UK ATHLETICS & THE HOME COUNTRY ATHLETICS FEDERATIONS

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy owner: UK Athletics Lead Safeguarding Officer
Policy approved by: The Boards of UK Athletics and the Home Country Athletics Federations
Date policy approved: 30/04/2021
Next review date: 31/01/2024

ENGLAND ATHLETICS
scottishathletics
BRITISH ATHLETICS
WELSH ATHLETICS ATHLETAU CYMRU
ATHLETICS NORTHERN IRELAND

CONTENTS

SECTION 1: CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy Objectives page 3

Policy Statement page 4

Application page 5

Key Principles page 5

Implementation page 6

Equality page 8

SECTION 2: SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Practice Concerns page 8

Wellbeing Concerns page 9

Child Abuse page 9

Policy Review page 9

Associated Documents page 9

National Safeguarding Contact Details page 10

Glossary page 10

SECTION 3: APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Process Map – Reporting a Concern About a Child page 11

Appendix 2: Child Abuse – Definitions, Signs and Indicators page 12

Acknowledgements page 19

SECTION 1: CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY

POLICY OBJECTIVES

This policy and related documents apply to the following governing bodies in athletics:

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

In this document, any reference to UK Athletics means UK Athletics and the above listed Home Country Athletics Federations (HCAFs).

Athletics is one of the most accessible and successful sports in the UK. All children who take part in athletics are entitled to participate in a fun and safe environment, and we believe that everyone involved in our sport can play a part to safeguard and protect children from harm.

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of UK Athletics and the four HCAFs to build a safer future in athletics for children, and our responsibility to:

- keep children and young people safe by valuing, listening to and respecting them
- promote the wellbeing of children through opportunities to take part in athletics safely
- put in place policies and procedures to promote the wellbeing and protection of children
- recruit, train and support all our staff and volunteers to prioritise the safety of children who take part in our activities.

POLICY STATEMENT

All children and young people have the right to be cared for, protected from harm and abuse, and to participate in a sporting environment which is safe, and in which their rights are respected, and their needs met. Children and young people should get the help they need, when they need it, and their safety is paramount.

UK Athletics and the four HCAFs accept our legal and moral duty to care for all children. This policy and the associated procedures and guidelines establish our collective commitment to protect all children and young people from poor practice, abuse and exploitation.

This policy operates in conjunction with the relevant government policies and legislation regulating the protection of children and young people in the four Home Countries, and we will work with the appropriate external partners to ensure best practice is implemented and maintained.

This policy links with our Adult Safeguarding Policy to ensure that as young people move into adulthood their safety and wellbeing will continue to be protected.

APPLICATION

Safeguarding and protecting children is everyone's responsibility, not just the obligation of a few.

Therefore, this policy applies to the following who must abide by its terms.

All individuals, clubs, associations, and other organisations involved in any capacity in athletics, whether or not members of UK Athletics or a HCAF. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes senior managers and the board of trustees, participants in events operating under a UKA or Home Country licence, individuals or organisations contracted to, or whose services are engaged to deliver programmes and courses on behalf of UKA or a Home Country, and anyone working within the sport (in a paid or voluntary capacity, whether as an employee or on a self-employed basis or otherwise) including all coaches and officials.

We will take appropriate action against anyone who is suspected of a breach of this policy, or of the associated codes of conduct, licence terms and conditions, and relevant disciplinary regulations.

DEFINITION OF A CHILD

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

- **The Children Act 1989**
- **The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995**
- **The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014**
- **The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014**

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

KEY PRINCIPLES

This policy is based on the following key principles:

- The welfare of children is the primary concern.
- The protection and wellbeing of all children in our care is everyone's responsibility.
- A child, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm and abuse.
- A child has the right to express views on all matters that affect them, should they wish to do so.
- A child's rights and opinions should be respected and promoted.
- The best way to promote the wellbeing, health and development of a child is to work in partnership with the child, parents/carers and other relevant organisations.

IMPLEMENTATION

To implement this policy and keep children safe, UKA and the HCAFs will:

- promote the health and wellbeing of children through the provision of opportunities to take part in athletics safely
- put in place procedures to promote the wellbeing and protection of children
- seek to prevent and address bullying through the development and implementation of effective anti-bullying policies and practices
- appoint Lead Safeguarding Officers
- recruit, train and support our volunteers and staff to prioritise and safeguard the wellbeing of children who take part in our activities and protect them from harm
- require clubs, volunteers and staff to adopt and abide by this safeguarding policy and related procedures and regulations, including the codes of conduct for working with children
- respect the rights of all children to express views on any matter which affect them, should they wish to do so
- respond to any child wellbeing or protection concerns in line with this policy and related procedures
- regularly monitor, review and evaluate the implementation of this policy and related procedures.

To implement this policy and keep children safe, clubs and organisations affiliated to the four HCAFs will:

- aadopt this Child Safeguarding Policy
- implement the guidelines, procedures and regulations related to this policy
- appoint at least one Club Welfare Officer
- safely recruit volunteers/staff in accordance with club volunteer recruitment guidance
- promote safeguarding best practice in all aspects of club activity
- ensure all volunteers, officials, coaches, athletes and parents agree to and sign the relevant code of conduct for their role
- accept that all office bearers and committee members have a responsibility for safeguarding children's wellbeing and protecting them from harm, and are prepared to respond to any concerns of abuse or poor practice
- challenge and change poor practice
- implement any recommendations of UK Athletics or relevant HCAF relating to this policy area
- promote an environment where all concerns can be raised without fear of victimisation or reprisal
- ensure that everyone volunteering or working with children at their club attends a relevant child safeguarding training course every three years.

EQUALITY

UK Athletics and the HCAFs endorse the principle of equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in athletics (in all its disciplines and forms):

- has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to their age, sex, gender identity, disability, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, race, socio-economic status or sexual orientation
- can be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected and, in particular, that they are able to enjoy their sport without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

SECTION 2: SUPPORTING INFORMATION

This policy addresses the following forms of harm:

- **Practice concerns**
- **Wellbeing concerns**
- **Child abuse.**

PRACTICE CONCERNS

A practice concern is behaviour that falls short of abuse but which nevertheless harms or places someone at risk of harm, or has a negative and adverse effect on the safety and wellbeing of children. Practice concerns include any behaviour, act or omission by members of staff, coaches, volunteers, officials, or a club and its members, that may contravene this policy, or any associated procedures and guidelines, in particular the codes of conduct.

This policy, along with the safeguarding procedures, codes of conduct and safeguarding regulations, promotes and supports the maintenance of healthy and positive relationships between those in positions of trust, such as coaches, and the young people in their care.

In England and Wales the government has amended the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and extended the legal definition of position of trust to include non-statutory settings such as sport by reference to the activity which the adult is carrying out in relation to the child, namely, coaching, teaching, training, supervising or instructing. In effect the changes have extended the settings and roles where it is illegal for an adult holding a position of trust to enter into a sexual relationship with a 16- or 17-year-old in their care, and this now includes athletics.

However, athletics has adopted a broader interpretation of the term “position of trust” to acknowledge the inherent power imbalance in coach/athlete relationships. Such relationships can be exploitative and where this happens it can impact on a child’s wellbeing and/or lead to abuse. Therefore, this policy addresses any practice in athletics that may be considered an abuse of a position of trust.

In addition, it would be considered as an abuse of a position of trust in athletics if an athlete is coerced or indoctrinated with attitudes to training, drugs and cheating, or social, political and religious views (radicalisation) which go against societal norms or the rules of the sport.

Further examples of practice concerns may include but are not restricted to:

- coaches who continually break rules, ignore recognised good practice guidelines, breach the codes of conduct, or the terms and conditions of their UKA licence
- individuals engaging in behaviours and practices that are known to be risk factors in cases of abuse
- continuing with a session or activity when there is a heightened risk to the group or athlete’s wellbeing and safety
- coaches leading activities for which they are not trained, insured or licensed
- a club not responding appropriately to a child wellbeing or protection concern.

WELLBEING CONCERNS

Whilst most children's needs will be met by their parents and carers, it is acknowledged that participation in sports can support and promote a child's wellbeing. Government policy in all parts of the UK recognises that sports clubs and their staff and volunteers are often significant role models and trusted people in children's lives. They are therefore well placed to identify when a child's wellbeing and health is, or is at risk of, being adversely affected by any matter, and to act in the child's best interests.

A wellbeing concern can be identified in different circumstances. For example:

- A child may reveal that they are worried, anxious or upset about an incident or set of circumstances, either within or outside of athletics.
- You may have noticed a change in a child's behaviour, demeanour or developmental progress.
- You may have concerns about the impact on a child of an incident or set of circumstances, either within or outside of the sport.
- You may have concerns for a child's physical or mental health.

There are of course other factors which can impact on a child's wellbeing. Government policy and guidance varies across the UK, so please refer to your HCAF's website for specific welfare and wellbeing guidance.

CHILD ABUSE

There are four well established categories of abuse:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect.

Detailed descriptions of the four main categories of abuse, along with information about additional vulnerabilities faced by some children and young people, can be found in Appendix 2.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner in the event of legislative changes or revisions to related policies and guidelines.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents, policies and procedures.

- Child Safeguarding Procedures (Responding to and managing a concern about a child)
- Club Safeguarding Toolkit
- Codes of Conduct
- Safeguarding Regulations
- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Adult Safeguarding Procedures (Responding to and managing a concern about an adult).

NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING CONTACT DETAILS

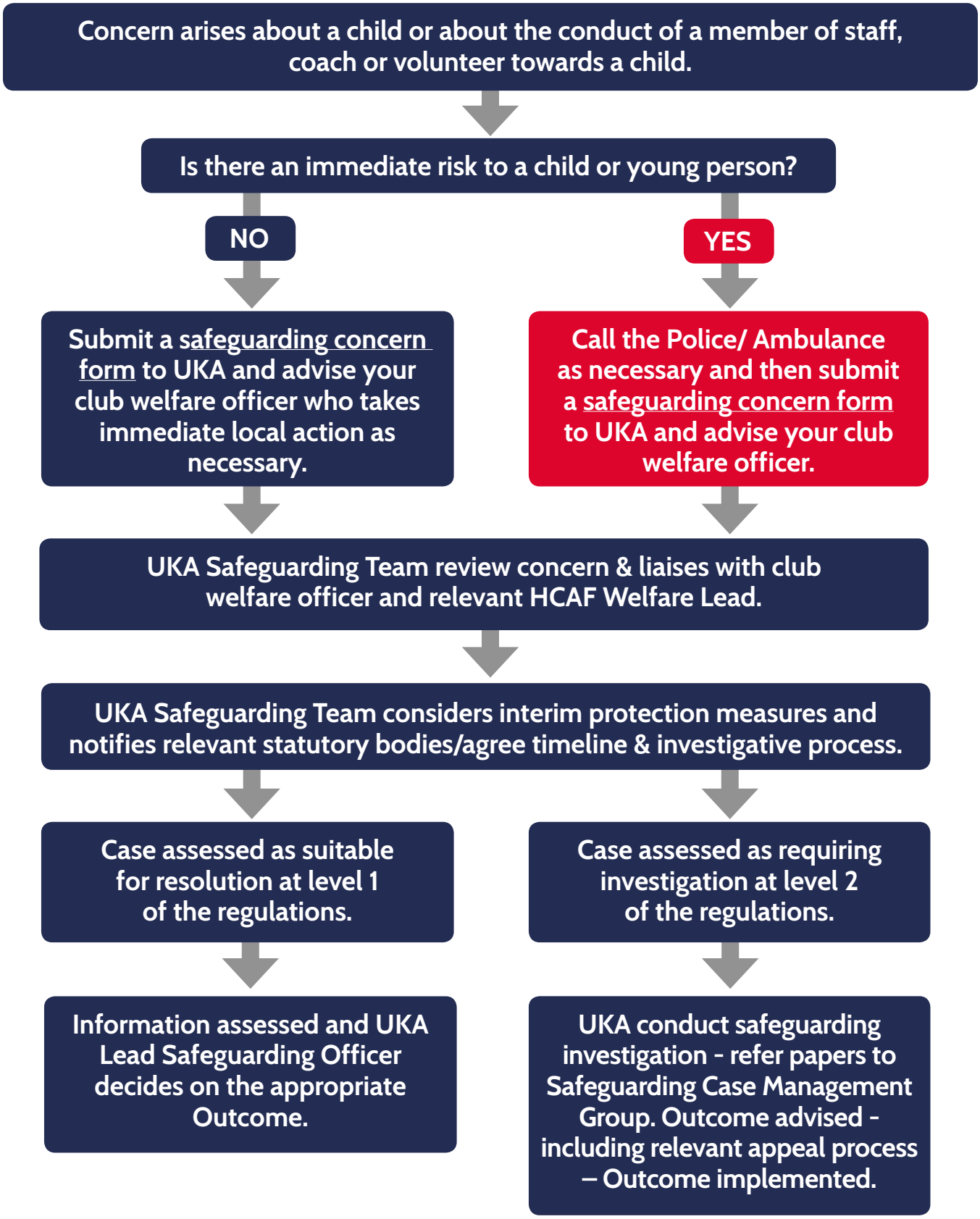
GOVERNING BODY	EMAIL	NAME
UK Athletics	safeguarding@uka.org.uk	Sue Wilson
England Athletics	welfare@englandathletics.org	Abbie Cranage
Welsh Athletics	safeguardingandwelfare@welshathletics.org	Carl Williams
Athletics Northern Ireland	welfare@athleticsni.org	Allister Woods
Scottish Athletics	welfare@scottishathletics.org.uk	Morva McKenzie

GLOSSARY

- **LSO** – Lead Lead Safeguarding Officer for UK Athletics or the relevant Home Country
- **CWO** – Club Welfare Officer
- **LSCB** – Local Safeguarding Children Board
- **DBS** – Disclosure and Barring Service in England and Wales
- **PVG** – Protection of Vulnerable Groups system operated by Disclosure Scotland
- **AccessNI** – Protection of Vulnerable Groups system operating in Northern Ireland
- **CPSU** – Child Protection in Sport Unit (NSPCC)
- **Children 1st** – Child Protection in Sport Service in Scotland
- **Affiliated club** – Means any voluntary club, non-voluntary organisation or virtual club affiliated to UKA or the Home Country Athletics Federations
- **Child** – Anyone who has not attained the age of 18 years
- **HCAF** – Home Country Athletics Federation.

SECTION 3: APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: PROCESS MAP - REPORTING A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD



APPENDIX 2: CHILD ABUSE - DEFINITIONS, SIGNS AND INDICATORS

What is Child Abuse and Child Neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. Children may be abused in a family, or an institutional or sporting setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

It is helpful to consider the different ways in which children can be abused, both within and out-with our sport.

There are four agreed categories of abuse:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Neglect.

These categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, a child experiencing physical abuse is undoubtedly experiencing emotional abuse as well. The definitions which follow show the different ways in which these categories of abuse may be experienced by a child.

Recognising the Signs of Child Abuse

After each definition that follows we have included some guidance on the main signs of abuse to look out for. However, be aware that although the physical and behavioural signs listed may be symptomatic of abuse, they may not always be an indicator and, conversely, children experiencing abuse may not demonstrate any of these signs.

Child abuse is often difficult to recognise. It is not your responsibility to decide whether a child has been abused or not. That is the role of trained professionals. At UK Athletics we believe it's everyone's responsibility to protect children. If you know or suspect that a child is being harmed or abused, you need to act.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is defined as the persistent emotional neglect or ill treatment that has severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may involve the imposition of age or developmentally inappropriate expectations of a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger and includes exploiting or corrupting children. Some level of emotional abuse will be present in other types of ill treatment of children, but it can occur independently of other forms of abuse.

Examples of emotional abuse in sport include:

- a persistent failure to show any respect to a child (e.g. continually ignoring a child)
- humiliating a child by continuously criticising their performance
- continually being aggressive towards a child
- acting in a way which undermines a child's self-esteem.

Signs which may raise concerns about emotional abuse include:

- low self-esteem
- running away from home
- extremes of passivity and aggression
- significant decline in concentration
- indiscriminate friendliness and neediness
- self-harming.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is defined as the causing of physical harm to a child or young person. It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after.

Most children sustain accidental cuts and bruises throughout childhood. These are likely to occur in parts of the body like elbows, shins and knees. An important indicator of physical abuse is when the bruises or injuries are unexplained, or the explanation does not fit the injury, or the injury appears on parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely (e.g. on the cheeks or thighs). The age of the child must also be considered. It is possible that some injuries may have occurred for other reasons (e.g. certain skin conditions and diseases).

Physical harm can be caused by:

- overtraining or dangerous training of athletes (e.g. sudden increases in training workloads)
- allowing an athlete to compete too frequently over an extended period
- failure to do a risk assessment of physical limits or pre-existing medical conditions
- administering, condoning or failure to intervene in drug use.

Signs which may raise concerns about physical abuse include:

- refusal to discuss injuries
- improbable explanations for injuries
- reluctance to go home
- repeat injuries over time
- untreated injuries
- fear of parents being asked for an explanation
- avoiding certain activities due to injury
- avoiding the removal of warm-up clothing during sessions.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is defined as any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person, whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. 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 penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or in watching sexual activities, using sexual language towards a child or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Some children may never be able to tell someone they have been sexually abused. Changes in a child's behaviour may be a sign something has happened. In some instances, there may be no overt signs to suggest that a child has been sexually abused.

Examples of sexual abuse in sport include:

- exposure to sexually explicit inappropriate language or jokes
- showing a child pornographic material or using a child to produce such material
- inappropriate touching
- sexual intercourse and/or sexual activity with a child under 16.

Signs which may raise concerns about sexual abuse include:

- lack of trust in adults, overfamiliarity with adults, or fear of a particular adult
- sleep disturbance (nightmares, bed-wetting, fear of sleeping alone)
- girls taking over the mothering role
- reluctance or refusal to participate in physical activity, or to change clothes for games
- drug/alcohol abuse
- psychosomatic indicators such as recurrent abdominal pain or headaches
- eating disorders
- social isolation – being withdrawn or introverted, poor peer relationship
- running away from home
- school problems (e.g. falling standards, truancy)
- low self-esteem
- sexual knowledge beyond the child's age
- sexual promiscuity/over-sexualised behaviour
- anxiety/depression/self-harm/suicide attempts.

Neglect

Neglect is defined as the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or failure to respond to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect may also result in the child being diagnosed as suffering from 'non-organic failure to thrive', where they have significantly failed to reach normal weight and growth of development milestones, and where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated. In its extreme form, children can be at serious risk from the effects of malnutrition, lack of nurturing and stimulation.

This can lead to serious long-term effects such as greater susceptibility to serious childhood illnesses and reduction in potential stature. With young children in particular, the consequences may be life-threatening within a relatively short period of time.

Examples of physical neglect in sport include:

- exposing a child to extreme weather conditions (e.g. heat and cold)
- failing to seek medical attention for injuries
- exposing a child to risk of injury through the use of unsafe equipment
- exposing a child to a hazardous environment without a proper risk assessment of the activity
- failing to provide adequate nutrition and water.

Signs which may raise concerns about neglect include:

- constant hunger
- constant tiredness
- untreated medical problems or injuries
- poor relationships with peers
- poor personal hygiene/clothing in poor condition
- being frequently late or not attending sessions
- low self-esteem
- stealing.

There are other circumstances and behaviours that can be considered as either forms of abuse, indicators that a child is at risk of abuse, or that a child's wellbeing is being compromised. The following examples should not be considered as a definitive list.

Bullying

Bullying is a breach of children's rights under several articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

There is no single legal definition of bullying in the UK, and whilst there are different descriptions of bullying across the Home Countries, it can broadly be termed as repeated behaviour which is intended to hurt someone either emotionally or physically, and is often aimed at certain people because of their race, religion, gender or sexual orientation, or any other aspect such as appearance or disability.

UK Athletics and the Home Country governing bodies are committed to challenging all types of prejudice-based bullying and language, including bullying based on the protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010.

This policy relates to both online and face-to-face bullying. We do not accept that bullying that happened online is something that happened 'outside' of our sport. Bullying in any form is behaviour that happens 'to' someone and it will have an impact upon them.

We expect that all volunteers and staff will work together to prevent and reduce bullying and prejudice amongst children and young people by:

- developing positive relationships amongst children, young people and adults which are mutually respectful, responsible and trusting
- building capacity, resilience and skills in children and young people, and parents and carers to prevent and deal with bullying
- preventing bullying of children and young people through a range of strategies and approaches
- supporting children, young people and their parents and carers who are affected by bullying.

  * For more information and links to specific advice on how to recognise and respond to bullying in your area, visit your Home Country governing body website.

Children and Young People on Performance Pathways

Moving through a performance pathway offers fantastic experiences and rewards for young athletes. However, there are factors that can make some talented young athletes more vulnerable to harmful behaviours, either from themselves, their coaches or parents, or members of their entourage.

These factors include, but are not limited to:

- a win-at-all-costs approach
- intense coach–athlete relationships
- a self-image that is linked closely with performance excellence
- child athletes operating in an adult-focused environment
- being away from family and support networks
- fear of losing funding or a place on the programme if they speak out.

Children and Young People with a Disability

Whilst disabled children are likely to suffer the same type of abuse as other children, research suggests that children with a disability are three to four times more likely to be abused than non-disabled children (NSPCC 2014, Scottish Government 2014a). Research has also shown that children with communication impairments, behavioural disorders, learning disabilities and sensory impairments are particularly vulnerable.

The most common forms of abuse experienced by disabled children are neglect and emotional abuse, although they may experience multiple abuses.

Communicating abuse is difficult for any child. They may be confused, fearful, traumatised and uncertain about what has happened and what might happen in the future. Not every child will tell someone of their abuse or harm and there should be no greater expectation that disabled children will tell someone more readily than any other children. Telling someone about abuse can be more difficult for children who have a wide range of communication styles, and this can be more problematic if the perpetrator is also in a trusted role.

Negative Discriminatory Behaviour

Children and young people may experience harassment or negative discrimination because of their race or ethnic origin, socio-economic status, culture, age, disability, gender, sexuality or religious beliefs. Although not in itself a category of abuse, for the purposes of this policy, negative discriminatory behaviour is categorised as a wellbeing concern, but in serious cases it can be considered emotional abuse.

Children and Young People Experiencing or Affected by Mental Health Problems

The emotional wellbeing of children and young people is just as important as their physical health. Most children grow up mentally healthy, but certain risk factors make some more likely to experience problems than others. Evidence suggests that more children and young people have problems with their mental health today than 30 years ago. Traumatic events in themselves will not usually lead to mental health problems, but they may trigger problems in those children and young people whose mental health is not robust.

Two separate but not necessarily unconnected issues relate to children affected by mental health problems:

- children and young people who are experiencing mental health problems themselves
- children and young people whose lives are affected by the mental illness or mental health problems of a parent/carer.

Financial Abuse

Children and young people can be subject to financial abuse and this may include:

- theft of money or possessions
- fraud/scamming
- being prevented from accessing their own money, benefits or assets
- undue pressure, duress, threat or undue influence put on the person in connection with financial matters. In a sport setting this could include being asked to pay a coach's expenses or being asked for a loan by a coach or volunteer
- misuse of personal allowance in a care home
- misuse of benefits by a parent/carer
- false representation, or using another person's bank account, cards or documents
- misuse of a power of attorney or other legal authority.

Parental Problematic Alcohol and Drug Misuse

Problematic parental substance use can involve alcohol and/or drug use (including prescription as well as illegal drugs). The risks to, and impacts on, children of parents and carers who use alcohol and drugs are known and well-researched.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse describes any behaviour that involves exerting control over a partner or ex-partner's life choices and that undermines their personal autonomy. Children and young people living with domestic abuse are at increased risk of significant harm, both as a result of witnessing the abuse and of being abused themselves. However, children can also be affected by abuse even when they are not witnessing it or being subjected to abuse themselves. Domestic abuse can profoundly disrupt a child's environment, undermining their stability and damaging their physical, mental and emotional health.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation is a culture-specific abusive practice affecting some communities. If it is suspected a child is at risk of FGM abuse, then this should always trigger a child safeguarding referral.

Honour-based Violence and Forced Marriage

Honour-based violence is a spectrum of criminal conduct which includes threats and abuse and which can escalate to honour killing. Such violence can occur when perpetrators believe that a relative/community member, who may be a child, has shamed the family and/or the community by breaking their honour code. The punishment may include assault, abduction, confinement, threats and murder.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child criminal exploitation is a form of child abuse which involves criminal exploitation and requires a safeguarding response. It includes children who are involved in criminal activities, including the movement of drugs or money which results in personal gain for an individual, group or organised criminal gang. This can involve an element of exchange and can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual. It is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation.

Child Trafficking

Child trafficking typically exposes children to continuous and severe risk of significant harm. It involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring and/or receipt of a child for purposes of exploitation. This definition holds whether or not there has been any coercion or deception, as children are not considered capable of informed consent to such activity. It applies to activity within a country as well as between countries.

Further Information

Further information on abuse and neglect is available from NSPCC and Children 1st.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

UK Athletics and the HCAFs are grateful to the NSPCC and Children 1st for their guidance and support in the development of this policy and associated procedures.