

Membership Risk Assessment Policy

A risk assessment is required where information received, about an existing Swim Ireland member, is of serious concern for the safety and welfare of young people. The member may be asked to step down from their position or may be suspended from membership of Swim Ireland.

Such information may include:

- an allegation of abuse against a member
- information relating to a member is a safeguarding concern where young people are at risk of harm
- behaviour of a member is a safeguarding concern where young people are at risk of harm

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) must be informed of any information or behaviour that is a serious concern for the safety and welfare of young people. The regional or club DLP can take advice from the National Children's Officer (NCO) who acts as the DLP. If there is a legal obligation to report, the NCO as the Mandated Person (MP) will submit a report to the statutory authorities.

Stepping down/Suspension

The CEO and the NCO may ask a member to voluntarily step aside from their position where there is a serious safeguarding concern for young people. If a member does not voluntarily step aside, the CEO or NCO will request a suspension of membership from the Chair of the Swim Ireland Board.

Consultation with Statutory Authorities

Where a case is discussed with the statutory authorities and does not meet the reporting threshold, this matter will be passed back to Swim Ireland. A member may not be required to step down or be suspended; however, this depends on the nature of the matter, discussions with the statutory authorities and advice from the NCO.

Referrals to Statutory Authorities

Where a case is referred to the Statutory Authorities there are a number of outcomes possible. If a member has been stepped down or suspended further action is required from Swim Ireland prior to the member being allowed to resume their membership or role.

A case is referred to court with a resulting conviction

An individual convicted of a charge relating to the harm of a child will be permanently excluded from membership of Swim Ireland or from participating in any Swim Ireland event or activity. The Board of Swim Ireland will be informed, as well as any other staff member or volunteer deemed necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of young people. In Northern Ireland the member will be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service as being permanently excluded from working in a regulated activity in Swim Ireland.

A case is referred to court with no resulting conviction

An individual who has met the grounds for being considered by the Director of Public Prosecution for an offence relating to the harm of a child requires a risk assessment to consider their membership of Swim Ireland or from participating in any Swim Ireland event or activity. The Board of Swim Ireland will be informed, if the individual is excluded, as well as any other staff member or volunteer deemed necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of young people. In Northern Ireland the member will be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service as being permanently excluded from working in a regulated activity in Swim Ireland.

A case is referred to the statutory authorities, investigated, passed back to Swim Ireland

In some instances, cases can be referred to the statutory authorities where, on investigation, no further action is taken by the statutory authorities. The matter is passed back to Swim Ireland to be dealt with through a Swim Ireland processes. The individual remains stepped down or suspended until Swim Ireland can conclude the required risk assessment based on the information available.

Membership Risk Assessment Process

Any member stepped down or suspended due to a serious concern for the safety and welfare of young people will be required to complete the following risk assessment prior to returning as a member or resuming a role:

1. The individual is asked to complete a vetting application, this may be for both jurisdictions; the vetting disclosure(s) must be received back, and an assessment made on the disclosure(s) according to the Swim Ireland Vetting policy
2. The information contained in the initial report to the statutory authorities is reviewed; if permission is required this is sought from the individual and any party involved
3. The parties involved are invited to submit further information relevant to the matter
4. The information will be considered by a case management group for consideration as to the suitability of membership of Swim Ireland
5. If relevant, the matter will be submitted to the Complaints and Disciplinary Officer to be dealt with through the Swim Ireland complaints and disciplinary procedures

This membership risk assessment is usually carried out by the case management group.

Case Management Group

A case management group will be convened according to need. The composition of the case management group will be chosen by the NCO with the approval of the CEO and may consist of the following:

CEO

NCO

Youth Development Director (if different)

Youth Development Officer

External individuals with relevant experience and knowledge of safeguarding standards and legislation

The case management group will set terms of reference depending on the type of case or cases being considered e.g. vetting disclosures or a risk assessment. All information will be anonymised, and details will only be shared that are needed to reach a fair and reasonable outcome.

Records

Where a concern has been investigated or an outcome reached the NCO will maintain a case management record of the matter. This information will be held securely in accordance with data protection requirements.

If the outcome of a case is permanent exclusion this will be recorded on the Swim Ireland membership system as 'Suspended'. The Swim Ireland Board will inform the individual of the outcome in writing via email or registered letter using the details recorded for the member on their database profile. The DBS will be notified even if the individual has stepped aside voluntarily.

If the outcome of the case is reached through a complaints or disciplinary process, any sanction will be recorded in the Swim Ireland complaints files. The member will be informed by the relevant complaints and disciplinary body in writing via email or registered letter using the details recorded for the member on their database profile.

Requesting renewal of membership

If a member has stepped away voluntarily or been suspended and not returned to Swim Ireland the membership risk assessment process must be completed prior to any renewal or commencement of membership of Swim Ireland. The membership status, i.e. suspended, will flag this need for a membership risk assessment to be done before an individual seeks to join Swim Ireland as a member again. It is important that the membership risk assessment process is carried out prior to re-joining as this will take into account any intervening period and/or any statutory investigation that took place.