



Child protection and safeguarding

Status: Approved December 2019

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Summary

This document is an abbreviated, simplified version of the original proposed by both British Athletics and England Athletics on their respective websites (at 10/04/2017). If the reader finds ambiguity or a lack of clarity, they should refer to the original document (or clarify with the governing body). 'Safeguarding and protecting children in athletics. Policy and procedures document.' (Dated January 2013 and Reviewed September 2016). GMT has agreed to adopt these EA/UKA policies. The latest full document may be found at [UKA policy](#)

For the purpose of this document Herne Hill Harriers will be referred to in its abbreviated form as 'GMT', while 'parent / parents' refers to the parent/s, carer/s or registered guardian/s of the child or children concerned.

It is the policy of the GMT to primarily safeguard the welfare of all children who are members of GMT or children who are invited to participate under the auspices of GMT. The welfare of children is seen to be to protect them from neglect, and physical, sexual and emotional abuse by members, helpers and others who are working under the auspices of GMT. This policy aims to make all members, helpers and others who are working under the auspices of GMT aware of possible child abuse occurring to children who are members of GMT or children who are invited to participate under the auspices of GMT outside the setting of the GMT environment.

Secondly, it is the policy of GMT to safeguard the interests of those adults who volunteer their services to GMT to coach or assist children in progressing their athletics career.

Anyone under the age of 18 years should be considered as a child

- The child's welfare is paramount

- All children, irrespective of their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Working in partnership with children and their parents is essential for the protection of the child

GMT recognises the role of other institutions and its responsibility to work with other institutions in dealing with cases of possible child abuse, namely Her Majesty's Constabulary, Social Services Departments, UK Athletics, the AAA, the SEAA, and the Surrey County AA

GMT recognises the rights of adult members and helpers of GMT when dealing with possible cases of child abuse

GMT coaches are licensed by UKA and are subject to appropriate licensing conditions and checks.

UKA Safeguarding Policy

Policy Objectives

Introduction

Everyone who takes part in athletics is entitled to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment. To ensure this Athletics in the UK is committed to establishing and implementing policies and procedures to ensure a safe athletics environment.

Best practise in athletics benefits everyone– the sport's governing bodies, 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. All children are entitled to a duty of care and 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 power over children in athletics.

Athletics 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 means taking action to report any concerns about their welfare. It is not the responsibility of athletics to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, this is the domain of the child protection professionals.

1. Policy Statement

UK Athletics Limited, England Athletics Limited, Welsh Athletics Limited, Scottish Athletics Limited and Athletics Northern Ireland fully accept their legal and moral obligations to provide a duty of care, to protect all children and safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, religion or belief, sex or gender and sexual orientation.

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, investigated and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All individuals involved in athletics understand and accept their responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.

In order to meet this obligation all Athletics bodies will:

- Provide and enforce procedures to safeguard the well-being of all participants and protect them from abuse.
- Ensure all children who take part in athletics can participate in a safe and fun environment.
- Respect and uphold the rights, wishes and feelings of children.
- Recruit, train and supervise their employees and volunteers to adopt best practise to safeguard and protect young people from abuse, and themselves from false allegations.
- Require staff/volunteers to adopt and abide by their 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.
- Review policies regularly.

2. Terms and Abbreviations

- **CPLO** Child Protection Lead Officer for UK Athletics or the nominated deputy.
- **CWO** Club Welfare Officer
- **LSCB** Local Safeguarding Children Board
- **DBS** Disclosure and Barring Service

- **ISA** Independent Safeguarding Authority
- **CPSU** Child Protection in Sport Unit (NSPCC)
- **A Child** is anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday.

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.

3. **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 6.

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; this means treating people 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.
- Respecting all athletes and helping them to take responsibility for their own development and decision making.
- 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 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 individuals welfare, it also protects you 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. If any of the following incidents should occur you should report them immediately to another colleague, make a written note of the event and inform parents and/or appropriate adults of the incident and inform the club Welfare Officer.

- If you accidentally hurt a child athlete
- If a child appears distressed in any manner
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Abuse:

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.

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 bullying 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 or non-penetrative acts such as including 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, shelter, protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Disabled children are 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 may be a reluctance to accept that abuse or neglect is taking place, or seeing it as being attributable to the stress and difficulties of caring for a disabled child.

4. Recruitment, selection and training.

All reasonable steps will be taken at all levels within the sport to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working in athletics, especially with children.

Recruitment of all those involved in the sport will include consideration for:

- 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

Applicants

All applicants must complete an application form that includes:

- 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 any Children's Social Care (social services) as being an actual or potential risk 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. This should be considered the first step in safeguarding.
- All applicants who have or are seeking to undertake a role and responsibility in relation to children in Athletics must complete a criminal record check (DBS) please refer to the separate advice on criminal record checks. Clubs should remember that these procedures should be applied to people who are already involved in the club and subsequently take on a role which gives them greater access to children (for instance a parent taking on a volunteering role within the club)
- If an applicant has no experience of working with children then they will be supervised and encouraged to take up appropriate and valid training.
- Any former involvement with athletics.

Training

All staff and volunteers who work with children will be encouraged to undertake relevant training in child / safeguarding procedures, procedures for taking children away and sources of education and training.

The SafeSportAway booklet gives advice on trips away and a link is available on the British Athletics website, this is a relevant aide memoire and means of updating.

UKA also licence coaches and officials under a specific licensing scheme with their own Terms and Conditions. The documents relevant to licence application, disciplinary and appeal procedures are available as separate UKA documents from the EA website.

5. Responding to Disclosure, 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 any concerns about the welfare of a child .These concerns may arise due to:

- An individual 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.

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.

Safeguarding Children 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 designated child protection lead officer (CPLO).
- The home countries have identified staff members with responsibility to act as safeguarding officers.
- All affiliated clubs are recommended to comply with the guidance contained in this document.

A job and person specification for the role of Club Welfare Officer is available as a separate UKA document.

Reporting procedures

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 an affiliated club, you should immediately inform the club's designated Club Welfare Officer (CWO) who will refer the matter to UKA's CPLO or Home Country lead welfare officer.

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.

If you are working in a local authority facility, you should inform the manager of the facility who will follow Local Authority procedures.

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

If the UKA CPLO nominated deputy or Home Country CPO is unavailable, you should take responsibility and seek advice from either the NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000), or the local police child protection unit. Telephone numbers are in the local telephone directory and should be in your club welfare policy. Add local police child protection unit tel. No. here.

A summary of the reporting procedures is provided in a flow chart format within the original BA document.

Where there is a complaint of abuse against an employee or volunteer there may be three types of investigation:

- Criminal: in which case the police are immediately involved
- Safeguarding children: in which case the social care services (and possibly the police) will be involved
- Disciplinary or misconduct: where it relates to coaches and officials UKA will be involved in other matters it will rest with the Home Countries.

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

Guidelines on the retention of records relating to possible future investigations may be found from local authority sources; however, records should be securely kept in an approved format for up to three years at least.

Dealing with Concerns and Allegations

While UKA CPLO and CWOs will have received training, they are not safeguarding children experts and 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 with professional agencies that will be responsible for subsequent action.

Any suspicion that an individual has been abused by a volunteer or employee within athletics should be reported 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 who will decide who should deal with any media enquires.
- the UKA CPLO and/or the Chief Executive can impose an interim suspension based on the risk to the child, an assessment of the seriousness of the allegation and the need to ensure a full investigation can be instituted.
- Accreditation may be withdrawn from any UKA event venue if it is considered that the use of the venue continues to offer any form of threat to children
- the UKA CPLO will also make a full report to a UKA Case Management Panel. Irrespective of the findings of the Children's Social Care (social services) or the Police, UKA will assess all individual cases and determine if the person can be reinstated and how this can be handled sensitively. This decision must be made on the available information, which could suggest on the balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. 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 the sport and the social care services and/or the police and pass on all the information to the relevant governing body/organisation with disciplinary jurisdiction.

Where the police or social care services 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 the 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 Independent Safeguarding Authority for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Poor Practice

If the allegations are against a volunteer and, after consideration, are clearly about poor practice, the allegation will be dealt with by the relevant BA recommendations under their disciplinary procedures as a misconduct issue.

Dealing with Bullying

The same procedures should be adopted when dealing with allegations of bullying. For specific actions to prevent and deal with bullying please refer to the separate bullying policy document.

Disciplinary and Appeal Procedures

UKA has a general disciplinary policy and separate policies relating to coaches and officials. England Athletics have their own policy and procedures the other home countries have adopted the UKA policy and procedures as their own. All the documents are contained within the web-based manual and easily available on the UKA website under governance/policies.

Records and Confidentiality

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

REFERRAL FORM should contain:

Your (referrer's) name and contact details:

Your position:

Your knowledge of and relationship to the child

Child's name:

Child's address:

Child's date of birth:

Date(s), time(s) and location(s) of incident(s):

· Nature of the concern/allegation:

· The child's account: If it can be given, of what happened using exactly what the child said and what you said. (Remember record actual details.)

- Details of any witnesses:
- Observations: made by you or to you (e.g. description of visible bruising, other injuries, child's emotional state etc)
- The facts about the allegation or observation. NB Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- Actions Taken so far:
- External agencies contacted:

A copy of this form/data must be sent to: Athletics Welfare, PO Box 332, Sale. M33 6XL

Email: childprotection@uka.org.uk Telephone: 0161 223 4246.

Support for Victim, Accused and Reporter

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

The club and UKA acknowledges the difficulty in reporting concerns and will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith 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 victim (and parents, appropriate adults) is able to access/provided with appropriate support (e.g. Help lines, support groups and the Counselling Directory).

They will also ensure through the appropriate allegation, disciplinary and appeals procedures that the accused is offered and given appropriate support.

Please forward a copy of all documentation to UKA Lead Welfare Officers

Don't keep it to yourself :

Help and advice from the Child Protection in Sport Unit

If you think you are being abused, or have been in the past, it's really important to tell an adult you trust. This isn't easy. You may feel worried about what will happen if you do. Here are some other reasons why you may not want to tell anyone:

- the abuser may have told you to keep quiet and not to talk to anybody
- they may have threatened you about what might happen to you or your place in the team if you tell
- they may have made threats about your friends or family
- they may have said "No one will believe you" or "No one will do anything if you tell"
- you may feel guilty that you didn't stop the abuse happening
- the person may be someone who everyone in your sport looks up to – perhaps including your parents
- you may not want to let your parents down
- you may even think the problem will go away if you ignore it.

Don't let any of these things stop you getting help. By telling someone, you can stop the abuse. You'll also be helping to protect other children from the abuser.

Getting help

- Tell an adult you trust as soon as possible. This could be: a parent or someone else in your family; another member of staff at your athletics club; a teacher or school counsellor; your doctor or school nurse.
- Your athletics club will have a welfare officer. Find out who they are and tell them about your worries.
- Contact one of the child protection helplines . They will know who can help you in your area.
- Make sure you are not alone again with the person who has tried to harm you.

Remember your rights!

UKA and the NSPCC believe that children have the right to enjoy sporting activities in safety. The work of our Child Protection in Sport Unit is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This Convention spells out how people should treat you. If you would like to know more, see what the Convention says about your rights .

For further help and advice, visit www.childline.org.uk

A YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO CHILD PROTECTION

Sport should be fun. You should feel safe and enjoy your sport. You can't do this if you feel unhappy – if someone is bullying or abusing you.

When do you know if something is wrong?

Something is wrong if someone:

- Constantly teases you, shouts at you or calls you names
- Threatens, hits, kicks or punches you
- Makes suggestive remarks or tries to pressurize you into sexual activity
- Damages or steals your belongings
- Touches you, or does anything in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable
- Does anything that makes you feel lonely, worried, unsafe, hurt or embarrassed!

If you are being bullied or abused it is not your fault.

If this is happening try to:

- Be firm and tell the person to stop – make a lot of noise to attract attention
- Get away from the situation quickly, go to a public place to find help or call the police (999)

- Tell your parents / carers, Club Welfare Officer or an adult you can trust what has happened as soon as possible, so they can help you
- Keep a record of the date, time and place, what happened, how you felt and the name of anyone who may have seen what happened
- Call or e-mail your Club Welfare Officer or use the 24 hr free telephone helplines:

Childline 0800 1111

NSPCC 0800 800 5000

Keep trying if you can't get through straight away

Keeping Safe

To keep safe always:

- Tell someone you can trust so they can help you
- Trust your instincts about the people you meet
- Avoid being alone or with just one other person
- Travel with a friend, avoid travelling in someone else's car by yourself
- Avoid going to other people's homes by yourself
- Carry a mobile phone, a phone card or some spare change

If any of the above happens to you do not wait for it to happen again, act immediately. Contact the one of the Club Welfare Officers.

Club Welfare Officers are:

Clive Carr: secretary@gmaxtrackstars.com tel. 0208 090 1752

© GMAX TRACKSTARS