



Athlete Welfare Toolkit

Making the decision to report a coach, official, volunteer, or fellow athlete can be a daunting and emotional task. This toolkit has been made by athletes, for athletes, to make the reporting system as open, supportive, and clear as possible, so that you know what to expect.

This toolkit will take you through the steps to reporting, who can support you and where you can go for guidance.

Contents:

- Know the signs
- What happens when I report?
- Who can I talk to?
- Victim Blaming
- Where to get help



Know the signs- Is this abuse?

What does harassment, abuse or assault mean, and how do we spot the signs?

Signs to look for from adults

Refusing to allow an athlete privacy or to make their own decisions about personal matters

Treat a particular athlete as a favourite, making them feel 'special' compared with others

Insist on physical affection such as kissing, hugging, tickling etc even if the athlete does not want it

Picking on a particular athlete, talking about them negatively with the rest of the training group

Are overly interested in the sexual development of a child or teenage athlete

Discuss or share sexual jokes or materials with an athlete online or offline

Insist on time alone with an athlete with no interruptions

Buy the athlete expensive gifts or gives them money for no apparent reason

Signs of abuse are not always obvious, and one of these signs on its own does not necessarily mean that abuse is happening, but you should be aware of the signs.

Every warning sign and every concern should be taken seriously and can be reported.



Know the signs- Is this abuse?

What does harrassment, abuse or assult mean, and how do we spot the signs?

Signs to look for from athletes

Suddenly having nightmares or other sleeping problems

Outbursts of anger, being very defensive

Becoming withdrawn or very clingy

Changes in eating habits

Personality changes or suddenly seeming insecure

Becoming secretive

Regressing to younger behaviours

Having unexplained gifts such as toys, money, mobile phones, expensive clothes

Unaccountable fear of particular places or people

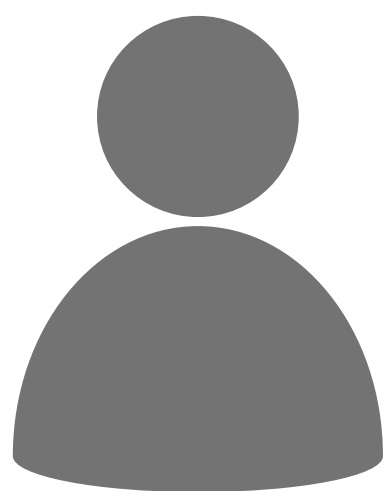
The child athlete acting in a sexual way with toys or objects



There are many reasons why an athlete's behaviour may change, but it is best practice to check for these signs. If you notice a combination of these warning signs, it is time to seek help and advice.

You do not need to wait for 'proof' to report a concern- you should talk to someone you trust if you are worried about something.

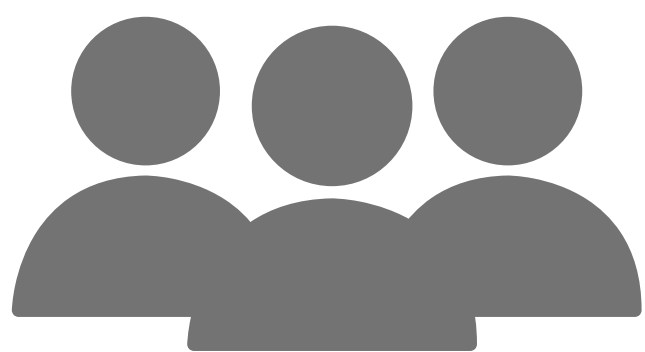
What happens if I decide to report?



Once you have alerted your sport's welfare officer or a member of staff, you can expect a safe guarding, welfare, or case management officer to get in touch with you. This individual will be a trained in the safeguarding procedures and is there to support you throughout the reporting process.



Although you may have briefly explained why you are reporting an individual in your initial reporting, you should not be asked to complete a written statement at any time, especially unsupported. If you are asked to write a statement, you should question whether this is appropriate, and if there is another way you could communicate your experience.



If the officer needs more information from you, you will likely be invited to an interview where you will be asked some questions about your experience. This should not be an interrogation, and you should be supported at all times.



At this point, the officer will decide whether or not to conduct a full investigation which will mean the accused is temporarily suspended while the investigation is underway

At the end of the investigation period, the case management officer will collate the information and present the findings to an independent case management committee.



During the investigation you will have the opportunity to reach out for help from professionals to support you during this time. The process may take up to 6 months while the welfare officer conducts interviews.

Who can I talk to?

Talking can really help you process your own experience and help you understand what has happened. Consider reaching out to professionals as well as family and loved ones.



Wales

Welfare Officer: Steve Jones safeguardingandwelfare@welshathletics.org



Scotland

Stewart McMillan stewart.mcmillan@scottishathletics.org.uk

Angie Sutherland welfare@scottishathletics.org.uk



Northern Ireland

Allister Woods: welfare@athleticsni.org



England

Emma Davenport: welfare@englandathletics.org



**BRITISH
ATHLETICS**

Angus Macdonald- Safeguarding Lead
Sue Wilson- Safeguarding Case Officer
Sam Green- Safeguarding Case Officer
safeguarding@uka.org.uk

MyConcern- Online Reporting Form

MyConcern has been created by child protection and safeguarding professionals, relentless in their efforts to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe from harm.

MyConcern is a simple to use, safe and secure software for recording and managing all safeguarding concerns in any setting.

This system can be used to submit a safeguarding concern by clubs, athletes, coaches, parents or any other individual.

You can find the online form here:

<https://www.uka.org.uk/submit-a-concern/>

What is victim blaming?

In the context of sexual assault, victim blaming is the idea that the incident is the victims fault and are responsible for what happened rather than blaming the perpetrator.

Victim blaming is problematic. It not only discourages survivors from coming forward to share their stories for fear of being blamed, but by blaming survivors, people are actively shifting focus away from holding predators accountable.

"But look at what they are wearing, what did they expect?"

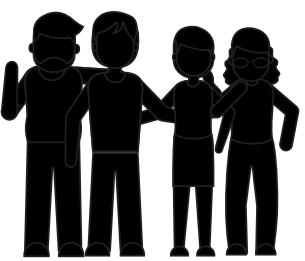
'Why didn't they fight back?'

"Why didn't they say something sooner?"

"How are we supposed to believe them?"



Clothing is not consent. A person's body belongs only to themselves- what they wear in no way gives someone the right to violate them



Not only is it not right for anyone to say how the victim should have reacted, survivors often report being in shock. There is no universal way in which survivors should behave.



Victim blaming is a large contributor as to why sexual predators feel comfortable enough to victimise individuals; it is not fair to invalidate a victim in any way.

Useful Links

Below you will find organisations and useful tools to support you through the reporting process



[UK organisation which protects children both online and offline](#)



[Domestic Abuse- How to Get Help](#)



[Help after rape or sexual assault](#)



[UK Mental Health in Sport Organisation](#)



[Mental Health Support for Athletes](#)



[Mental Health Charity.](#)



[UK Organisation for Child Prevention](#)



[Support and advice for abuse cases in England and Wales](#)



[Safeguarding Adults and Young People at Risk](#)