

Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults - Summary



Definitions

Child: Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday

Vulnerable adult: 18 and above (from 18th birthday) AND who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself or take steps to protect him or herself from significant harm or exploitation.

Abuse includes:

- **Physical Abuse.** Deliberately inflicting injuries upon someone, or knowingly not preventing such injuries. This could include the nature of the intensity of training or competition. Offering alcohol or drugs.
- **Emotional Abuse.** Failing to show due care or attention or threatening, using sarcasm, taunts or shouting at a child/vulnerable adult causing them to lose confidence, self-esteem and become nervous or withdrawn.
- **Neglect.** Failing to provide help and care to the child/vulnerable adult. This also includes leaving them without proper supervision or placing them at risk of injury.
- **Sexual Abuse.** Using children/vulnerable adults to fulfil sexual needs; this includes the taking/sharing of photos.

Introduction

Our aim is to provide all our members, guests and volunteers with the best possible experience and opportunities in sport within a safe and supportive environment.

As a club, our Safeguarding policies are in place to keep children and adults at risk safe, and to prevent harm from neglect, exploitation and abuse from occurring.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse against young or vulnerable adults will be responded to, and followed up appropriately in accordance with our Safeguarding policies and local area or statutory guidelines.

Best Practice

- Avoid when possible, situations when you and an individual child/vulnerable adult are alone.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact. Where possible teach techniques by demonstration.
- Adults should never over-criticise young athletes, or use language or actions which may cause children to lose self-esteem or confidence.
- Leaders/Coaches should not take unrelated children to their home. Permission must be obtained from the child's parent or guardian for car journeys. The presence of a further person should be sought. It is sensible to seat any child in the rear of the car.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in all conversations; so coaches and adults must not give children a promise or expectation of confidentiality.
- Being open and conducting all interactions with children/vulnerable adults in a public place and with appropriate consent.
- Challenge any bullying, harassment, foul or provocative language or controlling behaviour that could upset individuals or reduce them to tears.
- Ensure that your practice is appropriate for the age and development stage of each athlete.

If Your Plans Go Pear-Shaped

For everyone's sake, certain incidents should be reported immediately to another colleague; make a written note of the event as soon as possible and inform the club Welfare Officer / Committee

- If you accidentally hurt a child/vulnerable adult athlete
- If a child/vulnerable adult appears distressed in any manner
- If a child/vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

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Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations

Introduction

While it is not the responsibility of UKA, volunteers or club members to decide whether a concern constitutes abuse, it is our responsibility to report any concerns about the welfare of a child or adult at risk. These concerns may arise due to:

- An individual disclosing that they are being abused.
- Observed behaviour of an adult towards a child/vulnerable adult.

How to respond to a disclosure

- Listen rather than question him/her.
- Never someone who is freely recalling/disclosing significant events.
- Make a note of what is said, taking care to record the time, date, setting and people present.

Don't

- Probe for more information than is offered.
- Speculate or make assumptions.
- Show shock or distaste.
- Make comments about the person against whom the allegations have been made.
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets.
- Give a guarantee of confidentiality.

All suspicions and disclosures must be reported appropriately. It is acknowledged that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases of possible sexual abuse or where there is a misplaced loyalty to a colleague.

Reporting procedures

As part of an affiliated club (i.e. Lymm Runners), you should immediately inform the club's designated Welfare Officer. The Club Welfare Officer (CWO) will assess the information and refer the matter to the Police or Social Services as appropriate. UK Athletics' Child Protection Lead Officer or Home Country lead Welfare Officer should be informed and may be contacted for advice.

The CWO will ideally obtain written consent from the individual making the disclosure.

Contact details as at Sept 2014:

Athletics Welfare PO Box 332, Sale, Manchester M33 6XL Telephone 0161 223 4246, Fax 0161 223 5588.

<http://www.britishathletics.org.uk/governance/welfare-and-safeguarding/about-the-uka-welfare-team/>

Consent issues

Children

Safeguarding children is everybody's business. If concerns arise about a child these must be reported – ultimately to the local Children's Services team (Social Services) and/or police to investigate. You do not need consent from the child or parent/guardian although it is good practice to inform them of any decision to refer on unless this would put the child at greater risk of harm.

Vulnerable adult

If concerns arise, consent must be obtained from the individual concerned before a referral is made to Adult Services or the police. However, if others are at risk of harm the information should be passed to Adult Services or the police even if consent is not obtained.

Information about an individual should not be given to family or carers without the individual's consent.

