
GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS ENGLAND, WALES AND ULSTER – SAFEGUARDING POLICY

OVERVIEW

The members of Gamblers Anonymous ("GA") support each other in Groups. As individuals, GA members should be aware of their duties of care to others, and follow the law and best practice regarding safeguarding, when acting in GA's name.

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE

Everyone should recognise that all individuals, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

WHOM THE GUIDANCE PROTECTS

This policy applies to the safeguarding of all GA members, as well as those with whom GA members come into contact when acting in GA's name. This includes those under the age of 18 (minors) and vulnerable adults (who may be members of GA).

BEST PRACTICE

A copy of the latest version of this policy should be given to every new and existing GA member. It is vital that all Groups' Secretaries learn about and understand issues regarding safeguarding and protection in the context of GA, that a safe environment may be maintained for GA members, as well as those with whom GA members come into contact when acting in GA's name.

NEW MEMBERS

A member attending a GA Meeting for the first time should be greeted by two existing GA members and, wherever possible, by a man and a woman.

SPONSORS

A Sponsor should:

1. have at least one year's abstinence from gambling;
2. have regard to this guidance and their duty of care towards other GA members.

GA members are not legally required to obtain a DBS Certificate to act as a Sponsor. However, Sponsors are encouraged to apply, as individuals, for a basic DBS Check and to provide a copy of their DBS Certificate to their Group's Secretary, as a means of strengthening safeguarding standards in the Fellowship.

This policy has been reviewed by the National Committee on the 16th of April 2023.

DBS CHECKS FOR MEMBERS ATTENDING SCHOOLS AND PRISONS.

Schools, educational establishments and prisons will carry out identification checks, and some may ask all volunteers to provide a DBS Certificate. An enhanced DBS Check must be obtained by any GA member engaging in a regulated activity. This includes any member who, in GA's name, frequently attends schools, educational establishments, or prisons (e.g. to provide advice and guidance or to teach) or may have unsupervised contact with a minor or vulnerable adult. It is the school's, educational establishment's or prison's duty, not GA's, to ensure that the requisite DBS Checks are completed. However, as a matter of best practice, any members acting in GA's name should be willing to provide a DBS Certificate or sign up to the DBS Update Service for repeat checks, if requested. If any Group's Secretary or GA member is unsure whether a role requires any sort of criminal record check of any sort they should consult the following governmental guidance:

[gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service). Any GA member who holds a DBS Certificate should be encouraged to notify their Group's Secretary of this fact and of any updated DBS Certificate obtained. Details about who may require a DBS Check in the UK can be found here: onlinedbschecks.co.uk/blog/which-jobs-require-a-dbs-check-in-the-uk.

REPORTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

If any GA member believes they are being abused or knows/suspects that another GA member is being abused they should consider taking the following actions, as appropriate:

- Preserve any/all evidence;
- Report their concerns to:
 - Their Group's Secretary and/or any other member;
 - Their local authority's adult social care services (about a vulnerable adult); and/or
 - Their local authority's children's services (about a minor).

IN AN EMERGENCY

If there is immediate risk of abuse, call 999. If there is any doubt about whether a situation amounts to abuse, GA members should consult their local authority's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

SMALLER GROUPS

Smaller GA Groups and those in rural areas should consider contacting other Groups in their Region to pool resources to promote and strengthen their safeguarding practices.

REVIEW

This policy is reviewed annually by Gamblers Anonymous England, Wales and Ulster (and whenever a change in legislation occurs).