

GYDAC Safeguarding Policy

Adapted from UKA “Safeguarding and protecting children in UK athletics”

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1. TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

GYDAC: Great Yarmouth & District Athletic Club

CPLO: Child Protection Lead Officer for UK Athletics or the nominated deputy.

DSO: Club Safeguarding Officer.

LSCB: Local Safeguarding Children Board.

DBS: Disclosure and Barring Service.

CRBS: Central Registered Body in Scotland.

CPSU: Child Protection in Sport Unit (NSPCC).

CPiS: Child Protection in Sport Service in Scotland (Children 1st).

Affiliated Club means any voluntary Club, non-voluntary organisation or virtual club affiliated to UKA.

A Child is anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday. ‘Children’ therefore means children and young people throughout. The fact a child has reached 16 years of age, living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody, does not change his or her status or entitlement to protection under the Children Act 1989.

Disabled children may be more vulnerable and at greater risk of all forms of abuse. The presence of multiple disabilities increases the risk of both abuse and neglect. Some of the common factors that can lead to increased vulnerability include social isolation, communication and learning difficulties or disability, lack of understanding of boundaries, need for assistance with personal care and more likely target for bullying and abuse. Children with disabilities have the same rights to protection as any other child and clubs working with these children need to be especially alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse and have strategies in place to ensure all children are able to raise concerns.¹

¹ Safeguarding Disabled Children: Practice Guidance (DCSF 2009) {NB remains the current guidance in 2018}

Home Country Governing Bodies means England Athletics Limited, Welsh Athletics Limited, Scottish Athletics Limited and Athletics Northern Ireland.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

Duty of care

All organisations and individuals, including clubs, coaches, paid staff, volunteers and club officials, have a duty of care to safeguard children when they are participating in athletics activities under their auspices.

These best practice guidelines are maintained by the UKA Steering Group with a view to promoting the adoption of good and consistent safeguarding practices to ensure that children have a safe experience. These guidelines identify what needs to be done by organisations and individuals to demonstrate their duty of care.

Best practice in athletics benefits everyone - the sport's Home Country Governing Bodies, clubs, coaches and officials, teachers, parents, carers and athletes. Most importantly, it ensures that children who choose to participate in athletics have a safe and fun experience.

Our objective is to build a safer future in athletics for all children under the age of 18 years. (In Scotland this extends until the individual's 19th birthday).

All children are entitled to be protected from abuse. Abuse can occur anywhere. With over 250,000 children involved in athletics in the UK and 100,000 adults involved, the chances are very real that there are some individuals abusing their positions in athletics.

The UKA Steering Group is committed to devising, implementing and updating policies and procedures to promote best practice when working with children and to ensure that everyone in the sport understands and accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This includes taking action to respond to, record and report any concerns about their welfare.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

GYDAC, UKA, and the Home Country Governing Bodies fully accept their legal and moral obligations to meet their duty of care to all children and to safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, religion or belief, sex or gender and sexual orientation.

Key principles:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All organisations and individuals involved in athletics understand and accept their responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

In order to meet their safeguarding obligations, GYDAC will:

- Provide and enforce procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of all participants and protect them from abuse. Club policies and practices must, as a minimum, meet the requirements set out in this guidance.
- Ensure all children who take part in athletics are able to participate in a safe and fun environment.
- Respect and uphold the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Recruit, train and supervise their volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect

young people from abuse, and themselves from false allegations.

- Require volunteers to adopt and abide by GYDAC Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, Codes of Conduct and the relevant grievance, investigatory and disciplinary procedures.
- Respond to any allegations appropriately and implement the appropriate complaints, child protection, disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Designate a person in the organisation who is responsible for ensuring that all appropriate DBS checks are completed.

Appoint a Club Designated Safeguarding Officer.

- Review policies regularly.

4. BEST PRACTICE, POOR PRACTICE AND ABUSE

Introduction

To provide everybody with the best possible experience and opportunities in athletics it is important that everyone operates within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrates exemplary behaviour.

This section will help you identify what is meant by best and poor practice and some of the indications of possible abuse. Guidance on what to do if you are concerned about poor practice or possible abuse is provided in Section 5.

Best Practice

Best practice means:

- Being open and conducting all interactions with children in a public place and with appropriate consent.
- Avoiding situations where you are alone with one child.
- If you have to meet or coach one child ensure it is conducted in an open environment, and where full consent and emergency contact details have been provided.
- If you are travelling alone with a child gain appropriate consent, avoid consistently having one child alone with you in the car and never sharing a room on your own with a child.
- Challenging bullying, harassment, foul or provocative language or controlling behaviour that could upset individuals or reduce them to tears.
- Never ignoring bullying by parents, coaches or children. Listening to and supporting the person being bullied.
- Maintaining an appropriate relationship with children;
- Treating children fairly, with respect and avoiding favouritism.
- Being friendly and open and ensuring that relationships are appropriate for someone in a

position of power and trust.

- Avoiding unnecessary physical contact. In certain circumstances physical contact is perfectly acceptable and appropriate, as long as it is not intrusive or disturbing to the child/athlete and that consent for contact has been given by the individual and appropriate parental consent.
- Being qualified and insured for the activities you are coaching and ensuring that your licence remains valid. Ensure that your practice is appropriate for the age and development stage of each athlete.

Adopting best practice not only ensures the child's welfare, it also protects clubs and individuals from possible wrongful allegations. Children very rarely make false allegations. If they do, it is usually because they are confused or covering up for someone else's behaviour and hoping their action might scare the real abuser into stopping.

Poor Practice

The following are examples of poor practice and should be avoided:

- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay.
- A coach shouting comments at athletes when they are not working hard enough.
- A coach using harassing and discriminatory language such as '*you run like a girl.*'
- A coach engaging in an intimate relationship with one of his/her athletes.
- A group of athletes ganging up on a new athlete and refusing to talk to him/her.
- A coach taking a group of children away to a weekend event on his/her own.

The list above is not exhaustive and many other examples exist.

Reporting an Incident

If a child athlete:

- is accidentally hurt by you;
- appears distressed in any manner;
- appears to be sexually aroused by the actions of another; or
- misunderstands or misinterprets the actions of another.

Then the incident should be reported immediately to another colleague/volunteer, a written note must be made of the incident and parents and/or appropriate adults informed. The Club DSO should also be informed. The attached UKA referral form should be used
<https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/welfare-and-safeguarding/guidance-documents-and-policy/>

5. Recognising Abuse

Abuse can occur wherever there are children.

There are four main types of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express his/her views, deliberately silencing him/her or 'making fun' of what he/she says or how he/she communicates. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, which especially applies to when a child shares a protected characteristic e.g. racist, sexual or homophobic bullying² or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensuring adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensuring access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.³ Disabled children are particularly vulnerable to abuse and are at least three times more likely to be abused than non-disabled children. Those working with them must be aware of this and willing to acknowledge their concerns. There can be a tendency to make allowances for families with sick or disabled children. Organisations and individuals may over-identify with the child's parents/carers and be reluctant to accept that abuse or neglect is taking or has taken place, or seeing it as being attributable to the stress and difficulties of caring for a disabled child. When suspecting abuse, always ask: "*Would this be acceptable if the child were not disabled?*"

6.IMPLIMENTING THE POLICY

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND TRAINING

UKA is committed to providing a safe environment for children in our clubs and organisations and the requirements and processes set out below will assist organisations to ensure that best practice is followed. All reasonable steps must be taken at all levels within the sport to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working in athletics, especially with children.

Recruitment

Advertising of roles, whether paid or volunteer roles, will reflect:

- This Safeguarding children and welfare policy.
- The responsibility of the role.
- The level of experience or qualifications required.
- A positive stance on all aspects of welfare and safeguarding children.

Application Process

GYDAC must ensure that all applicants complete an application form that includes:

- Name and address.
- National Insurance number to confirm identity and right to work.
- Relevant experience, qualifications and training undertaken.
- Career history and/or involvement in sport (to confirm experience and identify any gaps).
- All applicants who have or are seeking to undertake a supervised role or responsibility in relation to children in athletics must complete a self-declaration form to establish whether they are known to Children's Social Care (social services) as posing an actual or potential risk of harm to children or whether they have ever had action taken against them (criminal/civil/disciplinary) that might indicate that they are unsuitable to work with or have responsibility for children. <https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/welfare-and-safeguarding/self-disclosure-process/>

All applicants who have or are seeking to undertake regulated activity in athletics must complete a criminal record check (enhanced level DBS, Disclosure Scotland or Access Northern Ireland). Please refer to the separate advice on criminal record checks <https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/policies/dbs/>

- Clubs should remember that these procedures should also be applied to people who are already involved in the club and subsequently take on a new role which gives them greater access to children (for instance a parent taking on a volunteering role within the club).
- Enquiries regarding Disclosure and Barring Service checks can be sent to dbs@uka.org.uk.
- A minimum of two written references will be taken up. Where the applicant is to work with children, at least one reference will be associated with former work with children or young people. Referees (not relatives) should provide written references that comment on the applicant's previous experience of, and suitability for, work with children. Applicants should be asked to provide consent to clarify information with referees. One reference should be from paid employment or education and the other reference should be in a sporting capacity, ideally in a role similar to the one they are applying for. If an applicant has no experience of working with children then they will be given appropriate training.
- Details of any former involvement with athletics.

Interviews and induction

Where appropriate, formal interviews will be used and a record of the interview will be made. All staff and volunteers will undergo a formal or informal induction process during which safeguarding policies and practices will be shared together with contact details of the relevant Club DSO and the UKA Steering Group.

When assessing a candidate's suitability, clubs and organisations should:

- Consider their relevant qualifications and experience.
- Establish if they have previously undertaken a role working directly with children.
- Explore their attitude and commitment to safeguarding.
- Establish if they have ever been prevented from having a role which involved contact with children.
- Test their safeguarding awareness with the use of hypothetical examples.
- The application form.

When making recruitment decisions, clubs and organisations must consider:

- The interview.
- All qualifications and experience.
- References.
- The outcome of the DBS check.

Training

Clubs and organisations must ensure that all staff and volunteers who work with children undertake relevant training on a three yearly basis in child / safeguarding procedures, procedures for taking children away and sources of education and training. For all coaches and volunteers with roles in relation to children this should include attendance at a recognised direct delivery safeguarding workshop (e.g. SportscoachUK Safeguarding and Protecting Children' workshop/ Local Safeguarding Childrens Board basic awareness workshops). The SafeSportAway booklet gives advice on trips away and a link is available on the website, this is a relevant aide memoire and means of updating knowledge.

Appraisal

Clubs and organisations must ensure that all staff should be given the opportunity to receive regular feedback through observed practice, appraisal or informal feedback to identify training needs and to set goals. Concerns about misconduct, poor practice or abuse, however must be acted on as they arise. Appropriate support will be offered to those who report concerns/incidents or complaints.

Disciplinary and Appeal Procedures

See GYDAC Disciplinary and Grievance Policy

UKA has a general disciplinary policy and separate policies relating specifically to coaches and officials. England Athletics have their own policy and procedures. Welsh Athletics, Scottish Athletics and Athletics Northern Ireland have adopted the UKA disciplinary policy and procedures. All the documents are easily available on the UKA website under governance/policies. <http://www.uka.org.uk/governance/policies/>

Monitoring

The effectiveness of the Policy will be reviewed at each Committee Meeting.

7. RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES, SUSPICIONS AND ALLEGATIONS

Introduction

While it is not the responsibility of UKA, the Home Countries Governing Bodies, volunteers or club members to decide whether a concern constitutes abuse, it is their responsibility to report to the club DSO any concerns about the welfare of a child. These concerns may arise due to:

- A child disclosing that they are being abused.
- The behaviour of an adult towards a child.
- A number of indicators observed in a child over a period of time.

Club Welfare Officers

To ensure that appropriate action is taken if there is a disclosure, statutory referral from the police, children's services, adult services or suspicions:

- UKA has trained an employee to act as the UKA designated child protection lead officer (CPLO).
- Each of the Home Country Governing Bodies have identified staff members with responsibility to act as safeguarding officers.
- GYDAC will train and appoint a designated club member as Club DSO.

A job and person specification for the role of Club DSO is available from the respective Home Athletics Country Federation. The DSO will be the first point of contact for club staff, volunteers, children and parents in respect of child welfare issues, poor practice or potential or alleged abuse.

Reporting procedures

If we have a concern about a child or children we will phone the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) on 0344 800 8021 immediately. We will be put through to a Social Worker who will take the relevant details. We will make sure we are prepared with full details of the child and family, what the concerns are, details of any support we have provided to the child/family and what we would like to happen. We will ensure we gain consent from the parent/carer unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm or undermine a criminal investigation. If we have not sought consent from the parent/carer we will inform the CADS worker of this and the reason for it.

The CADS worker will agree a way forward with us and keep us informed. They will send us written record of our conversation within 5 working days. The outcomes could include a full referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for further investigation, the Police, or for work with Early Help. We will not investigate, and will be led by the Local Authority and/or the Police.

We will make careful records of all conversation, in ink, including the dates and times of who we spoke to, the information shared and action agreed. We do not need to send a written referral.

Full details on this process can be found at www.norfolkscb.org under 'How to raise a concern'.

We understand if we are unhappy about a decision made by CADS or MASH we can use the Resolving Professional Disagreements policy on www.norfolklscb.org and contact the Safer Programme for more advice on this process.

How to respond to a disclosure

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.

Any person with information of a disclosure, allegation or concern about the welfare of a child must immediately report this in one of the following ways.

If you are part of GYDAC, you should immediately inform the club's designated Club DSO.

If you work in schools in England or Wales as part of a school club link, school curriculum or an extra- curricular basis, you should inform the head teacher or the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who can be contacted via Children's Social Care who will follow normal Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures. In Scotland, Local Authority procedures will be applicable.

If you are working in a local authority facility, you should inform the Local Authority Sports Development Officer or the manager of the facility or the LADO who will follow LSCB or Local Authority procedures.

In any other situation or if the designated person is not available, if the concern is about that designated person or no action is taken, you should contact the UKA CPLO.

If the UKA CPLO, nominated deputy, or Home Country Governing Body lead welfare officer is unavailable, you should take responsibility and seek advice from either the NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000), Children 1st (0141 418 5674), in Scotland the duty officer at the local Children Services department or the local police child protection unit. Telephone numbers are in the local telephone directory and should be in your club welfare policy.

Which

UKA has prepared a referral form for use by clubs, organisations and individuals to encourage the sharing of relevant and appropriate information.

A summary of the reporting procedures is provided in a flow chart format.

Where there is a complaint of abuse against an employee or volunteer there may be separate and/or additional investigations which take place, namely:

- Criminal investigation: in which case the police will be immediately involved.
- Safeguarding children: in which case Children's Social Care (and possibly the police) will be involved.
- Disciplinary or misconduct: where it relates to athletics coaches or officials, UKA will be involved. In other cases it will rest with the relevant Home Country Governing Body.

Civil proceedings may also be initiated by the alleged victim of misconduct or abuse, or his/her family, or by persons wrongly accused.

Documentation and records created during an investigation should be securely kept for at least three years.

Reporting by clubs

Where GYDAC becomes aware of an allegation in relation to a club member brought to their attention by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the police, they should immediately pass on these details to the UKA CPLO by email to dbrown@uka.org.uk.

Assistance with how to proceed with Position of Trust meetings will then be available to you from UKA.

Dealing with Concerns and Allegations

While UKA CPLO and CWOs will have received safeguarding training, it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. If there is any doubt about whether or not the alleged behaviour constitutes abuse, the concern must be shared by the CWO with the statutory agencies which will be responsible for any subsequent action.

Any suspicion that an individual has been abused by a volunteer or employee within athletics should be reported to the CWO in the first instance using the attached referral form or to the UKA CPLO who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the individual in question and any other individual who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- the UKA CPLO will refer the allegation to the appropriate social care services department who may involve the police or go directly to the police if out of hours.
- the parents of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social care services department.
- the UKA CPLO will also notify the Chief Executive of UKA who will decide how any media enquiries should be dealt with.
- pending a full investigation, the UKA CPLO and/or the Chief Executive can impose an interim suspension based on the risk of actual or potential harm to the child, an assessment of the seriousness of the allegation and initial information available.
- accreditation may be withdrawn from any UKA event venue if it is considered that the use of the venue continues to pose any risk of harm to children.
- the UKA CPLO may also make a full report to a UKA Case Management Panel. Irrespective of any findings that may be made by Children's Social Care (social services) or the Police, a UKA Case Management Panel will assess all individual cases and determine an appropriate outcome in order to manage the risk of harm to children. Decisions will be made on the balance of probability, in other words, based on whether it is more likely than not that the circumstances give rise to a risk of harm. The welfare of the child is paramount.

In circumstances where UKA does not have jurisdiction to deal with the individual, the UKA CPLO will act as the link person between athletics and Children's Social Care and/or the police and pass on all the information to the relevant governing body/organisation with disciplinary jurisdiction.

Where the police or Children's Social Care make a statutory referral and invite a club official to a case conference or professional meeting, then the UKA CPLO must be informed as soon as possible to determine whether to attend and represent UKA or the relevant Home Country

Governing Body at the meeting and support the individual and club.

Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences relating to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. These decisions will be dealt with by the Disclosure and Barring Service for England, Wales and Northern Ireland; and by Disclosure Scotland in Scotland.

Poor Practice

If allegations against an employee or volunteer are found to be poor practice, the allegation will be dealt with by the relevant club or Home Country Governing Body under their disciplinary procedures as a misconduct issue

Dealing with Bullying

Allegations of bullying should be considered and dealt with by the relevant Home Country Governing Body under the terms of their disciplinary procedure. For specific actions to prevent and deal with bullying please refer to the separate bullying policy document.

<http://www.uka.org.uk/governance/welfare-and-safeguarding/guidance-documents-and-policy/>

Records and Confidentiality

Always follow the reporting procedure set out above. Use of the UKA referral form will assist you to collect and collate the required information. Your reports should be factual and include where possible:

- The referrer's and/or the child's name, address and date of birth.
 - The date and time of the incident.
 - The facts about the allegation or observation.
 - Your factual observations e.g. describe the behaviour and emotional state of the alleged victim, and note any marks, bruising or other injuries.
 - The child's account, if it can be given, of what happened using the exact words if possible.
 - Details of any witnesses.
 - Any times, dates or other relevant information.
 - Any action that was taken as a result of the concerns.
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- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
 - A copy of this information must be sent by the DSO to the UKA CPLO.

Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Information should be handled and disseminated on a *need to know* basis only.

Information will be stored in a secure cabinet at UKA offices in line with data protection laws with access available only to UKA Chief Executive and UKA Welfare staff.

Support for Victim, Accused and Reporter

UKA and the Home Country Governing Bodies acknowledge the difficulty in reporting concerns and will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith (without malicious intent), reports his or her concern about a colleague's practice or concerns about the welfare of a child.

They will take appropriate steps to ensure that the child (and parents, appropriate adults) is provided with appropriate professional support (e.g. help lines and support groups). They will also ensure that the person under consideration is offered appropriate support.

Flowcharts, and Referral form are available on UKA Website

<https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/welfare-and-safeguarding/guidance-documents-and-policy/>
Safeguarding children policy

Child Protection Referral Form.