

HAILSHAM HARRIERS

Safeguarding and protecting children in Athletics

Policy and procedures document

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Everyone who takes part in athletics is entitled to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment. To ensure this Athletics in the UK which encompasses UK Athletics Limited, England Athletics Limited, Welsh Athletics Limited, Scottish Athletics Limited and Athletics Northern Ireland is committed to establishing and implementing policies and procedures to ensure a safe athletics environment. Best practice 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.

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 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 and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
 - All individuals involved in athletics understand and accept their responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer.
- 2.2 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 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 employees and volunteers to adopt best practice 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.

2.3 **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.

2.4 **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.

3. **Best Practice**

3.1 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.

3.2 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 favoritism.
- 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.

3.3 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.

4. Abuse

4.1 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 say 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 (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); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

5. Safeguarding Children Club Welfare Officers

- 5.1 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.
 - To achieve Clubmark affiliation clubs are required to train and appoint a designated club member to become the Club Welfare Officer (CWO)
 - All other affiliated clubs are recommended to comply with the guidance contained in this document.
- 5.2 A job and person specification for the role of Club Welfare Officer is available as a separate document.
- 5.3 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. Where there is no CWO, the CPLO should be contacted directly.

6. Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

6.3 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.

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6.4 **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 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), the duty officer at 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.

6.5 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 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.

6.6 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.

7. Contact information (East Sussex area)

Single Point of Advice (SPoA) Mon-Thurs 8.30am-5pm and Fri 8.30am-4.30pm.

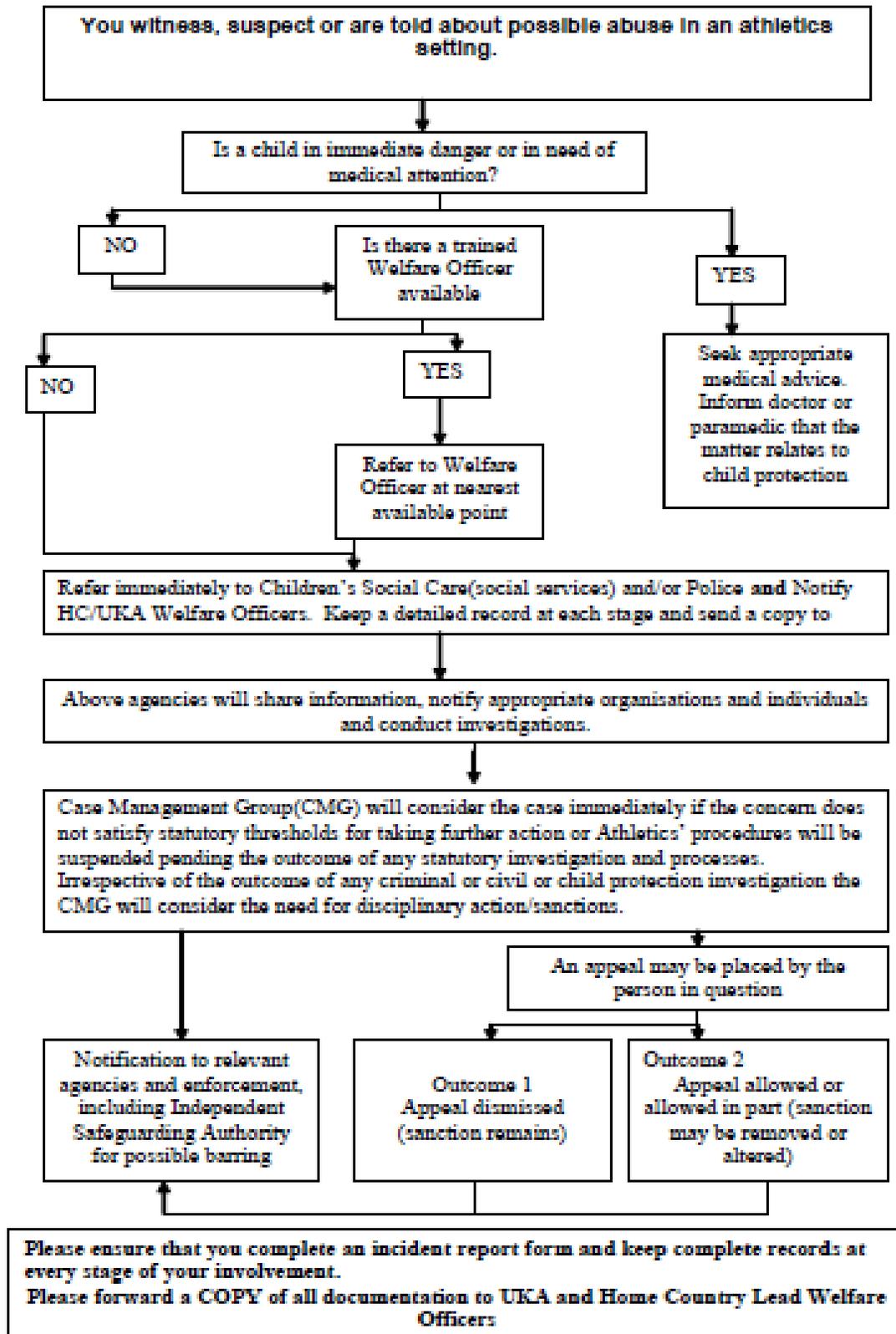
Phone: 01323 464222

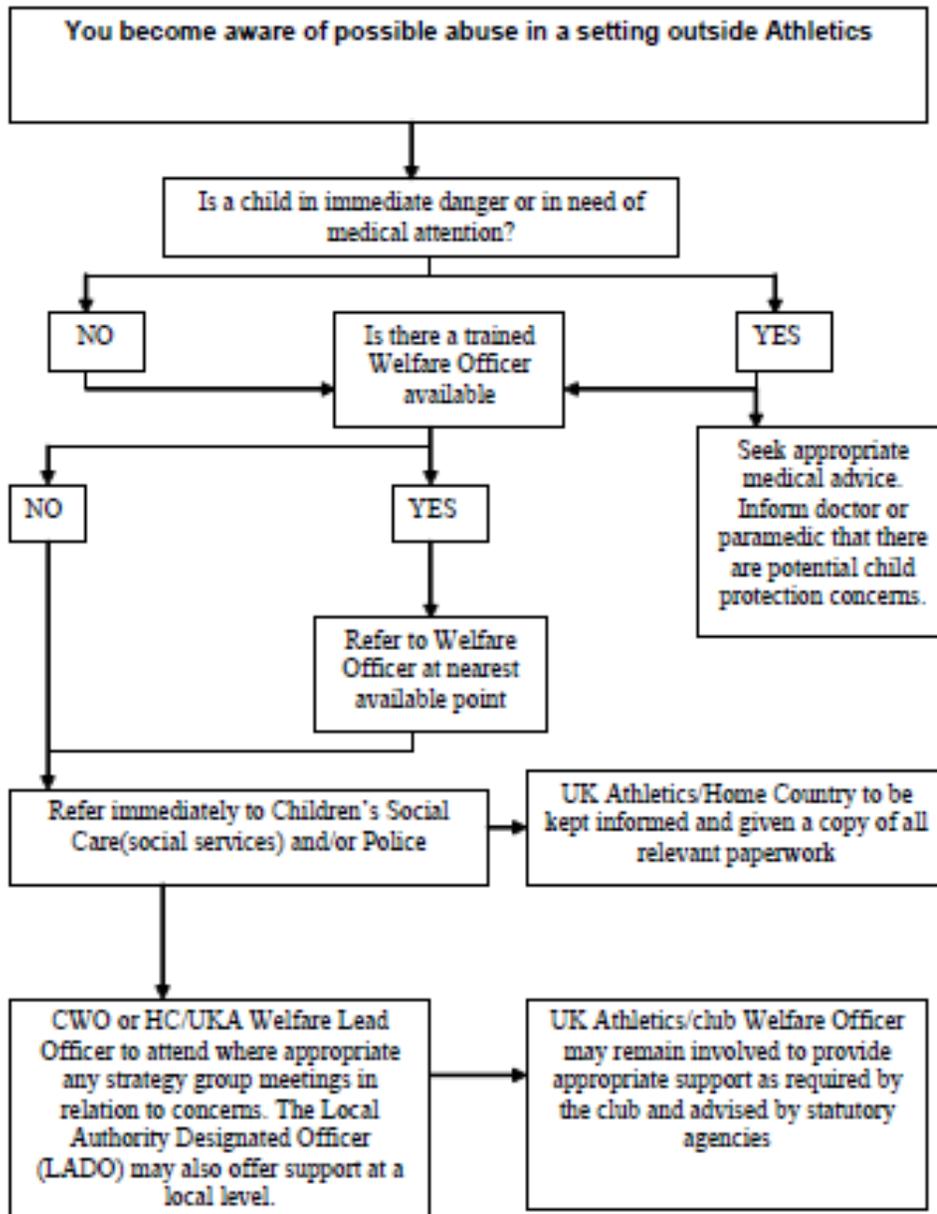
Email: 0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gov.uk or 0-19.SPOA@eastsussex.gcsx.gov.uk

Out of Hours Social Care Service - Children's services: **01273 335905/6** - See more at:
<https://sussexchildprotection.procedures.org.uk/yqkth/appendices/local-contact-details#s333>

<http://www.eastsussexlscb.org.uk/our-procedures>

<https://sussexchildprotection.procedures.org.uk/qkps/recognition-and-referral-of-abuse-and-neglect/making-a-referral>





Please ensure that you complete an incident report form and keep complete records at every stage of your involvement.
Please forward a COPY of all documentation to UKA and Home Country Lead Welfare Officers

