

Safeguarding and
protecting children and
vulnerable adults in
athletics
Policy and Procedures
document.

22nd April 2009

Acknowledgments.

This guidance document has been developed by the Welfare and Safeguarding Panel.

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BOARD LEVEL APPROVAL

This document has been considered and approved by the Boards of UKA and the Home Countries as follows:-

UKA	May 2009
England Athletics	April 2009
Welsh Athletics	April 2009
Scottish Athletics	March 2009
Athletics Northern Ireland	TBC

Policy Objectives

Introduction

Everyone who takes part in athletics is entitled to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment. To ensure this Athletics in the UK which encompasses UK Athletics Limited, England Athletics Limited, Welsh Athletics Limited, Scottish Athletics Limited and Athletics Northern Ireland is committed to establishing and implementing policies and procedures to ensure a safe athletics environment.

Best practise in athletics benefits everyone- the sport's governing bodies, coaches and officials, teachers, parents, carers and athletes. Most importantly, it ensures that young people who choose to participate in athletics have a safe and fun experience.

Our objective is to build a safer future in athletics for all young people under the age of 18 years.(In Scotland this extends until the individual's 19th birthday).

Vulnerable adults are also at risk from abuse and guidance is contained in the document for those working with vulnerable adults. A vulnerable adult is defined in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland as a person over the age of 18 who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself from significant harm or exploitation. (Dept of Health 2000). In Scotland an adult at risk is defined as anyone aged 16 or over in certain circumstances. A "protected adult" is one in receipt of services, health community care or residential care.

All young people and vulnerable adults are entitled to a duty of care and to be protected from abuse. Abuse can occur anywhere. With over 250,000 children involved in athletics in the UK and 100,000 adults involved, the chances are very real that there are some individuals abusing their power over young people and vulnerable adults in athletics.

Athletics is committed to devising, implementing and updating policies and procedures to promote best practice when working with children and to ensure that everyone in the sport understands and accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means taking action to report any concerns about their welfare. It is not the responsibility of athletics to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, this is the domain of the child protection professionals.

1. Policy Statement

UK Athletics Limited, England Athletics Limited, Welsh Athletics Limited, Scottish Athletics Limited and Athletics Northern Ireland fully accept their legal and moral obligations to provide a duty of care, to protect all children and vulnerable adults and safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, impairment, gender, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity.

- The welfare of the child or vulnerable adult is paramount.

- All children and vulnerable adults 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.

In order to meet this obligation all athletics bodies will:-

- Provide and enforce procedures to safeguard the well being of all participants and protect them from abuse.
- Ensure all young people and vulnerable adults who take part in athletics are able to participate in a safe and fun environment.
- Respect and uphold the rights, wishes and feelings of young people, and/or vulnerable adults.
- Recruit, train and supervise their employees and volunteers to adopt best practise to safeguard and protect young people and vulnerable adults from abuse, and themselves from false allegations.
- Require staff/volunteers to adopt and abide by their Welfare Policy and Procedures, Codes of Conduct and the 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.

2. Terms and Abbreviations

CPLO Child Protection Lead Officer for UK Athletics or the nominated deputy.

CWO Club Welfare Officer

LSCB Local Safeguarding Children Board

CRB Criminal Record Bureau

CRBS Central Registered Body in Scotland

ISA Independent Safeguarding Authority (Vetting and Barring, England)

CPSU Child Protection in Sport Unit (NSPCC)

CPiS Child Protection in Sport Service in Scotland (Children 1st)

Vulnerable Adult



A vulnerable adult is defined as a person over the age of 18 (16 or over in Scotland) who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself from harm or exploitation. (Dept of Health 2000). Please also see www.scotland.gov.uk/resource/doc/1095/0059478

A vulnerable adult may be a person who

- Is elderly or frail
- Has learning disability
- Suffers from mental illness
- Has a physical disability
- Is a substance abuser
- Is homeless
- In an abusive relationship

It should be noted that disability or age alone does not signify that an adult is vulnerable.

3 Best Practice, Poor Practice and Abuse

Introduction

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.

This section will help you identify what is meant by best and poor practice and some of the indications of possible abuse. Guidance on what to do if you are concerned about poor practice or possible abuse is provided in Section 6.

Best Practice

Best practice means: -

- Being open and conducting all interactions with children and young people and vulnerable adults in a public place and with appropriate consent.
- Avoiding situations where you are alone with one athlete except where this involves an elite athlete and where full consent and emergency contact details have been provided.
- If you have to meet or coach one athlete ensure it is conducted in an open environment.

- If you are travelling alone with a young person or vulnerable adult, gain appropriate consent, avoid consistently having one child or vulnerable adult alone with you in the car and never sharing a room on your own with a child, young athlete, or vulnerable adult.
- Challenging bullying, 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 and vulnerable adults. 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.

Adopting best practice not only ensures the individuals welfare, it also protects you from possible wrongful allegations. Children and vulnerable adults very rarely make false allegations. If they do it is usually because they are confused or covering up for someone else's behaviour and hoping their action might scare the real abuser into stopping.

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 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 young athletes away to a weekend event on their own.

This list 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.

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

Abuse

Abuse can occur wherever there are young people or vulnerable adults.

There are four main types of abuse:

- Physical abuse. This includes being hit, kicked, shaken or punched, or given harmful drugs or alcohol.
- Emotional abuse. This is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a individual's emotional development. This includes being called names, being threatened or being made to feel worthless
- Sexual abuse. This is where children and/or vulnerable adults are used by adults or other children to meet their own sexual needs. This includes being touched inappropriately or where the individual feels threatened or uncomfortable, sexual innuendo, being asked or forced to have sex or being exposed to images of a sexual nature.
- Neglect. This is when an individual is not looked after properly, including having no place to stay, or not enough food to eat, or clothes to keep them warm. It also includes when a child's or vulnerable adults safety is not considered or medical attention is not sought immediately when it is required.

Bullying and racism are also forms of abuse. Bullying is deliberate harmful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time. It includes hitting, threatening violence, taking property or name calling and deliberately humiliating or ignoring the person. Bullying between children typically takes place when adults are not present, such as in a changing room or on the way to or from a meeting. Racist behaviour may take the form of bullying when references are made to ethnic origin, skin colour or religious belief.

4 Recruitment, selection and training.

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working in athletics, especially with young people and vulnerable adults.

Recruitment

Advertising will reflect:



- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults and welfare policy
- The responsibility of the role
- The level of experience or qualifications required
- A positive stance on all aspects of welfare and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

Application

All applicants must complete an application form that includes:

- Name and address
- National Insurance number to confirm identity and right to work.
- Relevant experience, qualifications and training undertaken.
- Listing of past career or involvement in sport (to confirm experience and identify any gaps)
- All applicants who have or are seeking to undertake a role or responsibility in relation to children and young people (regulated position) in Athletics must complete a self declaration form to establish whether they are known to any Children's Social Care (social services) as being an actual or potential risk to children or young people or vulnerable adult or whether they have ever had action taken against them (criminal/civil/disciplinary) that might indicate that they are unsuitable to work with or have responsibility for children and young people. This should be considered the first step in safeguarding.
- All applicants who have or are seeking to undertake a role and responsibility in relation to children and young people(regulated position) in Athletics must complete a criminal record check(enhanced level CRB, Disclosure Scotland or Access Northern Ireland)Please refer to the separate advice on criminal record checks. Clubs should remember that these procedures should be applied to 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)
- From July 2010, as part of the implementation of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, all individuals in England and Wales who have regular or intensive contact with children and/or vulnerable adults must in addition to the criminal record check be a member of the Independent Safeguarding Authority(ISA). Separate guidance is available on how to apply.



- A minimum of two written references will be taken up. Where the applicant is to work with children and/or vulnerable adults at least one reference will be associated with former work with children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Referees(not relatives) should provide written references that comment on the applicant's previous experience of, and suitability for, working with children and young people or vulnerable adults and permission to clarify information with referees. Ideally one reference should be from paid employment or education and the other reference should be in a sporting capacity, ideally in a role similar to the one they are applying for. If an applicant has no experience of working with children and/or vulnerable adults then they will be given appropriate and valid training.
- Any former involvement with athletics.

Recruitment selection and induction of volunteers.

Interviews and induction

Where formal interviews are used they will be conducted according to accepted good practice in human resource management. All staff will undergo a formal or informal induction process in which they complete a profile to identify training needs and aspirations.

Training

All staff and volunteers who work with children and/or vulnerable adults will be expected to undertake relevant training on a three yearly basis in child /vulnerable adult safeguarding procedures, procedures for taking children and young people away and sources of education and training. For all coaches and volunteers with roles in relation to children and young people this should include attendance at a recognised direct delivery safeguarding workshop (e.g. SpotscoachUK Safeguarding and Protecting Children' workshop/ LSCB basis awareness workshops)

The SafeSportAway booklet gives advice on trips away and a link is available on the website, this is a relevant aide memoire and means of updating.

Monitoring and appraisal

All staff should be given the opportunity to receive regular feedback through observed practice, appraisal or informal feedback to identify training needs and to set goals. 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.

Complaints Appeals and Disciplinary procedures

UKA and the National Governing bodies have disciplinary and appeals procedures, which are available as separate documents in this manual.



UKA also licence coaches and officials under a specific licensing scheme with their own Terms and Conditions. The documents relevant to licence application, disciplinary and appeal procedures are available as separate documents within the manual.

5 Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations

Introduction

While it is not the responsibility of UKA, the Home Countries, volunteers or club members to decide whether a concern constitutes abuse, it is their responsibility to report any concerns about the welfare of a child and/or vulnerable adult. These concerns may arise due to:

- An individual disclosing that they are being abused.
- The behaviour of an adult towards a child or vulnerable adult.
- A number of indicators observed in a child or vulnerable adult over a period of time.

How to respond to a disclosure

Don't

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

Safeguarding Children, Vulnerable Adults and 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,

- UKA has trained an employee to act as the designated child protection lead officer (CPLO). This role incorporates safeguarding vulnerable adults.
- The home countries have identified staff members with responsibility to act as child protection, safeguarding vulnerable adult's officers.
- To achieve Clubmark affiliated clubs are required to train and appoint a designated club member to become the Club Welfare Officer (CWO)
- All other affiliated clubs are recommended to comply with the guidance contained in this document.

A job and person specification for the role of Club Welfare Officer is available as a separate document within the manual.

Reporting procedures

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

If you are part of an affiliated club, you should immediately inform the club's designated Club Welfare Officer (CWO) who will refer the matter to UKA's CPLO or Home Country lead welfare officer. Where there is no CWO, the CPLO should be contacted directly.

If you work in schools in England or Wales as part of a school club link, school curriculum or an extra- curricular basis, you should inform the head teacher or the Local Authority designated Officer(LADO) who can be contacted via Children's Social Care who will follow normal Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures. In Scotland, Local Authority procedures will be applicable.

If you are working in a local authority facility, you should inform the LA Sports Development Officer or the manager of the facility or the LADO who will follow LSCB or Local Authority procedures.

In any other situation or if the designated person is not available, if the concern is about that person or no action is taken, you should contact the UKA CPLO.

If UKA CPLO nominated deputy or Home Country CPO is unavailable, you should take responsibility and seek advice from either the NSPCC helpline (0808 800 5000), Children 1st (0141 418 5674) in Scotland the duty officer at local children services department or the local police child protection unit. Telephone numbers are in the local telephone directory and should be in your club welfare policy. Any concerns regarding vulnerable adults should be referred to the appropriate adult services for the area. As soon as possible also inform the UKA CPLO and explain the action taken to date.

A summary of the reporting procedures is provided in a flow chart format.

Where there is a complaint of abuse against an employee or volunteer there may be three types of investigation:

- Criminal: in which case the police are immediately involved
- Child protection & Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults: 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 their 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 in an approved format for up to three years at least.

Dealing with Concerns and Allegations

While UKA CPLO and CWOs will have received training they are not child protection or safeguarding vulnerable adults experts and 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 within athletics 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:

- UKA CPLO will refer the allegation to the appropriate social care services 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 services department. The appropriate adults will be contacted if the allegation involves a vulnerable adult.
- UKA CPLO will also notify the Chief Executive who will decide who should deal with any media enquires.
- UKA CPLO and/or the Chief Executive can impose an interim suspension based on the risk to the child or vulnerable adult, 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 or vulnerable adults.
- 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/ vulnerable adult 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 and/or vulnerable adults. These decisions will be dealt with by the Independent Safeguarding Authority for England, Wales and 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. The Protection of Children (Scotland) Act (2003) and the Protection of Vulnerable Groups are applicable in Scotland.

Poor Practice

If the allegations are against an employee or 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.

Dealing with Bullying

The same procedures should be adopted when dealing with allegations of bullying. For specific actions to prevent and deal with bullying please refer to the separate bullying policy document.

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 contained within the web based manual and easily available on the UKA website under welfare.

Records and Confidentiality

You should 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/vulnerable adult'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. describe the behaviour and emotional state of the alleged victim, and note any marks, bruising or other injuries.
- The child's/vulnerable adult'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 in a secure cabinet at UKA offices in line with data protection laws with access available only to UKA Chief Executive and UKA Welfare staff.

Support for Victim, Accused and Reporter

UKA and the home countries 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 and/or vulnerable adult.

They will take appropriate steps to ensure that the victim (and parents, appropriate adults) is provided with appropriate professional support (e.g. Help lines, support groups and the Counselling Directory).

They will also ensure through the appropriate allegation, disciplinary and appeals procedures that the accused is offered appropriate support.



You witness, suspect or are told about possible abuse in an athletics setting.

Is a child/vulnerable adult in immediate danger or in need of medical attention?

NO

Is there a trained Welfare Officer available

YES

Seek appropriate medical advice. Inform doctor or paramedic that the matter relates to child protection

NO

YES
Refer to Welfare Officer at nearest available point

Refer immediately to Children's Social Care (social services) and/or Police **and** Notify HC/UKA Welfare Officers. Keep a detailed record at each stage and send a copy to

Above agencies will share information, notify appropriate organisations and individuals and conduct investigations.

Case Management Group (CMG) will consider the case immediately if the concern does not satisfy statutory thresholds for taking further action or Athletics' procedures will be suspended pending the outcome of any statutory investigation and processes. Irrespective of the outcome of any criminal or civil or child protection investigation the CMG will consider the need for disciplinary action/sanctions.

An appeal may be placed by the person in question

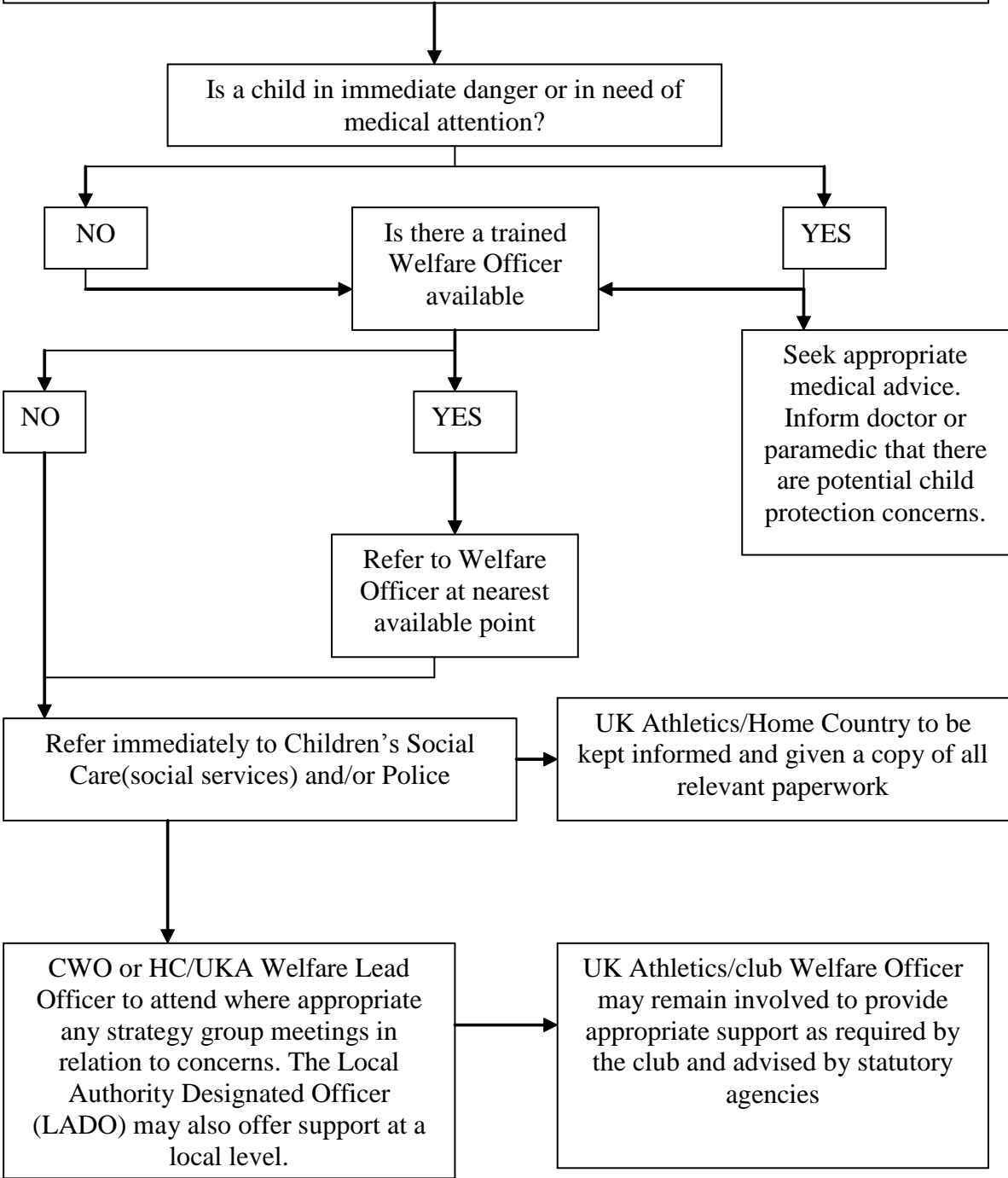
Notification to relevant agencies and enforcement, including Independent Safeguarding Authority for possible barring

Outcome 1
Appeal dismissed (sanction remains)

Outcome 2
Appeal allowed or allowed in part (sanction may be removed or altered)

**Please ensure that you complete an incident report form and keep complete records at every stage of your involvement.
Please forward a COPY of all documentation to UKA and Home Country Lead Welfare Officers**

You become aware of possible abuse in a setting outside Athletics



Please ensure that you complete an incident report form and keep complete records at every stage of your involvement.

Please forward a COPY of all documentation to UKA and Home Country Lead Welfare Officers

You witness, suspect or are told about concerns relating to poor practice within an athletics setting

Refer to Welfare Officer at closest point (club and Home Country Welfare Officer)

The case will be considered by the HC Welfare Officer and may be managed at club level with support.

Seek appropriate medical advice. Inform doctor or paramedic that the matter relates to child protection

Outcome 1
Conclusion of investigation
No case to answer

Outcome 2
Non disciplinary – situation requires retraining, mentoring or arbitration

Outcome 3
Disciplinary – Referred to UKA CMG for consideration of an investigation

UK Athletics/Home Country Decision – Sanction where appropriate

An appeal may be placed by the person in question

Outcome 1
Conclusion of hearing:
Appeal dismissed

Outcome 2
Appeal allowed (in part),
sanction removed in part

Notification to relevant statutory agencies and enforcement

**Please ensure that you complete an incident report form and keep complete records at every stage of your involvement.
Please forward a COPY of all documentation to UKA and Home Country Lead Welfare Officers**

Your name and contact details: _____
Your position: _____
Your knowledge of and relationship to the child/young person/vulnerable adult:
Child's/young person's/vulnerable adult's name: _____
Child's/young person's/vulnerable adult's address: _____
Child's/young person's/vulnerable adult's date of birth: _____
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 or young person's or vulnerable adult's emotional state etc): NB Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
Exactly what the child/young person/vulnerable adult said and what you said (Remember, do not lead the child or young person – record actual details. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary):
Actions Taken so far:
External agencies contacted:

Police Yes No If yes, which: _____

Date and time: _____

Name and Contact number: _____

Details of advice received: _____

Children’s Social Care Yes No If yes, which: _____

Or Local Authority Designated Officer

Date and time: _____

Name and Contact number: _____

Details of advice received: _____

UKA LCPO Yes No If yes, which department: _____

Date and time: _____

Name Role and Contact number: _____

Details of advice received: _____

Other (e.g. **NSPCC, Children 1st**) Yes No If yes, which: _____

Date and time: _____

Name and Contact number: _____

Details of advice received: _____

Print name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Remember to maintain confidentiality (on a need to know basis)-only share if it will protect the child. Do not discuss the incident with anyone other than those who need to know.

A copy of this form must be sent to: Athletics Welfare, PO Box 332, Sale. M33 6XL

Email: childprotection@uka.org.uk Telephone: 0161 223 4246.