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The British Model Flying Association

**Safeguarding Guidelines for Children and
Vulnerable Adults.**

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INTRODUCTION

All Clubs and voluntary organisations have a basic duty of care towards all their members. The BMFA Safeguarding Policy Statement sets out that duty of care towards children under 18 and vulnerable adults as outlined in the Children Act 1989 and 2004 amendment.

Implementing the BMFA Safeguarding Guidelines and Policy protects the interests of all concerned, from the junior members and vulnerable adults to the officers of the committee. The aim is to encourage junior members / vulnerable adults in model flying activities whilst providing a safe environment for them.

This document provides practical guidance on implementing the policy. Both the Policy and the Guidelines apply to BMFA centralised activities as well as to affiliated Clubs and Members.

The Policy and these Guidelines are published on the BMFA website at <https://bmfa.org/safeguarding>

Setting up a policy is not a complicated or difficult process; it requires a little practical application and a modicum of common sense. The five steps outlined below form the basis of what is required. However, they are not definitive and there is no 100% right or wrong solution.

The most important point that you do something rather than nothing.

Within this document [as in the Children Act 2004]:

A “**junior member**” or “**junior**” is defined as a person **under** 18 years of age.

A “**vulnerable adult**” is defined as an individual age 18 or older who has the functional, mental, or physical inability to care for themselves. It can also refer to one who is unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

In practice this means that a greater degree of supervision will be required when junior members or vulnerable adults are on site.

Whilst the majority of this document refers to affiliated Clubs, individuals who undertake training or supervision of children or vulnerable adults outside of the club environment are advised to familiarise themselves with the code of ethics and conduct, and guide to good safeguarding practise.

THE PRINCIPLES OF SAFEGUARDING

The following simple principles apply to promote the protection of children and vulnerable adults:

- The child's or vulnerable adult's welfare is the first consideration.
- All children and vulnerable adults regardless of their age, gender, disability, race, religion or sexual identity have the right to be protected from abuse and to be treated with dignity.
- All those working with children should have the knowledge and awareness to permit them to make informed decisions to prevent placing themselves or children at risk.

THE 'FIVE STEP' PLAN for Clubs

STEP 1

Decide on a policy that will be appropriate to your club's circumstances.

Read these BMFA guidelines in their entirety as they give information and advice on the issues involved and possible ways that you could structure a policy to suit your own specific needs.

Many clubs have adopted the Generic Template for Club Rules as outlined in Appendix A as it stands but you should consider your own needs and be prepared to formulate your own version if you think this is appropriate.

STEP 2

Adopt the agreed policy within your constitution.

This should be voted on at either a meeting of the Committee or at an AGM. The membership should be made aware of the general principles of child welfare and your adopted policy. Copies of the BMFA policy and this document should be available to relevant people [usually committee members and instructors] as it contains much valuable information on child welfare matters.

STEP 3

Review your club operating and flying field rules.

This is where you may need to add a few simple provisions to define how you treat and care for junior members on a day to day basis. Most clubs find that they either add to the existing field rules or produce a single A4 sheet to accompany their existing document. Remember you need reasonable common sense measures that reflect your club's needs and situation.

STEP 4

Consider the need for DBS clearance for some club members.

Obtain DBS Enhanced Disclosure Certificates for those members who may be spending large amounts of time on a regular basis with junior members or who may be taking full responsibility for junior members. Applications for Enhanced DBS Certificates can only be made by a Registered Body or through a registered 'umbrella body' (see the Gov.uk website for more details Guide to DBS Checks).

The BMFA can initiate the process on behalf of members, and all information is handled in the strictest confidence.

STEP 5

Document the route that you have taken.

Ensure that you have minutes from meetings where the subject of a Safeguarding policy has been discussed. Make sure that you have a simple but clear trail that defines the process that you have been through and the solutions that you have in place.

If you wish this can be backed up by submitting a record copy of your document to the BMFA office.

The final point is that your club situation can be fluid and change over time. Review your policy on an annual basis and make changes that reflect the club's needs and circumstances.

The BMFA is here to help. Should you require assistance contact the Head Office and discuss your club's needs with the Club Support Officer or the Chief Executive.

GUIDE ON CLUB POLICY - GENERIC TEMPLATE

A Generic Template for adaption by clubs is at Appendix A. It is not definitive and clubs should be aware that it may have to be tailored to meet the club's requirements and the individual needs of its members. However, it does provide a starting point for the formulation of club policy and identification of responsibilities.

It should be noted that any disclaimer attempting to deny a club's duty of care to any member, particularly junior or vulnerable adult members, is not acceptable in law.

If there are a number of welfare issues that your club needs to address on a regular basis, it can be very much to the club's advantage to appoint a member as the Welfare Officer. This person can act as a focal point for all welfare issues and be a point of contact for parents, guardians and carers. Ideally, the member should have experience of working [including model flying instruction] with children or vulnerable adults but if this is not the case then the club should contact the BMFA Welfare Officer who can advise on appropriate training.

Responsibility for children and vulnerable adults is shared between the parents, guardians or carers and the club members and should be well publicised to ensure that all are aware of the division of responsibilities. A copy the rules including the recommended note to guardians and carers should be given to parents and carers.

Selection Of Club Members Working Directly With Children Or Vulnerable Adults

An important aspect of a Safeguarding Policy within a club is the selection of those members who may be working with or taking responsibility for junior members or vulnerable adults on a regular basis.

When selecting members who will be taking direct responsibility for junior or vulnerable adult members, the Club must assure itself as far as is reasonable, from its experience and knowledge of the member that he or she is suitable for this role.

Implementation of a policy requires that all members working directly with juniors or vulnerable adult members on a regular basis to have an Enhanced DBS check.

DBS checks can be instigated as detailed at step 4 above.

It is the Club's responsibility to ensure that the following are in place:

- DBS Certificate is current
- Relevant qualifications are confirmed if appropriate.
- Role requirements and responsibilities are clarified.
- Club Safeguarding procedures are explained.
- Relevant Club Welfare Policies have been provided.

Role Of The Club Welfare Officer

Where appropriate, Clubs appoint a Welfare Officer whose role is to:

- Help the club follow the guidelines laid down in this document.
- Ensure that new initiatives and information from the BMFA are communicated to the club and its members.
- Ensure that welfare and care of children and vulnerable adults is an item on the club committee meeting agendas.
- Ensure that all club members working with children or vulnerable adults are suitable to do so.
- Assist club members with their initial application to work with children or vulnerable adults.
- Liaise with BMFA Welfare Officer on children and vulnerable adult issues.

The role of the Club Welfare Officer does not require him/her to be the recipient and 'solver' of club problems relating to children or vulnerable adults. Junior members will talk to those with whom they feel most confident and not necessarily to the Club Welfare Officer.

Who the club selects as its Club Welfare Officer is its decision but it should take reasonable steps to ensure that the chosen person has the ability to do the job and is appropriate to do so.

Instructors' Responsibilities

Instructors, especially those working with children or vulnerable adults, should display exemplary standards of conduct at all times.

Note: Although the term “instructor” is used, it also encompasses those persons teaching or assisting in schools or youth groups. E.g. model aircraft workshops, presentations on model aircraft flying, buddy box flying etc.

In addition, instructors should consider the following points when dealing with trainees:

- Instructors should place the well-being and safety of the trainee above the development of performance. The BMFA publishes Guidelines for Instructors which should be referred to when required.
- Instructors should always strive to develop a good working relationship with trainees (especially children and vulnerable adults) based on mutual trust and respect. Instructors must not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward nor abuse their position of trust.
- Instructors should encourage and guide trainees to accept responsibility for their own behaviour, standards of flying and adopting safe procedures.
- Flying instructors may hold a BMFA Approved Instructor qualification or they may apply to their club for inclusion in the BMFA Registered Club Instructor scheme. In either case they should try to ensure that their instruction and knowledge are to current best practice.
- Instructors must take care that activities which may entail increased risks (E.g. starting and handling internal combustion engines or electric motors) are carefully supervised.
- Instructors should at the outset make it clear to the trainee exactly what is expected of them and what the trainee is entitled to expect from the instructor. In addition, it may be appropriate to consult with parents or carers.
- Instructors should fully co-operate with all other interested parties (e.g. other instructors, the club, the school or youth group and the BMFA) in the best interests of the trainee.
- Instructors should always promote the positive aspects of model flying (e.g. compliance with BMFA recommendations and club rules) and never condone unsafe or unacceptable behaviour, or practice.

Code Of Ethics And Conduct

The development of individuals' performance and abilities is achieved by:

- Identifying and meeting the needs of individuals.
- Improving their performance through a progressive programme of safe, guided practice. Measured performance and/or competition.
- Creating an environment in which individuals are motivated to maintain participation and improve their performance.

All those working with children and vulnerable adults should comply with the good ethical practices as follows:

- They must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally within model flying.
- They must place the well-being and safety of the child/ vulnerable adult above that of the child's or vulnerable adult's performance.
- They must develop an appropriate relationship with the child or vulnerable adult in their care based on mutual trust and respect. They must not exert undue influence on them for their own benefit or reward.
- Wherever possible, they must encourage children or vulnerable adults to endeavour to take responsibility for their own behaviour and performance.
- All those working with children and vulnerable adults must be qualified to do so by virtue of their personal suitability and clearance.
- The level of supervision afforded must be that commensurate with the child's or vulnerable adult's age, maturity and abilities.
- At the outset, it must be clarified with the child or vulnerable adult and their family or carer exactly what is expected from both parties and how it will be achieved.
- Those working with children and vulnerable adults should always promote the positive aspects of model flying and never condone any form of malpractice.
- Those working with children and vulnerable adults should always maintain high standards of integrity.

A Guide To Good Safeguarding Practice.

Guidelines for Clubs

- Ensure that your Club has a policy for the promotion of welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
- Ensure that, as far as is possible, those working with children or vulnerable adults are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that parents, carers and club members know what rules the club has in place concerning children or vulnerable adults
- Ensure that parents, carers and club members know how to voice any concerns they might have.
- Ensure that children or vulnerable adults know how to voice their concerns.
- Be aware that you have a duty of care to all your members, not just children and vulnerable adults

Guidelines for Club Members

- Do not spend excessive amounts of time alone with children.
- Do not take children or vulnerable adults alone on car journeys.
- Do not take children or vulnerable adults alone to your home.
- Do not engage in horseplay or sexually provocative games.
- Do not permit inappropriate touching.
- Do not permit the use of inappropriate language or sexual comments.
- Do not engage in any contact via email social media etc without parental consent or knowledge
- Do not ignore any allegations that a child or vulnerable adult makes.
- Do not do things of a personal nature that a child or vulnerable adult can do for themselves.

If, for any reason, you have absolutely no choice and cannot comply with the above good practice, then always inform the parent or carer of the child or vulnerable adult, and a committee member of your club, citing the reasons why you were unable to comply and make a record of it.

Physical Handling

The requirements for physical contact are extremely rare in model flying. However, there are instances where it may be necessary and it is recommended that these procedures are discussed with the child or vulnerable adult and their parent or carer to ensure that all are aware of the reasons behind the physical contact and that there is no misunderstanding. The parent or carer should give their written consent for any form of physical contact which should include the type/limits of contact. It is also seen as good practice that permission to touch or hold the child or vulnerable adult must be sought from the person themselves.

Guidelines for Parents, Guardians and Carers

Before entrusting your child or vulnerable adult to his or her club you should check that:

- The club has a published policy to promote the care and welfare of children and vulnerable adults with which you are content.
- There are procedures in place should you wish to voice concerns.
- That those working with children and vulnerable adults are carefully selected and cleared to do so.
- That the club encourages the involvement of parents, guardians and carers.
- Should physical contact be deemed appropriate for any reason, such as for instructional purposes, you have given your consent in writing detailing the limits and type of contact to which you agree.
- Should your child or adult for whom you care have any medical or special need that you inform the club in writing.
- Should the Club wish to use a photograph of your child or that you provide your written consent.
- **That the Club has a means of contacting you in case of an accident or emergency.**

Do encourage your child or adult to talk about their training and the club environment and ensure that they know how to express their concerns if they are unhappy about any aspect of their care. If you have any doubts, contact the nominated club representative or contact any of the help lines at the end of this document.

The Use Of Photographs And Images Of Children

There have been concerns raised about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on websites and in publications. If sporting organisations are aware of the potential risks and take appropriate steps, the potential for misuse of images can be greatly reduced.

The NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit advises sporting bodies to:

- Consider using models or illustrations if you are promoting an activity.
- Avoid the use of first name *and* surname of individuals in a photograph. This reduces the risk of inappropriate, unsolicited attention from people outside the sport.

Easy rules to remember are:

- If the child is named in full, avoid using their photograph.
- If the photograph is used, avoid naming the child in full.
- Ask for written parental consent to use an image of a young person. This ensures that parents are aware the image of their child is representing the sport.

Although model flying does not often afford the opportunities that other sports present for such malpractice, clubs are advised to be aware that the possibility may still exist and adhere to the above principles, especially those concerning children and vulnerable adults.

Responding To Suspicions Or Allegations

Please remember it is not your responsibility to decide whether a child or vulnerable adult is being abused, but we are asking you to act on your concerns. It is your responsibility to ensure that concerns raised are passed on appropriately.

ACTIONS TO TAKE IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS

Always:

- Ensure that the child or vulnerable adult is in a safe place.
- Stay calm.
- Take seriously what you see or what you are told.
- Don't promise to keep it to yourself.
- Make a note of what you see and don't delay in passing on the information to the relevant person within your club.
- Maintain confidentiality and only tell those that need to know, but do so as soon as is reasonably possible.
- Only ask questions to clarify what they are telling you and do not ask for any explicit details.

Never:

- Rush into inappropriate action.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Take sole responsibility – Pass the information on or consult with somebody else as advised above.

Dealing With Alleged Abuse

Abuse can take place in a variety of settings: within the family, by other children, by other members of the community and within sports and social groups, such as model aircraft clubs.

The first thing to remember is that **you are not in a position to determine if abuse has taken place** but that it is your responsibility to do something about it if you have concerns.

However, taking action of this kind is never easy; it takes courage, but you may be protecting a life by doing so. Whilst it may be possible to talk to the parents, guardians or carers, be aware that this could place the child or vulnerable adult at a greater risk in certain circumstances. If in any doubt seek advice before talking to parents and guardians.

Action to be taken if Suspected Abuse is Being Committed by a Person within Model Flying

Any suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused within the club environment should be reported to the Club Welfare Officer [if appointed] or directly to the BMFA Safeguarding Team as soon as possible after the event.

[Tel: **0116 2441084**].

Email: safeguarding@bmfa.org

Use the BMFA Safeguarding Incident Report Form at the link below to make a record of your actions as this may assist both you and the authorities later should an investigation be undertaken.

<https://reporting.bmfa.uk/safeguarding>

If using the online form the details of the incident are automatically forwarded to the BMFA Safeguarding team. Once the form is submitted you should immediately follow any instructions given.

Alternatively, you may use the hard copy Incident reporting form at Appendix C.

The BMFA Safeguarding team will take the appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child or vulnerable adult and, if necessary, confirm with any other agencies previously involved that these steps have been taken. They will also take steps to ensure the safety of any other child or vulnerable adult that may be at risk.

Such steps may include:

- Contacting the local Social Services Department or Police.
- contacting, where appropriate, the parents of the child or vulnerable adult as soon as possible following advice from Social Services

In consultation with the club the BMFA Safeguarding team may also

- Advise an interim suspension of the member's activities.
- Inform the member of the reasons why the decision was taken.
- Determine if there is a requirement for an internal BMFA investigation.
- Suspend with immediate effect any BMFA instructor qualification.

The member involved has the right of appeal to the Board of Executives against the decision of the BMFA Safeguarding team. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Honorary Secretary.

The BMFA Safeguarding team will make a full report to the BMFA's Board of Executives, which will be convened specifically to address the allegation. Irrespective of the findings of any external investigation, the BMFA will assess all individual cases and determine if the person can be reinstated and how this can be handled sensitively. This decision will be based on all the information available, including the findings of any external investigation. Should there be any doubt on the person's ability to continue to work with children and vulnerable adults then his/her clearance to work with children and vulnerable adults will be withdrawn, as the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is paramount.

If a member of the BMFA Safeguarding team is the subject of an allegation then the report must be made to the BMFA Chairman who will take appropriate action.

Should an allegation be made some time after the event then the above procedures still apply.

Help lines and websites are listed on Page 15.

In an emergency always contact the Police in the first instance.

Use the Incident Report Form at Appendix C to make a record of your actions as this may assist both you and the authorities later should an investigation be undertaken. If an outside agency requests the incident form it should be sent within 24hours.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact Social Services or the Police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

DEALING WITH POOR PRACTICE

If the allegations are against a BMFA employee or volunteer and, after consideration by the BMFA Board of Executives are clearly about poor practice and not abuse, then the allegation will be dealt with as a disciplinary issue.

USEFUL CONTACTS FOR CLUBS

BMFA Safeguarding Team

Chief Executive Officer, David Phipps,
Club Support Officer, Andy Symons

Telephone 0116 2440028 (safeguarding & welfare enquiries during office hours)

Telephone 0116 2441084 (for urgent enquiries and incident reporting outside office hours only)

Email safeguarding@bmfa.org

NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit:	England & Wales	0116 2347278
	Scotland	0141 419 1156
	Northern Ireland	028 9035 1135

NSPCC: 0800 800 500

Social Services: Look up Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership number - Report a Concern or visit the appropriate website:

England: <https://www.safecic.co.uk/scb-england>

Scotland: <https://www.safecic.co.uk/cpc-scotland>

Northern Ireland: <https://www.safeguardingni.org>

Wales: <https://www.safecic.co.uk/scb-wales>

Police: 101 or in an emergency call 999

IMPORTANT

Please note that the British Model Flying Association is committed to the protection of its junior and vulnerable adult members. Whilst we accept that you may not wish to involve the BMFA should you have a concern, we would appreciate that you either contact the BMFA representatives listed above in the first instance or advise them if you have contacted another agency.

By doing so, we can then co-operate with all involved to ensure that any concern is quickly and fully addressed.

Please note that if you have a concern, your first point of contact should be the Club Welfare Officer (if you have one), the BMFA Chief Executive or the BMFA Club Support Officer.

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APPENDIX A

GENERIC TEMPLATE FOR CLUB RULES

Typically club rules concerning the care of children and vulnerable adults are:

- All members, parents, guardians and carers are to comply with BMFA and club policies and guidelines for the promotion of welfare and care of children and vulnerable adults.
- NB. A vulnerable adult can also be a temporary designation covering persons who may, for instance, be recovering from illness or medical treatment.
- Junior members must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult. The level of supervision is to be commensurate with the junior member's age, maturity, capability and level of experience.
- No child or vulnerable adult shall undertake any activity which might place him or her at risk. In any event prior consultation with their parent, guardian or carer must take place if there is any doubt on the member's abilities to undertake a specific activity.
- No senior member is to be expected to assume responsibility for a child or a vulnerable adult unless he/she has been specifically requested to do so by the parent, guardian or carer. If required to do so, he/she is to assume complete and total responsibility for the child or vulnerable adult whilst he/she is in their charge and written evidence of this must be obtained before total responsibility is undertaken.
- Notwithstanding the requirements of the previous paragraph, should a member discover a child or vulnerable adult that is unsupervised then he/she must assume responsibility for that person's safety in the first instance. The situation should then be rectified as soon as possible by seeking out the parent, guardian, carer or nominated supervisor. Any instance of such an occurrence is to be reported to the club committee as soon as possible and a record made of the occurrence.
- Whilst supervising children or vulnerable adults, members should avoid placing themselves in a position that could be open to misinterpretation or question in accordance with BMFA policy. Remember, the policy is there to protect you as well as children and vulnerable adults.
- Should any member, parent, guardian, carer or the person themselves have concerns about the welfare of children or vulnerable adults then he or she is to contact [*insert the nominated person*] or any of the helplines at the end of this document.
- Clubs should also place the following or similar statement (see Note to Parents, Guardians and Carers) on the club's membership application form to ensure that the parent, guardian or carer of a child or vulnerable adult also agrees to abide by club policy

Note to Parents, Guardians and Carers:

“Whilst this Club has a duty to take all reasonable steps to ensure the general welfare and protection of children and vulnerable adult members, in particular during the actual act of model aircraft flying and associated pre-flight and post-flight procedures, the Club will not undertake the responsibilities of those acting in the role of guardians or carers unless specifically arranged and written permission given by the parent or carer.

Should you wish to leave a child or a vulnerable adult at the flying site, it is your responsibility to arrange for one of the qualified club members to supervise your child or charge during your absence and make arrangements for the member to be able to make contact with you. Our activities at the flying site do not finish at a regular time. It is therefore your responsibility to ensure the well-being of your charge by arranging a predetermined collection time.

Should your child have any special medical or physical needs you are required to advise the Club in writing.

Should physical contact be required during model flying for instructional or any other purpose these will be explained to you, and you will be required to record your agreement in writing defining the type and limits of contact.

Should the Club wish to use a photographic image of your child; the Club will follow the guidelines laid down by the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit detailed on Page 22 of this document. In addition, your written consent will be required for the Club to do so.

This membership form must be countersigned by the parent or guardian if the applicant is under 18 years of age or by the authorised carer of a vulnerable adult, thereby signifying acceptance of the conditions of membership.

Should you wish to discuss any issue, have any concerns or have suggestions on how we may improve our policies, then please contact: the Club Welfare Officer or committee <<insert contact details here>>

Note that the above text assumes that your club will take responsibility for the supervision and welfare of a child or vulnerable adult if they are left with you on the flying field. This may not be the case and you may consider inserting an alternative wording stating that any such person must always be accompanied by a parent, guardian or other person designated to the club in writing.

APPENDIX B

WHAT IS ABUSE?

ABUSE: a form of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children / vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children / vulnerable adults may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

Forms of abuse:

Physical Abuse

Neglect

Sexual Abuse

Child Sexual Exploitation including grooming

Emotional abuse

Domestic Abuse

Bullying and Cyber Bullying

Child Trafficking including modern slavery

Female Genital Mutilation

Radicalisation and Terrorism

For further information and definitions of abuse see:

NSPCC definitions and Signs of Child Abuse

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1188/definitions-signs-child-abuse.pdf>

All Club Welfare Officers and club members are advised to maintain an attitude of:

‘It could happen here’ where Safeguarding is concerned.

When concerned about the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult, all Club Welfare Officers and club members should always act in the **best** interests of the child or vulnerable adult.

When incidents/ concerns are reported it is vital that this is recorded on the form at Appendix C of this document. In safeguarding terms the mantra is always record **verbatim** with no opinions offered as to what may have occurred.

Confidentiality must be maintained at all times. In certain cases it may not be appropriate to report concerns to the parent or carer. Always seek advice from the Club Welfare Officer or contact the BMFA Welfare Officers

BMFA Incident Reporting Form A



Name of child/ vulnerable adult	Club Name
DOB	Name of Club Member completing the form
Address	BMFA Number if applicable
Date/ Time/Place of Incident	
Nature of incident / concern including relevant background (Record child's word verbatim and any wishes and feelings expressed)	

Note: Please do not interpret what is seen or heard; simply record the facts. After completing the form, pass it immediately to the Club Welfare Officer



BMFA Incident Reporting Form B

Actions taken by Club Welfare Officer

Name of child/ vulnerable adult	Club Name
Date of Incident.	Name of Club Member completing the form

Actions taken:

- Parents/ carers informed Yes or No
If no why not?

- Has an external agency or agencies been contacted?
If so which one/ ones?

- What was the advice given?

Signature and Date of Club Welfare Officer

Please send a copy to The BMFA

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