ECB Guidance on Appointing and Training a Club Welfare Officer

It is a mandatory requirement that every ECB affiliated club recruit, identify, appoint and train a Club Welfare Officer.

This is essential firstly, to provide a "first point of contact" for everyone within the club and the ECB for child safeguarding matters, and secondly, to ensure the club is adopting, and implementing, the various safeguarding activities necessary for it to demonstrate its duty of care for children.

When appointing a new Club Welfare Officer, clubs must remember to refer to the ECB point of policy on appropriate recruitment for individuals who work with children, as well as the guidance notes on the recruitment and appointment of volunteers/staff found elsewhere in this Kit Bag. The role of Club Welfare Officer would be regarded as Regulated Activity, for the purposes of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, and as such, the club needs to be aware of the legal obligations placed on the club as a consequence. For further details on the responsibilities for the club, please see the guidance document, 'Responding to, Recording and Reporting Concerns…'.

Recommended process

- The Club Chairman must personally ensure the Club Welfare Officer has been through the ECB's vetting process
- Written references on the prospective Club Welfare Officer (which are required in accordance with the ECB appointment and recruitment guidelines) need to be taken up by the Club Chairman, and any concerns raised by those providing the reference should be referred by the Chairman directly to the County Welfare Officer
- The name and contact details for the appointed Club Welfare Officer must be communicated to your County Welfare Officer, and County Cricket Board Office
- Once the Club Welfare Officer has been appointed, they must attend training in accordance with the details shown later in this guidance under the heading of "Training". Once trained, where possible, the club should display the Club Welfare Officer's training certificates on the club notice board
- The Club Welfare Officer's name and contact details must be made known to club members, and other persons associated with the club, and these should also be displayed on the club notice board

Who should be a Club Welfare Officer?

The Club Welfare Officer should be selected as the most appropriate person for the role not because they are the only applicant.

NB The majority of clubs have as members (or members, partners/parents or associates), people who, in their professional lives, have experience of child safeguarding policies and procedures.

Where possible, the person selected for the role of Club Welfare Officer should not be someone who already has a high profile role within the club.

The person selected for the role of Club Welfare Officer must be able to:

- Satisfy the requirements of the core skills and knowledge areas
- Be prepared to complete the core tasks
- Be prepared to undergo the training required

The above is the ideal scenario for appointing a Club Welfare Officer and the ECB understands the problems clubs may face in securing volunteers to perform such a role. However the importance of selecting the right person cannot be over-stated. The person selected may well be privy to some of the most private aspects of club members lives and must show they are able, and experienced enough, to handle confidential matters.

Role Description – Club Welfare Officer

Core tasks

- Promote good practice in safeguarding and protecting children in their club, working with the coaching teams, club committee and club members to create a child centred environment and develop a proactive safeguarding culture within the club
- To help safeguard and protect children by assisting in the promotion and implementation of the Safeguarding Children Policy at a club
- To be the first point of contact for all club child safeguarding issues
- To act as a source of advice on current best practice and provide support to the Club Management Committee and the members of that club on safeguarding issues and procedures
- To attend Club Management Committee meetings as a member of that Committee by right of the role (and not through combing roles of established positions). To ensure safeguarding is a mandatory standing item on the committee agenda and that safeguarding is considered the primary driver in junior cricket decisions
- To advise the Management Committee in establishing which roles within the club require the post holder to undertake the ECB vetting process, and ensure such vetting applications are completed
- To maintain accurate records and keep all documentation in a secure fashion
- To ensure matters of a possible child safeguarding nature are reported/referred appropriately to the ECB and/or Statutory Agencies in a timely fashion, and in accordance with ECB procedures

Core areas of knowledge

- To be aware of the ECB process for reporting incidents to the ECB and the Statutory Agencies
- To have a basic knowledge of the different forms of abuse that can occur within, and outside of sport, which are harmful to children
- To have a basic understanding of the Statutory Agencies and their role in child safeguarding
- To be aware of ECB safeguarding policies and procedures as set out in “Safe Hands”

Core skills

- Have experience of child safeguarding either at work or other volunteering, for example as a teacher, social worker, police officer, charity organiser
- Have empathy with children
- Have excellent communication skills, including the ability to advocate the benefits of safeguarding
- Be able to collate and administrate paperwork and information received in a confidential and secure manner

Training the Club Welfare Officer

The ECB requires all Club Welfare Officers to attend the following training to support and equip them for the role:

- A "Safeguarding and Protecting Children" (SPC) workshop every three years. This is a basic awareness course and is required before attending the detailed training for Club Welfare Officers. A vocational basic awareness course (such as LSCB courses for social care workers, health professionals and designated child protection officers in education) can replace the SPC workshop, if evidenced by a certificate of attendance
- The ECB Club Welfare Officer workshop every three years. Before attending this workshop, any trainee Club Welfare Officer must have been vetted and attended a basic awareness safeguarding course such as SPC

Undertaking appropriate training will enable the Club Welfare Officer to:

- Explain the role and responsibility of the Club Welfare Officer and how this relates to other key roles in cricket
- Review club processes regarding good safeguarding practice and duty of care
- Identify legislation and government guidance relevant to the Club Welfare Officer role, including the Club Welfare Officer's need to have a working knowledge of children's social care, the police, LADO and so on
- Apply the "Safe Hands" safeguarding policy when managing concerns
- Create an ongoing action plan to support the implementation of "Safe Hands" in your club