

PERSONAL CARE

WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT TO PROVIDE YOUNG PARTICIPANTS' INTIMATE CARE?

Providing intimate care differs from more sport/activity-related assistance (such as supporting transfer to or from a sports wheelchair), and with all parties' agreement coaches may well appropriately undertake the latter role.

It should be clear to everyone at the club (including young people and their parents/carers) that sports coaches and other volunteers will not be involved in providing intimate personal care for young or disabled participants. This must always be the responsibility of the parents, carers or other identified chaperones or care staff.

The reasons for this include:

- It puts the individual in a potentially vulnerable position
- The potential negative impact on the individual's privacy and dignity
- Sports staff are unlikely to be trained to carry out this role and it isn't their role – they are there to facilitate and supervise sports activities
- It can impact on the level of adult supervision for the remainder of the group
- There may be health and safety considerations around manual handling procedures
- The adult may be vulnerable to others misinterpreting their behaviour or motivation, and may result in concerns or allegations arising
- It can reinforce the individual's vulnerability and lack of autonomy
- It models and may help to perpetuate poor practice

HOW SHOULD A CLUB ENSURE THAT AN INDIVIDUAL'S INTIMATE CARE NEEDS WILL BE ADDRESSED?

It is helpful for a club to have a personal/intimate care policy. Alongside a range of other practical considerations (such as access, communication, equipment, and so on) intimate care needs should have been considered and discussed with the young person and their carers at the outset as part of an initial discussion about how the young person's needs will be met.