



# BIHDA CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

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## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

This role is crucial in ensuring that the EIHA's approach to children's welfare and protection works in practice. The **Club Child Protection Officer** acts as the first point of contact for anyone in the club (club committee, team staff, parents or players) who has a concern about a child and about possible abuse or poor practice by adults working with children. They therefore need to be perceived as being approachable and as having a child-focussed approach.

The **Club Child Protection Officer** does not need to be a child protection 'expert'. That is the role of the statutory agencies (Police and Social Services).

**Core Knowledge** which the Club Child Protection Officer should acquire as soon as possible after taking on the position

- **Basic** knowledge of core legislation, government guidance and the national framework for child protection. In practice this means knowing the basics of the legal framework related to child protection and government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children and Young People', DoH 1999. The aim is purely to understand where sporting organisations fit within this framework.
- Basic knowledge of roles and responsibilities of statutory agencies (Police, Social Services and NSPCC) and Area Child Protection Committees. This means understanding what Police and Social Services will do if the Club Welfare Officer has to refer a situation of suspected child abuse to them.
- Understanding of the local arrangements for managing child protection, including reporting procedures for Social Services and Police. Access to the local Area Child Protection Committee's child protection guidelines and contact details for local agencies.
- Basic knowledge of behaviour that is harmful to children and young people – from bullying to poor practice and abuse.
- Understanding of EIHA's role and responsibilities to safeguard children and young people. Boundaries of their own role and where this fits with the roles and responsibilities of others within the EIHA.
- Familiarity with EIHA's policy and procedures related to safeguarding children and young people. Have copies of these and any related policies and procedures such as Equity Policy.
- Understanding of core values and principles underpinning practice.
- Awareness of equality issues and child protection

## CORE SKILLS OF THE CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

- A child-focussed approach – this is probably the most important skill.



- Basic administration and
- Maintaining records.
  - The Club Child Protection Officer will need to be able to ensure that there is a confidential system for managing records regarding concerns about child welfare. They may also need to advise on safe storage of records related to club personnel, such as self-declaration forms.
- Communication skills.
  - The Club Child Protection Officer will need to be able to communicate the EIHA's and the club's approach to safeguarding children's welfare to all involved at the club (children, parents, management committee, coaches, officials, spectators). They will also need to have confidence in contacting Police and Social Services where concerns about a child arise.
- Ability to promote the EIHA's policy, procedures and resources.
- Ability to provide information about local resources to assist children and families, and also the club.

## DUTIES OF THE CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

- Assist the EIHA to fulfil their responsibilities to safeguard children and young people at club level.
- Assist the EIHA to implement their child protection policy at club level.
- Be the first point of contact for club personnel, parents and children/young people where concerns about children's welfare, poor practice or child abuse arise.
- Ensure that appropriate records are maintained, appropriate agencies are notified to timescales, and club and EIHA procedures are followed.
- Maintain contact details for local Social Services and Police, and how to obtain the Area Child Protection Committee's policy and procedures. Contact details for local and national helplines should also be maintained and publicised within the club.
- Promote the EIHA's best practice guidance and codes of conduct within the club. This may involve working with children/young people and parents on developing the club's approach to expected behaviour of everyone at the club, or developing an anti-bullying policy, for example.
- Advise the committee on its approach to child welfare and ensuring that this is monitored and reviewed.
- Promote and ensure adherence to the EIHA's child protection training plan. Ensure that everyone is aware of what training is available, and work with the club management committee to ensure that training requirements are met.
- Ensure, along with the club's management committee, that confidentiality is maintained. Where concerns about a child arise, this frequently causes a high level of anxiety for those who need to respond and take action. This is particularly the case where the concerns relate to the behaviour of club staff. It is essential that confidentiality is maintained and information is shared only on a 'need to know' basis. An open mind needs to be kept in all cases. It is the role of the statutory agencies to investigate abuse. Speculation and breaches of confidentiality can seriously compromise this and may put children at further risk.
- Promote anti-discriminatory practice, in accordance with the EIHA's child protection and equity policies.
- Children and young people need to feel that their club is a safe and welcoming environment to all, regardless of their gender, race, culture, ability/disability or religious belief system.



## **BLACKBURN ICE HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION**



Everyone in the club needs to feel that their concerns will be listened to, and be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner.

### **REPORTING TO: THE CLUB CHAIR**