

Anti-bullying Policy

Everyone has the right to experience sport in a safe environment, free from abuse and bullying. As in most environments, bullying can and does happen in sport. Sports organisations play an important role in creating a positive club ethos that challenges it.

Within bowls there is a commitment to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all bowlers so they can take part in a relaxed and secure atmosphere regardless of their age or background.

Quite simply, bullying of any kind is unacceptable in bowls. If bullying does occur, all members should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club Safeguarding Officer as soon as they have concerns.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of force, coercion, hurtful teasing or threat, to abuse, aggressively dominate or intimidate. The behaviour is often repeated and habitual. There is typically an imbalance of physical or social power. This imbalance distinguishes bullying from conflict. The dynamics of bullying can be more complex than the basic idea of a bully and a victim. This video clip from the Anti – Bullying Alliance explains other roles.

[Understanding bullying as a group behaviour - YouTube](#)

Bullying can be:

- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. threatening gestures).
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Sexist – belittling someone because of their gender.
- Homophobic and biphobic - where people are discriminated against and treated unfairly by other people because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual or are perceived to be such.
- Transphobic - where people are discriminated against because their gender identity doesn't align with the sex they were assigned at birth or perhaps because they do not conform to stereotypical gender roles or 'norms'.

Cyberbullying has become more common. It is a form of bullying behaviour that takes place on social media, in online games and through mobile phones.

Cyberbullying can have just as much of an impact on children and young people as more direct, face-to-face bullying and is often harder to escape in the online world.

Objectives of this Policy

- All members, coaches, volunteers, officials and parents/carers should understand what bullying is and that it won't be tolerated in bowls.
- All members, coaches, volunteers, officials, and parents/carers should know what to do if they witness or experience bullying within the sport.
- Anyone involved in bowls should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club or County Safeguarding Officer, member of the Club or County committee or an adult you can trust.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the relevant NGB Safeguarding Officer.
3. In all cases affecting children, parents/carers of alleged victims should be informed.
4. If necessary and appropriate, the victim might consult the police. Laws concerning harassment, online behaviour, hate crime, use of violence and discriminatory behaviour may be relevant. The link below has information on bullying and the law: [ABA_BullyingandTheLaw - V2.pdf \(anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk\)](#)
5. The bullying behaviour will be investigated with the intention of stopping the bullying quickly.
6. The victim will be provided with information about support agencies and helplines.
7. An attempt will be made to help the bully/bullies change their behaviour.
8. Mediation can be considered if both/all involved are willing to participate. If mediation fails and the bullying continues, disciplinary action can be taken under the appropriate NGB Disciplinary Policy.

Recommended Club Action

If the club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they should follow the procedure outlined below:

1. A small panel of club officers should meet with the person making the allegation (including their parents if under 18) to obtain more information. This panel will normally include the Club Safeguarding Officer. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account. The person making the report can, if they are 18 or over, request that they are accompanied by a friend, carer or relative. The meeting should clarify the victim's preferred actions which could include:
 - i. support for them but no actions against the alleged perpetrator(s) – they may fear reprisals,

- ii. mediation supported by a club official,
 - iii. disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator(s).
2. In the case of ii or iii above, the same panel should meet with the alleged perpetrator (with their parent/s if under 18), detail the allegation and allow them an opportunity of reply. They can also request that they are accompanied by a friend, carer or relative if aged 18 or over. If the victim favours mediation, this should be offered as an option to the alleged perpetrator. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.
 3. If a mediation meeting is agreed by all those involved, this should be set up within a reasonable time scale. A trained mediator might be considered – clubs could canvass members to see if anyone has experience from their work eg. some current or former police officers, teachers, social workers, HR professionals etc. may have undergone mediation training.
 4. Following a successful mediation meeting, the club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not repeated and that there is no retaliatory behaviour.
 5. All appropriate coaches, volunteers or team managers involved with both individuals might be made aware of the situation and desired outcomes as part of the monitoring of the resolution.
 6. If mediation is not agreed or does not produce an appropriate resolution the NGB disciplinary procedure can be used by the person making the complaint.

Prevention

1. Bowls Clubs will have a written constitution, which should include what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members. This constitution should clarify that bullying is not tolerated.
2. All club members and parents of young bowlers (U18) should receive and sign a code of conduct ideally at the point of becoming a member. The code of conduct should include reference to the lack of toleration of any form of bullying.
3. The Club Safeguarding Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters.

Anti-Bullying Support Organisations and Helplines

Organisation	Website	Email/Tel
Anti-Bullying Alliance	anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk	aba@ncb.org.uk
BullyingUK/ Family Lives	www.bullying.co.uk	0808 800 2222
Childline	www.childline.org.uk	0800 1111
National Bullying Helpline	www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk	0300 323 0169
Samaritans	www.samaritans.org/	116 123

See the web page [Advice about bullying in sports clubs - Family Lives](#)