

PROTECTING VICTIMS



Responding to concerns or allegations about sexual violence

— Preventing sexual violence in and through sport

Everyone involved in sport for children and young people needs access to information and education to help them to:

- ▶ take practical steps to create a safe, enjoyable, child-centred, trusted environment;
- ▶ identify and respond to concerns about children and young people who may be experiencing sexual violence.

— How to respond to a child or young person who is experiencing sexual violence or if you have concerns about the behaviour of a colleague

Everyone should be familiar with their organisation's policy and procedures and know who to report their concerns to inside and outside the organisation.

Legal requirements to report concerns about/allegations of sexual violence

In England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland there are national 'Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in and through Sport'. National Governing Bodies are required to meet these in order to receive funding (see www.thecpsu.org.uk website). They will have expectations of their affiliated clubs. The respective sports councils may have club accreditation schemes such as 'Clubmark' in England and Northern Ireland which includes child protection minimum operating standards.

<https://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com/club-mark/>

— National organisations should have:

- ▶ a written policy about the protection of children and young people;
- ▶ codes of conduct/behaviour for adults and young people;
- ▶ written procedures for how to respond to all concerns about children and young people including when they disclose sexual violence themselves;
- ▶ complaints and disciplinary procedures;
- ▶ a designated person for child protection who everyone knows how to contact.

Sports clubs must at least ensure that children are aware of their rights and any helplines they can turn to, and ensure that people in the club know who to report their concerns to.

Different countries will have widely differing minimum expectations. There are not always policies and procedures for responding to concerns about children or young people in sport organisations so sport leaders/coaches need to know what is in place such as statutory agency contacts and child/adult helplines.

— Information sharing and confidentiality

- ▶ Keep reports confidential and only share them on a "need to know basis"
- ▶ Statutory agencies will advise who to share with if they are involved

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— How to respond to a child or young person who tells you that they are being abused: dos and don'ts

Remember that most children find it extremely hard to tell someone they are experiencing sexual violence.

It is very important to:

- ▶ keep calm and not show shock or disapproval;
- ▶ listen carefully to what the child or young person says;
- ▶ reassure the child or young person that they were right to tell and what has happened is not their fault;
- ▶ let the child or young person know they are believed;
- ▶ let the child or young person freely recall what they want to say;
- ▶ only ask questions to clarify something you may not have understood – remember that the child or young person may need to be interviewed again as part of a statutory agency /criminal investigation;
- ▶ avoid making any promises that you may not be able to keep such as keeping what the child or young person says as confidential when you have to share this;
- ▶ tell the child or young person what you are going to do next;
- ▶ provide information on other sources of help such as child helplines;
- ▶ pass on the report to your designated person with responsibility for child protection as soon as possible. If they are not available ensure that you pass information to statutory agencies who can take action to investigate the allegations and ensure the child or young person's safety. Take their advice on who should contact the child or young person's parents.

— Complaints and disciplinary procedures

Successful criminal prosecutions are still very hard to achieve even with the most sophisticated systems, as the threshold of "beyond reasonable doubt" is difficult to attain with vulnerable victims especially as sexual violence often takes place in secret.

National organisations therefore are responsible for dealing with allegations against their own staff and volunteers

So they need to develop policies and procedures to deal with breaches of codes of conduct which are fair through:

- ▶ complaints processes;
- ▶ disciplinary hearings;
- ▶ grievances;
- ▶ appeals.

— Act on your concerns:

- ▶ know your organisation's procedure and who to report concerns to in and outside the sport;
- ▶ record facts and observations not judgments in as much detail as possible;
- ▶ ensure the record is clear enough for you to recall for possible future criminal proceedings;
- ▶ know who you can turn to outside of your organisation if necessary.

Respond – Follow your procedures.

Record – Use your reporting form (if you have one), record facts, observations not judgements, in as much detail as possible.

Report – Pass on your concerns to your designated person for safeguarding – either at national level or local level depending on your sport's structure. If there isn't one and/or it is an emergency, pass on your concerns to statutory agencies.

— Help for the child or young person and others who are affected

Sports bodies and statutory agencies should provide information on local and national services for victims, their families and others who have been affected.



Support services

NSPCC Helpline 08088005000

Childline 08001111

For adult survivors of previous abuse – Sporting Chance
sportingchanceclinic.com

— Preparing for the effects and aftermath including re-victimisation

Maintaining a child and young person focused approach

- ▶ Ensure children are not re-victimised through other people's responses and reactions
- ▶ Provide support to them and information for others affected so they understand the organisation and/or statutory agencies' decisions

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