

# Welfare *of* Vulnerable People

in Snorkelling & Scuba Diving

## Self-Declaration and CRB Procedures



**The British Sub Aqua Club**



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## **Welfare of Vulnerable People**

These notes should be interpreted and implemented in conjunction with the full BSAC Welfare of Vulnerable People booklet.

The BSAC Welfare Policy reflects the need to promote awareness of the issues surrounding the welfare of vulnerable people, especially those under the age of 18. It should also be noted that as responsible members of society we have a duty to protect more vulnerable people from harm wherever it occurs - this means that if someone in our care during BSAC activities reports that possible abuse outside of those activities has occurred we should still do everything in our power to help.

All sporting organisations are required to meet certain standards in having clear policies and procedures implemented. As a responsible organisation, the BSAC have had a Policy in place for some time and positive adoption of the concept enables all members the right of protection from any form of bad practice, neglect, bullying and all forms of abuse.

In the future, grant funding to BSAC Branches may be conditional on the applicant having an up to date WoV policy in place. To facilitate the process of maintaining eligibility for grant funding at branch level, the BSAC has developed a model WoV policy that branches may adopt. This will closely follow the national guidelines (see main policy document).

Currently (January 2004) there is no intention to make grant funding conditional on the performance of criminal record checks for members.

As part of an ongoing strategy and under the guidelines of Sport England and other agencies, the BSAC is determined that it fulfils its commitment to protect children and vulnerable people from harm.

## **Controlling access to children and vulnerable adults**

Anyone may have the potential to abuse children or vulnerable adults in some way and it is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and also vulnerable adults. The particular circumstances of individual cases need to be taken into account, but the fundamental principle is that those in charge of activities involving young people must take all reasonable steps to satisfy themselves as to the suitability of those who will have significant contact with the children and vulnerable adults in their care.

## **Self-Declaration**

Members in positions within a BSAC Branch that involve significant access to young people in training and supervision are typically BSAC Instructors and BSAC Branch Officers. For such members, as a minimum requirement, a Self-Declaration should be completed. This would ask for any information about a criminal record or other matter that has a bearing on their suitability to work with children to be revealed (e.g. previous investigations by police or social services or disciplinary investigations in relation to contact with children).

## **Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks**

This is a more reliable way to determine whether the Criminal Records Bureau holds any relevant information on a member.

The CRB process is explained in detail later in this publication - see page 6.

### **Both these procedures are flawed.**

- Self-declaration relies on the honesty of the applicant to reveal information in full.
- CRB checks are only valid on the day of issue.

Both procedures can only reveal past history.

## **Good Practice and observation**

This is the most reliable way to strive to ensure the safety of all vulnerable people within the BSAC Branch environment. For Branches adopting good practice, following the guidelines of the BSAC Welfare of the Vulnerable Policy, this will promote vigilance when inappropriate behavior and early signs of potential problems can be spotted and dealt with.

Certainly Self-Declaration should be adopted as a minimum requirement, CRB checks are another process that Branches can consider if appropriate. It is important to emphasise that the absence of any relevant disclosure emerging from this vetting process does not guarantee that the individual is safe to work with children or vulnerable adults, so it should not be relied on excessively. It is only one of a number of factors in the assessment of a person's suitability.

## **The Self-Declaration Process**

The self-declaration process is only required to be followed in Branches where:

- with duties that involve regular contact with children and young people (under the age of 18) and vulnerable adults.
- Which involve regular contact with and caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children or young people.

Typically, this will be BSAC Instructors and BSAC Branch Officers

Currently, (January 2007) there is no mandatory obligation for any member to make a self-declaration. However, to meet the Standards of Sport England, this may become mandatory in the future. Working towards this, the BSAC, as a responsible organisation will encourage members and Branches to strive to adopt self-declaration in appropriate cases at an early stage.

## **How the Self-Declaration process works**

The Branch issues a Self Declaration Form (see appendix 1) direct to the member

The member completes the form and sends it direct to BSAC HQ (this maintains the

confidentiality of the member)

Where no disclosure of inappropriate convictions or investigations is revealed, BSAC HQ issues a letter confirming this to the Branch Welfare Officer or Chairman.

If the disclosure does reveal inappropriate convictions or investigations of a nature that would prevent someone from having access to children, then the applicant will be advised of this and also the Branch Welfare Officer will be informed. The member will have the right to appeal.

### **The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Protocol**

Clearly, a more reliable method of establishing evidence of previous convictions or investigations is for a member to request a CRB disclosure.

If a branch wishes to take advantage of the BSAC's registration as an "Umbrella Organisation" with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB), there is a protocol for accessing the criminal record of a membership applicant. This protocol is set down by the CRB and must be adhered to.

- 1) The branch must satisfy the BSAC Welfare Officer that they have applied the principals of "best practice" to all aspects of their activity (as described in the BSAC Guidelines for WoV).
- 2) Once the BSAC Welfare Officer gives approval, the branch may add an item to the agenda of a General Meeting of the Branch to discuss the addition of an additional Bye-law to its constitution (see appendix 1).
- 3) If the branch votes to accept the additional bye-law then it must lodge with BSAC HQ, a copy of the minutes of the meeting at which it decided to adopt the additional bye-law - and a copy of its new (amended) constitution. The decision to continue this bye-law must be ratified at each subsequent AGM - and confirmation of this ratification must be forwarded to BSAC HQ with the amended "Branch Details" form in order to retain the ability to access CRB disclosure.
- 4) BSAC HQ will then add the branch to the list of those from whom it will accept applications to access the CRB records and make a note of the expiry date of such acceptance as two months after the date at which the next AGM is scheduled. HQ will also send out an administrative pack detailing how to make applications for CRB checks.

### **The CRB Disclosure Process:**

- 1) The Branch MUST advertise the requirement for certain/all members (as outlined in their amended constitution) to undergo CRB checks in all membership application information - this is to be certain that potential members understand that they may be asked to undergo a check, and at what point, before they decide to apply for membership.
- 2) The individual member must apply for the CRB check to be undertaken themselves via the Branch Welfare Officer - the correct forms will be provided to registered branches. The CRB will not accept applications for disclosure from any third party. The completed

application should then be passed to the Branch Welfare Officer. Currently (January 2004) there is no fee charged for the disclosure procedure. The applicant should be reminded of the need to contact the BSAC Welfare Officer at HQ. Tel: 0151 350 6206 or e-mail [welfare@bsac.com](mailto:welfare@bsac.com) urgently if they discover inaccuracies in their disclosure statement (this is to stall communication with the branch that may cause embarrassment and/or confusion). The nature of the inaccuracy should not be discussed with anyone at this stage.

- 3) The branch should accompany the member's CRB Application Form with their own form (see appendix 4) for the BSAC to process the request (The BSAC will not process requests from individuals without the endorsement of the Welfare Officer/Chairman of their registered branch). The branch will only be allowed to ask the question: "The applicant will have significant contact with children and vulnerable adults. Is there anything in this person's record that may make them unsuitable to become a member of the BSAC?"

No other correspondence will be entered into with the branch.

- 4) Once the BSAC Welfare Officer receives an application for a CRB check that is correctly endorsed by a registered branch it will be countersigned and forwarded to the CRB.
- 5) The CRB sends a disclosure statement direct to the applicant - together with details of how to challenge the contents if necessary. A copy of the disclosure statement will also be sent to the BSAC Welfare Officer.
- 6) The BSAC Welfare Officer will pass the disclosure statement through a protocol (developed with help from the NSPCC and the CRB) that will generate a "Yes/No" answer to the question asked by the branch.
  - a. If the answer is "No" (the applicant has nothing in their record to exclude them from BSAC membership) this is communicated immediately to the Branch and the applicant is 'approved'.
  - b. If the answer is "Yes" (on the basis of their previous criminal record or investigations, the member will be excluded from BSAC membership) then communication with the branch is delayed by 7 days (to allow the applicant to receive the disclosure statement, challenge its content and inform the BSAC Welfare Officer/Membership Services Team that a challenge has been made).

*If the Welfare Officer receives notification that the content of a disclosure statement is to be challenged, the BSAC Welfare Officer will contact the applicant direct and introduce themselves as such. HQ should also remind the applicant that the branch has no knowledge of the content of the disclosure statement.*

**Branches should note that a delay does not imply anything:**

- **Disclosures may take time to process**
- **The BSAC Welfare Officer may simply be on holiday**
- **The CRB may be experiencing a seasonal rise in demand for checks that results in a delay**

- 7) The serial number on the copy of the disclosure statement held by the BSAC Welfare



Officer will be recorded and the Disclosure document itself will be permanently destroyed (by shredding). The BSAC will not receive copies of disclosure statements, nor will they be kept on file, anywhere, for more than 30 days.

### **How to get a CRB Disclosure:**

- 1) You must inform ALL membership applicants which membership/positions within the branch will require them to have a check before they join.
  - even if you only require instructors to undergo checks you **MUST** inform ALL membership applicants of this fact . . . before you process their membership application.
  - This information should be clearly referred to in any branch literature provided in any "Branch Info Pack" that you provide.

It, in any case, should be referred to in initial discussions with prospective members.

- 2) You should provide members applying for positions/membership classes specified in your bye-laws with a blank CRB "Application for Disclosure" form - provided by HQ in your CRB Administration Pack (sent to you by HQ when the BSAC Welfare Officer approves your status as a CRB Registered branch).
- 3) The applicant should complete sections A-H (in **BLACK** ink and **BLOCK CAPITALS**) and arrange an appointment with the Branch Welfare Officer to review identification documents. The Applicant should **NOT** complete section X of the application.
- 4) The Branch Welfare Officer should try to actually gain sight of as many of the documents listed in Section X as possible. It is **NOT** necessary to see **EVERY** document listed - but the more that can be used to confirm identity the better. The Branch Welfare Officer should, however, require sight of either a Passport or Photo Driving licence.
- 5) Before completing Section X, the Branch Welfare Officer should first check that the applicant has completed their form correctly.
- 6) In particular, please check that:
  - The applicant has given consent to undergo the Disclosure check by signing within the box provided at Section H, line 68.
  - The present name & address, and date of birth they have provided in section A are supported by the original documents shown to you directly as evidence of identity.
  - The applicant has provided previous addresses covering the whole of the last five (5) years.

When the CRB receive an Application Form it will be scanned automatically. It would be most helpful if Branch Welfare Officers could ensure that all information is entered in a way that the CRB computer can read.

As requested on the forms, please use **BLOCK CAPITALS** and **BLACK INK THROUGHOUT**.

Where there are boxes marked on the form to show you where to write please use only **one**

**letter or number** per box and make sure not to write over the edges of the box. Where relevant, leave an **empty box** between words but **not** between numbers or postcodes.

Always mark a **cross [X]** within the relevant boxes. Do NOT put ticks, or any other symbol in these boxes.

Please **don't leave any question or entry unanswered** (unless the applicant genuinely does not possess the information requested).

If the applicant has accidentally filled in any part of Section X, you should insist that the evidence of identity recorded on the form be given to you to examine and validate. Please ensure that this evidence is all **original** documentation - photocopies or replacements are not acceptable since they are more easily manipulated.

Detailed advice about verifying documentation is provided in Appendix 3.

Once the Branch Welfare Officer has completed Section X the form should be forwarded to the BSAC Welfare Officer at BSAC Headquarters.

*Note: The form will not be processed unless it is accompanied by the correct "Branch CRB Application Form" (see Appendix 4)*

## **Appendixes**

**Appendix 1 - Self Declaration Form and Guidance Notes**

**Appendix 2 - Extra text to be included in the Branch bye-laws**

**Appendix 3 - Notes on Evidence of Identity verified by Branch Welfare Officers**

**Appendix 4 - CRB Disclosure Request Branch Covering Form**



## Self-Declaration Form

As required in The British Sub-Aqua Club's Welfare of Vulnerable People Policy, all members for positions that require contact with children and/or vulnerable adults must complete this form.

The British Sub-Aqua Club is committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults involved in sport and has a duty to ensure the suitability of any individual with significant contact with children and/or vulnerable adults.

- 1 Have you been convicted of any offence or had a conviction or bind-over order, or is a prosecution pending related to children, any offence under the Sexual Offences Act or the Child Protection provisions within the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000?**  
*(Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 1986, a person should declare ALL convictions including 'spent' convictions where working with children).*

**YES**

**NO**

If YES – provide details:

[illegible]

Appendix 1
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- 2 Have you been previously investigated by the Police for any incident related to children, or any offence under the Sexual Offences Act or the Child Protection provisions within the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000?**

**YES**

**NO**

If YES – provide details:

Date of investigation:
Police Division involved:
Please give details of the reasons and circumstances that led to your investigation:
Disposal (if known):

- 3 Are you, or have you ever been, known to any Social Work Department/Social Services Department as an actual or potential risk to children:**

**YES**

**NO**

- 4 Have you ever had a disciplinary sanction (from a sports or other organisation's governing body) relating to inappropriate behavior with children/vulnerable adults or child abuse?**

**YES**

**NO**

## Appendix 1

If YES to 3, 4 or 5, please provide details: *(continue on a separate form if necessary)*

I agree to advise The British Sub-Aqua Club should I be convicted of an offence under the Sexual Offences Act or the Child Protection provisions within the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 after the date below and that failure to do so may lead to the immediate suspension of my work with children in Branch of The British Sub-Aqua Club and in certain cases, membership.

I agree to abide by The British Sub-Aqua Club's Code of Practice for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

I agree to abide by the conditions above and certify that the information contained in this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and I realise that false information or omissions may lead to the immediate suspension of my work with children in The British Sub-Aqua Club.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

FULL NAME:	
BRANCH NAME:	BRANCH NUMBER
ADDRESS:	
POST CODE	

**Note:** the information contained in this form will be managed in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998

## The British Sub-Aqua Club

### Guidance Notes for Completing Self-Declaration Form

The British Sub-Aqua Club is committed to the protection of children and vulnerable adults involved in sport and have a duty to ensure the suitability of any individual who works with children and/or vulnerable adults. The information provided in the Self-Declaration Form, detailed in The British Sub-Aqua Club's Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy and Procedures, will enable an informed decision to be made about member's suitability to work with children and/or vulnerable adults.

#### Who must complete the Self-Declaration Form?

This form must be completed by all applicants for positions:

- with duties that involve regular contact with children and young people (under the age of 18) and vulnerable adults.
- Which involve regular contact with and caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children or young people.

Typically, this will be Instructors and Branch Officers

#### What happens if I do not wish to complete a Self-Declaration Form?

In accordance with British Sub-Aqua Club's Child and Vulnerable Adult Policy and Procedures, all members for the above positions must complete a Self-Declaration Form. Anyone unwilling to do so must not participate in activities that requires regular or unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults.

#### Why must I give information about previous convictions?

Positions within a BSAC Branch that involve working with children, young people and vulnerable adults require a full disclosure of previous convictions of an inappropriate nature.

#### Who gets to read the Self-Declaration Form?

The Self-Declaration Form should be sent to **The British Sub-Aqua Club HQ** in a sealed envelope.

#### What happens next?

For applicants where there appears to be no reason why they should not have regular or unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults, a certificate will be sent to them indicating this. Members can then present this to the Branch Welfare Officer for inspection.

If the disclosures on a Self-Declaration form raise cause for concern about the suitability for the member to have contact with children or vulnerable adults, this will be conveyed privately to the member and the member will have the right to appeal.



**Extra text to be included in the Branch bye-laws:**

These clauses may be added to the model Bye-laws only by amendment at a General Meeting of the branch (as defined in Bye-laws 11 & 12 and subject to the conditions laid out in Bye-laws 13 & 20). Branches are encouraged to adopt all necessary changes leading to the appointment of a Branch Welfare Officer to their committee whether or not they intend to apply for CRB checks – but they **MUST** adopt them if they intend to adopt bye-law 5) iv).

5) iv)

Members applying for new or renewed membership of the Branch (in any/all of the capacities listed below) will be required to give their permission for their criminal record to be checked through the Criminal Records Bureau. Original results will be sent to the member in question. A copy will be sent to the BSAC Welfare Officer, or other nominated person, who will then provide a “yes/no” answer to the question:

***“The applicant will have significant contact with children and vulnerable adults. Is there anything within this person’s criminal record that suggests that they are not suitable for BSAC membership?”***

No other correspondence on this issue will be entered into.

Please circle/complete as appropriate (Chairperson and Secretary should sign alongside)

a) All Instructors who will have direct contact with young people or vulnerable adults.

*(Those who have attended the ITC/IFC and wish to act as instructors within the branch)*

b) All Dive Managers who will have direct contact with young people or vulnerable adults.

c) Any other position you wish to nominate should be discussed with the BSAC Welfare Officer or Membership Services at BSAC HQ before it is put to a vote at a General Meeting of the Branch.

Branches that include this clause in their bye-laws are required to provide minutes of the adopting meeting to BSAC, and to confirm continued acceptance at each subsequent AGM. Only those branches that properly record their adoption and annual re-acceptance of this clause will be allowed access to the services of the CRB through the BSAC.



## Evidence of Identity seen by Branch Welfare Officer

When verifying documentation, always check for signs of tampering.

Documents should be queried if they display any signs of damage, especially in the areas of the name and/or the photograph.

The following guidelines should help you to be on the lookout for any suspicious signs when authenticating documents.

### **Passports:**

Check the general quality and condition of the passport. Treat it with suspicion if it is excessively damaged: “accidental” damage is often used to conceal tampering. Photographs should be examined closely for signs of damage to the laminate or for excessive glue or slitting of the laminate: These signs would indicate photo switching. If the photograph appears excessively large, this might indicate an attempt to hide another photograph underneath. There should also be an embossed strip embedded into the laminate, which will catch a portion of the photograph. Check that there is no damage to this area. Please check that the photograph on the passport is that of the individual making the application.

### **Foreign Passport:**

If the passport is from a foreign national, you can still follow the same general procedures as above.

### **Photo driving licence:**

Examine the licence for evidence of photo tampering or any amendment of the printed details. You should ensure that the photograph on the licence is that of the person making the application and specify that you have seen a photo licence on the application form.

### **Old Style Driving Licence (no photo):**

Remove the document from the plastic wallet and check that it is printed on both sides. It should have a watermark visible by holding the licence up to the light, and there should be no punctuation marks in the name or address. The “Valid to” date should be the day before the bearer’s 70<sup>th</sup> birthday (unless the bearer is already over 70). The “Valid to” date can therefore be cross-referenced with the applicant’s date of birth detailed in Section A, line 10. Please specify that the licence you have seen is an old style paper licence (without a photo) on the application form.

### **Birth Certificate:**

Birth certificates are not wholly reliable for confirming identity, since copies are easily obtained. However certificates issued at the time of birth are more reliable than recently issued duplicates.

Check the quality of paper used: genuine certificates use a high grade. There should be a watermark visible when the document is held up to the light. Any signs of smoothness on the surface would indicate that the original text may have been washed or rubbed away. There should be no signs of tampering, changes using liquid paper, overwriting or spelling mistakes.

## Appendix 3

### **Other forms of Identification:**

The following items may also be used as validation of identity and confirmation of address – but only if the personal details they contain match those entered on the application form. If they do not, they should be disregarded.

- Marriage certificate
- Credit card statement
- Mortgage or insurance statement
- Bank details or bank statement
- Utility bill or an Official Tax communication
- National Insurance Number (from a P45 or P60)
- If the applicant is under 16 and has a Child Benefit document please enter the Child Reference Number in the space provided for the National Insurance Number.
- Rent book (or letter from their Landlord)

***Please note:*** None of these items should be used in any way other than to help validate identity and to confirm the applicant's address. Branch Welfare Officers are NOT entitled to refer to or to make use of any personal information details on these items.

Branch Welfare Officers should only mark a cross [X] against item 15 in Section X if they have actually seen and checked at least two documents, from those mentioned above) which confirm the applicants current address. These documents must be from different sources. e.g. one bank statement and one Council Tax Bill would be acceptable – but a bank statement and a credit card bill from the same provider would not be acceptable.

Item 16 in Section X should be signed by Branch Welfare Officers only when they have actually seen evidence of the applicant's identity and verified its authenticity (to the best of their ability).

Section Y may only be completed by a **REGISTERED COUNTERSIGNATORY**. For the purposes of checks carried out by the BSAC this is the BSAC Welfare Officer at HQ.



Return to:

Welfare Officer  
The British Sub-Aqua Club  
Telford's Quay  
South Pier Road  
Ellesmere Port  
Cheshire CH65 4FL

Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Request Form  
(TO ACCOMPANY THE MEMBER'S CRB APPLICATION FORM)

**STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

Applicant details:

NAME:	BSAC MEMBERSHIP NO:
ADDRESS:	
POST CODE:	TELEPHONE:

Branch details:

NAME OF BRANCH:	BRANCH NO:
APPLICANT'S POSITION IN BRANCH (i.e. Chairman etc.):	
NATIONALLY QUALIFIED INSTRUCTOR	YES/NO IF YES, Number:

I hereby request a CRB Disclosure. My CRB Application Form accompanies this request.

I understand that when the Disclosure Application is returned to BSAC HQ for forwarding to the Criminal Records Bureau, all personal details will be strictly guarded and handled only by an approved Countersignatory at BSAC HQ.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE:	DATE:
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Request from Branch: ***"The applicant will have significant contact with children and vulnerable adults Is there anything in this person's record that may make them unsuitable to become a member of the BSAC?"***

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ (BRANCH WELFARE OFFICER or CHAIRMAN) BSAC MEMBERSHIP NO: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

