Ledbury Bowling Club
Affiliated to Bowls England
Safeguarding Policy

1. Policy Statement
Ledbury Bowling Club (hereinafter referred to as "the Club") is committed to establishing and maintaining a secure and constructive environment for all its members, visitors, and participants. This commitment extends particularly to children and adults deemed at risk. The Club firmly believes that every individual involved in lawn bowls, irrespective of age, gender, ability, background, or ethnicity, possesses the inherent right to be safeguarded from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The Club fully endorses and pledges adherence to the **Bowls England Safeguarding Policy, known as "Bowls Safe"**, and all pertinent legislation and guidance issued by the UK government and relevant statutory bodies concerning the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.

2. Scope of Policy
This policy is applicable to all individuals associated with the Club, including, but not limited to:
- Coaching staff
- Club Officers and Committee Members
- Team Captains
- Volunteers
- Members (all categories)
- Parents/Guardians
- Visitors and spectators

3. Definitions
- **Child:** For the purposes of this policy, a child is defined as any individual under the age of 18 years, in accordance with the Children Act 1989.
- **Adult at Risk:** An adult (aged 18 years or over) who requires care and support (irrespective of whether these needs are being met by the local authority) and, as a direct consequence of those needs, is unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect, as stipulated by the Care Act 2014.
- **Abuse:** This comprehensive term encompasses physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, discriminatory abuse, financial abuse, modern slavery, organisational abuse, and self-neglect.
- **Safeguarding:** The proactive process of protecting children and adults at risk from harm, promoting their overall welfare, and implementing measures to facilitate optimal outcomes for their well-being.

4. Core Principles
The Club's safeguarding practices are founded upon the following fundamental principles:
- The welfare of the child and/or adult at risk is of paramount importance.
- All children and adults at risk are entitled to safety and protection from harm.
- It is the collective responsibility of all members to report concerns.
- All reported concerns will be treated with gravity and addressed promptly and appropriately.

- Confidentiality will be maintained where suitable, provided it does not compromise the safety of a child or adult at risk.
- Clear lines of responsibility and accountability shall be established and upheld.
- Robust and safe recruitment procedures will be consistently applied.
- Ongoing education and training are considered indispensable for effective safeguarding implementation.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Club Safeguarding Officers (CSOs)

The Club shall designate one or more dedicated Club Safeguarding Officers (CSOs) who will assume responsibility for the following duties:

- Serving as the primary point of contact for all safeguarding concerns arising within the Club.
- Facilitating liaison with Bowls England's Lead Safeguarding Officer (LSO) and statutory agencies as necessitated.
- Ensuring the widespread dissemination and comprehension of the Club's safeguarding policy among all members.
- Actively promoting a safe and inclusive environment.
- Maintaining accurate and confidential records pertaining to safeguarding concerns and subsequent actions undertaken.
- Overseeing the completion of appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for eligible roles.
- Coordinating and facilitating safeguarding training for Club members.
- Regularly reviewing and updating the Club's safeguarding policy in accordance with Bowls England and national guidelines.

Club CSOs: Scott Fleming, Tel: 01531 660338 & 07976 803920
Derek Phippen, Tel: 07947 807552

5.2 Responsibilities of All Club Members and Volunteers

All members, volunteers, and participants bear the responsibility to:

- Adhere strictly to this policy and the Bowls England Codes of Conduct.
- Maintain vigilance and report any concerns regarding the welfare of a child or adult at risk to the CSO without delay.
- Conduct themselves in a manner that ensures the safety and well-being of all individuals.
- Respect personal boundaries and privacy.

5.3 Bowls England Lead Safeguarding Officer (LSO)

The Club acknowledges that the Bowls England LSO holds ultimate authority for safeguarding matters within the sport and commits to full cooperation with their guidance and directives.

Bowls England LSO Contact Details: Listed in Section 15, but please refer to the official Bowls England website for the most current contact details.

6. Recruitment and Vetting Procedures

The Club is committed to implementing safe recruitment practices for all positions that involve regular interaction with children or adults at risk. This includes, but is not limited to, coaches, junior section leaders, and any individuals occupying positions of trust. These practices shall encompass:

- **DBS Checks:** All individuals engaged in regulated activity with children or adults at risk will be required to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The Club will strictly adhere to Bowls England's guidance regarding DBS eligibility and renewal protocols.

- **References:** The procurement of appropriate references for new volunteers and staff in relevant roles.
- **Self-Declaration Forms:** The requirement for individuals to complete self-declaration forms disclosing any previous convictions or disciplinary actions.
- **Interviews:** The conducting of interviews to assess the suitability of candidates for roles.
- **Probationary Periods:** The implementation of probationary periods for newly appointed volunteers or staff.

7. Reporting Concerns and Associated Procedures

Any member who identifies a safeguarding concern, irrespective of its perceived minor nature, is required to report it immediately.

7.1 Reporting Channels:

- **Imminent Danger:** In instances where a child or adult at risk is believed to be in immediate danger, emergency services (Police: 999) or the relevant Social Services/Adult Social Care department should be contacted without delay.
- **Internal Club Reporting:** Concerns should be reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO) identified within this policy.
- **Reporting to Bowls England:** If the concern directly involves the Club Safeguarding Officer, or if the individual believes their concern is not being adequately addressed by the Club, direct reporting to the Bowls England Lead Safeguarding Officer (LSO) is advised.
- **Statutory Agencies:** Concerns may also be reported directly to Herefordshire Children's Services or Adult Social Care, or to the Police.

7.2 Information Required for a Report:

When submitting a report, individuals should endeavour to provide comprehensive details, including:

- The reporter's name and contact information (for follow-up purposes; anonymous reports may be considered).
- The name of the child/adult at risk and the alleged perpetrator (if known).
- The specific nature of the concern (e.g., physical injury, atypical behaviour, disclosure of abuse).
- The precise date, time, and location of the incident or observation.
- Identification of any witnesses present.
- Factual observations, presented without interpretation or unsubstantiated assumptions.

7.3 Actions Subsequent to a Report:

Upon receiving a report, the CSO will undertake the following actions:

- Listen attentively and calmly to the reporter.
- Provide appropriate reassurance to the reporter.
- Record the information accurately utilising the Club's designated incident report form.
- The CSO shall not undertake an investigation of the matter; their role is to gather information.
- Assess the urgency and severity of the reported concern.
- Consult with the Bowls England LSO and/or relevant statutory agencies (Police, Children's Services, Adult Social Care) as deemed appropriate.
- Adhere to the guidance provided by the LSO and statutory agencies.
- Inform the Club Committee on a strictly need-to-know basis, whilst diligently upholding confidentiality.
- Keep the reporter informed of progress, where appropriate and in strict adherence to confidentiality guidelines.

7.4 Confidentiality Protocol:
All safeguarding concerns will be handled with the highest degree of confidentiality. Information will be shared exclusively on a "need-to-know" basis with pertinent individuals and statutory agencies, solely for the purpose of ensuring the safety of the child or adult at risk.

8. Codes of Conduct
The Club shall adopt and enforce the Bowls England Codes of Conduct for:

- Children and Young People
- Parents/Carers
- Coaches/Leaders/Volunteers
- Adult Members

These Codes will be prominently displayed and regularly communicated to all members. Breaches of these Codes of Conduct may result in formal disciplinary action.

9. Photography and Social Media Policy
The Club acknowledges the promotional benefits of photography and social media for lawn bowls, alongside the associated potential risks. Consequently, the Club will implement the following measures:

- Obtain explicit parental/guardian consent for photographing or videoing children at Club events.
- Ensure that all images are appropriate and do not identify children by name unless specific, written consent has been granted.
- Actively discourage the unsupervised use of personal mobile phones for photography or videography involving children.
- Provide clear guidelines outlining acceptable social media conduct for all members, with particular emphasis on interactions with children and adults at risk.
- Stress that inappropriate content or behaviour online will be treated with the same seriousness as if it occurred in a physical setting.

10. Anti-Bullying Policy
The Club is dedicated to fostering an environment free from bullying. All manifestations of bullying (physical, verbal, emotional, cyber) are deemed unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Any reported instances of bullying will be addressed promptly and effectively in strict accordance with the Club's disciplinary procedures.

11. Transport Policy
When Club members (including coaches and volunteers) provide transportation for children or adults at risk to or from Club events, the following protocols shall be observed:

- The Club recommends that parents/guardians retain primary responsibility for transporting their own children.
- Should Club personnel provide transport, they are required to ensure:
    - Parental/guardian consent has been obtained.
    - Vehicles are roadworthy and possess appropriate insurance coverage.
    - The presence of more than one adult in the vehicle when transporting unrelated children, or that the parent/guardian is explicitly aware if a single adult is transporting a child.
    - Strict adherence to all seatbelt regulations.

12. Away Trips and Overnight Stays
In the event that the Club organises any away trips or overnight stays involving children or adults at risk, comprehensive risk assessments will be conducted. Detailed safeguarding procedures will be developed and clearly communicated to all involved parties, including parents/guardians. These procedures will align with Bowls England's specific guidelines for such activities.

13. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
The Club is steadfast in its commitment to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring that all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. This safeguarding policy is inclusive and applies universally, irrespective of an individual's background or protected characteristics.

14. Policy Review and Dissemination
This policy will undergo an annual review (or more frequently as necessitated by changes in legislation or Bowls England guidance) by the Club Management Committee and the Club Safeguarding Officer. All members will be appraised of the policy's existence and its accessibility (e.g., via Club noticeboard, website, or membership pack).

15. Useful Contacts and Resources

- **Bowls England Lead Safeguarding Officer:**
  Juliette Maggs-Bowen 01929 500490 safeguarding@bowlsengland.com
- **NSPCC:**
  0808 800 5000 (National Helpline for concerns regarding children)
- **Childline:**
  0800 1111 (Direct support for children and young people)
- **Adult Social Care:**
  Herefordshire Council Tel: 01432 260101
- **Children's Services:**
  Herefordshire Council Tel: 01432 260800
- **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS):** www.gov.uk/dbs
- **Ann Craft Trust (Adult Safeguarding):** www.anncrafttrust.org
- **Bowls England Website:** www.bowlsengland.com
  For "Bowls Safe" policy and related resources
- **Police:** 999 (Emergency Services) / 101 (Non-Emergency Enquiries)

Acknowledgement of Policy:
By virtue of their membership or volunteer status at Ledbury Bowling Club, all individuals hereby agree to adhere to the principles and procedures delineated within this Safeguarding Policy.

Date Adopted: 31st Jul 2025
Revision 1: 30th Mar2026
Review Prior to: 31st Jul 2027