



SAFE RECRUITMENT POLICY

Version 1.0



Version History

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Introduction

Safe recruitment practices must address safeguarding concerns throughout every stage of the hiring process for positions involving children. While the majority of coaches, officials, and unqualified assistants are committed and dedicated individuals motivated by commendable reasons, it is crucial to take all necessary measures to prevent unsuitable individuals or those who might harm children from working in these roles.

The following procedures should be consistently adopted to ensure that gymnastics organisations recruit individuals who align with the organisations' values and approach to safeguarding. These measures also serve as an effective deterrent to those who might seek to abuse children within the sport. All IGA-affiliated organisations should review their current practices and implement any necessary changes.

Since individuals with harmful intentions may attempt to exploit various opportunities to access children, it is essential that robust recruitment procedures are enforced for both paid and voluntary positions. These practices must be adhered to consistently, even when there is only one applicant for a position.

Scope

This policy applies to all positions within IGA-affiliated organisations that involve regular contact with children. It covers both paid staff and volunteers who have significant or unsupervised access to children in gymnastics settings. It applies to all recruitment processes, including for coaches, assistants, volunteers, and any other roles with responsibility for safeguarding young people.

Key Principles

The IGA's safe recruitment practices are based on the following key principles:

- **Commitment to Safeguarding:** The protection of children and young people is the paramount consideration in the recruitment of staff and volunteers.
- **Equality and Diversity:** Recruitment procedures will be fair, transparent, and free from discrimination based on any protected characteristic.
- **Transparency and Consistency:** All recruitment practices will be applied consistently to ensure fairness and compliance with the law.
- **Confidentiality and Data Protection:** All personal information gathered during the recruitment process will be handled in accordance with data protection regulations and confidentiality requirements.
- **Each affiliated club must appoint a Designated Safeguarding/Welfare Officer (CWO)** responsible for ensuring safe recruitment practices and risk assessments. Clubs will also require a DBS Officer who will be overseeing DBS checks and risk assessments.



Non-Recurring Volunteers

The only current exception to this rule is for one-time volunteers who will have supervised contact with children. This may include:

- Parents or other volunteers assisting at a club fundraiser or event.
- Young people participating in work experience at the club.

Clubs operating a dedicated facility should implement a sign-in and sign-out system for these volunteers and visitors. If one-time volunteering becomes more frequent, such as more than once a month, then the full recruitment procedures must be followed.

Parents

It is important to note that it is both inappropriate and, in the case of criminal records checks, unlawful to apply recruitment procedures to parents whose sole role is to care for their own child, such as a parent of a child with a disability who attends a gymnastics session to provide one-on-one support. However, if the individual wishes to assume a role within the club that involves responsibility for other young people, then the full recruitment procedures must be followed.

Recruitment Process

A comprehensive safe recruitment process should include the following key elements:

- Preparing Candidate Information
- This should involve:
 - A job description outlining responsibilities related to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
 - A person specification with clear references to the candidate's suitability to work with children. An application form that includes relevant safeguarding sections.
- Attracting Candidates
- Candidates can be reached through various channels such as advertisements in the press and on websites. All promotional materials must emphasise the importance of safeguarding and the use of criminal records checks in the recruitment process.

Candidate Information

- All staff and volunteers working in regulated activity should be encouraged to register for the DBS Update Service, allowing clubs to carry out ongoing safeguarding checks.

Applications

- For positions requiring a DBS check, applicants must be informed that their criminal record will be assessed in line with IGA's Criminal Records Policy.
- Affiliated clubs must ensure that external contractors (e.g., physiotherapists, cleaners, or temporary coaches) provide evidence of DBS clearance before working in club environments.

Interviews

- At least one individual on every recruitment panel must have completed Safer Recruitment Training, as recommended in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023.

Candidate Information

Anyone expressing interest in a job role should receive a candidate information pack, which includes the job description, person specification, the organisation's safeguarding policy, and equality policy. The Job Description outlines key responsibilities, including safeguarding duties, ensuring that the postholder understands their role in safeguarding and promoting children's welfare. This must explicitly state the expectations for child protection, adherence to safeguarding protocols, and training requirements.

The Person Specification details the profile of the ideal candidate, specifying essential and desirable qualities. It should highlight the candidate's suitability for working with children and safeguarding, including relevant experience, commitment to child protection, and the ability to follow safeguarding protocols. Assessment of these qualities should occur through the application process and interview.

Applications

All applicants must complete a standard application form, even if they have submitted a curriculum vitae (CV). This ensures consistency in the information provided and enables easier comparison between candidates. The application form should clearly state that a criminal record check will be part of the pre-recruitment checks, where applicable. This is necessary when a risk assessment identifies that a criminal record check is relevant and proportionate to the role being applied for.

For roles that are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, applicants must disclose all cautions, reprimands, final warnings, and convictions, including those that are deemed 'spent'. However, under the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013), certain spent convictions and cautions may be considered 'protected' and are not required to be disclosed to employers. These will not be considered when assessing an applicant's suitability. Detailed guidance on filtering these cautions and convictions is available on the gov.uk website.

The application form should request the following essential information:

- Current and former names, along with address and contact details
- National Insurance number to confirm the applicant's right to work in the UK
- Relevant academic or vocational qualifications
- Current IGA membership number (where applicable)
- A full chronological history of paid or voluntary positions where the applicant has worked with children, including start and end dates and reasons for leaving
- A personal statement outlining the applicant's qualities, experience, and how they meet the person specification for the role
- Contact details of at least two referees (excluding relatives), one of whom should be a previous employer or club. These referees must be willing to provide written references concerning the applicant's experience and suitability to work with children and young people. It should be made clear that references will be sought for shortlisted candidates prior to the interview, except in cases where there is a justifiable objection to contacting the applicant's current employer



- Confirmation of whether the applicant has any unprotected convictions, cautions, reprimands, or final warnings as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013)

It should be clearly stated that the successful applicant will be required to undergo a criminal record check through the relevant Gymnastics governing body.

Attracting Candidates

When recruiting for a position that involves working with young people, it is crucial to highlight safeguarding responsibilities in all advertising materials. IGA is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people involved in our activities. As such, safeguarding must be a prominent feature of any job advertisement for roles that involve working directly with children.

To ensure clarity and consistency, IGA will include a safeguarding statement in all recruitment materials for such roles. This statement will underscore the organisation's commitment to child protection and the expectations placed on all staff and volunteers. Additionally, candidates will be informed that a criminal record check will be required as part of the recruitment process.

Here is a sample advertisement that IGA would use for recruitment:

- Recruiting Organisation: IGA (International Gymnastics Academy)
- Position: [Position Title]
- Main Duties and Responsibilities: [Overview of key responsibilities related to the role]
- Salary: [Salary or mention of expenses if the role is voluntary]
- Experience/Qualifications: [Specific experience and qualifications required]
- Safeguarding Statement: "IGA is committed to safeguarding children and ensuring all young people have a positive experience in gymnastics. Anyone recruited to work or volunteer with IGA must be fully committed to these values and adhere to our safeguarding policies."
- Criminal Record Check Requirement: "As part of IGA's safer recruitment process, all candidates will be required to undergo a criminal record check, including checks against the Children's Barred List, as part of the recruitment process."

This section ensures that any candidates applying for positions with IGA are fully aware of the safeguarding responsibilities and the importance IGA places on maintaining a safe environment for children. It also clearly outlines the necessary steps in the recruitment process, including the mandatory criminal record check.



References

Before conducting interviews, and with the candidate's consent, references should be sought to gain insights into the applicant's suitability for the role. It is important that references are sought promptly so that any concerns can be addressed before proceeding with the interview process.

If the candidate has indicated previous qualifications or experience relevant to gymnastics, the recruiting organisation should request, in writing and on formal headed paper, confirmation from the appropriate company of the following:

- Membership Status: Verification of the applicant's membership with the relevant gymnastics organisation.
- Criminal Record Check Details: Confirmation of the date of the last criminal record check and whether the individual has been cleared through appropriate safeguarding channels.
- Previous Employment Concerns: Any known reason for not employing or appointing the individual by the gymnastics organisation, where applicable.

Seeking references before the interview is advisable to help identify any potential concerns that can be clarified with the applicant. If a candidate refuses consent to contact their current employer, they should be informed that, should they be selected as the preferred candidate, any issues raised by their current employer will need to be addressed before their appointment is confirmed.

In addition to obtaining references from a current employer, it is essential to seek references from previous employers or organisations where the candidate has worked in a paid or voluntary capacity with children. This will provide additional insight into the candidate's suitability for the role and their experience working with vulnerable groups.

Interviews

For positions that involve significant contact with young people, a formal interview should be conducted in line with IGA's recruitment procedures and safeguarding protocols. The primary aim of the interview is to assess the candidate's qualities in relation to the requirements of the role and their suitability to work with children. It is crucial that interviews are conducted face-to-face, even if only one candidate applies, to ensure a thorough evaluation of their abilities and personality.

During the interview, candidates should be given the opportunity to provide further information beyond the application form. This includes addressing any self-disclosures, such as details about convictions or other safeguarding-related matters, and clarifying any discrepancies between the information provided on the application and the findings from pre-interview checks or references.

For positions working directly with children, it is recommended that at least two interviewers are present. This allows for a more comprehensive assessment of the candidate's responses and ensures that all aspects of the interview are covered fairly and objectively. Interview panel members must have received safeguarding awareness training and must have the necessary authority to make recruitment decisions.



Before conducting the interview, it is essential that the panel agrees on the interview process and the specific questions that will be asked. These questions should include a series of questions specifically aimed at determining the candidate's suitability to work with children. The purpose of these questions is to explore the candidate's attitudes toward safeguarding, their understanding of child protection, and their responses in situations involving children. Interviewers may ask about the candidate's experience in dealing with safeguarding concerns or how they would handle certain challenging situations involving young people.

The interview panel should also use this opportunity to address any concerns raised during the reference-checking process or within the application form. Additionally, the panel should verify the accuracy of the self-declaration form completed by the applicant and confirm that they are willing to undergo a criminal record check, such as a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, or an equivalent check in line with IGA's Criminal Record Checks Policy & Guidance.

Verification and Checks

Before a candidate is appointed, the following verification checks should be completed:

- **Identity verification:** All candidates must provide proof of identity (e.g., passport, driving licence) to ensure they are who they claim to be.
- **Right to work:** Candidates must prove their eligibility to work in the UK by providing the necessary documentation (e.g., a UK passport or visa).
- **Criminal record checks:** An enhanced DBS check (or equivalent from other jurisdictions) is required for anyone working with children.
- **Qualification verification:** Candidates should provide evidence of their relevant qualifications and professional certifications.

A Safer Recruitment Officer should be appointed to ensure compliance with all stages of the recruitment process, keeping records for transparency and monitoring.

Criminal Record Checks

- Any positive DBS disclosure must be risk-assessed by the Designated Safeguarding/Welfare Officer in consultation with IGA's safeguarding team. If serious concerns arise, clubs should seek guidance from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- Candidates who have lived or worked outside the UK in the last five years must provide police clearance from all relevant countries. If unavailable, alternative risk assessments will be carried out in consultation with safeguarding authorities.



Identity Checks

Identity verification should be conducted at the interview stage, using photographic evidence provided by the candidate. The Welfare Officer or designated person should verify the identity of the candidate in person, ensuring the individual matches the provided documentation.

Confirming the Appointment

Once the decision has been made to hire someone or invite them to take a voluntary role within a club or organisation, an offer letter should be issued.

The offer should clearly outline that the appointment is contingent upon satisfactory criminal record checks and reference verifications (if any references have not yet been reviewed).

All appointments remain conditional until all pre-employment checks, including references and criminal record checks, have been satisfactorily completed.

Criminal Records Check

A criminal record check is an essential part of the safer recruitment process for any individual seeking to work with children. These checks ensure that the applicant is not barred from working with children or vulnerable adults and provide insight into any criminal history that could indicate a risk to the welfare of children in gymnastics settings.

Criminal Record Check Requirements:

1. Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check: All individuals who will be working in regulated activities involving children are required to undergo an Enhanced DBS check. This check includes a search against both the Children's Barred List and the Adults' Barred List.

- Children's Barred List: This list identifies individuals who are barred from working with children. A check against this list is mandatory for anyone applying for roles involving regulated activity with children.

Adults' Barred List: If the role also involves working with vulnerable adults, a check against the Adults' Barred List will also be conducted. This ensures that the candidate is not prohibited from working with vulnerable adults.

- Criminal Record Check Renewal:
 - In alignment with IGA's Safeguarding Requirements, a criminal record check must be renewed every three years for all staff, volunteers, coaches, and officials working directly with children or vulnerable adults.



- This regular renewal of checks helps ensure ongoing safeguarding of children and allows the organisation to stay up-to-date with any changes in the candidate's criminal record that may arise.
- The three-year renewal cycle should be monitored and managed by the designated Safeguarding Officer or equivalent to ensure compliance with this requirement.

- **Overseas Police Checks for Candidates Who Have Lived Abroad:**
 - For any candidate who has lived or worked outside the UK in the last five years, it is mandatory to provide overseas police clearance from the country or countries in which the individual has resided.
 - Foreign criminal record checks must be obtained directly from the authorities in the respective country, and these checks will be assessed alongside the standard DBS check.
 - If the individual has resided in multiple countries, police checks should be provided from each of the countries they have lived in during this period.
 - This requirement ensures that any potential criminal history or safeguarding concerns from overseas are also thoroughly reviewed and addressed.
 - If the individual is unable to provide the necessary overseas police check (for example, due to the country not offering such checks or language barriers), an alternative assessment may be considered in consultation with local safeguarding authorities.

- **Management of Criminal Record Information:**
 - All criminal record checks and related information must be treated with strict confidentiality and stored in a secure manner, in line with data protection regulations (such as GDPR).
 - Any decision regarding an individual's suitability for a position based on the results of a criminal record check will be carefully considered by the Safeguarding Officer and appropriate personnel, ensuring that the decision is in the best interests of safeguarding children.

- **Disclosure and Risk Assessment:**
 - If a candidate discloses a criminal conviction or caution during the DBS check process, the Safeguarding Officer should assess the nature of the offence in relation to the role applied for.
 - A risk assessment should be carried out, considering factors such as the type and age of the offence, the candidate's role, and the potential risk to children.
 - In cases where a candidate has a criminal conviction, the organisation will conduct a full review to assess whether the individual can be safely employed or placed in a role that involves working with children. This may include seeking advice from legal experts or relevant safeguarding authorities.

- **Disqualifications and Barred Lists:**
 - If an individual appears on either the Children's or Adults' Barred List, they are automatically disqualified from working with children or vulnerable adults. The IGA will notify the individual if they are disqualified and take immediate steps to prevent them from being appointed or continuing in a role involving children.



- **Periodic Monitoring:**

- For ongoing protection, once an individual has been cleared through a criminal record check, it is essential that they are subject to regular monitoring. If any safeguarding concerns or issues arise during the individual's time working in the role, this may lead to a review of their suitability to continue in the role.

By maintaining these rigorous standards, the IGA ensures that all staff and volunteers are thoroughly vetted and regularly reviewed, minimising the risk of harm to children and vulnerable adults involved in gymnastics.

Induction

While the pre-recruitment processes serve as vital safeguards, the induction period following recruitment is one of the most crucial phases for ensuring the successful integration of new staff or volunteers, particularly those working with young people. The induction process not only helps familiarise the new recruit with the clubs and IGA's values and policies but also acts as a key opportunity to address any potential concerns or gaps in understanding regarding safeguarding practices. This phase is essential to setting clear expectations, ensuring compliance, and providing the support necessary to deliver a safe and welcoming environment for young people involved in gymnastics.

A successful induction programme will address the unique needs of each new recruit and will involve a series of tailored activities and discussions, including:

- **An overview of IGA's Safeguarding Policy:** This includes detailed explanations of the safeguarding and child protection procedures, including reporting concerns and recognising signs of abuse. It ensures that the new recruit understands IGA's commitment to safeguarding and the expectations of their role in promoting the welfare of children.
- **Familiarisation with relevant policies and procedures:** The new recruit should receive information on the clubs and IGA's codes of ethics and conduct, health and safety protocols, confidentiality agreements, and any other policies relevant to their role. These documents should be reviewed thoroughly, and the recruit should formally acknowledge their understanding and commitment to adhere to them by signing relevant documentation.
- **Clarification of roles and responsibilities:** The induction should provide an opportunity to clarify the specific responsibilities of the new recruit within the club, especially in relation to safeguarding duties. It is essential that the recruit fully understands their role, how they contribute to the safety and well-being of young people, and the boundaries of their responsibilities.
- **Assessing learning needs:** Each new recruit should undergo a tailored assessment of their existing skills and knowledge, particularly in areas such as safeguarding, first aid, coaching, and equality and diversity. This process ensures that any gaps in knowledge or experience are identified early on, and appropriate training or support is provided.
- **Coaching and mentoring:** A key component of a successful induction is the support provided through mentoring and coaching. The recruit may be assigned an experienced mentor, someone who serves as a role model and guide during their initial period. Mentors can provide practical advice, share knowledge, and help the new recruit navigate challenges such as cultural differences or language barriers.



- Support with integration into the culture: The induction process should aim to integrate the new recruit into the clubs and IGA's ethos, fostering a positive and supportive environment. This includes promoting teamwork, encouraging communication, and embedding the principles of inclusion and respect that are central to the organisation's values.
- Review and evaluation of practice: The induction period allows both the recruit and the club to assess how well the new recruit is adjusting to the role and to identify any concerns regarding their practice. This is the time to address any issues, including potential gaps in training or any observed lapses in safeguarding practices, and to provide corrective support where necessary.
- An effective induction programme not only equips the new recruit with the knowledge and skills required for the role but also provides an opportunity for the club to identify and rectify any potential poor practices or concerns before they become embedded. By taking a proactive approach to induction, the club can ensure that all new recruits are fully supported and are placed in the best position to succeed in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children throughout their tenure.

Ongoing Monitoring and Appraisal

Once in post, staff and volunteers should be regularly appraised to ensure they continue to meet the required standards and remain suitable for their roles. The appraisal process should:

- Be conducted regularly, starting with an evaluation at the end of the probationary period.
- Include feedback from colleagues, managers, and any other relevant parties.
- Address any concerns, learning needs, or areas for development.
- Ensure continued compliance with safeguarding standards.

There should also be a clear procedure for handling complaints or concerns about staff or volunteers, with disciplinary actions taken where necessary.

Appraisals should be used to evaluate the performance of staff and volunteers regarding safeguarding and child protection, ensuring that they are fully up to date with IGA policies.

DBS checks must be renewed every three years unless the individual is registered with the DBS Update Service, in which case clubs must check their status annually.

Allegations, Concerns, and Complaints

A structured reporting process for handling allegations of misconduct or child abuse, including reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and relevant authorities.

The Whistleblowing Policy will also be referenced to ensure that anyone with concerns about a staff member's or volunteer's conduct is encouraged to come forward without fear of retribution.

Clubs must follow IGA's Whistleblowing Policy, ensuring that any safeguarding concerns about staff or volunteers are reported promptly without fear of retaliation.

Compliance with Legislation and Guidance

This policy complies with the following key legislative and regulatory frameworks:

- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 – Establishes the requirement to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children.
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 – Provides additional legal obligations related to safeguarding and barred individuals.
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013) – Outlines exceptions to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, ensuring that certain criminal convictions are disclosed during the recruitment process.
- The Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR) – Ensures personal data is handled and stored securely during recruitment and employment.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- This policy is informed by Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2023 as best practice guidance for safeguarding in sports settings.

Reviews and Updates

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains compliant with current safeguarding practices and legal requirements. Any changes to the law or IGA will be incorporated into the policy at the next review.

Staff and volunteers will be informed of any significant updates to the policy through training and communication from the IGA.

Conclusion

The safety and wellbeing of children in gymnastics are of paramount importance. By adhering to this safe recruitment policy, the IGA ensures that only individuals who are suitable to work with children are appointed. All recruits are expected to demonstrate a clear commitment to safeguarding and creating a positive, supportive environment for young people in the sport. This policy helps to ensure that IGA-affiliated organisations recruit responsibly and ethically, putting the welfare of children first in every recruitment decision.