

WW/BWL Club Welfare Officer Guidance Pack

Introduction

Welcome to the Club Welfare Officer Guidance Pack

It is important that every licensed club that involves junior members or adults at risk assigns a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) within their management team or committee to ensure the safeguarding of these individuals. This pack has been created to outline everything you need to know in order to become and perform well in the role as a Club Welfare Officer for your Club. It should be used by those who are currently working as a CWO or looking to become one.

What do I need know?

The aim of this pack is to provide you with advice and support within your role and you will find it full of handy tips. At the end of the pack there is a checklist that all new and current Club Welfare Officers should use to update and keep track of their training stages. After completing this you should have everything you need in order to start carrying out the role effectively.

Before making the decision to become a CWO it is important to realise that it is classed as a volunteer role and you would be expected to give up a percentage of your free time to dedicate yourself to fulfilling this role, so please ensure you are 100% committed.

To make the role easier and to reduce the number of hours each volunteer would have to spend working within the role, it would be recommended that there are two CWOs working together. This would also allow for the club to be fully covered throughout the year, even when was CWO was on holiday.

Why do we need a Club Welfare Officer?

The Club Welfare Officer plays a key role in ensuring all members within the Club feel safe and respected as valued members. It is their responsibility to act on any issues that arise involved child protection or adults at risk and should be available as the first contact point should anyone – children, young person, parent or coach – have any concerns about the welfare of a child or adult at risk or if they see any poor practice that is having a detrimental effect to the club. This role is hugely important as it allows all members to feel safe and enjoy participating in a happy and fun environment.



What do I need to be able to do a good job?

The CWO does not need to be an individual who is an expert in child protection as training will be provided (where required) to ensure you are equipped to deal with any issues that may arise or know who to contact if you need further advice and support in the case of a serious incident. CWOs are also not expected to work alone - their Club's management team should provide help and support as you will see later in this pack, there are many avenues available to you to gain advice and help.

However, there are certain personal qualities that would be beneficial to a CWO role. Which are listed below:

- Level-headed and fair
- Able to remain unbiased
- Able to remain calm and control difficult situations
- Approachable
- Good Listener
- Patient



It's all about the Young People

It is really important to recognise that your role involves you working to create a safe and happy environment for children/young people and vulnerable adults, therefore, you should always work with their best interests at heart and endeavour to meet their individual needs as much as possible. This would also include making extra efforts to learn how to accommodate anyone with learning difficulties or disabilities and familiarising yourself and their coach with any special requirements that they may have, then ensuring that these are followed through.

It is also important to engage with the children/young people within your club and ensure that they are aware of the role you play, ensuring that they feel able to approach you. This could also include ensuring that your contact details are readily available for members to view and access, perhaps on the club's notice board, club's Facebook page or website or as a handout or business card given to all new members. There is a poster you can use on the WW Website or in your Licensed Club pack.

Keeping children and adults at risk safe in sport is not just about ensuring that those who work in sport are suitable to do so. A trusted coach or leader may be the person a child trusts to tell about something that is happening in their life outside of sport.

Here are some other ideas and thoughts that could help to make sure that the needs of your young people are met:

- Invite young people to meet you to discuss their ideas for development for development at the club and find out what they want/would like.
- Allow the club to vote a young person to represent them at board meetings to give them a voice and a better understanding of the club
- Club Training: WW would recommend a minimum ratio of one adult to fifteen lifters for children who are aged thirteen and above and a ratio of one adult to ten children for children aged nine to twelve. Where possible, two suitably qualified adults should be present.
- Attending events: Where events are external to the regular club training venue a minimum ratio of one adult to ten lifters is required. In addition, there must always be a minimum of two responsible adults present. This ensures there is supervision in the event of an accident or incident that requires one of the adults to leave the group to accompany a child.

Developing a new Child Protection Policy

Although Weightlifting Wales and British Weight Lifting have policies and guidelines in place on child protection and safeguarding. It is recognised that not all clubs are the same and that not all sections of WW/BWL policies apply to every club and you may want to have your own policies for certain things however, we recommend you follow the WW/BWL policies and guidance where possible and appropriate.

Responding to Concerns

As you are the first point of contact for anyone with any serious concerns about child welfare you should understand how to handle difficult situations and know how to respond to anyone, adult or child who may come to you with concerns.

DO

- Remain calm and in control
- Listen to the adult or child and show that you believe what they are telling you
- Reassure the individual that they can trust you and that it is okay to share their concerns
- Keep questions to a minimum and allow the individual to lead the conversation only prompt when necessary and use only open-ended questions that would not lead their answer, such as how or why?
- Keep opinions to yourself
- Ensure the individual is safe and feels safe within your care

DO NOT

- Promise confidentiality
- Panic or allow the individual to see panic
- React or show shock in front of the individual
- Make any assumptions
- Discuss the information you have been told with anyone that it is not necessary to share with

It would also be important to make sure that a **record** of the incident and conversation was made, this should include:

- All possible information about the incident that you have gained, including any relevant times, dates and actions.
- All the information about the child or adult at risk concerned, including name, date of birth, gender and contact details.
- Contact details and full names of known parents or carers of the child (if applicable).
- Details of anyone else involved, including the person making the claim, if it is not the child,



parent or adult at risk.

- A personal account of the situation from the child/adult at risk involved in their own words where possible.
- Information of anyone who has been consulted or knows of the situation

Remember this information is very sensitive and should be stored very securely.

If necessary, the information should be handed to the appropriate authority, social worker and the police. The child's parent should also be informed unless they are the one being accused of abuse, in this case it would be down to the authorities to inform the parent/carer.

What Support is there for you?

You can speak to the Lead Safeguarding Office (Simon Roach) at Weightlifting Wales Head Office on 01248 388194 or via mobile on 07913945501

Detailed below you will also find the details of organisations that are involved in child protection, welfare and adult safeguarding and have many resources and information that would help and guide you throughout this process.

NSPCC

Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

(Their help and advice section include a great section with free advice leaflets for you to download and use and their child protection in sport unit also provides insightful information)

ChildLine

Helpline: 0800 1111

Website: www.childline.org.uk



Kidscape

Website: www.kidscape.org.uk

Anti-Bullying Alliance

Website: www.antibullyingalliance.org

ACT (Ann Craft Trust)

Website: www.anncrafttrust.org

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