BOWL SAFEGUARDING BULLETIN Nov 2026

NEW LEGAL DUTY – MANDATORY REPORTING

The recent Crime and Policing Act 2026 introduces a new legal duty to report child sexual abuse in certain circumstances in England.

This includes an important change for those involved in coaching and regularly supporting young bowlers. It is intended to strengthen the protection of children in our sport

WHO DOES IT APPLY TO?

The duty applies to adults undertaking specified activities and roles involving children. In bowls, this may include coaches and certain volunteers who regularly work closely with junior players. It does not automatically apply to every club member or occasional volunteer.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

It remains important to act if you become aware of, witness or receive a disclosure suggesting that a child may have been sexually abused: Remember

- Listen calmly and take the concern seriously.
- Never promise to keep the information secret.
- Record what has been said or observed, using the persons own words where possible.
- Follow existing ESMBA safeguarding procedures and seek advice from your Club or County Safeguarding Officer.
- Where the legal duty applies, you must be sure that a report reaches the police or relevant local authority as soon as practicable. Do not simply assume someone else has reported it.

WHAT IF I DON'T REPORT?

Failing to meet the statutory reporting duty is not itself a criminal offence but may lead to a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), which could affect your ability to work or volunteer with children in the future.

However, if someone deliberately prevents or discouraging someone else from making a required report this is a criminal offence under the new act.

DO I HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS ALONE?

Absolutely not! Our procedures mean that you are not expected to investigate abuse or manage a safeguarding concern on your own. Your Club and County Safeguarding Officers and the ESMBA Lead Safeguarding Officer are there to provide advice and support.

Please remember if something worries you, **tell someone.** If you are unsure, **ask for advice.** Never assume someone else will deal with it.

Doing nothing is not an option. Speaking up could make all the difference to a child who needs help.

See something. Hear something. Say something.