



CHURCHDOWN VILLAGE BOWLS CLUB WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

2025

Objectives of the Policy

Churchdown Village Bowls Club (CVBC) aims to make our sport as safe possible. Part of this mission is to recognise our responsibility in promoting a safe environment. To achieve this aim, we encourage anyone with genuine concerns about suspected malpractice, illegal acts or failure to comply with recognised policies, codes or standards to report their concerns without fear of reprisals or victimisation. As an affiliated bowls club to Bowls England (our National Governing Body (NGB) we will adhere to their Whistle Blowing Policy. All club members, committee members, coaches, volunteers and parents/carers should have an understanding of whistle blowing.

Whistle blowing is an early warning system, raising concerns over misconduct or malpractice within an organisation or independent structure associated with it.

All players and parents/carers should be aware of CVBC policy and of the National Governing Body (NGB) policy, and of what action should be taken when legitimate concerns arise.

This policy will be readily available to all members within our club house, and also on our club website:

<https://churchdownvillagebowls.com/palette/Whistle%20Blowing%20Policy.pdf>

National Governing Body (NGB) Bowls England Whistle Blowing Policy:

<https://www.bowlsengland.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Whistle-Blowing-Policy.pdf>

Individuals will be fully supported when concerns are reported. CVBC will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of a genuine whistle-blower.

We comply with The Public Interest Disclosure Act. For disclosures to be protected by the acts provision they must show that the individual believes one of more of the following is happening, took place in the past, or is likely to happen in the future:

Qualifying Disclosures

NGBs would expect their members or participants to report any of the following:

- A criminal offence (including fraud)
- A failure to comply with a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- The endangering of an individual's health and safety
- Damage to the environment
- Deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above

Where the nature of the disclosure is not included in the above list, it should be made by way of the relevant NGB's Grievance Procedure and/or Safeguarding Policies and not under the Whistle Blowing procedure.

<https://www.bowlsengland.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Regulation-9.pdf>

<https://www.bowlsengland.com/safeguarding-policies/>

Your belief must be reasonable, but it need not be correct. It might be discovered subsequently that you were in fact incorrect, but you must be able to show that you held the belief in good faith and that it was a reasonable one to hold in the circumstances at the time.

This policy does not apply to any personal grievances concerning an individual's contractual terms, or other aspects of the working relationships such as complaints of bullying, harassment or disciplinary matters.

A report or disclosure must not be made for the purposes of personal gain. Concerns must be raised in good faith and the individual must reasonably believe that the information disclosure is accurate. Individuals will not be penalised for raising disclosures, however malicious and false allegations will be regarded as a serious disciplinary offence.

Why should you disclose your concern?

CVBC is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of all our members. We recognise that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the alleged poor practice.

If an individual believes what they are saying to be true, they should have nothing to fear because in reporting their concern they will be doing their duty to the child, young person or adult concerned.

Disclosure Procedures

If you wish to make a qualifying disclosure you should in the first instance report the situation to an appropriate person within the club who will then follow the NGB Whistle Blowing Procedures as follows:

Safeguarding Officer, Mrs Janet Pearce email: janetsp@blueyonder.co.uk Tel: 07971 097673

President, Mr Fred Etheridge email: fred.etheridge@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 07902 205909

Such disclosures should be made promptly so that investigation may proceed, and any action taken quickly.

All qualifying disclosures will be taken seriously. The disclosure will be promptly investigated and as part of the investigatory process, you will be interviewed and asked to provide a written statement setting out the nature and details of your qualifying disclosure and the basis for it. Confidentiality will be maintained during the process to the extent that it is practical and appropriate in the circumstances.

In order to investigate a disclosure, an NGB must be able to determine the scope of the investigation and the individuals who should be informed about the disclosure. The NGBs reserve the right to

appoint another investigator to investigate the disclosure other than the designated person to whom you reported.

Your NGB may ask you to attend a meeting at a reasonable time and place at which your disclosure can be discussed. You should take all reasonable steps to attend that meeting and you have the right to bring with you an appropriate other individual of your choice.

Once the investigation has been conducted and completed, you will be informed in writing of the outcome and the NGB's decision as soon as possible.

If you wish to appeal against the NGB's decision, you must do so in writing within five working days of the decision. On receipt of an appeal a senior officer shall make arrangements to hear your appeal. Your National Governing Body may ask you to attend a meeting at a reasonable time and place at which your appeal can be discussed. You should take all reasonable steps to attend that meeting and you have the right to bring with you an appropriate other individual of your choice.

Following your NGB appeal hearing, you will be informed in writing of the outcome and their conclusion and decision within five working days.

Once the NGB decision has been finalised, any necessary action will be taken. If no action is taken, the reason will be explained to you.

If, on conclusion of the above stages, you reasonably believe that appropriate action has still not been taken, you may report the matter to the proper authority in good faith. The Act sets out a number of prescribed bodies or person/s to which qualifying disclosures can be made. However, NGBs always encourage members and staff to raise their concerns directly in the first instance, rather than externally. This enables issues to be dealt with promptly and speedily.

There are many sources of advice if you wish to seek independent help on whether to and how to proceed. Some of which are listed below:

- The Public Interest Disclosure Act, provides further information. Here is the link to their website. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-auditors-and-independent-examiners-of-charities/the-public-interest-disclosure-act-2#:~:text=act%2D%2D2-,1.,blow%20the%20whistle%20on%20wrongdoing>.
- The Protect Charity, provides free confidential advice to workers who have concerns in the work place. Here is the link to their website <https://protect-advice.org.uk/> for more information.

What about confidentiality?

Anonymous complaints are not covered by this policy and may not be investigated. In view of the protection afforded to whistle-blowers, individuals should put their name to any disclosure. The identity of the whistle-blower will be kept confidential, if so requested, for as long as possible provided that this is compatible with a proper investigation.

What about retaliation?

CVBC has an obligation to shield whistle-blowers who make a protected disclosure in good faith. If, however, you feel that you have suffered adverse treatment as a result of making a disclosure, you

should submit a formal complaint. All reports of whistle-blowers suffering adverse treatment, harassment or victimisation as a result of a disclosure will be taken exceedingly seriously.

Key Legislation The key legislation can be found at [Whistleblowing policy - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/whistleblowing-policy)
(www.gov.uk)

Agreed and Signed
Mr Fred Etheridge
President CVBC