

## **Good Club Guide for A Welfare Officer**

### **Welcome**

You have either been appointed, or are considering, a role as a Club Welfare Officer. We wish you a fulfilling and enjoyable experience in your role. We greatly appreciate the time and commitment that you are giving to support the development of aquatics.

### **How this resource will help you**

This resource is intended to assist you in your role by providing:

- A guide to your roles and responsibilities as a Welfare Officer.
- Templates and resources to assist you and save you time in your role.
- Top tips and good practice advice from experienced volunteers.
- Useful links and information about additional learning opportunities.

### **Role of the Welfare Officer**

Every club should have a Welfare Officer and every swim 21 club must have a Welfare Officer. This role is essential in providing a first point of contact for children, parents and adults within the club who have a child safeguarding or welfare concern.

In partnership with the club committee, the Welfare Officer ensures that the club is adopting and implementing child safeguarding policy and procedures which are necessary for it to demonstrate its duty of care to children. The importance of the role cannot be underestimated – you may become involved in the most private aspects of a club member's life and take part in meetings and discussions with the Police and Statutory Agencies in order to safeguard a child/children.

Clubs can choose to have more than one Welfare Officer – often one male and one female officer is helpful. It is recommended that the Welfare Officer does not hold another position on the club committee, and is not an active teacher or coach at the club. In addition, the Welfare Officer should not be related to other members of the committee or members of the coaching team. This recommendation is made to avoid difficulties and conflicts of interest that could arise from a club member wishing to refer a concern to the Welfare Officer but feeling unable to do so.

We are aware that for some clubs it may not always be possible to recruit a truly independent Welfare Officer, and those clubs should therefore appoint a second or standby Welfare Officer. This means that, should a conflict of interest arise, the concern can be referred to the second Welfare Officer who could be someone else at the club able to meet the requirements of the role. Where a second Welfare Officer cannot be recruited, some clubs have made an agreement with the County or Regional Welfare Officer to assist in circumstances where the Welfare Officer is conflicted.

### **Duties of the Welfare Officer**

- To assist the club to put Wavepower, the ASA's Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures document, in place.
- To assist the club to put implementation plans in place for child safeguarding.
- To be the first point of contact for club staff, volunteers, young people, and parents for any issues concerning child welfare, poor practice or potential or alleged abuse.
- To ensure that all incidents are reported correctly and referred, in accordance with Wavepower.
- To act independently and in the best interests of a child at the club, putting their needs above that of others and the club itself.

- To ensure that all relevant club members, volunteers and staff have a DBS Enhanced Disclosure and the opportunity to access appropriate child safeguarding training.
- To ensure that ASA Wavepower procedures for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers are followed.
- To ensure that all appropriate existing staff or volunteers have an up-to-date DBS Enhanced Disclosure. These should be updated every 3 years.
- To be aware of, and have a note of contact details of, the Local Children's Services, Police, Local Authority Designated Officer and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and the ASA Safeguarding Team.
- To ensure that Codes of Conduct are in place for club staff, volunteers, coaches, competitors and parents.
- To sit on the club management committee to advise on child safeguarding issues or be in attendance as necessary.
- To ensure confidentiality is maintained and information is only shared on a 'need to know' basis.

### **Skills and qualities required**

- Have a child-centred approach.
- Have basic administration and record-maintenance skills.
- Have excellent communication skills.
- Have confidence when referring cases externally.
- Have the ability to ensure policy and procedures are implemented effectively.

### **Level of commitment required**

This will vary from club to club, but will include attendance at club meetings and dedicated time should any child protection concerns be raised.

### **Term of office**

This will vary according to club constitutions and club election processes. Some clubs have rules stipulating that a new Welfare Officer should be appointed each year, or impose a limit to the number of times a person can be re-elected, to prevent one person remaining in post for too long a period of time.

### **Getting started**

#### **Training required**

- SCUK Safeguarding and Protecting Children Workshop or approved accredited Local Safeguarding Children's Board equivalent.
- ASA/NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit "Time to Listen" child safeguarding training for designated persons. Please refer to [www.swimming.org/volunteering](http://www.swimming.org/volunteering) for details of courses running in your area.

#### **Tools for the role**

As the Welfare Officer you will need copies of the following resources:

- Wavepower, the ASA Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit document 'Safe Sport Events, Activities and Competitions'.
- ASA Child Welfare Complaints Process shown in the ASA Handbook.

- Wavepower/Swimline poster in order to publicise their contact details to the club.

Additionally, 'Child Power leaflets' can be requested from the ASA Safeguarding Team to be distributed to the club's young members.

### **Wavepower: The ASA Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures**

Wavepower is designed to assist all ASA affiliated swimming clubs and organisations to safeguard children in line with current child safeguarding legislation and guidance. It consistently highlights that responsibility for child safeguarding lies with all those involved in the sport and is not the sole responsibility of any one person whether that is at club, county or national level.

The format of Wavepower provides information in one document to the club officers, club members and member's parents, and is subdivided into specific sections to make using it straightforward and concise. The ASA will be constantly updating the manual as and when required, and we always welcome feedback from users.

As the Welfare Officer you will be the officer most likely to use the guidance and you are responsible for holding and maintaining the manual as and when required. Wavepower should be made available to all persons in the club who request to consult it, and it should always be passed on to the new Welfare Officer should you resign your position.

As the Welfare Officer acting for the club, you will find the manual helps you guide the club committee to plan, prioritise and implement the various safeguarding activities that are necessary to protect children within swimming and fulfil the club's duty of care.

The aim of such a comprehensive manual is to enable everyone in swimming to play their part in safeguarding children. It offers practical guidance for those who are directly involved in swimming with children, providing awareness of both mandatory requirements and good practice guidance.

Wavepower can also be accessed via the ASA website ([www.swimming.org](http://www.swimming.org)) where you will find the Wavepower icon on the landing page, giving you direct access to the document. Any updates to Wavepower can also be found there.

In addition you will find links to:

- The ASA Child Welfare Complaints Procedures.
- NSPCC/CPSU Safe Sport Events, Activities and Competitions.
- Useful templates you can use.
- Links to information on the Disclosure and Barring Service.

### **Top tips for a Welfare Officer**

1. Be approachable. Make yourself known to members of the club and ensure all members are aware that you are available to advise any person in the club who has a concern of a child safeguarding nature. This can be done by providing your contact details on the club website and notice boards. A Wavepower poster is available on request where you can display your contact details. Similarly, having a presence at training sessions and competitions/events on a regular basis helps too.

2. Promote Wavepower. Assist the club to put in place the policies and procedures detailed in Wavepower.

3. Promote best practice. Previous Club Welfare Officers have done this by:
  - Providing information sheets or briefing sessions to teaching/ coaching staff and volunteers at the club.
  - Ensuring the club use the Code of Conduct templates provided in Wavepower.
  - Ensuring that volunteers receive child safeguarding training as appropriate to their role in accordance with Wavepower.
  - Raising awareness of child safeguarding at committee meetings.
  - Ensuring any questions or issues arising from poor practice is referred to the club committee for action.
  - Seeking further advice from the ASA Safeguarding Team as and when required.
4. Be knowledgeable and clear about how to make a referral. Follow the guidance and flow charts provided in Wavepower.
5. Implement and/or maintain a system to ensure all eligible persons within the club complete a DBS check. Advice can be sought from the ASA DBS Coordinator.
6. Get to know your County and Regional Welfare Officer. They will support you in your role, so do introduce yourself to them. Their details can be found on the relevant County or Regional website or via the ASA Safeguarding Team.

### **Moving on from your role**

When you decide it's time to move on, it's important to think about how you will ensure that all your knowledge and experience is passed on to the person taking over from you. Here are some suggestions to help ensure a smooth transition, and to ensure the person taking over from you has the information and resources they need:

- Try to give as much notice as you can that you are moving on, in order to allow the club to recruit or elect another Welfare Officer.
- Where possible, try to build up or be part of a small team of Welfare Officers in your local area in order to share workloads, ensure others can take over when you move on and are able to offer training to new volunteers.
- Assist in developing an up-to-date role description and advert for the post based on your experience, and think of any people that may be interested.
- Think about the type of information you would like to receive if you were to volunteer for this position again, and the format you would like to receive it in, e.g. e-mail, paper file, face-to-face handover meeting, shadowing at a competition, etc.
- Prepare an information pack for the new Welfare Officer to assist them in their role, including a list of any outstanding work/issues, a list of any contacts and any 'top tips' that may help.
- Hand over hard copies of any files or important correspondence and pass on any electronic information by saving it on a USB stick.
- Offer to mentor the new Welfare Officer for an agreed period of time.

### **Summary**

We hope you have found this guide informative. We wish you a great experience in your role and thank you once again for all the time and commitment you are giving to the sport.

## **swim21**

swim21 is the ASA's quality mark for the development of effective, ethical and sustainable clubs. The opportunity to gain swim21 accreditation is available to all ASA affiliated clubs, across any of the aquatic disciplines, regardless of size or activity delivered. swim21 is about creating the best possible aquatic experience for all and raising the quality of aquatic provision across all areas. The swim21 programme enhances club management, strengthens the structures and unites the club with shared goals to ensure the best environment is available for all swimmers.

To find out more about swim21 and the associated benefits, please visit <http://www.swimming.org/asa/clubs-and-members/swim21-accreditation/>.

## **Equality and diversity**

Is your club as inclusive as it could be? Does your club truly reflect the local demographics? Aquatic sports can and should be made accessible to everyone, to the greatest extent possible. Opening your club to everyone will aid with sustainability, add new dimensions to the club's social element, and you may even find talent, in many different forms, where you least expect it. Read more about the ASA's commitment to equality and diversity and find further support for clubs at this link: <http://www.swimming.org/asa/about-us/equality/>.

## **Further information**

The ASA accepts no liability for any errors or omissions in this resource. Further, whilst it is hoped that volunteers will find this resource useful, no liability arising out of its use can be accepted by the ASA or the club. This resource is not a contract of employment and the role you undertake as a volunteer will not create an employment relationship between you and the club or the ASA.

## **ASA Volunteering Hub**

Did you know that the ASA has a dedicated hub for volunteers? To access this hub, go to [www.swimming.org/volunteering](http://www.swimming.org/volunteering) or email us at [volunteering@swimming.org](mailto:volunteering@swimming.org).

## **Acknowledgements**

The ASA Volunteer Engagement Team are grateful for the contributions of both staff and volunteers who supported the creation of this resource. The knowledge and experience of those involved is vital to ensuring these materials are as beneficial as possible.

## **Useful links and contacts**

### **ASA Contacts**

Jenni Dearman - National Child Safeguarding Coordinator  
Telephone 01509 640270  
E-mail [jenni.dearman@swimming.org](mailto:jenni.dearman@swimming.org)

Keith Oddy - Independent Child Protection Officer  
[keithoddy49@gmail.com](mailto:keithoddy49@gmail.com)

Samantha Massey DBS Coordinator  
Telephone 01509 640738  
E-mail [DBS@swimming.org](mailto:DBS@swimming.org)

### **Links**

Child Protection in Sport Unit  
<https://thecpsu.org.uk/>

Wavepower  
[www.swimming.org](http://www.swimming.org)

Swimline 0808 1004001

Childline 0800 1111

NSPCC Child Protection 0808 800 5000  
Helpline

CPSU (Child Protection in 0116 234 7278 Sport Unit)

For Child Power leaflets and a Wavepower/Swimline poster, please e-mail  
[jenni.dearman@swimming.org](mailto:jenni.dearman@swimming.org) for copies.