



Softball Ireland

Safeguarding Policy

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Document Details

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1.0	25 January 2021	Amanda Ní Ghabhann Softball Ireland Board Member safeguarding@sotfball.ie
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Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Below is a list of terms and abbreviations used throughout this document:

Term	Description	Abbreviation
National Governing Body	Refers to 'Softball Ireland'	NGB
Regions	Refers to the regional associations on the island of Ireland (SL / SU / GS)	-
Board	Refers to the Softball Ireland Board	-
Softball Ireland	The NGB of softball on the island of Ireland	SI
Softball Leinster	The regional association for Leinster	SL
Softball Ulster	The regional association for Ulster	SU
Fastpitch Ireland	The body responsible for the administration of Fastpitch Softball in Ireland	FPI
Softball Connacht Munster	The regional association for Connacht Munster	SCM
Under 18	Refers to all players under the age of 18 years	U18
Northern Ireland Sports Forum		NISF
National Vetting Bureau		NVB
Disclosure and Barring Service		DBS

Introduction

Softball Ireland are committed to providing a fun, safe and inclusive environment for young people and vulnerable adults to learn and play our sport. The following safeguarding policy has been developed to carry out the directives of the Children First Act and Guidance, Children (NI) Order and is guided by the Sport Ireland Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport. The policy will outline the legislative requirements that Softball Ireland and their clubs have, and the role they play, in safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults in sport, on the island of Ireland. As Softball Ireland is the National Governing Body for an all island sport this policy will outline the requirements across two jurisdictions as well as the best practice guidance of Sport Ireland, Sport Northern Ireland and the World Baseball Softball Confederation. The paramount principle of the following information is the safety and welfare of all young people in our care and vulnerable adults and the structures of our sport. We are committed to ensuring compliancy measures are met and our personnel are qualified and understand, and adhere to, the legislative requirements, best practice and the Softball Ireland ethos.

All clubs with U18 members must have the following in place:

- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment (template provided)
- Reporting procedures and policy (template provided)
- A nominated Club Safeguarding Officer (role descriptor below)

All Club Safeguarding Officers and Coaches/Managers must complete the following training:

Republic of Ireland: Sport Ireland Safeguarding 1 Basic Awareness Workshop (ALL)
Sport Ireland Safeguarding 2 Club Children's Officers Workshop (CSO only)
Sport Ireland Safeguarding 3 Designated Liaison Person Workshop (CSO only)
Garda Vetting Application through the Federation of Irish Sport (ALL)

Northern Ireland: Sport NI Safeguarding Children, Young People & Children in Sport workshop (All)
Sport NI Designated Safeguarding Children's Officer Workshop (CSO only)
Access NI Application through Northern Ireland Sports Forum (ALL)

Key pieces of legislation can be found below:

Children First Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children is the statutory support in promoting the Children First Act (2015) in the **Republic of Ireland**.

Children (NI) Order 1995 deals with public and private law for children in **Northern Ireland**

Roles:

National Children's Officer – responsible for all Safeguarding matters, club support and safeguarding policy development. The NCO is the National Designated Liaison Person.

Child Safeguarding Officer and Designated Liaison Person – responsible for reporting any concerns, disclosures or abuse allegations to the relevant statutory authorities. Ensure the above compliances are in place. They are the first point of contact for club safeguarding queries or concerns.

Core Values and Ethos

Softball Ireland are governed by a core set of values and an inclusive ethos which creates an athlete centred environment and promotes child welfare and safety throughout. The mission is to grow and develop the sport of softball across the island of Ireland. The sport is organised on the foundation of life long participation, best practice, excellence, inclusion and fun.

It is our vision that by 2025 Softball Ireland will be providing social, recreational and high-performance sporting opportunities throughout all provinces and communities. The leadership structures at all levels of the game will entice, engage and grow new life long participants, driving individual and team passion. We understand the important role good governance plays in providing a safe environment for young people and we are committed to ensuring our athletes feel protected when they train and compete in softball in Ireland.

In order to provide this we will ensure that we are fully compliant with legislation and best practice – taking the lead from Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland. We are aware that young people have rights and will provide opportunities for them to exercise those rights.

Softball Ireland is both the representative organisation for players and the administrative authority of the sport in Ireland. It is a member of the World Baseball Softball Confederation (WBSC) and WBSC Europe. We are a 'not for profit' organisation and have no paid employees and rely on volunteers from our membership for the management and administration of softball in Ireland. Softball Ireland is managed by a Board that includes an executive branch consisting of a president, secretary and treasurer. Where necessary we outsource for the delivery of certain service

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

Section 1 – Organisation Details

Softball Ireland provides various sporting activities and opportunities for young people.

Organisation details:

- **Name:** Softball Ireland
- **Sport:** Slowpitch, Fastpitch Softball and Baseball 5's
- **Location:** National Level
- **Activities:** All levels of Softball for all ages

Section 2 – Principles to safeguard children from harm

Softball Ireland is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults under the guidance of Softball Ireland Safeguarding Policies, our volunteers working with our young people, throughout the organisation, seek to create a safe environment for young people to grow and develop within sport. The following set of principles should be adhered to:

- **Importance of Childhood** – The importance of childhood should be understood and valued by everyone involved in sport.
- **Needs of the Child** – All children's sport experiences should be guided by what is best for children. This means that adults should have a basic understanding of the emotional, physical and personal needs of young people.
- **Integrity in Relationships** – Adults interacting with children in sport are in a position of trust and influence. They should always ensure that children are treated with integrity and respect, and the self-esteem of young people is enhanced.
- **Fair Play** – All children's sport should be conducted in an atmosphere of fair play. The principles of fair play should always be emphasised, and organisers should give clear guidelines regarding acceptable standards of behaviour.
- **Quality Atmosphere and Ethos** – Children's sport should be conducted in a safe, positive and encouraging atmosphere.
- **Competition** – Competition is an essential element of sport and should be encouraged in accordance with ability, age and gender. A child centred ethos will help to ensure that competition and specialisation are kept in their appropriate place.
- **Equality** – All children should be valued and treated in an equitable and fair manner regardless of ability, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, social and ethnic background or political persuasion.

Section 3 – Risk Assessment

This Softball Ireland written risk assessment document indicates the areas of potential risk of harm, the likelihood of the risk occurring, and gives the required policy, guidance or process documents required to alleviate these risks. The list of risks identified (low, medium, high) and procedures to manage these risks are contained in the following categories:

Club and Coaching Practices	
Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Lack of coaching qualification.	Coach Standards Policy /Recruitment policy
Supervision issues	Supervision policy
Unauthorised photography & recording activities	Photography & Use of Images policy
Behavioural Issues	Code of Conduct / Safeguarding 1 / Complaints & Disciplinary policy
No guidance for away trips	Travel/Away trip policy / Child Safeguarding Training.

Complaints & Discipline	
Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Lack of awareness of a Complaints & Disciplinary policy	Complaints & Disciplinary procedure/policy / Reporting procedures
Difficulty in raising an issue by child & or parent	Complaints & Disciplinary procedure/policy / Reporting procedures
Complaints not being dealt with seriously	Complaints & Disciplinary procedure/policy with escalation to NGB

Reporting Procedures	
Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Lack of knowledge of organisational & statutory reporting procedures	Reporting procedures/policy / Code of Conduct/Safeguarding Training Policy/Induction Training
No Designated Liaison Person appointed	Reporting procedures/policy
Concerns of abuse or harm not reported	Reporting procedures/policy / Child Safeguarding Training – L1
Not clear who young people should talk to or report to	Post the names of Club Safeguarding Officer/ Designated Liaison Person

Use of Facilities	
Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Unauthorised access to designated play & practice areas	Codes of Conduct/ Safeguarding Training
Photography, filming or recording in prohibited areas	Photography policy and use of devices in private zones
Children sharing facilities with adults e.g. dressing room, showers etc...	Safeguarding policy/Event Management Guidelines

Recruitment	
Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Recruitment of inappropriate people	Recruitment policy/Safeguarding Policy
Lack of clarity on roles	Recruitment policy/Role descriptors
Unqualified or untrained people in role	Safeguarding policy/ Role Descriptors

General Risk of Harm	
Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage risk identified
Harm not being recognised	Safeguarding policy / Child Safeguarding Training
Harm caused by: Child to Child Coach to Child Volunteer to Child Member to Child Visitor to Child	Safeguarding policy / Safeguarding Training L1
General behavioural issues	Code of Conduct
Issues of Bullying	Anti-Bullying policy/Code of conduct
Vetting of staff/volunteers	Recruitment policy / Vetting policy
Issues of Online Safety	Social Media / Online Safety policy
Safety in Virtual Environments	Safeguarding Policy

The Risk Assessment was undertaken on: **31/12/2023**

Section 4 – Procedures

Our Child Safeguarding Statement has been developed in line with requirements under the Children First Act 2015 and in Northern Ireland the Club Framework for Safeguarding Standards in Sport. In addition to our Risk Assessment document, above, there are further procedures that support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our activities.

Softball Ireland has the following procedures in place as part of our Safeguarding Policies:

- Procedures for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct by volunteers against young people availing of our activities.
- Procedures for the safe recruitment of volunteers to work with young people in our activities.
- Procedures for access to child safeguarding training and information, including identifying harm
- Procedure for reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Statutory Authorities.
- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons

Please note that all procedures listed are available on request.

The Relevant Person for Softball Ireland is: **Amanda Ní Ghabhann**

Section 5 – Implementation

We recognise that implementation is an ongoing process. **Softball Ireland** is committed to the implementation of this Child Safeguarding Statement and the procedures that support our intention to keep children safe from harm while availing of our activities.

Please note the following:

- That staff/volunteers have been furnished with a copy of this statement.
- This statement is available to parents/guardians and members of the public on request.
- This statement will be displayed in a prominent place by **Softball Ireland**

This Child Safeguarding Statement will be reviewed on **30 August 2026**

Colum Lavery - Chairperson/President

Signed: *Colum Lavery* Date: 18/03/2024

Amanda Ní Ghabhann - National Children's Officer Phone no: 0876660421

Signed: *Amanda Ní Ghabhann* Date: 02/01/2024

For queries on this Child Safeguarding Statement, please contact: safeguarding@softball.ie

Safeguarding and Training Policy

Softball Ireland is committed to promoting training standards to achieve best practice for the protection of children in sport; consistent with child welfare and protection guidance and relevant legislation. A list of typical roles are outlined below, and the appropriate level of safeguarding training required.

Safeguarding training is required in order to ensure personnel have a basic level of awareness and understanding of safeguarding and roles and responsibilities within the club or organisation. It is important that those taking on specific roles implement minimum standards for best practice and behave in accordance to a code of conduct set out by the organisation. Safeguarding training provides guidance on identifying, responding to and reporting concerns of abuse.

Role	Requirement
National Children's Officer	Safeguarding 1,2+3 (ROI) Safeguarding 1+2 (NI)
Club Safeguarding Officer & Designated Liaison Person	Safeguarding 1,2+3 (ROI) Safeguarding 1+2 (NI)
Coaches & Director of Coaching	Safeguarding 1 (ROI) (NI)
Managers	Safeguarding 1 (ROI) (NI)
Umpires	Safeguarding 1 (ROI) (NI)

Course	Valid for
Safeguarding 1 or Safeguarding Children and Young People (NI)	3 years. Renewal can be done by attending a face to face refresher or completing the online refresher (ROI) or (NI) also valid for 3 years. If renewal is complete via online options the applicant will need to attend a face to face course for their next renewal.
Safeguarding 2 or Designated Safeguarding Officer (NI)	3 years. Renewal is done by attending Face to Face training.
Safeguarding 3 (ROI)	3 years. Renewal is done by attending Face to Face training.
Safeguarding Refresher online (ROI) (NI)	3 years. Renewal is done by attending Face to Face training.

- It is the responsibility of each club to ensure those personnel who are in an above role, which requires regular interaction with young people, are suitably qualified.
- It is a requirement of Softball Ireland affiliation that each club appoints a Club Safeguarding Officer, who meets the above requirements, and also carries out the duties of the Designated Liaison Person.
- A valid certificate of attendance at the required course / courses must be sent to the National Children's Officer.
- Courses are organised by Local Sports Partnerships (ROI) and by Sport Northern Ireland (NI).
- Sport NI or Sport Ireland approved safeguarding training obtained through other sporting bodies will also be accepted.

IMPORTANT – Volunteers in the above roles who have not attended approved safeguarding training in advance of the Renewal of the Registration process, as it pertains to the individual volunteer, will not have their registration renewed.

Safeguarding 1 (ROI) & Safeguarding Children and Young People (NI)

Child Welfare & Protection Basic Awareness Courses. This course educates participants on the implementation of best practice in protecting the welfare of children involved in sport.

Validation period: 3 years plus an additional 3 years if Safeguarding 1 refresher e-module is completed online after 3 year face to face course. Certificate of attendance must be renewed after 6 years by attending a face to face SG1 workshop.

Safeguarding 2 (ROI) & Designated Safeguarding Officer (NI)

Before a person takes up the role of Club Safeguarding Officer they must have a valid certificate of attendance at **Safeguarding 1** or **Safeguarding Children and Young People** training and attend **Safeguarding 2** or **Designated Safeguarding Officer** training. This course will help the Club Safeguarding Officer to carry out their role and support the implementation of best practice in the club. Participants will also receive a Club Safeguarding Officer Action Planning document as part of the training.

Validation period: 3 years. A Safeguarding 2 certificate may only be renewed by attendance at a Safeguarding 2 or Designated Safeguarding Officer face to face workshop.

Safeguarding 3 - Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

Before a staff member or volunteer can take up the role of a Designated Liaison Person they must have a valid certificate of attendance at **Safeguarding 1** training and attend **Safeguarding 3 (ROI only)** training. The Designated Liaison Person is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to TUSLA or Social Services (NI) and/or An Garda Síochána / PSNI. It is mandatory that the Chairperson of a club attends Safeguarding 3 (ROI) training before the club affiliation is confirmed in 2021.

Validation period: 3 years. A Safeguarding 3 certificate of attendance may only be renewed by attendance at a Safeguarding 3 face to face workshop.

Safeguarding Online Refresher (ROI) or (NI)

This is the renewal option for anyone needing to renew their Safeguarding 1 compliancy.

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Training

- Sport Ireland and Sport NI have developed a virtual Safeguarding 1 course which can be found via Local Sports Partnerships (ROI) and by Sport Northern Ireland (NI).
- Sport NI or Sport Ireland approved safeguarding training obtained through other sporting bodies will also be accepted.
- PLEASE NOTE - Face to Face refers to attending a virtual course delivered by a Safeguarding Tutor

Recognising and Reporting Child Abuse Policy

Recognising Child Abuse

Under the Children First legislation it is a requirement to report any knowledge, belief, or reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed, to the statutory authorities. By working with young people you have a duty of care to keep them safe; understanding child abuse and the procedures for if you have a concern, or if you receive a disclosure from a young person, will support you in your role. It is everyone's responsibility to keep young people safe. The statutory authorities have a threshold of harm for intervention of abuse; this is the level at which a concern must be reported.

"Harm" means, in relation to a child:

- (a) assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare, or;
- (b) sexual abuse of the child.

A designated person should be informed if you witness anything that causes you concern; the following definitions have been taken from the Children First Guidance (ROI) and Co-Operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (NI):

Physical Abuse:

Physical Abuse is when someone deliberately hurts a child physically, or puts them at risk of being physically hurt. It may occur as a single incident or as a pattern of incidents. Examples of this might be hitting, pinching, burning etc. It is a reasonable concern if you believe the life of the young person is in imminent danger.

Emotional Abuse:

Emotional abuse is the systematic emotional or psychological ill-treatment of a child as part of the overall relationship between a caregiver and a child. A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when the behaviour becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer. In sport, bullying may also fall under the category of emotional abuse and may occur in the form of online bullying.

Neglect:

Neglect occurs when a child does not receive adequate care or supervision to the extent that the child is harmed physically or developmentally. This is commonly reported as deprivation of food, clothing, safety, hygiene or medical care. Over a period of time neglect can have a negative impact on a child's emotional and physical development. A reasonable concern for the child's welfare would exist when neglect becomes typical of the relationship between the child and the parent or carer.

Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal or for that of others. It includes the child being involved in sexual acts (masturbation, fondling, oral or penetrative sex) or exposing the child to sexual activity directly or through pornography. Any concern about possible sexual abuse constitutes reasonable grounds for concern.

The following are noted in the Children First Guidance as being Reasonable Grounds For Concern:

- Evidence, for example an injury or behaviour, that is consistent with abuse and is unlikely to have been caused in any other way.
- Any concern about possible sexual abuse.
- Consistent signs that a child is suffering from emotional or physical neglect.
- A child saying or indicating by other means that he or she has been abused.
- Admission or indication by an adult or a child of an alleged abuse they committed.
- An account from a person who saw the child being abused

Responding to an allegation from a young person

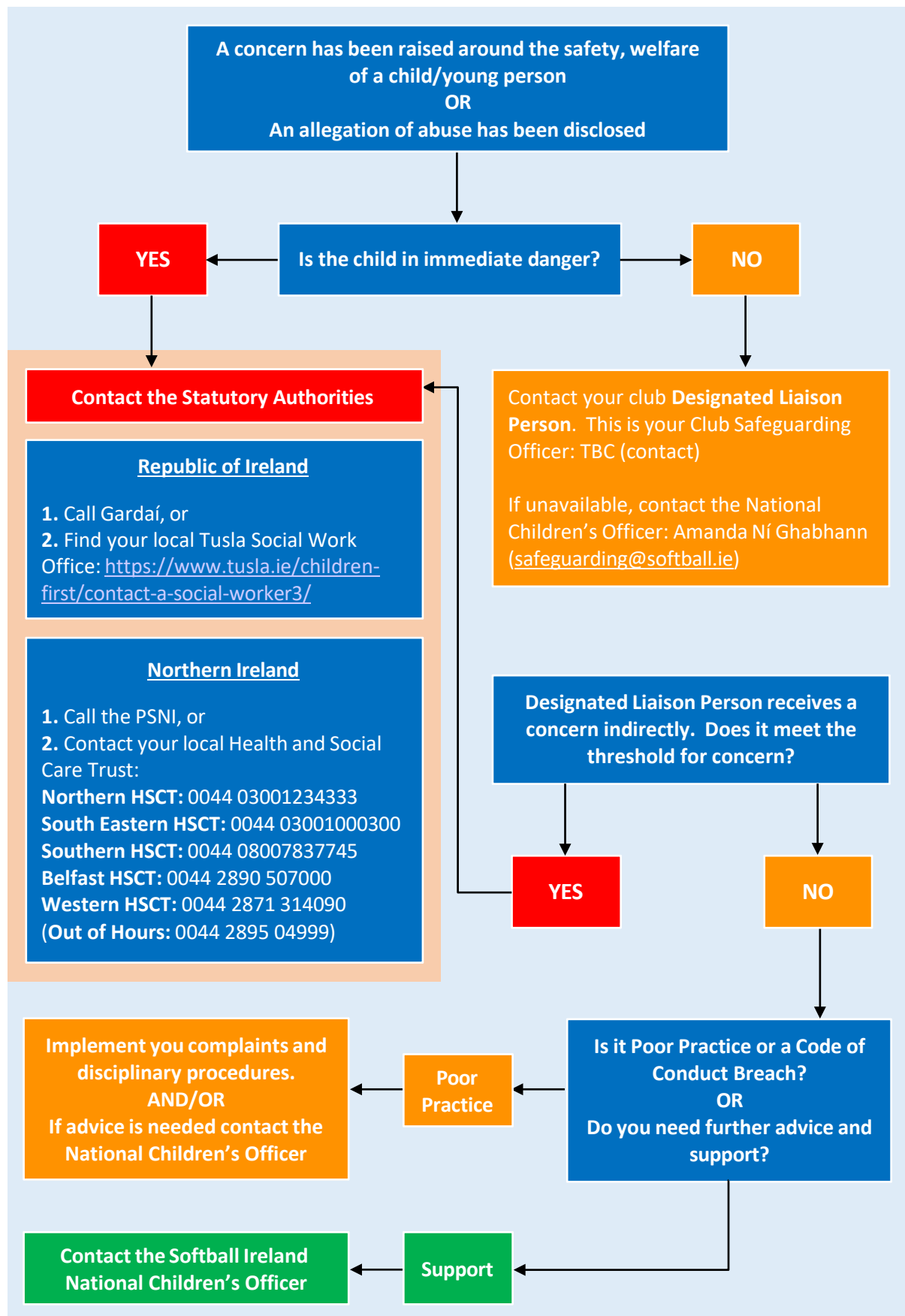
It is important to remember that if a child has chosen to disclose something to you it is because they trust you. It is important to note where a child has made a disclosure which meets the threshold of Reasonable Grounds for Concern you have a duty to report it – you cannot keep this a secret. Remember they are looking for help. Actions that can help you manage the situation include:

- Be sensitive – listen and facilitate vs interview.
- Stay calm – don't react emotionally.
- Take the child seriously.
- Don't promise to keep information a secret.
- Make no judgmental statements.
- Use open, non-specific questions.
- Explain – what happens next?

You should keep a record of the report and note dates, times, locations and contexts in which the incident/s occurred. The next step is to report the allegation to the Designated Liaison Person. If they do not find that it meets grounds for concern you can still choose to report to the statutory authorities yourself. If it is an emergency or you feel the child is in immediate danger you should contact the Gardaí/Police immediately.

IMPORTANT – You must employ a “needs to know” approach. This is confidential outside of the reporting structure and must only be passed on if the person needs to know.

Reporting Structure for Safeguarding Issues for Clubs (ROI/NI)



Garda Vetting and Access NI Policy

All members of Softball Ireland who regularly work with children and vulnerable adults in a paid or voluntary capacity, and are 16 years+, must complete a vetting application. An individual cannot work or volunteer with children or vulnerable persons unless their vetting application has been completed and the outcome sent to the Liaison Person. As softball is an all island sport there are two types of vetting that members may be required to undertake – Garda Vetting (ROI) and Access NI (ANI). Vetting provides information regarding all prosecutions, pending or completed and/or convictions in respect of an individual applicant to an organisation in the form of a document known as a **Disclosure**.

The National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016 provides a statutory basis for the vetting of persons carrying out relevant work with children or vulnerable persons. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2017 is the legislation making it a legal requirement that a person barred from regulated activities is not recruited. An Access NI disclosure is obtained through the Disclosure and Barring Service (NI).

Vetting is conducted on behalf of registered organisations only and is not conducted for individual persons on a personal basis i.e. if you have been vetted for another organisation this will not suffice for Softball Ireland. The Federation of Irish Sport will conduct Garda Vetting (ROI) and Northern Ireland Sports Forum will conduct Access NI (NI) on behalf of Softball Ireland, However disclosures will be referred to Softball Ireland for decision regarding suitability for the role applied for.

Currently the following roles within Softball Ireland require Vetting (if carrying out regular activity with children and Vulnerable Adults):

- National Children's Officer
- Director of Coaching
- Coaches
- Club Safeguarding Officers
- Team Managers
- Umpires

Garda Vetting Process

1. Complete the Federation of Irish Sport Vetting Service ID form and the National Vetting Bureau 1 Invitation Form. If applicant is 16-17 years they must also complete National Vetting Bureau 3 consent form.
2. Present the forms and your original ID's with photocopies to one of the people authorised to validate your ID. The necessary forms along with photocopies of the ID used, and the consent form where necessary, must be sent to the Federation of Irish Sport with the payment of €10 per applicant. **Federation of Irish Sports, Irish Sports HQ, National Sports Campus, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15**
Please note: If you have lived in Ireland for less than 12 months you will also be required to supply a police check from your previous country of residence/country of origin.
3. Federation of Irish Sport will upload your information and an e-mail, inviting you to complete the online e-Vetting Form, will be sent from the NVB. This is Important as you will only have 30 days to complete this.

Please note: You will need all previous addresses which you have lived at to complete this step.

4. The Liaison Person will review the e-Vetting Form and submit it to the National Vetting Bureau for processing.
5. The National Vetting Bureau processes the application and forwards a vetting disclosure to the Liaison Person.
6. Softball Ireland will review the vetting disclosure and will advise the applicant of an outcome.

Access NI Process

1. Go to <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/apply-online-enhanced-check-through-registered-body>
2. From this web page, click the green button (scroll to end of page) to apply for an enhanced check through a registered body.
3. Register your account by creating a user ID and password and follow online instructions to log in. Keep these details safe as you will need them to track the progress of your case.
4. Once you have successfully logged in, you will be taken to the online application.
5. Enter the PIN number below at Step 1 of the form completion. This is the NISF's PIN number and will ensure that your application is automatically forwarded to NISF for processing on behalf of your sport's governing body. Please enter it carefully.

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6. Complete the remainder of the on-line form and click on **Confirm and Proceed** to finish the on-line process. Every time you click next the page will be saved.
7. You must note the 10 digit AccessNI reference number you are provided with once you have submitted the application online and enter this in the **Application Reference** box on the ID Validation Form.
8. Complete the front page of the **ID & Role Validation Form**, including your 10 digit reference number and signature. On page 2 of the form, complete the position being applied for box **only**.
9. Return the ID Validation form to the person who asked you to undertake an AccessNI check and present relevant identification as listed on final page.

Disclosures

All disclosures will be sent to the National Children's Officer for consideration. A disclosure provides information regarding all prosecutions, pending or completed and/or convictions in respect of an individual. This is used to make a decision regarding the suitability of an application for their role. Where information is received regarding an offence the applicant will be contacted to help the review group to make a decision. The review group will be made up of the President of Softball Ireland, the National Children's Officer and one other non-conflicting board member. All information is strictly confidential and will remain so at all times. All decisions are made on an individual basis and self-disclosure will be taken into consideration. In the case of a person's application being unsuccessful the individual will be given the opportunity to withdraw from the role applied for.

In the case of a dispute in the information received on a vetting disclosure the applicant will need to contact the relevant vetting bureau as Softball Ireland nor Federation of Irish Sport can make this query on their behalf.

Consideration is given to the recruitment of ex-offenders; a criminal record would not automatically prevent you from taking up a role with Softball Ireland. The position applied for, the background pertaining to the offence and any other relevant information will be taken into account. This is in compliance with the Code of Practice (NI) issued by the Department of Justice (NI) in relation to the recruitment of ex-offenders.

Storing information

Vetting disclosures will be stored in accordance with GDPR, ANI Code of Practice and the Police Act 1997. All information will be securely kept in an online location by the National Children's officer, who will be the only person with access to this information. Disclosure information will not be shared with any person who is not authorised to receive it. The content of a disclosure will not be detailed on membership databases or spreadsheets.

Re-vetting

Softball Ireland will re-vet members requiring vetting after 3 years. From time to time it may be required to have a shorter renewal period due to a concern arising from a disclosure. Under such circumstances this will be agreed with the applicant in advance.

GDPR

All safeguarding documents will be kept according to the requirements of the Irish Data Protection Act 1988, the amended act 2003, and the UK Data Protection Act 1998; and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Directive 2009/136/EC and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 ("GDPR"). This includes requirements for the collecting, storage and requests of personal data. For general information on Data Protection consult the Data Protection Commissioner's Irish web site on www.dataprotectionact.ie or the UK Information Commissioner's web site www.ico.gov.uk. Exclusion in data protection includes: information about a data subject, which would be likely to affect the way crime is detected or prevented, catching or prosecuting offenders, the assessment of taxes or duty, need not be made available

Policy on the Recruitment of ex-offenders (NI Only)

As an organisation assessing applicants' suitability for positions which are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Softball Ireland complies fully with the [code of practice](#) and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. A criminal record does not necessarily disqualify someone from taking up a role with Softball Ireland.

- Softball Ireland undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal record check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.
- Softball Ireland can only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that Softball Ireland are legally entitled to know about. Where a DBS certificate at either standard or enhanced level can legally be requested (where the position is one that is included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended, and where appropriate Police Act Regulations as amended).
- Softball Ireland can only ask an individual about convictions and cautions that are not protected.
- Softball Ireland is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.
- Softball Ireland has a written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is made available to all DBS applicants at the start of the recruitment process.
- Softball Ireland actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records.
- Softball Ireland select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.
- An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to DBS after a thorough risk assessment has indicated that one is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where a criminal record check is identified as necessary, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that an application for a DBS certificate will be submitted in the event of the individual being offered the position.
- Softball Ireland ensures that all those in Softball Ireland who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.
- Softball Ireland also ensures that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- At interview, or in a separate discussion, Softball Ireland ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.
- Softball Ireland makes every subject of a criminal record check submitted to DBS aware of the existence of the [code of practice](#) and makes a copy available on request.
- Softball Ireland undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

Roles with Safeguarding Responsibilities

National Children's Officer (NCO)

As this is a voluntary role in Softball Ireland the National Children's Officer is not mandated but is the relevant person and thus the lead on all safeguarding matters within the sport. The NCO carries out the duties of the national Designated Liaison Person and is responsible for ensuring the Children First Legislation requirements are met.

It is the role of the National Children's Officer to support the Board, Regions, Fastpitch Ireland and Clubs in safeguarding matters and update guidance and policy as needed. The NCO will advocate for young people in the sport and ensure their welfare and protection remains paramount. If needed, they will also act as an advisor and be present in complaints and disciplinary matters involving a member U18.

Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO)

All clubs with member's U18 years must have a Club Safeguarding Officer. This person must be Vetted and Safeguarded to Level 3 to assume the role. It is their role to ensure all necessary club members are vetted and possess the correct level of Safeguarding; they will provide advice and support where necessary. They are the voice of young people in the club and will advocate that policy is in place and adhered to. The CSO will complete the Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment and keep up to date, with the support of the committee.

Designated Liaison Person (DLP)

The Child Safeguarding Officer will act as the Designated Liaison Person and will be responsible for reporting any concerns or allegations to the Statutory Authorities. They will also advise and lead on matters of poor practice, concerning young people, at club level.

Coach / Manager

A Coach / Manager plays a vital role in the sporting experience of young people. It is vital that they are aware of the position of power they possess and ensure a safe relationship with the athlete. The welfare of the young person is paramount to any competitive gain. The Coach / Manager should be Safeguarded and Vetted and understand how to work with young people in a way that is safe, fun and inclusive. Often Coaches / Managers are seen as trusted adults and young people may choose to disclose a concern or abuse; it is important that you know how to respond correctly.

Umpire

Although not directly responsible for U18 members, in their role, umpires are in a position of power and thus must also be Vetted and Safeguarded. It is important that they acknowledge this influence and are also prepared for potential disclosures from a young person.

Codes of Conduct

The following pages outline the codes of conduct for all individuals involved with young people or vulnerable adults.

- Coaches / Managers
- Officials (e.g. Umpires)
- Parent / Guardian
- Athlete

Coaches / Managers Code of Conduct

By signing below I agree to:

Respect others:

- Lead by example and be a positive role model
- Treat all athletes, volunteers, spectators and officials with respect.
- Not engage in inappropriate physical contact or use foul or abusive language
- Thank officials, and if clarification is needed, follow the appropriate procedures to do so
- Encourage all athletes and do not show favouritism

Respect Safeguarding guidelines:

- Undertake Vetting and attend a Sport Ireland/SportNI Safeguarding workshop
- Ensure adequate supervision for athletes
- Ensure there is more than one adult present at all times
- Provide feedback opportunities and ensure expectations are clearly communicated
- Refrain from any form of abuse towards athletes, including bullying
- Be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed towards athletes
- Be aware of any medical needs and/or disabilities
- Not take photographs of athletes that are in breach of the Photography Policy. Taking of photographs and video recording is prohibited inside changing areas, showers and toilets

Provide a safe sporting environment:

- Provide a positive experience
- Respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each athlete
- Ensure athletes are never ridiculed, humiliated or shouted at for making a mistake
- Give clear and simple instruction
- Encourage athletes to develop skills, sportsmanship and to play for fun and enjoyment
- Ensure that the equipment, rules, training and the environment are safe for use and are appropriate for the age and ability of the athletes

Behave professionally:

- Display professionalism at all times including via online mediums
- Engage in ongoing coach education and continuous professional development
- Be knowledgeable of the rules, and governance, of the sport and the skills being coached
- Provide a planned training programme and be punctual

As a coach you have the right to:

- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Have access to adequate training opportunities for your role
- Have access to necessary policies and procedures for Softball in Ireland
- Have the freedom to make suggestions and have access to a complaints procedure

I confirm I have read the above Code of Conduct and agree to abide by the guidelines.

Signature of Coach / Manager: _____

Print name of Coach / Manager: _____

Date: _____

Officials Code of Conduct

By signing below I agree to:

Respect others:

- Lead by example and be a positive role model
- Treat all athletes, volunteers, spectators and coaches with respect
- Not engage in inappropriate physical contact or use foul or abusive language
- provide clarification if needed and requested via appropriate procedures

Respect Safeguarding guidelines:

- Undertake Vetting and attend a Sport Ireland/SportNI Safeguarding workshop
- Refrain from any form of abuse towards athletes, including bullying
- Be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed towards athletes
- Not take photographs of athletes that are in breach of the Photography Policy

Provide a safe sporting environment:

- Provide a positive experience
- Ensure athletes are never ridiculed, humiliated or shouted at for making a mistake
- Give clear and simple instruction
- Refrain from bias and be fair to all

Behave professionally:

- Display professionalism at all times including via online mediums
- Engage in ongoing education and continuous professional development
- Be knowledgeable of the rules, and governance, of the sport

As an official you have the right to:

- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Have access to adequate training opportunities for your role
- Have access to necessary policies and procedures for Softball in Ireland
- Have the freedom to make suggestions and have access to a complaints procedure

I confirm I have read the above Code of Conduct and agree to abide by the guidelines.

Signature of Official: _____

Print name of Official: _____

Date: _____

Parent / Guardian Code of Conduct

By signing below I agree to:

- Complete all the necessary forms and keep them up to date
- Inform coaches of any necessary medical information
- Drop off and pick up on time for training and competition
- Encourage my athlete to play by the rules
- Ensure I never ridicule, humiliate or shout at athletes, coaches or officials
- Set a good example by applauding all athletes and promoting the spirit of sport
- Not engage in inappropriate physical contact or use foul or abusive language
- Accept the decision of officials
- Treat coaches, volunteers, spectators and officials with respect
- Not take photographs of athletes that are in breach of the Photography Policy

I understand:

- My athlete is involved for their enjoyment, not mine
- They have their own goals and expectations for their sport
- The importance of positive behaviour and dialogue around my athletes sport
- I may be needed to provide support and help with my athletes sport from time to time

As a Parent/Guardian you have the right to:

- Know your athlete is safe
- Be informed of any concerns or issues relating to your athlete
- Access relevant policies and procedures
- Have the freedom to make suggestions and have access to a complaints procedure

I confirm I have read the above Code of Conduct and agree to abide by the guidelines.

Signature of Parent / Guardian: _____

Print name of Parent / Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Athlete Code of Conduct

By signing below I agree to:

- Treat all athletes, volunteers, spectators and coaches with respect
- Treat all personnel connected with the sport, or the venues being used, with respect
- Be a role model if you are acting as a captain
- Support other team members when they do well and also when they/you feel they have not
- Never bully or use bullying actions against another person; you should never hurt other team members, or your opponent; this includes never spreading rumours or telling lies about others
- Listen to and respect decisions made by others; if you feel unjustly treated talk to your captain
- Not engage in inappropriate physical contact or use foul or abusive language; do not shout at or argue with captains, team mates or opposing participants - talk to someone if you are upset or angry
- Do not take, or allow other people to make you take, banned substances to improve your performance.
- Take part without cheating and you must not allow others to force you to cheat
- Take care of any equipment being used for the sport
- Do not damage or take any property which does not belong to you
- Report any inappropriate behaviour to your coach/Parent/Guardian

You have the right to:

- Feel safe and secure when you are taking part in your sport
- Be listened to
- Be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect
- Have a voice in the decisions that affect you
- Know that any details that are about you are treated with confidentiality

I confirm I have read the above Code of Conduct and agree to abide by the guidelines.

Signature of Athlete: _____

Print name of Athlete: _____

Date: _____

Appendices

[Appendix 1 - Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment \(Club\)](#)

[Appendix 2 - Safeguarding Incident Log](#)

[Appendix 3 - Federation of Irish Sport Vetting Service ID](#)

[Appendix 4 - NVB 1 Vetting Invitation Form](#)

[Appendix 5 - NVB 3 Parent Guardian Consent Form](#)

[Appendix 6 - Northern Ireland Sports Forum ID Validation](#)

[Appendix 7 - Under 18 Membership Form](#)