

## Roles

All persons working with young people in Swim Ireland must be compliant with this document and Swim Ireland rules i.e. registered, qualified, trained and/or licenced according to their role, vetted by Swim Ireland and are required to abide by the appropriate codes of conduct. The roles described here are fundamental to the implementation of safeguarding standards in Swim Ireland.

### Children's Officers

Swim Ireland has a National Children's Officer (NCO), who is an employee of Swim Ireland. In addition to the NCO, there are appointed Regional and Club Children's Officers who are volunteers.

#### National Children's Officer

The role of the National Children's Officer is carried out by the Youth Development Director with the following responsibilities.

##### National Children's Officer role

- The Mandated Person
- The national Designated Liaison Person
- Responsible for the Swim Ireland Risk Assessment and Child Safeguarding Statement documents
- The Relevant Person for the purposes of the Swim Ireland Child Safeguarding Statement
- An advocate for the welfare and protection of young people in Swim Ireland
- A resource to the Swim Ireland operational departments for advice, guidance and information on all aspects of safeguarding policy and standards
- A resource to the Swim Ireland Board, regions, clubs and general membership for advice, guidance and information on all aspects of safeguarding policy and standards
- Responsible for developing and reviewing safeguarding policy
- Responsible for ensuring legislation and statutory requirements are in place
- An advisor where young people are involved in a complaints and disciplinary process to the Complaints and Disciplinary Officer, including being present at national level hearings involving young people under 18 years of
- A direct link, through the Chief Executive Officer, to the Board of Swim Ireland on all safeguarding matters

#### Regional Children's Officer

Each region must appoint a Regional Children's Officer (RCO). The RCO is appointed by the regional management committee annually and has the following responsibilities. The RCO is subject to the four year rule as an appointed individual to a committee.

##### Regional Children's Officer role

- A member of the Child Welfare Committee (national committee)
- Ensure the region considers a safe, child centred environment in activities and undertakings
- An advocate for safeguarding policies in region
- The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the region responsible for reporting concern, disclosures or allegations of abuse to statutory authorities
- Responsible for Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment documents for region and acting as the Relevant Person
- Provide advice on events/trips/regional activities involving young people
- Included in the communications/network list and on mailing list for regional management business
- A member of the Connaught, Leinster or Munster regional management committee or invited member of the Ulster Board.
- Has a standing item on regional meetings agenda to provide updates and reports
- Link with regional pathway coach and team manager panels to ensure collaboration on safeguarding young people
- A contact for CCOs in clubs in the region
- Promotes the Youth Development department projects
- An advisor to a complaint or disciplinary matter occurring at regional level where young person (U18) is involved
- Attend a complaint or disciplinary hearing at regional level where a young person (U18) is involved

## **Club Children's Officer**

Every club must appoint a Club Children's Officer (CCO) with a minimum of two CCOs recommended. In a mixed gender club, it is desirable to appoint a CCO of each gender. Clubs may appoint as many CCOs as is relevant to their own structures. It would be helpful for a head coach in each club to assist in the appointment of the CCO. The committee of the club in agreement with the CCOs must appoint one CCO onto the committee – this person will be known as the Lead CCO.

### **Club Children's Officer role**

- Ensure the club, coaching staff and the committee considers a safe, child centred environment in activities and undertakings
- Advocate for safeguarding policy within the club
- Voice for young people in the club, co-ordinating opportunities for young people to express views and opinions
- Ensure young people are treated fairly and with equity
- Ensure young people in the club know how to contact a CCO
- Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for the club responsible for reporting concerns, disclosures or allegations of abuse to the statutory authorities
- Assist the committee with the Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment documents
- Advisor on events/trips/club activities involving young people
- Receive general membership communications
- Link with the club coaches and team manager panels to ensure collaboration on safeguarding young people
- Aware of the movement and attendance of young people in and out of the club; work with coaches to support squad movements or identify underlying issues
- Respond to matters of concern for the safety or well-being of young people
- Advisor to a complaint or disciplinary matter occurring in the club where young person (U18) is involved
- Attend a complaint or disciplinary hearing at club level where a young person (U18) is involved
- Liaise with the other CCOs in the club
- Act in manner to ensure there are no conflict of interests with the CCO role
- Promote Youth Development department projects

### **Lead Club Children's Officer role**

- The CCO role responsibilities as above
- Appointed to and an active member of the club committee with one vote; the Lead CCO should not have any other role\*
- Lead responsibility for the Child Safeguarding Statement and the Risk Assessment documents to ensure the club committee completes this regularly and on time
- The Relevant Person for the club
- Receive communications regarding club committee business
- Attend club committee meetings
- Report at each club committee meeting i.e. CCO has standing item on the agenda

\* In line with good governance practice it is recommended that a spouse/partner of a Lead CCO is not a member of the same committee. If this is unavoidable as a temporary measure, the club should ensure a replacement is sought within six months. The Lead CCO is subject to the four year rule for committee members, however, they may remain as a CCO in the club, if re-appointed.

### **Additional requirements**

Where a conflict of interest occurs, it may be necessary to request a CO from a different club or region to assist with a particular need e.g. as an advisor or attending a complaints or disciplinary hearing where a young person under 18 years of age is involved. All COs will be guided by the NCO through training, regular communications and attendance at upskill sessions. The NCO (or appropriate substitute) should be contacted for advice, guidance and support.

## Other Roles

There are other significant roles in Swim Ireland, regions and in clubs that are important for safeguarding the well-being of young people. The responsibilities of these roles are detailed in their respective training or qualification programmes and each role must abide by the compliancy requirements in Swim Ireland and the relevant codes of conduct.

### **Roles with importance to young people:**

**Coach** – including head coach and all coaching staff working in a club, region or Swim Ireland. A coach is often the one constant in a club. Whilst committees and other roles change regularly, the coach remains and can play an important part in a young person's life. The coach can be a supportive adult in a young person's life as someone to turn to or confide in. The coach/athlete relationship must operate with the safety and welfare of the young athlete as paramount.

**Teacher** – depending on the frequency of teaching, this person will often have a similar relationship to that of the coach in the club, being a constant and long standing presence in a young person's life.

**Strength and conditioning coach** – this role may also develop a relationship with athletes depending on the frequency of attending sessions; often this is a role that is contracted into clubs, regions or Swim Ireland; however the same standards of care as with other roles must be in place for the benefit of young people.

**Team Manager (or chaperone)** – this person has a specific role in the well being of young people, often at crucial moments in their sporting lives, e.g. at a competition or on an away trip for the first time. The team manager will be influential in ensuring these times are as stress free and enjoyable as possible.

**Committee member (club, regional and national)** – a committee member automatically has an authority in the club, region or Swim Ireland and this can be intimidating for some. Committee members have the responsibility to ensure all safeguarding standards are operational and implemented which creates a safe and secure environment for young people.

**Official** – an official has specific responsibilities during competitions and galas and in a similar manner to a team manager may often encounter a young person at moments of greatest stress or joy. Officials should operate to ensure all young people are treated fairly and with integrity and respect.

**Contractors e.g. medical doctors, physiotherapists or psychologists** – these people are often contracted in their professional role and whilst they are bound by their own professional ethics (and may also be Mandated Persons) the club, region and Swim Ireland continue to have a duty of care for young people availing of their services. Any contracted person should be properly recruited, meet the requirements of their profession and complete the Swim Ireland Self Declaration Disclosure Form for Service Providers.