
GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS UK & IRELAND – SAFE GUARDING POLICY GUIDE APRIL 2019

OVERVIEW

The members of Gamblers Anonymous (GA) support each other in self-supporting groups (the GA Fellowship). As individuals, however, GA members should be aware of their duty of care to others and hence follow the law and best practice on 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.

WHO THE GUIDANCE PROTECTS

This Guidance applies to the safeguarding of all GA members or those who GA members come into contact with when acting in GA's name, including those under the age of 18 (minor) or any vulnerable adults who may be members of the GA Fellowship.

BEST PRACTICE

A copy of the latest version of this policy guidance should be given to every new GA member and existing GA members.

It is vital that all Group Secretaries understand and learn about safeguarding and protection issues within the context of the GA Fellowship in order to ensure a safe environment for GA members and those who GA members come into contact with when acting in GA's name.

NEW MEMBERS

Meetings with new members to the GA Fellowship:

- should be conducted by two existing GA members and, wherever possible, by a man and a woman;

SPONSORS

A Sponsor should:

1. have at least 1 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 in order 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 Secretary, as a means of strengthening safeguarding standards in the Fellowship.

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 a school, educational establishment, or prison (e.g. to provide advice and guidance or teach) or may have unsupervised contact with a minor or vulnerable adult. It is the school's/prison's/educational establishment's duty, and not that of the Fellowship, 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 Secretary or GA member is unsure whether any role undertaken in GA's name requires a criminal record check of any sort they should consult the following governmental guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

Any GA member who holds a DBS Certificate should be encouraged to notify the Group Secretary of this fact and of any updated DBS certificate obtained.

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 action(s), as appropriate:

- Preserve any evidence.
- Report all concerns to the:
 - Group Secretary and/or any Group member;
 - Local Authority Adult Social Care team (about a vulnerable adult); and/or
 - Local Authority Children's Services team (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, members of the Fellowship should ask the advice of their Local Authority Safeguarding Lead.

SMALLER GROUPS

Smaller GA groups, and those in rural areas, should consider contacting other groups in the region to pool resources to promote and strengthen the safeguarding practices.

REVIEW

This Policy shall be reviewed annually by Gamblers Anonymous UK (or sooner should there be a change in legislation).