

# UK ATHLETICS & THE HOME COUNTRY ATHLETICS FEDERATIONS

# CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

## RESPONDING TO AND MANAGING A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD

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# INTRODUCTION

UK Athletics, the four Home Country Athletics Federations (HCAFs) and all affiliated clubs and organisations have a responsibility to protect children and young people participating in our sport from harm, abuse and exploitation, and safeguard their wellbeing. This responsibility extends to developing and applying consistent and robust case management procedures to reported safeguarding concerns.

These procedures apply to the following governing bodies in athletics:

- **UK Athletics (UKA)**
- **England Athletics (EA)**
- **Athletics Northern Ireland (ANI)**
- **Welsh Athletics (WA)**
- **Scottish Athletics (SA).**

Any reference to UK Athletics means UK Athletics and the above listed HCAFs.

These procedures detail the steps to be taken when a concern is raised that a child or young person involved in athletics and related activities, is at risk of or is experiencing harm. They should be implemented with reference to the Child Safeguarding Policy, Safeguarding Regulations and supporting information.

For the purposes of these procedures, a child means a person who has not attained the age of 18 years.

# CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

## RECOGNISING A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

Many concerns raised over a child's wellbeing will not need a full child protection investigation. But a coordinated response may still be necessary to address any concerns. You may be concerned about a child or young person because of something you have seen or heard, information you have been told by others, or because someone has confided in you about things that are happening or have happened to them.

It is not your responsibility to prove or decide whether a child or young person has been harmed or abused. It is, however, everyone's responsibility to respond to and report any concerns they have.

The signs of child abuse are not always obvious, and a child or young person might not feel able to tell anyone about what is happening to them. Sometimes, children may not realise that what is happening to them is abuse.

There are different types of child abuse and the signs that a child or young person is being abused may depend on the type. For example, the signs that a child is being neglected may be different from the signs that a child is being abused sexually.

Detailed guidance and advice on recognising child abuse is available in the section titled 'Child Abuse – Definitions, Signs and Indicators' in Appendix 2 of the Child Safeguarding Policy.

However, there are certain key indicators to look out for:

- A change in the child's behaviour – e.g. becoming disruptive or unreasonable during sessions.
- They become anxious, lack confidence or are withdrawn and stop communicating.
- They begin bullying other children.
- They display sexualised behaviour or language inappropriate for their age.
- They are often hungry, may steal food, or are always tired.
- They have inadequate clothing or have poor personal hygiene.
- They have unexplained cuts and bruises or bite marks.
- They display signs of self-harming or of having an eating disorder.
- They are reluctant to change clothes for sport/activity or receive medical treatment such as physio.
- They seem afraid of parents or carers, or don't want to go home.
- They suddenly stop attending training without explanation.

**Remember: If you have an immediate and serious concern about the safety or health of a child or young person, contact the emergency services on 999.**

## RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE OR CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

Club members, coaches, volunteers and staff may be informed in different ways about a concern regarding a child or young person. This may be:

- because of what a child has said
- through observation of a child or young person, or a change in their behaviour, appearance or demeanour
- information that is shared from another individual or organisation.

If a child tells you about a concern, or that they or someone else is being, or has been, abused or you witness or become concerned about a child, then follow the guidance below:

- Take their concern seriously.
- React calmly and in a manner that does not alarm the child.
- Listen to what they say and don't show surprise or shock.
- Reassure them they are not to blame and were right to tell you.
- Allow them the space and time to talk.
- Keep questions to a minimum – only ask questions if you need to identify/clarify what the child is telling you.
- Explain that you will have to share the information with those that need to know.
- Act swiftly to report and carry out any relevant actions (see below).

It is important **NOT** to:

- make assumptions or speculate
- come to your own conclusions
- probe for more information than is offered
- give personal viewpoints or opinion
- conduct your own investigation of the case
- dismiss or ridicule the information
- promise to keep it a secret. You must be clear that this is important and you will have to tell someone who can help
- make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- approach an alleged abuser to discuss the concern
- discuss the information with anyone who does not need to know. Safeguarding information is confidential
- delay in reporting the concerns to UKA and the Club Welfare Officer, or in an emergency to the Police
- ignore what has been reported – you have a duty to act.

**Remember: If the child or young person has a need for immediate medical attention, call an ambulance on 999.**

**If you are concerned the child or young person is in immediate danger or a serious crime is being committed, contact the Police on 999 straight away.**

## RECORDING THE CONCERN

- Make a note of what the child or young person has said using his or her own words as soon as practicable. If the information is from someone else or an organization, note full details and obtain contact information from them.

If you do not have immediate access to the [Submit a Safeguarding Concern](#) tab, make notes and write down the following detail:

- The child's name and date of birth (if known)
- How the report was made (in person, second hand by someone else, observation)
- Where and when the report was made (date/time/location)
- Use the child's own words – do not try to edit or make it sound polite or less concerning
- What nature of the concern is
- Description of any visible injuries or behaviours (do not examine the child)
- Details of any witnesses
- What the child's view is – bear in mind the abuse may be something the child is not conscious of; it could be normal to them.

## REPORTING THE CONCERN

- As soon as possible, complete and submit the form on the “[Submit a Safeguarding Concern](#)” tab. This will send the details directly to the UKA Safeguarding team.
- Alternatively, you can email these details to – [safeguarding@uka.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@uka.org.uk).
- If someone has written to you (including by email or social media), include a copy with the form.
- Alert the Club Welfare Officer without delay.
- This information is confidential and must only be shared with UKA and/or your Club Welfare Officer, and others that have a need to know, in order to keep the child safe whilst waiting for action to be taken.

### Reporting a Concern About the Conduct of a Coach

Any concerns for the wellbeing and safety of a child arising from the conduct or practice of a coach or member of staff/volunteer must be reported to UKA on the day the concern arises, or as soon as practically possible.

This can be done by completing the form on the “[Submit a Safeguarding Concern](#)” tab or by emailing: [safeguarding@uka.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@uka.org.uk).

## CASE MANAGEMENT

### a. The Role of the Club Welfare Officer

On being advised of a concern, the Club Welfare Officer will take the following actions:

1. Ensure any immediate local actions necessary to protect any child at risk have been taken.  
If the concern or risk is believed to be due to the behaviour of a club member then consider the relevant procedures (e.g. interim suspension from the club) to prevent that person having contact with the child being harmed and other children.
2. If you have been sent written details of the concern by the informant check that you understand the content and that all the necessary detail has been gathered.  
If you are being contacted directly by a club member, or a member of the public, ensure that if they have not already sent details to UKA, that they provide enough information for you to complete the Submit a Safeguarding Concern form.
3. Reassure, and advise the person making the report. Explain what will happen next. Reinforce the need for confidentiality.
4. Consider what the risks are to the child. Decide what further action is needed to protect the child.
5. **Sharing concerns with parents/carers.** Where there are concerns that the parents/carers may be responsible for or have knowledge of the abuse, sharing information with them may place the child at further risk. In such cases, advice must firstly be sought from the Police/Social Services/UKA Safeguarding Team as to who informs the parents/carers.
6. In all situations, the Club Welfare Officer should ensure those in the club/organisation who can act (within their remit) to prevent further harm have the information to do so.
7. The Club Welfare Officer must ensure the case is referred to the UKA Safeguarding Team as soon as possible. This can be done by completing the details on the Submit a Safeguarding Concern tab or by emailing [safeguarding@uka.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@uka.org.uk). Don't assume that someone else has submitted the details to UKA. Remember, it's better to send it twice than not at all.

### b. The Role of the HCAF and UK Athletics Safeguarding Team

On receipt of a concern about a child or young person from any source, the UKA Safeguarding Team will take the following action:

1. **Consult and decide.** The UKA Safeguarding Team will assess the concern and actions taken locally. They will consult with the Home Country Welfare Officer and the Club Welfare Officer and will decide what further actions need to be taken and by whom.
2. Identify immediate protective and support needs for the child, the person raising the concern, and the alleged perpetrator, if they are within the sport.
3. Establish who needs to know about the concern, why they should know and what they need to be told, and record details of who was informed and when. For example, they may refer the case to the Local Authority Child Safeguarding Team.
4. **Criminal allegations.** If the case is a suspected crime and is not already under Police investigation, ensure it is reported without delay to the Police.

5. Use policy and procedures to reduce risk/stop harm within the organisation. If the person who may be causing harm is a person involved in athletics in whatever capacity, the Safeguarding Team will:
  - identify which policies and procedures are applicable (e.g. safeguarding regulations, Coach and Official's licence terms and conditions, Codes of Conduct, etc.)
  - agree what interim arrangements can be put in place to enable the child to continue participating in their activity.
6. **Ongoing liaison with statutory agencies.** If statutory agencies are involved, the UKA Safeguarding Team will ensure the relevant people are assigned to work together with them to coordinate and agree the next steps. The Lead Safeguarding Officer will decide who attends and contributes to any child safeguarding case meetings that are called by the Local Authority. This may be a club or Home Country representative.
7. **Ongoing liaison with the child and their parent/carer.** The UKA Safeguarding Team will confirm who will maintain contact with the child, to consult with them, keep them informed, and make sure they are receiving the support they need. This may be a club or Home Country representative.
8. Where the statutory agencies conclude their investigations or decide to take no further action in relation to a referral, the UK Athletics Safeguarding Team in conjunction with the Safeguarding Case Management Group will follow the relevant investigative process as set out in the safeguarding regulations.

## NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING LEADS CONTACT DETAILS

GOVERNING BODY	EMAIL	NAME
UK Athletics	<a href="mailto:safeguarding@uka.org.uk">safeguarding@uka.org.uk</a>	Sue Wilson
England Athletics	<a href="mailto:welfare@englandathletics.org">welfare@englandathletics.org</a>	Abbie Cranage
Welsh Athletics	<a href="mailto:safeguardingandwelfare@welshathletics.org">safeguardingandwelfare@welshathletics.org</a>	Carl Williams
Athletics Northern Ireland	<a href="mailto:welfare@athleticsni.org">welfare@athleticsni.org</a>	Allister Woods
Scottish Athletics	<a href="mailto:welfare@scottishathletics.org.uk">welfare@scottishathletics.org.uk</a>	Morva McKenzie

# APPENDIX 1: PROCESS MAP

## REPORTING A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD

