



IGAT

SAFEGUARDING & WELFARE OFFICER : ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Version 1.0



Version History

Version	Summary of amendments/changes	Published Date
Version 1.0	Document Created	July 2024
Version 1.2	Expanded on SWO duties, Club Duties and added a recruitment section	October 2024

Contact Information

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At IGA, every member has a responsibility to ensure the safety and enjoyment of everyone involved in gymnastics. Every club affiliated with IGA must appoint a designated Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer (SWO). This role is crucial as the SWO ensures that safeguarding practices are ingrained throughout the gymnastics environment, facilitates positive changes, and advocates for those who may not be able to speak up. Key Principles of the SWO role include:

- The welfare of gymnasts is paramount and must always be the top priority.
- Everyone has the right to protection from abuse, irrespective of their protected characteristics.
- All suspicions and allegations of misconduct or abuse must be taken seriously and addressed promptly and appropriately.
- Ensuring that staff, coaches, parents, and other adults adhere to IGA's Codes of Conduct and serve as positive role models.
- Collaborating with club members, parents/carers, club staff, volunteers, and relevant organisations to uphold safeguarding standards. It is the collective responsibility of everyone to respond to and report concerns in accordance with statutory guidelines. The SWO plays a crucial role in ensuring that all individuals within the club environment understand and feel empowered to report any concerns they may have, either about themselves or others.
- Promptly acknowledge and address any concerns regarding abuse or the wellbeing of a child, young person, or adult within the IGA community. This duty extends to issues arising at home, school, or elsewhere, including concerns about treatment by family members, peers, or professionals.
- Take a proactive stance by reporting or addressing any instances of poor practice that come to your attention, whether reported by others or observed firsthand.



- Ensure your IGA club environment is implementing the policies and procedures outlined by IGA.
- Promptly share all identified level 1 and level 2 safeguarding cases with the IGA Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team.
- Seek guidance and support from the IGA Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team if uncertain about the appropriate course of action.

Requirements for the SWO Role:

- Each IGA environment must have at least one designated Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer (SWO).
- SWOs must not have any conflicts of interest, including holding dual roles such as club owner/manager or coach, or having close family members in these positions.
- SWOs are required to undergo Safeguarding and Protecting Children training, and possess a current valid DBS certificate.
- SWOs must regularly attend the club environment and be available during operating hours.
- Support the club in integrating safeguarding practices and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
- The club adopts a child-centered approach in all activities.
- Welfare Officers serve as the primary contacts for club staff, volunteers, young people, and parents regarding safeguarding concerns, instances of poor practice, or potential/alleged abuse.
- Ensure all incidents are accurately documented, reported (to relevant parties i.e HSE, LADO and/or IGA etc.), and referred according to the guidelines set by IGA.



- Make certain that all applicable club members complete the necessary safeguarding training.
- Implement the safe recruitment procedures for staff and volunteers as outlined by IGA.
- Keep up-to-date local contact information for Children’s Social Care Services, the Police, and Local Safeguarding Children Boards.
- Provide guidance to club management on safeguarding matters.
- Maintain confidentiality, sharing information only on a strict 'need to know' basis.
- Include safeguarding as a discussion item in all club meetings.

Responsibilities of Gymnastic Environments:

- Clearly display SWO contact details for reporting concerns in every gymnastics environment. This includes a photo of the SWO, contact telephone number, email address.
- All gymnastic environments must adhere to safe recruitment policies when appointing SWOs.
- It is the responsibility of the club manager to ensure that every SWO at IGA has the necessary training, membership credentials, and a valid DBS check. They are also accountable for providing ongoing training and support to the SWO.
- If there is a change in the SWO role—whether a SWO leaves or a new SWO is appointed—it is the club manager's duty to promptly update their club portal to reflect these updates. Remember, safeguarding is a collective effort. Always seek support and guidance from the IGA Safeguarding and Wellbeing team when needed.



- The Welfare Officer plays a vital role within the management team.
- Safeguarding is included as a regular agenda item at all club meetings.
- The Welfare Officer should contribute to the creation, review, and updating of policies, procedures, and best practices.
- Connecting with club members and families to gather feedback on their experiences at the club.
- Organising or participating in parent committees, gymnast committees, drop-in discussion sessions, and similar activities.
- Coordinating with Regional Welfare Officers, and other safeguarding organisations.
- Attending welfare-specific training or events with IGA to support professional growth and confidence in the role.

Recruiting a Welfare Officer

Hiring a Welfare Officer is one of the initial steps clubs need to undertake when establishing themselves and is a requirement for becoming a registered club. Clubs should carefully evaluate who would be the most suitable candidate for this role. It is advisable to have multiple Welfare Officers, although at the outset, the Regional Welfare Officer can assist the appointed Welfare Officer.

Considerations to be made whilst recruiting and/interviewing for a welfare officer:

Must Have

- Must be registered to IGA (or club will need to register on behalf of SWO)
- Must be over the age of 18
- Can not be a coach or key member of the coaching team or family member
- Must have an up to date and clear Enhanced DBS
- Must have up to date safe guarding qualifications (Must be CPD certified)



Desirables

- Experience in a child-focused profession (such as teaching, nursing, law enforcement, or social work)
- A gymnast-centered approach to their role within the club
- Enthusiastic about fostering a safe sporting environment for children
- Availability to dedicate time at the club, attend meetings, oversee welfare, and handle incident investigations
- Strong communication skills
- Approachable and professional when addressing safeguarding issues
- Proficient in maintaining accurate records
- Familiarity with reporting procedures