

Safeguarding Children's Procedure

Version One– March 2026

SLSGB Safeguarding Children Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to set out the operational steps that Surf Life Saving GB (SLSGB), its staff, volunteers, clubs and Accredited Training Centres (ATCs) must follow when responding to safeguarding concerns, allegations, or disclosures involving children and young people (under 18).

This procedure operationalises the SLSGB Safeguarding Policy, ensuring that safeguarding practice is consistent, lawful, trauma-informed and aligned with the 10 Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) Standards.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all SLSGB people — in person, online, and in all environments where SLSGB delivers activities. It must be read in conjunction with:

SLSGB Safeguarding Policy

SLSGB Safeguarding Adult's Procedure

SLSGB Safeguarding Threshold Guidance

All associated safeguarding procedures and documents

A *child* is defined as any person under the age of 18.

3. Procedure Statement

SLSGB is committed to creating safe, inclusive and protective environments for children and young people.

Our objective is to:

- Prevent harm through safe practice
- Respond appropriately when concerns arise
- Act quickly to protect children from abuse, harm, neglect, exploitation or unsafe practice
- SLSGB personnel are not responsible for investigating safeguarding concerns — this is the responsibility of statutory agencies.

Our safeguarding response requires all SLSGB people to:

- Recognise concerns
- Respond appropriately

- Record accurately
- Report promptly
- Refer to external agencies when necessary

These steps ensure compliance with safeguarding law across all UK nations – See *Appendix 3*

4. The SLSGB 4Rs Response Framework

4.1 Recognise

All SLSGB people must be able to identify indicators of:

- Abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, neglect)
- Exploitation, grooming and harmful sexual behaviour (HSB)
- Bullying, harassment and discriminatory harm
- Poor practice or boundary violations
- Contextual safeguarding risks — where harm occurs outside the family home, and where extra-familial threats such as exploitation, violence, trafficking or harmful peer dynamics may arise.

See *Appendix 2* for full definitions.

4.2 Respond

When a concern arises:

- Respond calmly, safely and without judgement
 - Ensure immediate safety
 - Follow trauma-informed principles (safety, trust, empowerment)
 - Do not investigate
 - Do not promise confidentiality
 - Use the child's own words
 - Act immediately if the child is in danger
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4.3 Record

- Record facts only
- Use *SLSGB Safeguarding Incident Reporting Forms*

- Include: who, what, where, when, and any witnesses
- Use the child's exact words where possible
- Keep records secure and confidential
- Submit records to the Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO) or SLSGB Safeguarding Manager (depending on Threshold Level – as per *SLSGB Safeguarding Threshold Guidance*) as soon as possible

4.4 Report

Concerns must be reported as soon as possible and on the same day, following the *SLSGB Threshold Guidance Tool*:

- Level 2 concerns → report to Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO)
- Level 3 & 4 concerns → report to SLSGB Safeguarding Manager via safeguarding@sls.gb.org.uk

4.5 Refer

Club Safeguarding Officers and/or the SLSGB Safeguarding Manager will advise on external referrals to:

Children's Social Care

Police

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

Statutory agencies in devolved nations

Where appropriate, it is best practice for the person who witnessed the concern directly to make the referral. CSOs and the SLSGB Safeguarding Manager will provide support as needed.

5. Prevention

Safeguarding is a Golden Thread woven through all SLSGB operations. Prevention means designing environments, decisions and activities that Do No Harm and reduce the likelihood of abuse, misconduct or unsafe practice.

To prevent harm, SLSGB will ensure:

5.1 Safer Recruitment

All individuals working or volunteering with children under the SLSGB banner must be recruited safely. This includes:

- Two verified references
- Confirming identity, right to work and qualifications
- DBS/PVG/AccessNI checks at the appropriate level
- Following SLSGB Positive Disclosure Guidance
- Following SLSGB Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy
- Ensuring individuals in Positions of Trust (PIPOT) meet conduct expectations
- Ongoing monitoring, renewals and responding to concerns

Safer recruitment applies to all staff, volunteers, coaches, instructors, ATC personnel, club officers, helpers and contractors.

5.2 Safeguarding Induction

All staff/volunteers with child contact must complete a safeguarding induction covering:

- SLSGB Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Reporting routes and procedures
- Codes of Conduct
- Professional boundaries
- Do No Harm principles
- Trauma-Informed Approach
- Responsibilities in recognising, responding and reporting

Induction must take place before an individual engages with children and must be refreshed.

5.3 Safe Practice

Safe practice must be consistently applied across all SLSGB environments, including clubs, ATCs, beaches, pool sessions, competitions, events, travel and online spaces. This includes:

- Safe supervision ratios appropriate to activity, environment and risk
- Risk assessment procedures for all activities and events

- Transport, collection and late collection procedures
- Changing-room and pool safety guidance
- Procedures for missing children
- Managing bullying and expectations of behaviour
- Practices to avoid and practices never to sanction
- Safe online communication and social media conduct
- Photography and image-use procedures (consent, storage, safe use)
- Safe supervision of children away from the organisation
- Procedures for supporting volunteers who are children
- Supporting children with additional needs or disabilities
- Clubs must adopt SLSGB templates and apply safe practice consistently.

6. Voice of the Child

Children's experiences, rights and perspectives sit at the centre of SLSGB safeguarding practice. SLSGB will ensure:

- Children's views are respected, taken seriously and responded to
- Children's voices inform decisions where appropriate
- Children receive age-appropriate explanations of next steps
- Children receive feedback where safe to do so
- Trauma-informed communication is used to promote safety, trust, empowerment and choice

7. External Reporting

The Club Safeguarding Officer and/or SLSGB Safeguarding Manager will advise on referrals to:

Local Authority Children's Services

Police

LADO

Charity Commission

DBS/Disclosure Scotland/AccessNI

Other statutory or specialist agencies

SLSGB ensures compliance across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

8. Learning & Improvement

Safeguarding concerns, case reviews and lessons learned will:

- Be analysed regularly
- Inform changes to policy and practice
- Strengthen training and prevention
- Be included in annual safeguarding reporting to Trustees

9. Responsibilities

9.1 SLISGB Trustees

Hold ultimate accountability

Ensure robust safeguarding governance

9.2 SLISGB CEO

Policy owner

Ensures organisational compliance

9.3 SLISGB Safeguarding Manager

Operational safeguarding lead

Oversees case management

Supports clubs and CSOs

Advises on statutory referrals

9.4 Club Safeguarding Officers

Lead safeguarding locally

Report concerns to SLISGB

Ensure local implementation of policy and procedure

9.5 All Staff, Volunteers, Coaches & Members

Recognise, respond, record, report

Complete mandatory training

Follow Codes of Conduct

Respect children's rights to protection

10.1 Appendix 1: related documents

Document Title	Relationship to This Policy

10.2 Appendix 2: Definitions and Key Terms (SLSGB)

Definitions and Key Terms (SLSGB)

Abuse (General Definition)

Any form of maltreatment that causes harm to a child or adult. 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)

1. Physical Abuse

Causing physical harm to a child through actions such as hitting, shaking, burning, poisoning or fabricating illness.

2. Emotional Abuse

Persistent emotional maltreatment that causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development (e.g., humiliation, threat, rejection, bullying, coercive control).

3. Sexual Abuse

Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including non-contact activities such as exposure to sexual acts or online grooming.

4. Neglect

Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in impairment of health or development (e.g., lack of supervision, inadequate food, medical care, clothing or emotional warmth).

Adult at Risk

An adult aged 18+ with care and support needs who may be unable to protect themselves from harm, abuse or exploitation.

Bullying

Persistent, offensive or intimidating behaviour, including misuse of power, that causes emotional or physical harm or distress.

Child

Any person under the age of 18, irrespective of age of majority or parental consent (Children Act 1989; UNCRC).

Child-Centred Practice

An approach that places the welfare, rights and voice of the child at the centre of all decisions and actions.

Children's Social Care

The statutory local authority service responsible for protecting children at risk of harm, assessing concerns, undertaking child protection enquiries and coordinating safeguarding responses.

Contextual Safeguarding

An approach recognising that children may be at risk outside the home — for example, in peer groups, schools, online spaces, communities or public environments — and that safeguarding responses must consider these wider contexts.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The trained individual responsible for receiving, managing and escalating safeguarding concerns within SLSGB.

Discriminatory Behaviour

Behaviour or language that treats someone unfairly based on a protected characteristic (Equality Act 2010).

Do No Harm

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

Exploitation

Taking advantage of someone for personal, social, financial or sexual gain, typically through coercion, manipulation or misuse of power.

Golden Thread of Safeguarding

The principle that safeguarding must run through every aspect of SLSGB — culture, leadership, decision-making, programmes, training, events and partnerships.

Harm

Any physical, emotional, psychological or social injury or damage.

Harassment

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

LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer

The statutory officer within local authorities who manages allegations against adults who work with children, ensuring concerns are addressed promptly, proportionately and in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

PIPOT – Person in a Position of Trust

A person aged 18 or over who holds a position of authority or influence over children or adults at risk; any concern about their behaviour must be managed under Position of Trust procedures.

Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Abuse that takes place between children, including sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, bullying, coercion, physical violence or exploitation.

Position of Trust

A role in which an adult has responsibility, authority or influence over a child; misuse of this position is a safeguarding concern.

Power Imbalance

A relationship in which one party has more influence, control or authority than another, increasing vulnerability.

Protected Characteristics

Characteristics protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Safeguarding

Protecting children, young people and adults from abuse, harm, neglect or exploitation and promoting safe, supportive environments.

Safeguarding Concern

Any worry, suspicion or allegation relating to harm, abuse, neglect, unsafe practice, or breach of safeguarding standards.

Safe Practice

Professional behaviours, boundaries, supervision levels, ratios, conduct expectations and risk-reduction actions that prevent harm.

Sexual Abuse

Any actual or threatened sexual act without consent, under coercion, or involving a child, including online sexual abuse.

Sexual Exploitation

Any act using a position of vulnerability or power imbalance to pursue sexual purposes, including transactional sex or coercive relationships.

Sexual Harassment

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

Trauma-Informed Approach

An approach recognising the impact of trauma and prioritising safety, trust, empowerment and emotional wellbeing.

Violence

The intentional use of force or coercion likely to cause harm or injury.

Whistleblower

A person who raises a concern about wrongdoing, unsafe practice or abuse in good faith.

Zero Tolerance

SLSGB’s commitment to addressing all forms of abuse, exploitation, harassment or serious misconduct immediately and taking protective action.

10.2 Appendix 3: UK Legislation Related to Children at Risk

England	Scotland	Northern Ireland	Wales
The Children Act 1989	Children (Scotland) Act 1995	Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995	Children Act 1989
The Children Act 2004	Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003	Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007	The Children Act 2004
Working Together to Safeguard Children	The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014		Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

10.3 Appendix 4: Document Provenance

Date endorsed	Category	Summary of changes made	Reason for changes	Consulted	Changes endorsed by
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