



Safeguarding Policy and Procedures: Children and Young People

Introduction

North Shields Polytechnic Club (North Shields Poly) is committed to establishing and implementing policies and procedures which ensure a safe athletics environment for all. Our Safeguarding Policy aligns with that of our governing body, UK Athletics (UKA) which states that '*Everyone who takes part in athletics is entitled to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.*' We are committed to promoting best practice when working with children and young people under the age of 18 years and ensuring that everyone in the organisation accepts their responsibilities to safeguard them from harm and abuse.

1. Policy Statement

North Shields Poly fully accepts our legal and moral obligations to provide a duty of care, to protect all children and adults at risk and to safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, religion or belief, sex or gender and sexual orientation. Key principles include:

- 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 and organisation.

North Shields Poly will:

- Provide and enforce procedures to safeguard the wellbeing 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 volunteers to adopt best practise to safeguard and protect individuals from abuse, and themselves from false allegations.
- Require volunteers to adopt and abide by our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, and all 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. This will occur minimum annually, and in response to any changes to legislation or safeguarding best practice.

2. Definitions

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.

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 concerns¹.



3. Best Practice, Poor Practice and Abuse

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.

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 favouritism.
- 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.

Poor Practice

The following are examples of poor practice, and should be avoided:

- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay.
- A coach shouting comments at athletes when they are not working hard enough.
- A coach using harassing and discriminatory language such as 'you run like a girl'
- A coach engaging in an intimate relationship with one of his/her athletes.
- A group of athletes ganging up on a new athlete and refusing to talk to him/her.
- A coach taking a group of children away to a weekend event on his/her own.

The list above is not exhaustive and many other examples exist. If any of the following incidents should occur you should report them immediately to another colleague, make a written note of the event and inform parents and/or appropriate adults of the incident and inform one of our club welfare officers:

- If a child appears distressed in any manner.
- If a child appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a child misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
- If you accidentally hurt a child.

If you have any concerns at all, report them!



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Abuse

There are many 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, 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), 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 bullying² 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 gender specific - women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.
- **Child sexual exploitation (CSE)** is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.

Child sexual exploitation is a hidden crime. Young people often trust their abuser and don't understand that they're being abused. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what's happening. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed and exploited online.

Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs.

Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online.

- **Female genital mutilation (FGM)** is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but where there's no medical reason for this to be done. It's also known as "female circumcision" or "cutting", and by other terms such as sunna, gudniin, halalays, tahur, megrez and khitan, among others.

FGM is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty starts. *It is illegal in the UK and is child abuse.* If you believe **someone is in immediate danger**, contact the police immediately by dialling 999 otherwise report to the club's welfare officers.

- **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. 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.



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- **Peer on Peer Abuse.** Peer on peer abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in peer on peer abuse is under the age of 18.

Peer on peer abuse often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. One of the greatest challenges, is distinguishing abuse from the banter and horseplay we associate with modern adolescent behaviour, however just because a young person can attribute a seemingly acceptable word to what they're saying or doing, it does not justify the behaviour. 'It was only banter/foreplay/messing around' is no excuse for what could constitute abusive behaviour.

Peer on peer abuse could involve perpetrators having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they abuse to defend themselves. This imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways. It may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), or social (e.g. isolating or excluding someone). It could also include issues such as revenge porn or what are often gender issues (e.g. girls being touched or boys being involved in initiation activities). Bullying (including cyber-bullying) can be involved in any type of abuse and is often motivated by prejudice or ignorance due to actual or perceived differences between people or groups or people. People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT), those from minority ethnic groups, or those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties can be more vulnerable to this form of abuse. Peer on peer abuse should be addressed as a child or vulnerable adult protection concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. Sexting involving those under the age of 18 must always be referred to the club's welfare officer.

- **Cyber bullying** is any form of bullying which takes place online or through smartphones and tablets. Social networking sites, messaging apps, gaming site and chat rooms such as Facebook, Xbox Live, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat **Cyber bullying** is rife on the internet and most young people will experience it or see it at some time. Care must be taken when setting up groups chats and oversight would be recommended.
- **Radicalisation. Children from all kinds of backgrounds can become radicalised.** in children can happen over a long period of time. In some cases it is triggered by a specific incident or news item and can happen much quicker. Sometimes there are clear warning signs of radicalisation, in other cases the changes are less obvious.

The teenage years are a time of great change and young people often want to be on their own, easily become angry and often mistrust authority. This makes it hard to differentiate between normal teenage behaviour and attitude that indicates your child may have been exposed to radicalising influences.

The following behaviours listed here are intended as a guide to help you identify possible radicalisation:

Outward appearance

- Becoming increasingly argumentative
- Refusing to listen to different points of view
- Unwilling to engage with children who are different
- Becoming abusive to children who are different
- Embracing conspiracy theories
- Feeling persecuted
- Changing friends and appearance
- Distancing themselves from old friends
- No longer doing things they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Being secretive and reluctant to discuss their whereabouts
- Sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups

If you believe **someone is in immediate danger**, contact the Police immediately by dialling 999 otherwise report to either of the club's welfare officers.



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Disabled children are vulnerable to abuse and are at least three times more likely to be abused than non-disabled children. Those working with them must be aware of this and willing to acknowledge their concerns. Practitioners may also over identify with the child's parents/carers and be reluctant to accept that abuse or neglect is taking or has taken place, or seeing it as being attributable to the stress and difficulties of caring for a disabled child. When suspecting abuse, practitioners should always ask: "Would this be acceptable if the child were not disabled?"

4. Recruitment, Selection and Training

All reasonable steps will be taken at all levels within the sport to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working in athletics, especially with children.

Recruitment of Volunteers and Coaches

Advertising will reflect:

- This Safeguarding Policy.
- The responsibility of the role.
- The level of experience or qualifications required.
- A positive stance on all aspects of welfare and safeguarding children.

Application

All applicants must complete an application form that includes:

- Name and address, including proof of ID, which would be part of an Enhanced DBS check as required.
- Relevant experience, qualifications and training undertaken.
- All applicants who have or are seeking to undertake a role and responsibility in relation to children (regulated position) must complete a criminal record check (enhanced level DBS). In line with guidance from UKA, North Shields Poly will also utilise these procedures where people who are already involved in the club and subsequently take on a role which gives them greater access to children (for instance a parent taking on a volunteering role within the club).
- Any former involvement with athletics.

Induction: Training

All volunteers who work with children will be expected to undertake relevant training on a three yearly basis in safeguarding procedures. For all coaches and volunteers with roles in relation to children this should include attendance at a recognised direct delivery safeguarding workshop.

From April 2019 requirements came into effect for coaches and those renewing an EA licence regarding a Level 2 course in safeguarding. This has been devised specifically for athletics using UKA's existing welfare policies and procedures, so all examples are relevant to the sport. The online nature of the training allows coaches to complete it in their own time and choice of location. North Shields Poly will fund this training for all our coaches as appropriate, which will be triggered when individuals apply for DBS check or DBS renewal.

Monitoring and Appraisal

All coaches should be given the opportunity to receive regular feedback through observed practice or informal feedback. Concerns about misconduct, poor practice or abuse, however will be acted on as they arise. Appropriate support will be offered to those who report concerns/incidents or complaints.

5. Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations

Whilst it is not the responsibility of North Shields Poly, our volunteers or members to decide what constitutes abuse, it is our 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.

How to respond to a disclosure

Don't:

- Probe for more information than is offered.
- Speculate or make assumptions.



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- 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.

All suspicions and disclosures must be reported to the one of the club's welfare officers or Local Authority Designated Officer (appropriately dependant on the disclosure. 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.) Please see below for reporting procedures.

Club Welfare Officers

To ensure that appropriate action is taken if there is a disclosure, statutory referral from the police, children's services, adult services or suspicions, North Shields Poly has two trained welfare officers (one female and one male) who will act as the designated child protection lead officer (CPLO).

The welfare officer's role is to

- Advise and support the club officers and committee to implement welfare policies and procedures and to support the club to adhere to codes of conduct and good practice.
- Ensure that all club coaches / helpers / volunteers have completed a volunteer recruitment process which includes volunteer reference forms and DBS checks (where required). They should assist in ensuring that this process is completed in a timely manner. The Welfare Officer should also ensure there is a process in place within the club for auditing DBS checks and UKA Licences of all relevant Coaches, Officials and Volunteers to ensure they are regularly updated (every three years).
- Respond to suspected breaches of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures that may be referred to them, and to advise and support other club officers or committee members on how to respond appropriately in accordance with the procedures.
- Report any concerns about child abuse as per 'Reporting Procedures', below.

The club welfare officers for North Shields Poly are:

Holly Mansfield – welfare@nspoly.org 07837 518372 and Graham Lewis-Dale – welfare@nspoly.org 07415 393960

In the event of both club welfare officers being unavailable, the contingency point of contact is North Shields Polytechnic Club Chair of trustees, John Sutcliffe – john@wjrltd.co.uk / 07792 727369

All club officers and committee members have responsibility to uphold our policies and procedures, to adhere to good practice and to support the club welfare officers to respond to any suspected breaches. This is NOT the sole responsibility of the welfare officers.

Reporting Procedures

Any person with information of a disclosure, allegation or concern about the welfare of a child must immediately report this in the following ways.

You should immediately inform one of the club's designated welfare officers, who will refer the matter to UKA's CPLO and take appropriate reporting action with the North Tyneside Social Care- Front Door service or Social Care Gateway Team as appropriate. The welfare officer will refer to North Tyneside Children's Social Care Front Door service (0345 2000 109 and/or Police 111 service) or to North Tyneside Adult Social Care Gateway Team (0191 643 2777 and/or police 111 service) as appropriate.

In any other situation or if neither of the welfare officers are available, if the concern is about that person or no action is taken, you should contact the UKA's CPLO (David Brown – UKA Lead Safeguarding Officer dbrown@uka.org.uk or 0121 713 8450). If they are unavailable, you should take responsibility and seek advice from either the NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000), North Tyneside Council Social Care Front Door service or Social Care Gateway Team as appropriate (details above). A summary of the reporting procedures is provided in a flow chart format.

Reminder of Important numbers:

Graham Lewis-Dale – welfare@nspoly.org 07415 393960



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Holly Mansfield – welfare@nspoly.org 07837 518372

David Brown – UKA Lead Safeguarding Officer dbrown@uka.org.uk or 0121 713 8450

North Tyneside Council Front Door Service, 0345 2000 109

If you think a child is in immediate danger, call 999

Where there is a complaint of abuse against a 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.

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 for minimum three years.

Reporting by Clubs

Where a club becomes aware of an allegation in relation to a club member brought to their attention by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the police they should immediately pass on these details to the UKA Welfare and Compliance Officer on email dbrown@uka.org.uk. Assistance with how to proceed with Position of Trust meetings will then be available from UKA.

Dealing with Concerns and Allegations

While our welfare officers have received training, it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. If there is any doubt about whether or not the alleged behaviour constitutes abuse, the concern must be shared with professional agencies that will be responsible for subsequent action.

Any suspicion that an individual has been abused by a volunteer or employee should be reported to the UKA CPLO who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the individual in question and any other individual who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- The UKA CPLO will refer the allegation to the appropriate social care department who may involve the police or go directly to the police if out of hours.
- The parents of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social care department.
- The UKA CPLO will also notify the Chief Executive who will decide who should deal with any media enquiries.
- The UKA CPLO and/or the Chief Executive can impose an interim suspension based on the risk to the child, an assessment of the seriousness of the allegation and the need to ensure a full investigation can be instituted.
- Accreditation may be withdrawn from any UKA event venue if it is considered that the use of the venue continues to offer any form of threat to children
- The UKA CPLO will also make a full report to a UKA Case Management Panel. Irrespective of the findings of the Children's Social Care (social services) or the Police, UKA will assess all individual cases and determine if the person can be reinstated and how this can be handled sensitively. This decision must be made on the available information, which could suggest on the balance of probability; it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child is paramount.

In circumstances where UKA does not have jurisdiction to deal with the individual, the UKA CPLO will act as the link person between the sport and the social care services and/or the police and pass on all the information to the relevant governing body/organisation with disciplinary jurisdiction. Where the police or social care services make a statutory referral and invite a club official to a case conference or professional meeting then the UKA CPLO must be informed as soon as possible to determine whether to attend and represent the governing body at the meeting and support the individual and club.

Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences relating to abuse is automatically excluded from working with children. These decisions will be dealt with by the Independent Safeguarding Authority for England, Wales and



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Northern Ireland in Scotland this will be the role of the Central Barring Unit. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children Act (1999) and set out in Schedule 4 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act.

Poor Practice

If the allegations are against a volunteer and after consideration are clearly about poor practice, the allegation will be dealt with by the relevant home country under their disciplinary procedures as a misconduct issue.

Disciplinary and Appeal Procedures

UKA has a general disciplinary policy and separate policies relating to coaches and officials. England Athletics have their own policy and procedures the other home countries have adopted the UKA policy and procedures as their own. All the documents are easily available on the UKA website (<http://www.uka.org.uk/governance/policies/>).

Records and Confidentiality

Always follow the reporting procedure set out above. Use of the referral form will assist you to collect and collate the required information. Your reports should be factual and include where possible:

- The referrer's and/or the child's name, address and date of birth.
- The date and time of the incident.
- The facts about the allegation or observation.
- Your factual observations e.g. behaviour and emotional state of the alleged victim, note any marks, bruising etc.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what happened using the exact words if possible.
- Details of any witnesses.
- Any times, dates or other relevant information.
- Any action that was taken as a result of the concerns.
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A copy of this information must be sent to the UKA CPLO.

Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Information should be handled and disseminated on a *need to know basis only*. Information will be stored securely by North Shields Poly in line with data protection laws.

Support for Victim, Accused and Reporter

North Shields Poly acknowledges the difficulty in reporting concerns and will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith (without malicious intent), reports his or her concern about a colleague's practice or concerns about the welfare of a child. They will take appropriate steps to ensure that the victim (and parents, appropriate adults) are provided with appropriate professional support (e.g. Help lines, support groups). They will also ensure through the appropriate allegation, disciplinary and appeals procedures that the accused is offered appropriate support.

Policy Ratified by: North Shields Polytechnic Club Chair

Date: July 2020

Date for review: July 2021



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REFERRAL FORM

Your name and contact details:		Your position:	
Your knowledge of and relationship to the child:			
Child's name		Child's address:	
Child's date of birth:		Parent/Guardian Name/s and contact details:	
Date(s), time(s) and location(s) of incident(s):			
Nature of the concern/allegation:			
Observations made by you or to you (e.g. description of visible bruising, other injuries, child's emotional state etc):			
Exactly what the child said and what you said (Remember, do not lead the child– record actual details. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary):			
Actions Taken so far: Police contact Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Date and time if contact made Police reference number Advice give Children's social care contacted yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> Date and time of contact Discussion with – Advice given			
Local Authority Designated Officer contacted			



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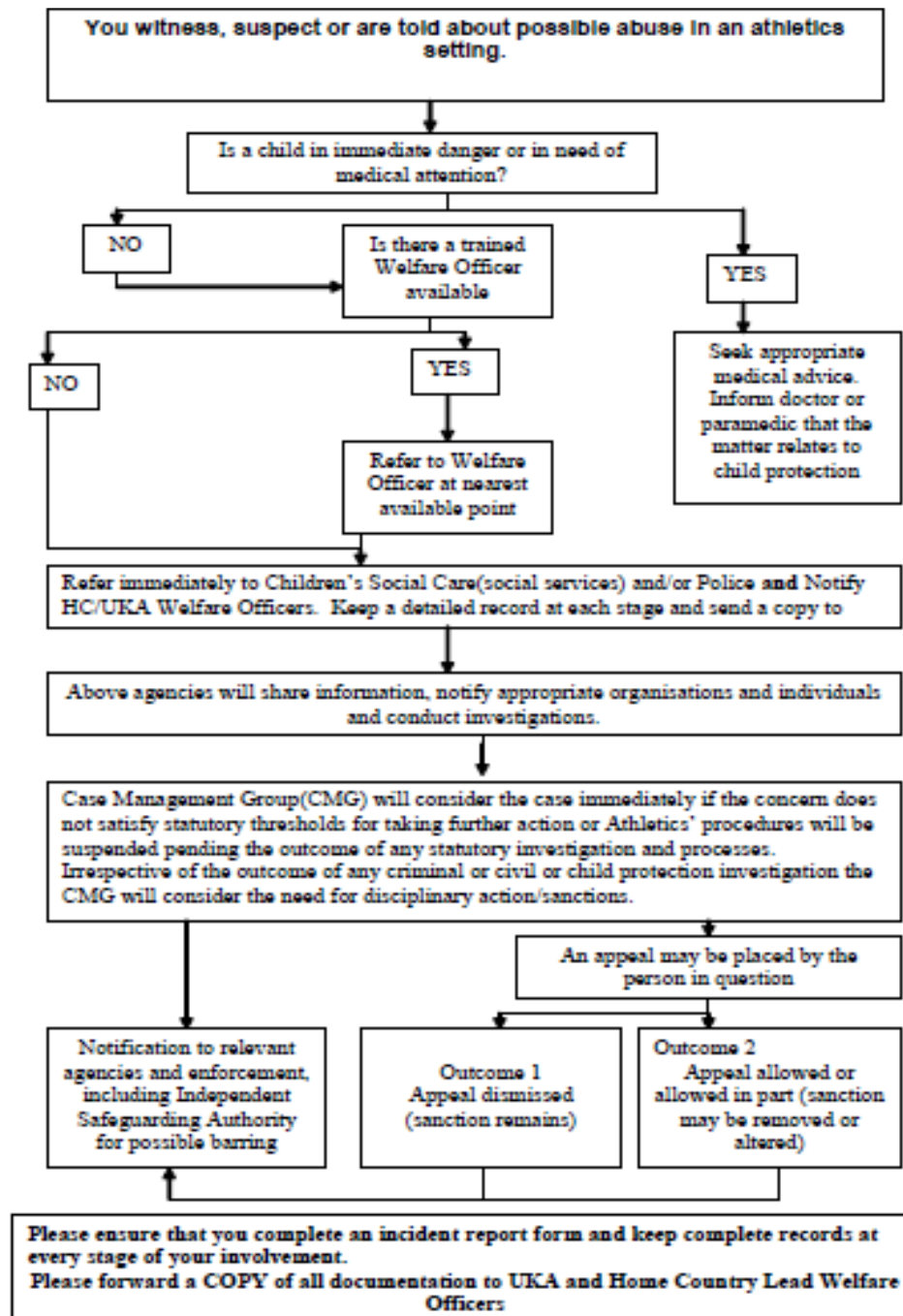
UKA Contact Date and Time
Other agency contact if required

Name of person completing form

Signed

Date

Copy sent securely to UK Athletics





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