UK ATHLETICS & THE HOME COUNTRY ATHLETICS FEDERATIONS

CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

RESPONDING TO AND MANAGING A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD

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

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION page 3

CHILD SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

Recognising a Concern About a Child or Young Person page 4

Respondong to a Disclosure or Concern About a Child or Young Person page 5

Recording the Concern page 6

Reporting the Concern page 6

Case Management: page 7

a. The Role of the Club Welfare Office page 7

b. The Role of the HCAF and UK Athletics Safeguarding Team page 7

National Safeguarding Leads Contact Details page 8

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Process Map – Reporting a Concern About a Child or Young Person page 9

Appendix 2: Child Safeguarding Report Form page 10

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 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

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 sexual 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:

- a direct disclosure by the child or young person
- 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, you should 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 the Club Welfare Officer.
- 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 disclosure
- 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 allegations with anyone who does not need to know. Disclosures are confidential
- delay in reporting the concerns to the Club Welfare Officer, or in an emergency to the Police
- ignore what has been disclosed – 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.
- Completing the Child Safeguarding Report Form (Appendix 2) will assist in the recording of information.
- Ensure you describe the circumstances in which the concern was raised and what action you took.
- It is important to distinguish between things that are fact and things that have been observed or overheard, as this will ensure that information is as accurate as possible.
- If someone else has told you about a concern they have about a child or young person, or have witnessed harm or abuse, use the words the person used. If someone has written to you (including by email or social media), include a copy with the form.

If you do not have access to a form, make notes and try to be accurate and factual, and write down the following detail:

- The child's name and date of birth (if known)
- How the disclosure was made (in person, second hand by someone else, observation)
- Where the disclosure took place (date/time/location)
- Use the child's own words – do not try to edit or make it sound polite or less concerning
- What 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

- Submit a copy of the Child Safeguarding Report Form to the Club Welfare Officer without delay.
- This information is confidential and must only be shared with 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.
- Alternatively, you can send the form to your HCAF Welfare Officer or you can complete and submit the Online Safeguarding Concern Form available on your Home Country governing body website. This will be sent directly to the UKA Safeguarding Team.

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 member of staff/volunteer must be reported to the Club Welfare Officer on the day the concern arises, or as soon as practically possible. The Club Welfare Officer must report the concern to the UKA Safeguarding Team immediately but within 48 hours.

If the coach or individual is not attached to a club, or you would prefer to speak to someone independent from a club, then please report your concern directly to the UKA Safeguarding team by emailing: Safeguarding@uka.org.uk.

CASE MANAGEMENT

a. The Role of the Club Welfare Officer

On receipt of a referral, the Club Welfare Officer will take the following actions:

1. Ensure any immediate 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 a Child Safeguarding Report Form check that you understand the content and that all the necessary parts have been completed.

   If you are being contacted directly by a club member, or a member of the public, ensure that they provide enough information for you to complete the Child Safeguarding Report 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 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. Depending on the situation you may need to pass information to, and work together with, other organisations such as the Police or the Local Authority Child Safeguarding Team.

7. The Club Welfare Officer must refer the case to their Home Country Welfare Officer, or to the UKA Safeguarding Team as soon as possible. This can be done by sending the Child Safeguarding Report Form to safeguarding@uka.org.uk, or by submitting an Online Safeguarding Concern Form using the link on your Home Country Athletics Federation website. This will be sent directly to the UKA Safeguarding Team.

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 consult with the Home Country Welfare Officer and the Club Welfare Officer and will decide what initial actions need to be taken and by whom to protect the child.

2. Identify immediate 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 referral, 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.

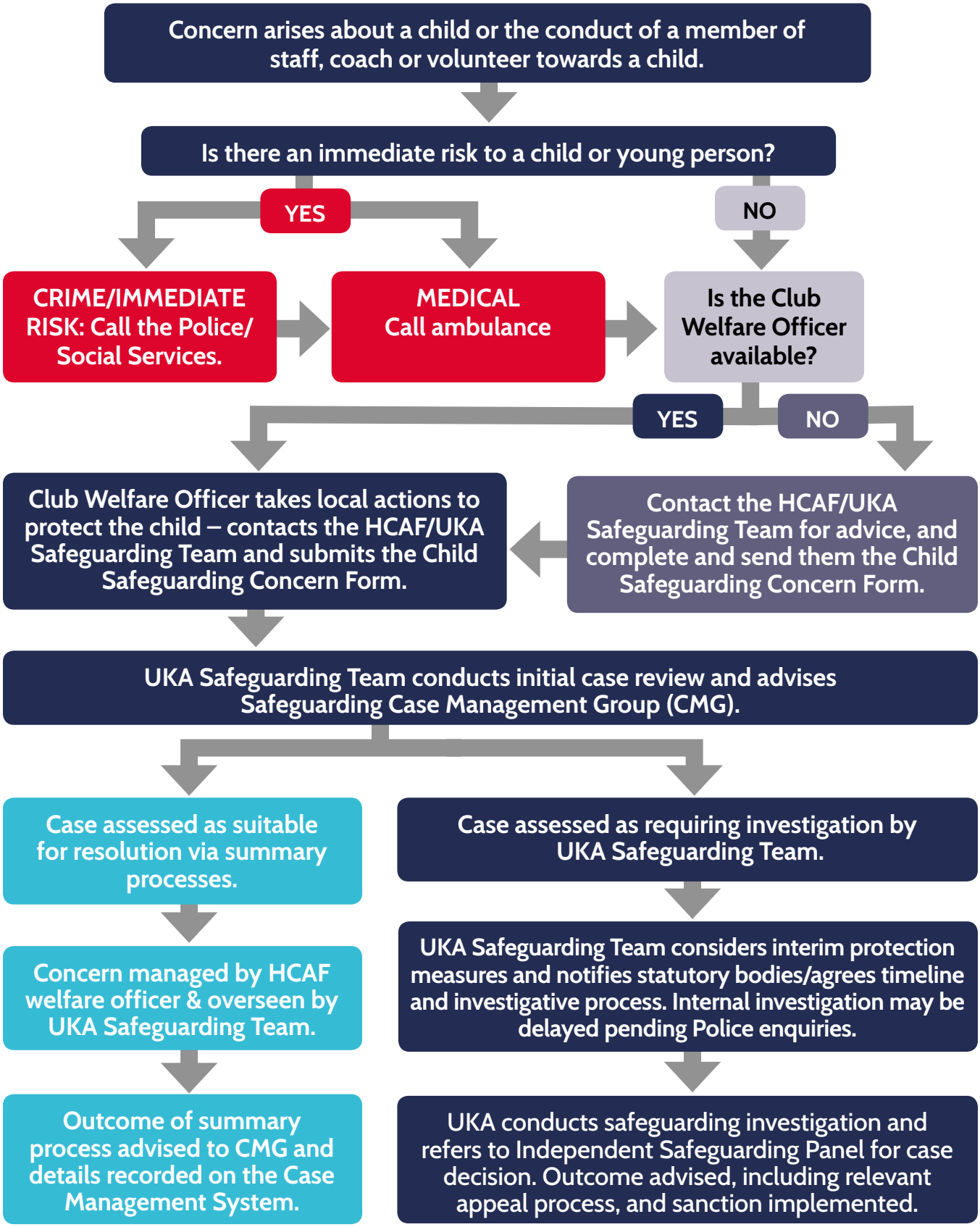
4. **Criminal allegations.** If the case is a suspected crime and is not already under Police investigation, ensure it is reported without delay to the Police.
5. **Use policy and procedures to reduce risk/stop harm within the organisation.** If the person who may be causing harm is a person involved in athletics in whatever capacity, the Safeguarding Team will:
   - decide what policy and procedures to follow (e.g. breach of code of conduct, relevant disciplinary procedures, breach of contract)
   - agree what short-term 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. When 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 decide which internal disciplinary proceedings are appropriate.
9. The UKA Safeguarding Team will coordinate and oversee all case-related decisions and actions supported by the Safeguarding Case Management Group.

NATIONAL SAFEGUARDING LEADS CONTACT DETAILS

GOVERNING BODY	EMAIL	PHONE
UK Athletics	safeguarding@uka.org.uk	07920 532552
England Athletics	welfare@englandathletics.org	07967 317341
Welsh Athletics	safeguardingandwelfare@welshathletics.org	07792 242153
Athletics Northern Ireland	welfare@athleticsni.org	02890 602707
Scottish Athletics	welfare@scottishathletics.org.uk	07983 081122

APPENDIX 1: PROCESS MAP

REPORTING A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD



APPENDIX 2: CHILD SAFEGUARDING REPORT FORM

Section 1 – Details of person reporting

Name

Club

Positon/role

Address

Postcode

Telephone number

Mobile number

Email address

Section 2 – Child's details

Name

Date of birth

Address

Postcode

School (if relevant)

Telephone number

Prefered language

Is an interpreter required? Y N

Any additional details?

Name of parent/carer

Parent/carer telephone

Section 3 – Details of person about whom the concern/allegation relates

Name

Relationship to child*

Address

Postcode

Telephone number

Position within club**

*e.g. coach/coach assistant/helper/parent or carer etc. **e.g. coach/parent/ helper/official etc

Section 4 – Nature of harm or concern

Please indicate type of concern and include date, time, location, details of harm/concern, who, what, where, when and how.

Section 5 – Has the child been physically injured?

Has the child been physically injured? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do not examine the child – include details of visible or reported injuries, location of injury, and any first aid administered where relevant.

Section 6 – Child's view of the circumstances

If expressed, where possible use their own words. If they have not been made aware that a concern has been raised, explain why not.

Section 7 – Initial actions taken

Section 8 – Witnesses

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone number

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone number

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone number

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone number

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone number

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone number

Section 9 – Other persons/agencies contacted

Date/time

Name of contact/agency

Advice received

Date/time

Name of contact/agency

Advice received

Name of contact/agency

Date/time

Advice received

Date/time

Name of contact/agency

Advice received

Date/time

Name of contact/agency

Advice received

Section 10 – Have the parents or carers been informed?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Please explain decision.

Send this form to your Club Welfare Officer and/or to the UKA Safeguarding Team - **safeguarding@uka.org.uk**