



English Carpet Bowls Association

Child/V.A. Protection Policy

The English Carpet Bowls Association, (hereby referred to as the ECBA) is committed to providing a safe environment for persons under the age of 18 years (hereby referred to as a child) and Vulnerable Adults (hereby referred to as V.A.) attending carpet bowls events in England. A vulnerable adult can be defined as a person over 18yrs, who has special needs. This can be anything from any disability, both physical and mental, special care requirements and dependency upon others. In some cases communication is difficult.

Harm can occur in a variety of ways, e.g.

1. Through an accident.
2. Through bullying by others.
3. Misguided actions by adults.
4. Through deliberate actions of using carpet bowls events to make contact with a child/V.A. in order to cause harm or abuse.

All the above actions are unheard of in carpet bowls, but by adopting a policy such as this, we demonstrate our commitment to young people and V.A. to maintain a safe environment, and minimise the possibility of such an occurrence.

Our aims are:

1. To ensure all members of the ECBA committee, contractors and casual members are aware of this policy and adhere to its advisory directions wherever required.
2. To ensure all member counties having children or V.A. in their membership, have a Child Protection Officer (CPO) responsible for implementing the Child/V.A. Protection Policy within their county. This includes all "casual" and occasional child/V.A. bowlers within the county.
3. To ensure the CPO is aware of this policy and actively encourage its implementations throughout their county.
4. To include this policy in the constitution of the ECBA.

Signed: Neil Jolly, Chairman ECBA.

Dated : 14 April 2025

Child/V.A. Protection Policy

The ECBA is committed to:

1. Ensuring all children/V.A. are protected from harm at all times when attending a carpet bowls event.
2. Ensuring all children/V.A. are aware of this policy and feel free and confident to notify the CPO responsible for them should they be worried or concerned for any reason.
3. To ensure children/V.A. are welcomed into the ECBA and its members' events, and enjoy the experience in complete safety.
4. To ensure all parents attending events, either competing or supporting their child/V.A., are assisted in their responsibilities of care for the child whilst at the event.
5. Ensure the implementation of this Child Protection Policy.
6. Act as a source of advice to all its members regarding all child/V.A. protection matters, and seek advice from other authorities as and when required.
7. Ensure that all child/V.A. protection concerns are reported to the necessary authorities without delay.
8. Ensure full records are kept, securely, of all counties having children/V.A. in their membership, required details are names, addresses, contacts, medical information and any reported incidents involving those children/V.A. To conform to standards set by the Data Protection Act, the records shall be kept as follows:
 - Disclosure & Barring Service (hereby referred to as DBS) Checks: Shall be kept for 6 (six) months from the date of the check. This will only be exceeded after gaining permission from the person who was checked.
 - Reports of Abuse (non referral to authorities): These shall be kept for a period of 12 (twelve) months after the child has reached the age of 18 years. 12 (twelve) months in the case of a V.A.
 - Reports of Abuse (referral to authorities): These will be kept for a period of 6 (six) years after the date of the reported incident.
9. Work with the Bowls Development Alliance to utilise their reporting system (MyConcern) to record and monitor any Safeguarding incidents/reports.
10. Ensure our Child Protection/Vulnerable Adult Policy is reviewed, at least every 2 years, to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

Child Protection Procedure

Each member county with a child/V.A. in its membership is required to:

1. Have at least 1 Child Protection Officer (CPO), who is responsible for the implementation of this policy and the code of conduct for their county.
2. These CPO's are to be checked through the Disclosure & Barring Service.
3. Inform the Child Protection Officer of the ECBA of any member of their county classified as a child/V.A.
4. Inform the CPO of the ECBA, by way of completing and returning the appropriate form(s), of any incidents involving any child/V.A in their care. This should be done within a 24 hour period directly after the event has been reported.
5. Ensure that all incidents relating to children/V.A. are reported.
6. Ensure the CPO is aware of the contact details of authorities which deal with incidents relating to children.

Code of Conduct

The ECBA also requires all its members, whether or not they have children/V.A. in their membership to comply with the code of conduct.

1. Whilst attending events including children/V.A, we all have a responsibility for their wellbeing. Their safety is to be paramount at all times.
2. Never use any kind of physical punishment or chastisement such as smacking or hitting.
3. Do not smoke in front of them.
4. Do not use or be under the influence of any unprescribed drugs or be under the influence of alcohol.
5. Never behave in a way that would frighten or demean any child/V.A.
6. Do not use any racial, sexist, discriminatory or offensive language.
7. Do not give presents or personal items to a child/V.A.
8. Do not invite any child to your home/V.A., or arrange to meet them alone outside the bowling fraternity.
9. You should exercise caution about being alone with a child/V.A. Where it is necessary to do so, ensure someone knows what you are doing, try to stay in sight of another adult, keep a door ajar, within earshot of others if at all possible and **IMPORTANTLY** make notes after the meeting regarding the conversation, in case it should be required for investigative reasons, and report the incident to the County Child Protection Officer within 24 hours.
10. Any physical contact should be initiated by the child/V.A., e.g. hugs when upset, or help with toileting (only if the child/V.A. is unable and only with parental consent.) Try to encourage the child/V.A. to carry out personal cleansing themselves.
11. Try to listen to children/V.A and raise their self-esteem as much as possible.
12. Ensure that you are aware of the Child Protection Policy, and you know how and who to contact should the need arise.
13. **REMEMBER** you are there to listen to the worries and concerns of the child/V.A.; you are there to investigate only. Once information has been received, take the appropriate action, also report it to the ECBA CPO. They will advise on the correct course of action.
14. Please seek advice and support from authorities, your colleagues and or the ECBA CPO whenever it is required.

15. Please make clear to anyone disclosing any matter of harm or abuse to a child/V.A., that you cannot guarantee to keep this information to yourself. It is your responsibility to report such information to the authorities.

Definitions of Abuse

Definitions of abuse, for guidance purposes, as set down by the NSPCC are:

1. **Physical.** This may be hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing the child physical harm or preventing harm befalling the child/V.A.
2. **Emotional Abuse.** This is when the child/V.A. is persistently being emotionally maltreated so as to have adverse affects upon the development of the child/V.A. This may be persistently running the child/V.A. down, telling them they are worthless, inadequate, unloved, unwanted. It may feature too heavy an expectation being placed upon the child/V.A., not allowing the child/V.A. to socially interact with its peers so as to learn and develop. It could be the child/V.A. overhearing abuse of another. Bullying could cause the child/V.A. to become frightened, or in danger.
3. **Sexual Abuse.** This is when a child or V.A. is forced or enticed to take part or view sexual activity, including prostitution, whether or not the child/V.A. is aware of what is happening. This may involve physical contact, penetrative and non-penetrative acts such as kissing, touching and fondling.
4. **Neglect.** This is the persistent failure to meet the basic physical and psychological needs of the child/V.A., which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's/V.A. health or development. This may be through lack of food, clothing, shelter and exclusion from home or abandonment. Failure to ensure adequate supervision, appropriate medical assistance and being unresponsive to a child's/V.A. basic needs are also neglect.
5. **Bullying.** This can be defined as deliberate, hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time so as to make those being bullied unable to defend themselves. There are 3 main forms of bullying, physical (hitting, kicking, theft,) verbal (racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling,) and emotional (isolation from activities, social acceptance of their peer group.) Bullying can cause considerable distress, sufficient to cause them significant harm in extremes.

This list is not exhaustive, it is included as a guide to what to look for only. It is the responsibility of the County CPO to act upon the concerns of the person responsible for implementation of the policy.

Recognising abuse is not easy. Remember, after training, it is the responsibility of the county CPO to decide if abuse has taken place, or if a child is at significant risk from harm. It is the responsibility and duty of any member of club or county to act and report on any suspicions you may have, or have reported to you, and pass this information onto the relevant responsible person, or CPO.

Help and assistance

Should you feel you need advice, please do not hesitate to contact any of the following:

NSPCC

0808 800 5000

E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk

This national organisation has the power to investigate any notification of child abuse, and will advise accordingly.

Police

Contact your local station for advice or in emergencies call 999. The police are also authorised to investigate cases of child abuse.

Local County Council

Most have a dedicated department ensuring the safety of children in your county.

ECBA Child Protection Officer.

Currently – Rebecca Hearn