

SAFER RECRUITMENT GUIDANCE FOR CLUBS

Last Updated: 9th September 2025

Author: Liz Behnke

1. PURPOSE

British Fencing (BF) recognises that the majority of people who work and volunteer with children and adults at risk within fencing are well motivated, and the sport cannot operate without them.

Unfortunately, a very small number of people will try to use sports organisations and events to gain access to children and adults at risk for inappropriate motives. People who go on to harm others are likely to seek opportunities that provide access to children and adults at risk and organisations that have poor recruitment processes. This safe recruitment and selection guidance has been developed to help to deter and screen out unsuitable individuals from clubs and reduce the risk of this happening.

Effective recruitment and selection procedures benefit everyone. They ensure that staff and volunteers will have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, which will have a positive impact on everyone. Parents and carers will be assured that all possible measures are being taken to ensure only suitable people will be recruited to work in all aspects of fencing. Having these in place sends out a positive message about the way our sport operates.

2. SAFER RECRUITMENT ACTIONS

It should make no difference as to whether a person is paid to undertake a role or does so voluntarily, the recruitment process in respect of safeguarding should be broadly similar. The steps below are not intended to cover all the steps in a recruitment process, but cover those steps that contribute to a **safer** recruitment process.

Responsibilities

All clubs are responsible for ensuring that all activity in the club is as safe as possible and safer recruitment is an important part of this. Clubs should ensure responsibility for the recruitment and retention of personnel in the club is appropriately assigned. In larger clubs it may be possible to have a dedicated person for this role, perhaps in the form of a workforce co-ordinator. In smaller clubs, this may remain the responsibility of the club committee or manager.

Step 1 – Define the Role

The first step is to define the role. Think about the tasks to be carried out and prepare a role description based on these. Then consider what skills and qualities are needed to undertake that role and add this to the role description. This will help you to find the right person to undertake the role and define the expectations. BF has role descriptions available on the website for:

- Welfare Officers - <https://www.britishfencing.com/welfare-zone/welfare-club-resources/>
- Event Welfare Officer - <https://www.britishfencing.com/welfare-zone/event-welfare-officer/>
- [Club Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Volunteer Coordinator](#)
- Club Coach - <https://www.britishfencing.com/welfare-zone/welfare-club-resources/>
- Assistant Club Coach - <https://www.britishfencing.com/welfare-zone/welfare-club-resources/>

You should include safeguarding information about the club for example:

- Outline your commitment to safeguarding
- Detail the principles of safer recruitment that you will follow
- Highlight strong safeguarding foundations
- Encourage people with positive safeguarding values

You should make it clear if a role falls within the definition of Regulated Activity and will require a DBS/PVG/Access NI Check. Welfare officers and club coaches will typically fall within the definition. If you are unsure please contact BF on safeguarding@britishfencing.com.

Step 2 – Advertise the Role

The next stage will be to advertise the role. Ideally this should be done both internally and externally to increase the pool of applicants and to ensure that a fair and transparent process is being followed.

When reviewing applications in addition to considering whether the applicant has met the criteria for the role, you should also consider:

- Have they offered suitable references that are recent?
- Are there any inconsistencies in their submission?
- Are there any discrepancies between work history and reference information, or any unexplained gaps?
- What additional commitment to safeguarding are they evidencing (eg their personal values, additional training)

A short list of suitable applicants to be interviewed should be determined by a panel, perhaps using a scoring system.

Step 3 – Interview

Any person working with children or adults at risk should be interviewed. Ideally this should be carried out by a minimum of two people from the club and you might want to involve the club's

BF SAFER RECRUITMENT GUIDANCE

Welfare Officer. This interview should be carried out face to face, either in person or virtually. This should be a welcoming environment and allow the applicant to understand more about the club, as well as providing the club with an opportunity to explore further the suitability of the applicant.

A list of questions should be drawn up which probe the applicant's suitability to the role. It is advised that the questions asked of each applicant must be consistent, relevant to the role and selection criteria, and justifiable.

From a safer recruitment perspective you can consider asking (if relevant to the role) about

- Their working knowledge of safeguarding using scenarios based questions (eg what would you do if...)
- Their experience in recognising and responding to (reporting of) safeguarding concerns

Some other topics that you could consider including as part of the interview might be:

- A brief overview of the club – what the club offers, how you operate and plans for the future
- The role description and tasks
- Any training and support offered to staff/volunteers, including any compulsory training
- How the successful applicant will be supported in their role and how they can raise any concerns or problems
- Role progression, if applicable
- The club's expectations
- The days and times available
- Any resources available to volunteers/staff whilst they are volunteering/working for you

Step 4 – Checks and References

Once the panel has reached a conclusion then it is important that the following checks are undertaken

- Do they appear on the relevant BF Workforce Register?
- Can they prove their qualifications? Usually this is established by seeing their certificates. It is important to check original certificates and be alert to the possibility of forgery. If you are unsure check with BF.
- Follow up references. From voluntary or employed positions, in the UK or internationally.
- Consider checking on any public social media accounts that they hold.
- Initiate the appropriate [criminal record check](https://www.britishfencing.com/welfare-zone/criminal-records-check/) (<https://www.britishfencing.com/welfare-zone/criminal-records-check/>). It is a legal requirement for any person working in Regulated Activity to have the appropriate check. It may also be illegal to undertake certain checks for people who do not fall into this category.
- (For employees only) Establishment of their identification (ID) and right to work. This is a statutory responsibility of employers, which if not completed sufficiently can lead to criminal liability for those in leadership positions. As an employer you must complete identity checking (photo ID and birth certificate) and obtain proof of right to work in the UK from candidates

Step 5 – Induction

On taking up their role, the individual should go through an induction process. This should include:

- Induction into safeguarding and the importance of safeguarding within your organisation
- Discuss expected behaviours and reminders of code of conduct
- Signing of a code of conduct (if not already part of a written signed contract)
- Explain any club policies and procedures
- Identify a mentor or buddy that can support the individual in the initial stages of their role
- Agree a training plan as necessary if they are not on the relevant BF Workforce Register

Step 6 – Ongoing Monitoring

Once you have appointed someone it is important that you continue to monitor their performance and address any concerns that might arise, including safeguarding concerns.

Version History (can be placed at end)

Version Number	Date Updated	Updated by	Comments	Approved for Publication (LSO/CEO)
V1.0	12/07/2017	LB	First version	July 2017
V1.1	25/8/2025	LB/GU	Minor Updates	