnerships, environments, and communications carried out under the SLSGB banner, whether in person, online, or during any organised programme, event, or engagement.

2.5 This is the single safeguarding policy for Surf Life Saving GB. All member clubs and accredited training centres are required to adhere to this policy and associated procedures and do not need to develop their own standalone safeguarding policies. Local procedures may be used to support implementation but must align with this policy.

3. Safeguarding Principles at SLSGB

3.1 Surf Life Saving GB is committed to creating safe, inclusive and protective environments for all children, young people and adults. Our safeguarding principles outline the values and responsibilities that guide all aspects of our work:

3.2 **Safeguarding as a Golden Thread:** Safeguarding is embedded throughout all SLSGB activities, systems, training, operations and governance, and is a shared responsibility for everyone involved.

3.3 **Do No Harm:** SLSGB ensures that all activities, decisions, environments and interactions actively prevent harm and never create avoidable risk. Everyone involved in SLSGB — staff, volunteers, coaches, lifeguards and members — must act in ways that safeguard others and avoid behaviours or practices that could increase vulnerability, reinforce harm or enable abuse.

3.4 **Legislative Compliance:** SLSGB complies with all relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance across all UK nations in which we operate, ensuring our practice meets devolved nation requirements.

3.5 **Trauma-informed Approach:** SLSGB recognises the impact of trauma and responds in ways that promote safety, trust, empowerment and wellbeing, ensuring that everyone involved in SLSGB feels heard, respected and supported.

3.6 **Child-Centred Practice** SLSGB recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. We ensure that children and young people experience positive, enjoyable and safe participation in environments that place their needs, rights and voices at the centre of all decisions. We value, listen to and respect children, ensuring their perspectives meaningfully inform safeguarding practice.

3.7 **Inclusive Practice** SLSGB ensures safeguarding is inclusive, equitable and accessible for all children and young people, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or socioeconomic background. We recognise that some children, including deaf and disabled children and those from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities, may face increased risk of harm and take reasonable, proportionate steps to safeguard their wellbeing and support full participation

4. Safeguarding Standards and Commitments

Framework

SLSGB adopts the **10 Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) Standards for Safeguarding in Sport** as the core framework guiding our safeguarding governance, culture, procedures and continuous improvement.

4.1 Policy and Procedures for Responding to Concerns

As SLSGB we will:

- SLSGB recognises that some safeguarding concerns require urgent action or intervention. Where a child or adult is believed to be at immediate risk of harm, emergency services or statutory safeguarding authorities must be contacted without delay, in line with SLSGB safeguarding procedures and threshold guidance.
- Maintain clear, accessible policies and procedures for identifying, responding to and escalating safeguarding concerns.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure children, young people and parents know where to go for help and feel safe to speak up.
- Maintain confidential, detailed and accurate records of all concerns, stored securely and in line with data protection requirements.
- Protect those who raise concerns through whistleblowing and non-retaliation measures.
- Appoint a Designated organisation-wide Safeguarding Lead, Safeguarding Manager and an identified safeguarding trustee/Board lead.
- Ensure the policy is widely promoted, mandatory for all, and enforced consistently.

4.2 Operating Systems

SLSGB will:

- Embed safeguarding as a **golden thread** across all systems, activities and governance.
- Operate clear safeguarding structures, reporting routes and case management processes across national, regional and club levels.
- Use consistent operating tools, such as the **SLSGB Threshold Reporting Guidance Tool**, to support decision-making.
- Ensure supervision, support, quality assurance and review systems help staff and volunteers apply safeguarding effectively.
- Implement strong **online safety procedures** for digital communication and social media.

4.3 Prevention

SLSGB takes a proactive approach to preventing harm, embedding prevention as part of the **Golden Thread** and **Do No Harm** principles. We will:

- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people across all SLSGB environments.
- Identify and reduce risks through risk assessments for all activities, events, travel, competitions and training.
- Apply safer recruitment, including verified references, identity and qualification checks, and appropriate criminal record checks.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers in contact with children receive a safeguarding induction covering policy, procedures, Codes of Conduct and responsibilities.
- Ensure activities and events are planned and delivered safely with guidance on supervision, emergency planning and safe practice.
- Share and promote best practice across all SLSGB clubs to support consistent, safe practice.

4.4 Codes of Ethics and Conduct

SLSGB upholds the highest standards of ethical behaviour and safeguarding conduct. We will:

- Apply safeguarding best practice through all policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct for adults and children.
- Ensure everyone understands behaviour expectations and follows them confidently and competently.
- Apply **zero tolerance** to abuse, harm, bullying, harassment, discrimination, exploitation or oppressive behaviour.
- Prohibit discriminatory or prejudicial behaviour or language relating to protected characteristics.
- Require all staff, volunteers, members, athletes, coaches, instructors, officials and representatives to comply with:
 - SLSGB Codes of Conduct
 - International Life Saving Federation (ILS) Code of Conduct
 - Codes required by national governing bodies, partner organisations or regulatory bodies
- Address breaches immediately, linking actions clearly to disciplinary processes; serious or repeated breaches may result in dismissal or exclusion.
- Maintain clear processes for managing abuse of a position of trust and for preserving professional boundaries.

4.5 Equity

SLSGB ensures that all children have equal rights to protection and that safeguarding is inclusive, fair and accessible. We will:

- Confirm that every child has an equal right to safety and protection.
- Ensure staff and volunteers understand additional vulnerabilities and barriers that children may face.
- Require dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness in all interactions.
- Maintain **zero tolerance** of discriminatory, offensive or violent behaviour.
- Ensure complaints processes are fair, transparent and open to challenge.
- Actively value and listen to children's voices.
- Take tailored safeguarding steps for children who may face increased risk, including any child with an additional need and/or a disability, and those from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities.

4.6 Communication

SLSGB ensures safeguarding information is visible, accessible and understood. We will:

- Clearly display our safeguarding commitment and children's right to feel safe.
- Provide children, young people and parents with clear information on where to get help.
- Communicate in formats accessible to all stakeholder groups.
- Ensure everyone knows how to contact the safeguarding at SLSGB.
- Make statutory safeguarding contact details (social care, police, LADO, NSPCC helpline) readily accessible.
- Seek regular feedback from children, parents, staff and volunteers to strengthen safeguarding practice.
- Include safeguarding responsibilities and communication expectations in all inductions.
- Deliver safeguarding messages across leaflets, posters, group sessions and one-to-one discussions.
- Promote psychological safety so all individuals feel able to speak up.
- Ensure consistent safeguarding messaging across all clubs, accredited training centres, regions and national programmes.
- SLSGB encourages clubs to clearly display safeguarding information, including the names and contact details of Club Safeguarding Officers, and external sources of support such as Childline and the NSPCC Helpline, so that children, parents and members know who to speak to and where to seek help if they have a concern.

4.7 Education and Training

SLSGB will:

- Ensure everyone can recognise, identify and respond to safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities and follow procedures confidently.
- Provide regular opportunities to refresh and update safeguarding knowledge.
- Maintain a training needs analysis and plan for all roles.
- Provide guidance on where to access specialist training for those with designated safeguarding responsibilities.
- Club Safeguarding Officers (CSOs) and Deputy CSOs are expected to undertake safeguarding training and ongoing learning appropriate to their role and ensure that training undertaken is appropriately recorded.

4.8 Access to Advice and Support

SLSGB ensures timely, appropriate safeguarding support. We will:

- Provide children and young people with clear information on where to seek help for abuse, harassment or bullying.
- Ensure designated safeguarding staff have access to specialist advice, support and current safeguarding information.
- Maintain contact links with statutory safeguarding agencies (social care, police, LADO, NSPCC).
- Provide support to staff and volunteers involved in safeguarding cases, including whistleblowers.
- Ensure information is accessible to all stakeholders.
- Signpost individuals to appropriate external services when needed.

4.9 Implementation and Monitoring

SLSGB ensures safeguarding is systematically planned, resourced and continuously improved. We will:

- Maintain a written safeguarding implementation plan with clear actions, responsibilities and resources.
- Integrate safeguarding planning into wider organisational planning with senior oversight.
- Allocate appropriate budget and staff time for safeguarding responsibilities.
- Review safeguarding policies and practices regularly, including formal 3-year reviews or earlier when required by legislation or learning.

- Consult children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers during reviews.
- Record and monitor all incidents, allegations and complaints to identify learning.
- Monitor compliance with safeguarding and safer recruitment procedures across SLSGB.
- Ensure learning from cases is embedded in policy, training and practice.
- Maintain clear governance arrangements for safeguarding oversight.
- Conduct safeguarding due diligence for all partners, programmes and services.

4.10 Influencing

SLSGB promotes safeguarding leadership across lifesaving, aquatic sport and coastal safety. We will:

- Make safeguarding standards clear to all partners, clubs, providers and commissioned organisations.
- Provide or signpost safeguarding guidance, training and resources to partners.
- Ensure safeguarding requirements are included in all service level agreements and contracts.
- Share learning, influence good practice and advocate for safe environments for all children and young people.
- Role model safeguarding culture so it is seen as everyone's responsibility.
- SLSGB will identify, share and promote examples of good safeguarding practice across clubs and programmes to support continuous learning and improvement.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 The Board of Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the policy and are responsible for championing safeguarding and overseeing the organisation's management of safeguarding risk.

5.2 The SLSGB Governance Committee are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and guiding our response to corporate safeguarding risks.

5.3 The SLSGB Chief Executive Officer (policy owner) is responsible for ensuring that this policy allows achievement of external and internal standards.

5.4 The SLSGB Safeguarding Manager (policy lead), together with the policy owner, is responsible for the development, monitoring, and review of this policy. The Safeguarding Manager is also the organisational lead, supported by the Board of Trustees, CEO and SLSGB Governance Committee.

5.5 SLSGB Governance Committee/SLSGB CEO/ SLSGB Safeguarding Manager/Clubs are responsible for policy implementation.

5.6 All of our people have a responsibility to read and follow the Safeguarding policies, procedures and processes; undertake any mandatory and other training required for their role; recognise the indicators of abuse and harm; respond effectively; respect the rights of children and adults to live a life free from abuse, exploitation and harm; and report concerns in line with our safeguarding procedures and processes.

6. Review and Maintenance

6.1 This policy will be formally reviewed every three years to ensure it remains current and reflects changes in legislation, national guidance, best practice and SLSGB activities. The policy may be reviewed earlier where required, including in response to legislative change, learning from safeguarding incidents, or significant organisational change.

The next scheduled review is May 2029.

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: Definitions and Key Terms (SLSGB)

This appendix sets out key safeguarding definitions used throughout SLSGB policies, procedures and guidance. These definitions align with statutory guidance, Sport England expectations and the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU).

Abuse (General Definition)

Abuse is a form of maltreatment that occurs when someone harms a child or an adult. Abuse often takes place in a context of power imbalance, trust or responsibility and may be a single act or a series of acts. Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual, financial, organisational, discriminatory or neglectful and may occur in person, online or through misuse of power.

Categories of Abuse (Children Act 1989)

Physical Abuse

Deliberately causing physical harm to a child, including hitting, shaking, burning, poisoning, suffocating, or fabricating or inducing illness.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent emotional maltreatment that causes severe and sustained adverse effects on a child's emotional development. This may include humiliation, threats, rejection, isolation, bullying or coercive control.

Sexual Abuse (Children)

Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes contact and non-contact abuse, sexual exploitation and online grooming.

Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, resulting in actual or likely significant impairment of health or development. This may include lack of supervision, food, shelter, medical care, clothing or emotional warmth.

Adult at Risk

An adult aged 18 or over who has care and support needs and who is unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect or exploitation because of those needs (Care Act 2014). For adults at risk, abuse may take several forms as recognised under the Care Act 2014, including physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse, financial abuse, neglect, self-neglect, discriminatory abuse, domestic abuse, modern slavery and organisational abuse.

Bullying

Repeated or intentional behaviour, including misuse of power, that is intimidating, offensive or harmful and causes emotional or physical distress. Bullying may be verbal, physical, emotional or online (cyberbullying).

Child

Any person under the age of 18, regardless of age of majority, consent or status (Children Act 1989; UN Convention on the Rights of the Child).

Child-Centred Practice

An approach that places the rights, welfare and lived experience of the child at the centre of all decisions and actions, ensuring children are listened to and taken seriously.

Children's Social Care

The statutory local authority service responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including assessing concerns, undertaking child protection enquiries and coordinating safeguarding responses.

Contextual Safeguarding

An approach recognising that children may experience harm outside the family home, including within peer groups, organisations, communities, public spaces and online environments, and that safeguarding responses must address these wider contexts.

Discriminatory Behaviour

Behaviour or language that treats a person unfairly or less favourably because of a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

Disclosure

When a child, young person or adult shares information that indicates they may be experiencing abuse, neglect, exploitation or harm.

Do No Harm

SLSGB's commitment to ensuring that its actions, decisions, environments and programmes do not create avoidable risk or contribute to harm, and instead actively promote safety and wellbeing.

Duty of Care

The legal and moral responsibility to take reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harm to children, young people and adults involved in SLSGB activities.

Exploitation

The abuse of a person's vulnerability, trust or power imbalance for personal, social, financial or sexual gain.

Golden Thread of Safeguarding

The principle that safeguarding underpins every aspect of SLSGB's work, including leadership, culture, decision-making, policies, training, programme delivery, events and partnerships.

Harm

Any physical, emotional, psychological or social injury or adverse impact.

Harassment

Unwanted behaviour that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer

The statutory officer responsible for managing allegations against adults who work with children and ensuring concerns are addressed promptly and appropriately.

Online Safety

Measures taken to protect children and adults from harm when using digital platforms, social media, live-streaming, messaging or online communication linked to SLSGB activities.

Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Abuse that occurs between children, including bullying, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, coercion, exploitation or physical violence. Such behaviour may be minimised or normalised but remains a safeguarding concern.

Person in a Position of Trust

An adult aged 18 or over who holds a position of authority, power or influence over children or adults at risk. Any concern about their behaviour must be managed under Position of Trust procedures.

Power Imbalance

A relationship or situation where one person holds significantly more authority, influence or control than another, increasing vulnerability to harm or exploitation.

Poor Practice

Behaviour that falls below expected professional or organisational standards but does not meet the threshold of abuse. Poor practice may escalate into abuse if not addressed.

Protected Characteristics

The characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

Safe Practice

Professional behaviours, boundaries and organisational measures used to reduce risk and prevent harm, including supervision, ratios, codes of conduct and risk management.

Safer Recruitment

Recruitment practices designed to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children or adults at risk, including appropriate checks, references and safeguarding screening.

SEAH / PSEAH

Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH), relating to sexual misconduct involving coercion, power imbalance or abuse.

Service Users / Participants

Children, young people and adults who take part in or benefit from SLSGB programmes, services or activities.

Sexual Abuse (Adults)

Any actual or threatened sexual act carried out without consent, including acts involving coercion, intimidation or misuse of power.

Sexual Exploitation

The use of vulnerability or power imbalance for sexual purposes, including transactional sex or coercive sexual relationships.

Sexual Harassment

Unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile or unsafe environment.

Trauma-Informed Approach

An approach that recognises the impact of trauma and prioritises safety, trust, choice, empowerment and emotional wellbeing.

Violence

The intentional use or threat of force or coercion likely to result in harm, injury or distress.

Whistleblower

A person who raises concerns about wrongdoing, unsafe practice or safeguarding breaches in good faith.

Zero Tolerance

SLSGB's commitment to responding promptly and decisively to safeguarding concerns and taking appropriate protective, disciplinary and preventative action.



Surf Life Saving GB
Buckland House, Park 5, Harrier Way, Sowton, Exeter, EX2 7HU
Tel: 01392 369111