



Safeguarding Children and Young People in Sport & Physical Activity

Policy and Procedures 2025

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Introduction

Purpose of the Policy

The Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership has developed and will implement this Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures to:

- Provide guidance for Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership staff and volunteers on safeguarding issues, policy and procedures.
- Articulate minimum safeguarding standards when Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership works in partnership with other organisations to provide activities for children and young people.
- Provide guidance on safeguarding in specific relationship to sport and physical activity.
- Exist as an example of good practice to sport and physical activity organisations operating in the Hertfordshire.

Setting the Context

The Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership is hosted by the University of Hertfordshire and provides the function of the Active Partnership in Hertfordshire as recognised by Sport England. This involves working strategically and collaboratively to improve the lives of the people of Hertfordshire, by using the power of sport and physical activity to tackle inequality and disadvantage.

The Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership works with sport clubs, local authorities, education services, schools and governing bodies of sport in partnership to give people local opportunities for participation in sports and physical activities.

The Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership recognises that sport and physical recreation activities often place individuals in a position of trust with significant influence over vulnerable people and that a high level of trust is placed on such individuals by parents, carers and the participants themselves.

This document should be used in conjunction with the [Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Policy and Procedures](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#). All child protection matters will be investigated and dealt with in accordance with these procedures.

For information related to safeguarding adults, please refer to the Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership [Safeguarding Adults in Sport & Physical Activity Policy](#).

The Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership acknowledges that local authorities, schools, national governing bodies of sport, sports clubs and other sports delivery agencies will have their own safeguarding policies.

Terminology used in this Document

The following terms and abbreviations are commonly used in this document:

HSP	The Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership.
UH	The University of Hertfordshire.
CPSU	The Child Protection in Sport Unit.
Sport	Used to define any sport or physical activity.
DBS Check	Means a Disclosure and Barring Service check (the DBS check superseded the CRB check from December 2012 when the Criminal Records Bureau and Independent Safeguarding Authority merged to become the DBS.
DSO	Designated Safeguarding Officer.
Staff	Staff means anyone working or volunteering for or on behalf of HSP.
Child/Children	Refers to anyone under 18 years of age.
Young People	Refers generally to people under 18 years of age, with sensitivity towards not referring to all as 'children'.
Parent	A generic term used to describe parent, parents, carers or guardians.

Part 1 – Policy

1.1 Key Principles of this Policy

- People who participate in sport do so for the enjoyment and sense of achievement that it brings. Everyone who participates is entitled to experience a safe and supportive environment. Children and young people are entitled to expect activity organisers to fulfil their duty of care, and to be nurtured and protected from abuse and poor practice.
- The welfare and safety of those participating in any activities organised by, or in association with HSP is paramount.
- Children and young people, have the right to protection from abuse and the right to be treated with dignity and respect, irrespective of their culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, and/or sexual orientation.
- The policy recognises risks to young people in their environment outside the home and works to protect them in those settings.
- It is not the responsibility of the relevant professionals to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, however, it is the responsibility of everyone to take action to respond to and report any concerns
- Partners can expect that all suspicions and allegations of abuse or poor practice will be taken seriously by HSP and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- HSP recognises the role and responsibilities of other agencies and partners in safeguarding children and is committed to complying with their procedures where relevant and applicable.
- Confidentiality will be upheld in line with data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018, the Human Rights Act 2000 and the Freedom of Information Act (2004)
- All staff shall have recourse against any allegation made against them and be supported if they report a concern.
- This policy will be promoted to all relevant parties and be freely available from the HSP website.
- This policy and its procedures are mandatory for all HSP staff and volunteers.

1.2 Policy Statement

HSP believe that all people have the right to take part in sport and physical activities free from harm and abuse. HSP recognises that children and young people are at increased risk of harm and that their protection is of paramount importance.

This policy and the related procedures will be reviewed on an annual basis, or earlier in response to any significant changes to the organisation's structure, role or to relevant legislation.

1.3 Review

The HSP Safeguarding Policies and associated procedures will be reviewed annually, or if there is an incident and intermediate review as a result of the learning from this, or if there is a change in legislation/government guidance which requires an intermediate review.

The HSP Safeguarding Implementation Plan will also be reviewed on an annual basis in line with our annual safeguarding review with the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU). The review will be signed-off by the HSP Board. The review will include, but not be limited to:

- Ensuring that documentation reflects the organisation's role, current legislation and government guidance.
- Progress made against the targets within the Implementation Plan.
- Compliance with the recruitment, induction and training processes.
- Currency of any relevant training and DBS checks required.
- Examination of reported and recorded cases.
- Efficiency of communication about the policy to all partners and staff.

1.4 The Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership Designated Safeguarding Officers

HSP has an appointed individual who is responsible for dealing with any safeguarding concerns. In their absence, a deputy will always be available for anyone to consult with.

The Designated Safeguarding within HSP are:

Designated Safeguarding Officer	Louise Gallagher-Smith
Work telephone number	01707 284229
Work email	l.gallagher-smith@herts.ac.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer	John O'Callaghan
Work email	j.d.ocallaghan@herts.ac.uk
Board Safeguarding Champion	Mervyn Morgan

1.5 Key Contacts

Other key contacts for safeguarding children are:

Children's Social Care: for advice about a concern involving a child in Hertfordshire	0300 123 4043 (24 hours a day)
Police: if there is a danger to life, a risk of injury or a crime is taking place	999
Child Protection in Sport Unit: for general enquiries related to safeguarding children in sport	0116 366 5580
NSPCC Helpline: specialist support that will listen, advise and take any action needed related to safeguarding children concerns	0808 800 5000 help@nspcc.org.uk

1.6 Roles and Responsibilities

1.6.1 General Responsibilities of HSP

HSP is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people whilst they are engaged in any activity provided by, or through, the Partnership. We will endeavour to do this by:

- Leading on the production, implementation, monitoring and review of this policy and the accompanying procedures.
- Ensuring that all staff are clear in their role in safeguarding and promoting welfare.
- Ensuring that all staff are appropriately selected, trained and supervised
- Ensuring that the inclusion of adequate safeguarding arrangements is a key element of all commissioning, funding or partnership agreements.
- Providing help and guidance to partners with regard to safeguarding in sport issues.

1.6.2 Role and Responsibilities of the HSP Board

The Board, as the strategic steering body for HSP, will:

- Ensure that safeguarding remains a central principle of the operations and development of the organisation.
- Have strategic accountability for the development of policies for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in sport.
- Have strategic accountability for effective implementation of organisational policies and procedures to safeguard children and young people, including those related to safe recruitment.
- Represent the organisation's approach to safeguarding children and communicate this approach to other organisations, as appropriate.
- Maintain a Board Safeguarding Champion who will liaise between Board and the Lead Designated Safeguarding Officer.

1.6.3 Role and Responsibilities of the Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team will:

- Oversee arrangements to ensure the organisation fulfills its duty of care towards children and young people in line with this policy document.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of policies for the safeguarding and protection of vulnerable children or young people in sport.
- Develop, maintain and review other organisational policies and procedures which contribute to safeguarding, including those related to safer recruitment, complaints and disciplinary procedures.
- Work collaboratively with external agencies on cases of poor practice or abuse
- Implement an organisational culture of listening to children and young people as reflected in organisational plans and practices.
- Ensure that the inclusion of appropriate safeguarding arrangements is a key element of all commissioning, funding and partnership agreements.
- Represent the organisation's approach to safeguarding children and young people and communicate this approach to other organisations, as appropriate.
- Ensure that resources are available to support the delivery of the safeguarding action plan and to embed safeguarding within the organisation.

1.6.4 Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Officer

HSP will maintain both a Lead and a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO). The DSOs will:

- Lead the development and implementation of HSP's approach to safeguarding children and young people.
- Lead in maintaining and embedding the CPSU Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport.
- Provide a point of contact for and respond to any communications and/or concerns regarding safeguarding.
- Work with partners to maintain, develop and review policies and procedures for safeguarding in-line with national legislation and guidance
- Advise staff and volunteers on implementation of HSP safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Advise on development of and implementation of staff and volunteer training.

- Implement reporting procedures and maintain relevant records in line with organisational procedure, maintaining confidentiality as appropriate
- Represent the organisation's approach to safeguarding.
- Provide advice and support on safeguarding arrangements as a key part of all commissioning, funding and partnership agreements.
- Co-ordinate dissemination of policy, procedures and resources as appropriate.
- Provide advice and support to lead safeguarding officers within partner organisations in the county.
- Signpost individuals to sources of support during and following an incident, allegation or complaint.

1.6.5 Role and Responsibilities of Staff and volunteers

All staff will:

- Be aware of what is meant by safeguarding and be able to communicate this.
- Be alert to the risks to children or young people, particularly in relation to sport.
- Demonstrate awareness of HSP policies and procedures and how to apply these in practice.
- Report all concerns in line with the organisation's procedures.
- Ensure that safeguarding procedures are a key element of commissioning, funding and partnership agreements, where these are relevant.
- Represent the organisation's approach to safeguarding and protecting children and communicate this approach to partners.

1.6.6 Role and Responsibilities of the Board Safeguarding Champion

The HSP Board will nominate a member to be HSP's Board Safeguarding Champion, the Board Champion will:

- To support the Lead Safeguarding Officer and/or Deputy Safeguarding Officer(s) in their promotion and delivery of the HSP annual Safeguarding Implementation Plan.
- To receive from the Lead Safeguarding Officer regular reports on progress of the Implementation Plan and check and challenge.
- To present to the Board on any appropriate Safeguarding information (provided by DSO).

- To ensure that Safeguarding is included as a standing agenda item at Board meetings.
- To ensure that the Board takes safeguarding issues into consideration when making decisions.
- To help ensure all Board members are up to date with relevant safeguarding training.

Part 2 – Procedures

2.1 Recruitment, Deployment and Training of Staff and Volunteers

Introduction

It is vital that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and young people, having access to significant personal data, or being placed in a position of trust over such.

2.1.1 Staff recruitment

Recruitment procedures for HSP staff will fall in-line with [UH policy](#) and include:

- For eligible and/or required posts, an appropriate level Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. If these are not completed before employment commences then a risk assessment will be undertaken, and the necessary safeguards put in place. *
- A risk assessment undertaken on any positive disclosure or reference information.
- Two confidential references should be obtained, once permanent contracts are confirmed, including last employer, and questions asked regarding suitability to work with children/at-risk groups.
- References MUST be taken up and confirmed through direct contact e.g. Telephone.
- Personal identification should be requested e.g. valid passport or driving license with photo.

Recruitment adverts should reference the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and state requirement for DBS checking and references, if appropriate.

Note: It is an offense for an employer to employ a person to work with children and/or at-risk people who has been barred from doing so.

*For information regarding Criminal Records Bureau/Disclosure and Barring Service checks:
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service

2.1.2 Pre-employment Interview

Potential employees will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations of UH and HSP, including:

- A check that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures. Any gaps or inconsistencies in employment history should be identified.
- Any relevant qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified to the candidate.

2.1.3 Induction and training

It should be clearly recognised that pre-employment checks are only a part of the process. It is important that the recruitment and selection process is followed by a needs analysis as part of the induction process and then provision of appropriate training.

All staff will undergo an induction process a part of which will familiarise them with safeguarding policies, associated procedures and their specific responsibilities.

All staff are to be provided with opportunities to learn about how to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns. Assistance will be provided to ensure that individuals can access appropriate basic awareness course, such as the NSPCC and CPSU Safeguarding and Protecting Children course. All staff will undertake this training upon appointment, and it will need to be renewed at least every two years.

Any members of staff whose role specifically requires working with children and young people may need to undertake additional training, including training provided by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.

HSP Designated Safeguarding Officers will attend relevant training and networks for Active Partnership safeguarding leads identified by Sport England, the CPSU, Ann Craft Trust, plus any other relevant safeguarding training deemed required and appropriate.

Training and/or written guidance on safer recruitment practice will be provided for those responsible for recruiting, selecting and deploying staff and volunteers. Training should also include guidance and help for staff and volunteers to recognise additional vulnerability of some people based around:

- Race
- Gender
- Age
- Religion
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Social background
- Culture
- Mental Health

2.1.4 Code of Conduct

HSP have developed an [internal code of conduct](#), which all staff must adhere to. The code of conduct is issued to all staff on appointment.

2.1.5 Monitoring and review

A record will be kept of relevant staff training and required DBS checks etc. This will be reviewed as part of the annual safeguarding review.

Any training or checking needs that are identified will be reported to the individual's line manager for implementation.

2.1.6 Partnership working

HSP often work with external providers to deliver elements of funded programmes. As part of this, any service level or funding agreements will require the funded organisation/activity to have safeguarding policies and procedures in place. This will be collated and evidenced as part of any application or tender process and will ensure that the organisations to monitor and review process and provide opportunities to gain feedback on safeguarding from children and young people, parents/carers and other stakeholders. Risk assessments will be provided along with a detailed understanding of the organisation/venues procedures to be followed in the event of an incident being reported.

2.2 Recognition of Abuse and Poor Practice

Introduction

The term 'abuse' generally covers physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect. Even for those experienced in working with abuse, it is still not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may be occurring. Staff and volunteers working within sporting activities or events are not expected to be experts at

recognising abuse. They do, however, still have a responsibility to report any concerns about the safety and welfare of vulnerable people, or about any individual who may pose a threat to vulnerable people.

Poor practice is behavior that fails to follow codes of conduct, ethics, or sometimes just common sense. Often this may not be a deliberate action and/or constitute abuse, as such, but it is still an issue that needs to be addressed as it could have a detrimental effect on another person. Concerns about poor practice should be reported in the same way as abuse.

2.2.1 Abuse

Abuse refers to the use or treatment of something (person, item, substance, concept, idea, or vocabulary) that is harmful. It can be classed by target or type of abuse.

Abuse is a serious term and often conjures up images of physical harm and physical evidence like bruising, cuts, abrasions, fractures etc. But harm can be caused in many different, often quite subtle ways e.g.:

- Using stereotypes and degrading language
- Using overfamiliar or inappropriate terms
- Undermining someone's confidence
- Ignoring their wishes
- Poking fun at the conditions some people live with
- Treating people by their condition and not as individuals living with a condition
- Restricting an individual's liberty or choices
- Making decisions for someone without their knowledge/permission

Individuals may be abused by the infliction of harm or the failure to act to prevent harm. Abuse can occur within the family, community or an institutional setting. Abuse can also take place through various communication mediums. Victims of abuse are more commonly abused by people they know. The abuser can be an adult or a child and can occur within any social group. Victims of abuse frequently suffer more than one category of abuse.

2.2.2 Neglect

For children, neglect can be described as: *the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of health or development.*

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve:

- Not providing adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Not protecting from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Not ensuring adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers).
- Not ensuring access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

2.2.3 Physical abuse

Physical abuse is the non-accidental infliction of physical force that results (or could result) in bodily injury, pain or impairment. Examples include:

- An inflicted physical injury, which is not satisfactorily explained.
- An injury where there is knowledge or suspicion that it was inflicted intentionally or through lack of care.
- Assaults on the body including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking resulting in injuries such as burns, abrasions, fractures, dislocation, welts, wounds or marks of physical restraint.
- Misuse of medication or medical process.
- Inappropriate restraint or inappropriate actions or inactions.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child or vulnerable person.

Within sport, physical abuse can potentially occur where the nature and intensity of training and competition exceeds the capacity of the individual's ability to positively adapt and where drugs are used to delay puberty or enhance performance.

Some possible indicators of physical abuse are:

- Multiple bruising that is inconsistent with the explanation given.
- Bruising in uncommon areas, such as back of legs, mouth, cheeks, stomach, chest, under the arm.
- Abrasions, especially to neck, wrists and/or ankles.
- Grasp, hand or finger marks.
- Unexplained burns or scalds.

- Hair loss in one area, scalp sore to touch.
- Frequent 'minor accidents' without seeking medical help.
- Unusually sleepy or docile.
- Unexplained fractures.
- Cowering and flinching.
- Self-harm, emotional distress, low self-esteem.

2.2.4 Sexual abuse

Direct or indirect involvement in sexual activity without consent. This could also be through inability to consent, or by pressurization/inducement to consent or take part. (See the Sexual Offences Act 2003).

Examples include:

- Rape
- Indecent assault
- Indecent exposure
- Exposure to inappropriate sexual behavior or images/material
- Inducement to take part in inappropriate sexual behavior.

Sport often places individuals in positions of authority and influence over others. A significant potential exists for abuse of these positions of trust. It is known that abusers gravitate towards roles that provide opportunities over vulnerable people and sport has often been a conduit for abuse. Awareness of the threat and appropriate action to ensure the safety of people at risk in sports settings is inherent on all individuals and agencies within sport.

2.2.5 Emotional abuse

Acts or behavior which impinges on the emotional health of, or which causes distress or anguish to, individuals. This may also be present in other forms of abuse

Examples include:

- Threats of harm or abandonment.
- Humiliation, shaming or ridicule.
- Harassment, bullying, intimidation.
- Control or coercion.
- Deprivation of choice or privacy.

- Deliberate social isolation,
- Infantilisation (The prolonged treatment of one who has a mental capacity greater than that of a child as though they are a child).

2.2.6 Bullying

In some cases of abuse, it may not be an adult that is the abuser. It could be that the abuser is another child or young person, for example, in common cases of bullying. Bullying may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Although anyone can be the target of bullying, victims are usually picked-on because of their vulnerable position in relation to the bully. This can be social or organisational standing, shyness, sensitivity, insecurity etc. Sometimes victims are singled-out for physical reasons – being, physically smaller, less competent at skills, overweight, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture.

Research shows that bullying can and does occur where there is inadequate supervision – on the way to and from activities, at sporting events and in changing rooms etc.

2.2.7 Online Abuse

Online abuse is any type of abuse, exploitation, or harm that happens to a child or young person through the internet or digital technology.

It is a serious safeguarding concern because it can happen anywhere, at any time, and often in private, making it harder to detect. Children can be targeted anonymously and quickly and often abuse can happen without parents or carers knowing. Key Forms of Online Abuse include:

- **Online Grooming** – When someone (often pretending to be younger) builds a relationship with a child online to gain their trust, then manipulates or exploits them for sexual, criminal, or other harmful purposes.
- **Sexual Abuse / Exploitation** – Encouraging or forcing a child to send nude or sexual images (sexting), Asking for explicit videos or live streaming or sharing or threatening to share indecent images

- **Cyberbullying** – Bullying using social media, messaging apps, or gaming platforms, includes harassment, threats, exclusion, name-calling, or spreading rumours online.
- **Emotional Abuse / Manipulation** – Controlling, gaslighting, or manipulating a child through constant messaging or monitoring.
- **Online Radicalisation** – Trying to groom or persuade a child into extremist beliefs or violence via online forums, videos, or messages.
- **Financial Exploitation** – Pressuring or tricking children into sharing bank details, spending money, or engaging in "get-rich-quick" scams.

Online abuse is most commonly found on;

- Social media (e.g. Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok)
- Messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp)
- Gaming platforms (e.g. Roblox, Fortnite, Xbox Live)
- Livestreaming sites (e.g. YouTube)
- Online forums or chat rooms (e.g. Discord)

2.2.8 County Lines and Child Sexual Exploitation

County lines is a term used in the UK to describe a form of criminal exploitation where drug gangs from urban areas expand their operations into smaller towns and rural areas, using dedicated mobile phone lines (the "lines") to sell drugs. Gangs groom and exploit children (sometimes as young as 11) to transport and sell drugs. Signs of County Lines Exploitation may include:

- A child going missing from school or home and traveling to far-off areas.
- Sudden acquisition of expensive items (phones, clothes, money).
- Increased secrecy, new friendships with older people.
- Multiple strangers visiting a home at odd hours (cuckooing).
- Unexplained injuries or withdrawal from family/friends.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a serious form of child sexual abuse where an adult or older person takes advantage of a child or young person for sexual purposes—often in exchange for something the child wants or needs, like attention, money, gifts, alcohol, or drugs.

CSE happens when a child or young person under 18 is manipulated, deceived, pressured, or forced into sexual activity, often by someone who gains their trust

first (this is known as grooming). Even if a child “agrees” or doesn’t realise what’s happening, it’s still exploitation—because they’re being taken advantage of.

Examples of CSE:

- An older person gives a child gifts or money in return for sexual acts.
- A young person is groomed online via social media or gaming platforms and persuaded to send explicit photos or videos.
- A child is taken to parties, given drugs or alcohol, and then pressured into sex.
- A group of adults share or pass around a child for sexual purposes (gang exploitation).

2.2.9 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Honour Based Violence (HBV)

FGM stands for **Female Genital Mutilation**.

It refers to all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons, and it's internationally recognized as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. There are four types of FGM, ranging from clitoridectomy (removal of the clitoris) to infibulation (sealing of the vaginal opening).

Often carried out for cultural, religious, or social reasons within families or communities and is wrongly believed to ensure purity, virginity, or suitability for marriage.

FGM is illegal in many countries, including the UK (under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 and the Serious Crime Act 2015). It’s also illegal to take someone abroad to have it done (known as FGM vacation cutting).

FGM is considered child abuse in the UK and must be reported.

Honour-Based Violence refers to violent acts committed to protect or defend the "honour" of a family or community. Victims are usually women and girls, but men can be affected too. Often it occurs when families or communities believe that someone has brought shame through their behaviour (e.g. refusing an arranged marriage, dating someone from a different culture/religion, dressing "inappropriately"). It may involve:

- Physical violence
- Emotional abuse
- Forced marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Threats or even murder

Forced marriage is illegal in the UK and many other countries. A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both people do not (or cannot) give their full and free consent, and pressure or abuse is used to make it happen. This is very different from an arranged marriage, where both people choose to marry with full consent.

2.3 Responding to Concerns

Introduction

It is not the responsibility of those working or volunteering in sport to individually decide whether abuse or poor practice is occurring. However, wherever there is a genuine concern, it should be treated seriously and acted upon.

The extremely sensitive nature of issues regarding abuse should be understood by all along with the need for appropriate confidentiality.

Concerns about possible abuse can arise through:

- a direct **disclosure** of poor practice/abuse
- an **allegation** of poor practice/abuse by a third party
- a **suspicion** that poor practice/abuse may have taken place based on other signs or indicators.

If an individual indicates that they may be being abused or information or observations made give rise to concerns, the response should be immediate. The procedures which have been developed to deal with allegations of suspicions about abuse are based on the fundamental principle that the welfare of children and young people is paramount. (See flowchart located in Appendix one for dealing with concerns).

Whistleblowing is the act of reporting concerns about unsafe practices, abuse, neglect, or misconduct within an organisation to someone who can take action—especially when normal reporting channels have failed or the concern involves colleagues, management, or leadership.

2.3.1 General Response

Immediate action should be taken if concerns arise about the safety and welfare of a young person within their family or the community (e.g. at home, school, sports clubs etc.). If the child or young person reports (discloses) this directly, the person receiving the information should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten or deter the informer.
- listen carefully to all the information that is disclosed.
- Reassure the discloser that they are not to blame and were right to tell, but that the disclosure cannot be kept secret (by law) and must be reported to the proper people.
- Where appropriate, ask open questions to establish clarity of what is being said whilst taking great care not to ask leading questions and not pry into intimate details, ensuring the discloser does not feel they are being interrogated.
- Ensure the safety of the person – if they need immediate medical treatment, call an ambulance and inform that a child protection issue is suspected. Professional medical services should know how to respond appropriately.
- Reassure the child or young person but not make promises of confidentiality which might not be feasible in the light of any subsequent developments.
- not contact parents or carers until professional advice is sought from Social Care Services.

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported as soon as possible at which point the procedures detailed within this policy should be followed.

2.3.2 Sharing Concerns with Parents or Carers

Hertfordshire Children's Social Care outline parental consent should be gained prior to making a referral. However, there are some circumstances where a child or young person may be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared (e.g. where a parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). If unsure whether to discuss concerns or an incident with the parent/carers then contact Hertfordshire Social Care (see section 1.5). The NSPCC/CPSU are both also contactable for advice concerning children

and young people. Further information on gaining parental consent can be found on [Hertfordshire Children's Social Care webpage's](#).

2.3.3 HSP Staff Response to a Disclosure, Complaint or Concern

Any staff member who receives a disclosure, complaint, or concern should report to the HSP Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) or Deputy DSO as soon as possible:

The DSO will take action to forward the details to the relevant professional body.

If the DSO or Deputy cannot be contacted and there is immediate concern, contact should be made directly with Hertfordshire Children's Social Care (see section 1.5), or where immediate risk of harm is suspected, contact the police.

The next steps are as follows:

- A report form should be completed either alongside the DSO or passed to the DSO as soon as possible.
- The DSO will contact the appropriate parties or professional bodies (Police, Social Care, LADO Service, sport's Governing Body).
- The DSO will record the details of the response.
- Where a report has been made, written or verbal, to a professional body, the DSO will follow-up to confirm that the information has been received (record this).
- Where advice is given to a third party to contact statutory services, the DSO should also follow-up to confirm what action has been taken by the third party.

2.3.4 Responding to a Child/Young Person making a disclosure

All disclosures from a child or young person will be documented and every care will be taken to support them in accessing relevant support. Where appropriate, they will be sign posted to local support services.

2.3.5 Confidentiality and Storage of Information

Any confidential information must be stored securely. Confidentiality should be maintained for all concerned and access limited to designated people, in accordance with the 2018 Data Protection Act and GDPR. Information should only be passed-on on a need-to-know basis. The people designated to receive information are:

- HSP Designated Safeguarding Officers.
- Appropriate social care personnel.

- The Police.
- The parents of any child who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)*.

***Seek professional advice from Hertfordshire Social Care on who should approach the alleged abuser.**

2.3.4 Responding to Suspensions about Staff

Staff, for this purpose, includes anyone working on behalf of HSP in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Having reviewed the situation, the DSO will discuss with the Deputy DSO (and if required with statutory agencies) and will make a decision as to whether the matter should be referred for external investigation to Social Services or if the incident can be dealt with internally e.g. a failure to observe good practice. The DSO should avoid making a decision alone.

2.3.5 Responding to Allegations Against Staff

The following steps should be followed when an allegation is made against a HSP member of staff:

- Concerns should be reported to the DSO and an Incident Report Form completed.
- Any allegation which may be related to a staff member must be reported immediately by the DSO to the UH Human Resources Business Partner and the Partnership Director. If the allegation also concerns a child or young person, then the DSO will also notify the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours of receiving the concern. The LADO referral form can be accessed on the [Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership webpages](#).
- Where the concern is about an individual who is a volunteer and not an UH employee, the DSO should refer to the Social Services.
- The staff member may need to be suspended from work (without prejudice) whilst the matter is investigated according to the existing [disciplinary procedures](#) operated by UH. Any action will be taken in consultation with statutory agencies. Where this is deemed necessary, consideration should be given as to whether the accused is permitted to

access potentially incriminating evidence, or devices which may contain this.

- Suspension will not be automatic, and the decision will consider the relevant circumstances and advice from statutory agencies.
- The reinstatement of an individual will follow procedures operated by UH and HSP following the conclusion of any investigations (both internal and external) and an assessment of all available relevant information.

2.3.6 Support for the Reporter of Abuse

A variety of feelings and concerns may be generated by the discovery that a member of staff or a volunteer is, or may be, abusing another person and this may raise concerns amongst other staff and volunteers.

HSP will fully support all staff and protect anyone who in good faith and without malicious intent reports his or her concern about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a person may be being abused.

Details of disciplinary and grievance procedures are available through UH Human Resources. [UH Policies and Regulations](#), including the UH [Staff Disciplinary Policy](#), [Staff Grievance Procedures](#), [Whistleblowing Policy](#) are available on the UH website.

2.3.7 Types of Investigation

When there is a complaint of abuse or poor practice against a member of staff or volunteer, the following types of investigation may occur:

- Criminal; Police
- Safeguarding; Social Services/Police
- Internal; HSP, UH

It is also a possibility that civil proceedings could be initiated by the alleged victim, by their family, or indeed the person who has been accused.

2.3.8 Allegations of Previous Abuse

There are situations that may arise where an allegation of abuse is made some time after the event has happened, this may be months or on occasion even years. Where an allegation such as this is made the allegation should still be investigated because other people could potentially be at risk. Procedures for investigation etc. will remain the same.

2.3.9 Escalation of concern

If you've raised a safeguarding concern about a child and the response from Children's Social Care or the police is unsatisfactory, it's important to know that you are entitled—and professionally expected—to escalate your concerns.

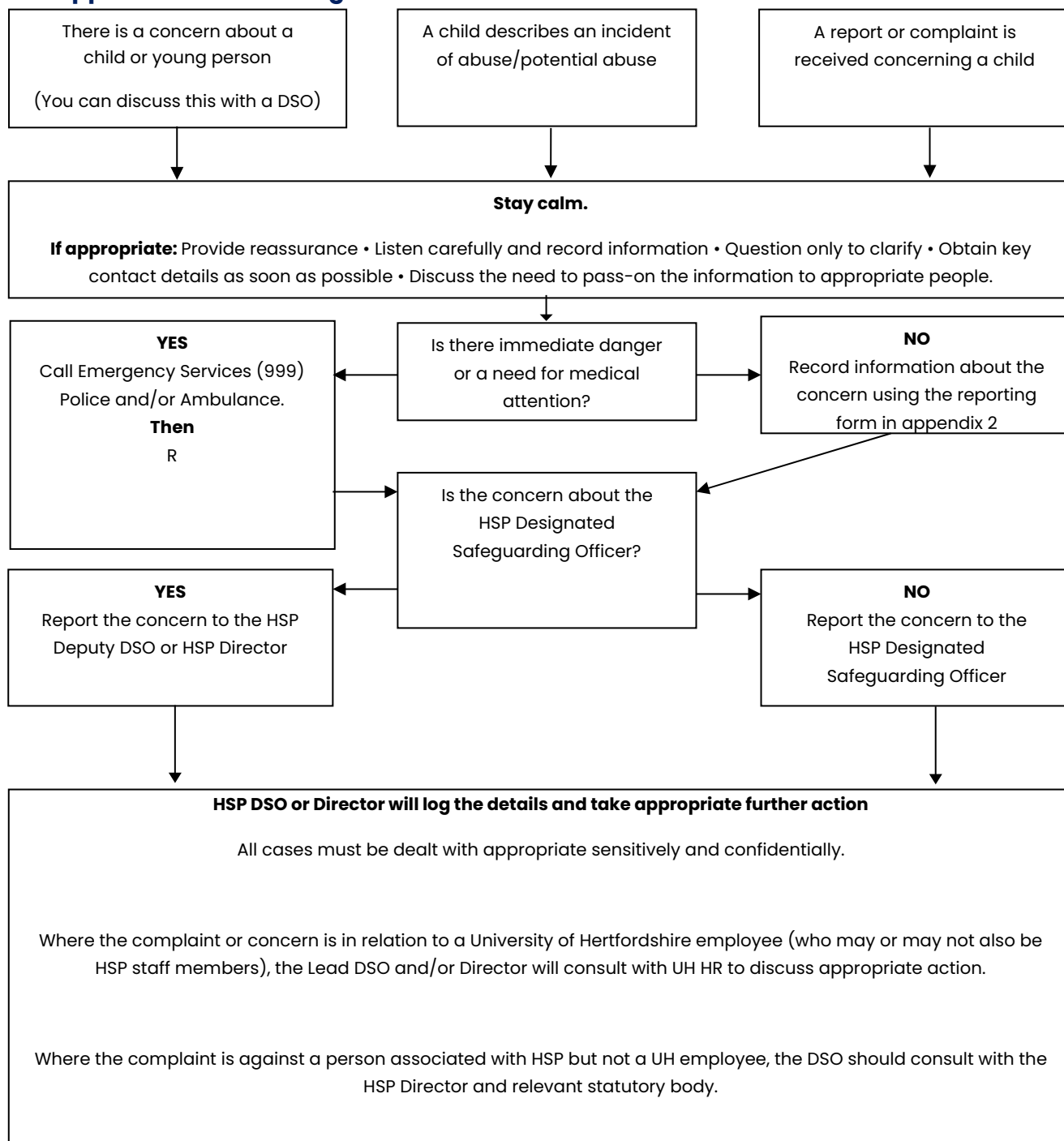
As a professional (or even as a member of the public), you have a duty to act in the child's best interests. If you believe a child is still at risk, you must not give up—even if your first referral is dismissed.

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership is responsible for multi-agency safeguarding and therefore staff would be required to search and follow the escalation or dispute resolution policy on their website, submitting concerns formally in writing to enable an investigation how the case was handled.

In the UK, whistleblowers are protected by law under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. You cannot be legally punished for raising genuine safeguarding concerns—even if they turn out to be wrong.

Appendices

Appendix One – Dealing with Concerns and Disclosure for HSP Staff



Appendix Two – Reporting Form

Caller/reporter's details:	
Name (<i>even if just first name</i>)	
Contact number	
Relationship to person(s) at risk	
Person(s) at risks details:	
Name	
Address	
Contact number	
Are they aware of your concern?	
Person suspected of committing the poor practice or abuse:	
Name	
Address/Location	
Relationship to person(s) at risk	
Are they aware of your concern?	
Details of concerns/incident:	
Questions to ask/paraphrase- <i>What has happened?</i> <i>Why are you concerned?</i> <i>When did this happen?</i> <i>Where?</i>	
Has anyone else been informed?	(who?):

Time of call/report:	Date of call/report:	Taken by:
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Appendix Three – University of Hertfordshire Policies

As the Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership is hosted by the University of Hertfordshire, all staff working for the Partnership are employed by the University of Hertfordshire. As such, HSP staff must comply with the University's organisational policies.

The University of Hertfordshire was created an independent Higher Education Corporation in 1989 under the terms of the Education Reform Act (1989). The institution achieved university status in 1992 under the provisions of the Further and Higher Education Act (1992).

The University operates in accordance with the terms of its Instrument and Articles of Government, as approved by the Privy Council. These determine the overarching governance framework within which the University functions and require it to establish a Board of Governors and Academic Board.

Access to all the University of Hertfordshire policies can be found on the Universities website: www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/governance/university-policies-and-regulations-uprs/uprs

The Universities policies most relevant to Safeguarding can be accessed below:

- [Anti-Bribery and Corruption](#)
- [Bullying and Harassment](#)
- [Complaints Policy \(non-staff\)](#)
- [Data Protection Policy and Privacy Statement](#)
- [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
- [IT and Computing Regulations](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Staff Disciplinary Policy](#)
- [Staff Grievance Procedures](#)
- [Whistleblowing Policy](#)

Appendix Four – CPSU Supporting Documents

Supporting documents are available for sports organisations on the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) website, covering issues such as:

- [Online safety & social media](#)
- [Codes of conduct](#)
- [Involving children and young people](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Away day trips](#)
- [Safeguarding at events](#)
- [Photography and videos](#)
- [Supervision ratios](#)
- [Safe use of changing facilities](#)

www.thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/

Appendix Five – Media Consent

On occasions photographs will be taken on behalf of the Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership, of children participating in sports activities. Photos taken in this official capacity should be used and stored in line the Data Protection Act 2018.

Prior to capturing any photos of children, permission to do so must be gained from a parent or guardian. Consent from parents for use of these photos or videos of children or young people must be captured on [HSP's Media Consent Form](#).

Appendix Six – Social Media Policy



The Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership

Social Media Policy

Overview

Social media offers the opportunity for people to gather in online communities of shared interest and create, share or consume content. As a public-facing organisation, the Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership (HSP) recognises the benefits of social media as an important tool of engagement, to communicate with and market promotions to our customers and partners.

It is important that the reputation of HSP, as well as its partners, is not tarnished in any way by anyone using social media tools inappropriately, particularly in relation to any content that directly references the Partnership.

When someone clearly identifies their association with HSP, or can easily be associated with the Partnership through their employment, in this type of open forum, they are expected to behave and express themselves appropriately and in a manner that is consistent with Herts Sport & Physical Activity Partnership Safeguarding Policies.

The purpose of this social media policy is to provide some guiding principles for HSP employees to follow when using social media. This policy does not apply to the personal use of social media platforms by HSP staff where no reference is made to HSP or any associated partners or projects within posts or material posted.

Scope

This policy applies to all HSP employees, casual, part-time and full-time.

This policy covers all forms of social media. Social media includes, but is not limited to, activities such as:

- Maintaining a profile page on social or business networking sites (such as LinkedIn, Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram etc)
- Content sharing including using sites such as Flickr (photo sharing) and YouTube (video sharing)
- Commenting on blogs for personal or business reasons
- Leaving product or service reviews on retailer sites or customer review sites.
- Taking part in online votes and polls

- Taking part in conversations on public and private web forums
- Editing a Wikipedia page

The intent of this policy is to include anything posted online where information is shared that might affect employees, partners or customers of HSP as an organisation and the reputation of both the organisation and partners associated therewith.

Guiding Principles

The web is not anonymous. Due to the unique nature of HSP as an organisation, the boundaries between personal and professional profiles and any associated opinions and comments can often be blurred. As such, it is essential when posting anything online HSP employees at all times consider their connection to HSP and, as such, their role as a representative of the organisation.

When using the internet for professional or personal pursuits, all HSP staff must respect the reputation of the organisation, its staff and our partners, following the guidelines in place to ensure that the intellectual property of both HSP and our partners is not compromised and the organisation is not brought into disrepute.

Usage

For all HSP staff using social media, such use:

- Must not contain, or link to, libellous, defamatory or harassing content – this also applies to the use of illustrations or nicknames.
- Must not comment on or publish information that is confidential in any way.
- Must not bring the HSP or any partners into disrepute.
- Must not be directly linked with any individuals aged 18 or below from a personal social networking account.
- Must not breach of HSP's Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Adults Policy or Code of Conduct for Staff.

Official HSP Social Networking Platforms

Prior to creating a new website, social networking page or forum that is in any way or can in any way be judged to be associated with the HSP, approval must first be granted by the Senior Leadership Team.

Similarly, appropriate permissions must be obtained for the use of logos or images. Images of children may not be replicated on any site without the permission of the child's parents and/or guardian. Parental permission should be gained using HSP's [Photo Content Form](#).

For official HSP Social Networking Platforms:

- Posts must not contain, nor link to, pornographic or indecent content.
- Some hosted sites may sell the right to advertise on their sites through “pop up” content, which may be of a questionable nature. This type of hosted site should not be used for online forum or social pages as the nature of “pop up” content cannot be controlled.
- HSP employees must not use official HSP pages to promote personal projects.
- All materials published or used must respect the copyright of third parties.

Consideration Towards Others When Using Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites allow photographs, videos and comments to be shared with thousands of other users. HSP staff must recognise that it may not be appropriate to share photographs, videos and comments in this way.

For example, there may be an expectation that photographs taken at private the HSP events will not appear publicly or on the internet. In certain situations, HSP staff could potentially breach the Data Protection Act or inadvertently make HSP liable for breach of copyright.

HSP staff should be considerate to others in such circumstances and should not post information when they have been asked not to or consent has not been sought and given. They must also remove information about another person should they be asked to do so.

Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about HSP, its staff or any partners.

Breach of Policy

HSP will continually monitor online activity in relation to the organisation. Detected breaches of this policy should be reported to the organisation via HSP’s Safeguarding procedures.

If detected, a breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action from HSP under the University of Hertfordshire procedures. A breach of this policy may also amount to breaches of other HSP documents and policies. Disciplinary action may involve a verbal or written warning or, in serious cases, termination of employment or engagement with the Partnership.

Consultation or Advice

This policy has been developed to provide guidance for HSP staff. HSP staff who are unsure of their rights, liabilities or actions online should contact the organisation’s Designated Safeguarding Officer, Tom Horey.

Useful contacts:

- The HSP Designated Safeguarding Officer, Louise Gallagher-Smith, Tel: 01707 284229. Email l.gallagher-smith@herts.ac.uk
- Safeguarding section of the HSP [website](#).
- NSPCC Child Protection 24-Hour Helpline 0808 800 5000
- Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) 0116 234 7278 / 7280
- Or by going direct to the Police and/or Children Services

External referrals can be made to Hertfordshire Children Services by telephone: 0300 123 4043.



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www.sportinherts.org.uk

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