



# Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

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# About Safeguarding and Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy

## Contained within this section is:

General Principles

Requirement for a Vulnerable Adults Policy

British Gymnastics is committed to...

## General Principles

“Everyone who participates in British Gymnastics is entitled to do so in a safe and enjoyable environment”. All members of British Gymnastics must follow the policies defined in this document. BG is committed to helping everyone in BG to accept their responsibility to safeguard Vulnerable Adults from harm and abuse.

This document sets out the procedures you need to follow to protect Vulnerable Adults and what you need to do if you have any concerns. This policy applies to all coaches, volunteers, helpers, gymnasts, parents/carers and Staff involved in BG, whether or not they are BG members. All these people have a Duty of Care to safeguard the welfare of Vulnerable Adults and prevent their abuse.

## Requirement for a Vulnerable Adults Policy

In line with the considerations of the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) and the Vulnerable Groups Act (2006), to promote equal opportunities and provide a clearer framework for those with physical, mental health and learning disabilities.

Vulnerable people are at heightened risk of abuse and discrimination because of their susceptibility and many experience this in all walks of life. Practice has shown that vulnerable people who are victims of abuse in the sports setting can be reluctant to report their experiences for fear of losing a positive and important part of their lives. Therefore it is essential that BG, as a national governing body, and its associated clubs and staff, are aware of the indicators of abuse and can recognise and act appropriately to protect potential victims.

Abuse can occur in many situations, including the home, workplace, day centre, at the shops, on the bus, in educational institutions and of course in a gymnastics club. For the majority of Vulnerable Adults, gymnastics is a positive and rewarding experience, however, there is a growing recognition that sport generally provides easy access to vulnerable people for those who wish to perpetrate abusive behaviour. Therefore, BG is aware of the need to protect Vulnerable Adults from those individuals who may seek to harm them in the gymnastics environment.

**The primary difference in addressing adult and child abuse relates to the adult’s right to self-determination. Adults may choose not to act at all to protect themselves and only in extreme circumstances will the law intervene.**

This is not the case for Children because they are minors under the Children Act (1980) and this legislation can be used effectively to ensure protection from abuse once it has been recognised. In cases of suspected adult abuse it is important to recognise that assertive persuasion to encourage the individual to report or take action against an abuser or abusive situation may have negative outcomes for the Vulnerable Adult and could be detrimental to their well-being by causing them further harm. Therefore, protection of Vulnerable Adults from abuse is a more complex process than child protection and requires policy and procedures that reflect this. Policy users need to develop an understanding that protecting Vulnerable Adults necessitates a more supportive and advisory approach in response to reporting abuse, than in child protection situations where the legal framework is clear and definitive and requires stipulated responses. In serious situations the child can be removed from the abusive environment, for Vulnerable Adults it is not always possible or appropriate to achieve this level of safety.

The following policy document draws from and includes relevant legislation and government guidance such as the “Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)” and the “No Secrets guidance (2000)” regarding vulnerable people.

## British Gymnastics is committed to...

Making the welfare of Vulnerable Adults paramount, even where the rights and needs of the other adults that work with them are overridden in order to provide the necessary protection to these individuals, Enabling everyone, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, first language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual orientation to participate equitably in the sport and to have fun in a safe environment. Taking all reasonable steps to protect Vulnerable Adults from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and have respect for their human rights, wishes and feelings. Taking all suspicions and allegations of abuse or poor practice seriously and responding swiftly and appropriately to them in accordance with current procedures (Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures). Ensuring that all BG members working with Vulnerable Adults are competent and appropriate for the responsibility given to them and have been provided with relevant awareness training regarding the potential difficulties Vulnerable Adults can face and how to manage them. Requiring all registered clubs, members and volunteers to accept responsibility for the welfare of the Vulnerable Adults in their care in accordance with all BG’s policies and procedures, and that they incorporate these into their constitutions and rules, being mindful and ensuring that all registered clubs, members and volunteers are mindful of the differences between policies and procedures regarding vulnerable adults and those of children, and particularly that each vulnerable adult has the right to self determination in all but the most extreme matters. Where appropriate, working in partnership with parents/carers to support the Vulnerable Adults and, where practicable, cooperating with the wishes of the Vulnerable Adult and their carers.

# Abuse and Anti Bullying Policy

## Contained within this section is:

Objectives of this policy  
Degree of Abuse  
Responding to Bullying  
Strategies to Discourage Bullying  
Responding to victims of Bullying  
Confronting the Bully(ies)  
Supporting the Bullied

## Objectives of this policy

- All Gymnastics staff, volunteers, members, and parents/carers should have an understanding of what abuse is.
- All Gymnastics staff, volunteers and members should know what the clubs policy is on any form of abuse, and follow it when abuse is reported.
- All members including vulnerable adults and their parents/carers should know what the club policy is on abuse and what they need to do should abuse arise.
- As a club you take bullying seriously. Vulnerable adults and their parents/carers should be assured that they would be supported when abuse is reported.
- Any form of abuse will not be tolerated

BG is committed to providing a supportive, friendly, safe and positive environment free of offensive or abusive behaviour through its network of members, clubs and staff.

Adults with disabilities are particularly 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, lack of understanding of boundaries, need for assistance with personal care and more likely target for bullying and abuse. Adults with disabilities have the same rights to protection as any other adult and clubs working with these adults need to be especially alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse and have strategies in place to ensure all vulnerable adults are able to raise concerns.

Abuse is not always easy to identify.

Some indicators of abuse are:

- The adult discloses a concern and describes what may be an abusive act.
- Another person raises concern about the well being of an adult.
- Unexplained or concerning injuries such as burns, cuts, and bruises and particularly when situated in areas of the adults body which are not normally prone to injury.
- Physical injury where the explanation given is inconsistent.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour such as an adult becoming withdrawn, quiet or aggressive/verbally violent.
- Inappropriate sexual awareness and/or behaving in a sexualised manner.
- Excessive weight loss or weight gain for no obvious reason.
- Physical appearance becomes unkempt.
- The adult is withdrawn and isolated themselves from the group and seems unable to make friends.

This is not an exhaustive list of indicators and alone cannot be seen to be definitive proof an adult is being abused.

***British Gymnastics does not expect the adults involved in the sport to decide whether a vulnerable adult has been abused but it is everyone's responsibility to act upon their concerns and report any incident immediately.***

## Degree of Abuse

In response to the "No Secrets" Government guidance, the Law Commission states that the severity and extent of abuse should be evaluated based on the level of harm brought about by ill treatment (not only physical ill treatment) *"that leads to an impairment of, or avoidable deterioration in physical or mental health and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development"*.

the vulnerability of the victim  
the nature and extent of the abuse  
the length of time the abuse has been occurring  
the impact on the individual  
the risk of repeated or increasingly serious acts involving this or other Vulnerable Adults

The government guidance “No Secrets” provides the following as classifications of abuse:

- **Physical abuse**, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- **Sexual abuse**, including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting;
- **Psychological abuse**, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks;
- **Neglect and acts of omission**, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- **Financial or material abuse**, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits;
- **Discriminatory abuse**, including racist, sexist, that based on a person’s disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.
- **Bullying**. Bullying and harassment occurs where repeated deliberate actions by one or more people cause hurt to an individual or group and where it is difficult for the bullied person(s) to prevent or deal with this person’s actions. The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

In more extreme cases signs of bullying include the following:

- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night, has nightmares or demonstrates any other form of unusual behaviour during the evenings
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other individuals
- stops eating
- self harms
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

## Responding to Bullying

Bullying by children or adults on vulnerable adults within a club must never be tolerated. Bullying may take many forms including physical, verbal, or through the written word, and may be conducted in person or through the actions of another person/other people.

## Strategies to Discourage Bullying

- Create an open environment and provide adequate supervision at all times
- Encourage vulnerable adults to speak out and share any concerns with the person in charge, the Welfare Officer or other responsible adults.
- Take all signs or allegations of possible bullying seriously.

## Responding to victims of Bullying

- Anyone becoming aware that a vulnerable adult is being bullied should offer the adult reassurance and try to gain their trust.
- Explain that someone in authority may need to be informed.
- Keep accurate records of what happened together with names of those involved and any action taken.
- Report suspicions or concerns to the person in charge.

## Confronting the Bully(ies)

- Talk to the bully(ies), explain the situation and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their actions.
- Seek an apology from the bully(ies) to the victim.
- Inform the bully’s parents.
- Insist that any borrowed items are returned to the victim.
- Impose sanctions or disciplinary action if necessary.
- Report and record all actions taken.
- Provide support for the victim and his/her coach.
- Encourage the bully(ies) to change his/her behaviour.

## Supporting the Bullied

- Vulnerable adults who have been bullied will often need support from club officer’s to deal with the impact of bullying. This may include having a specific person to whom concerns can be raised.
- They will need to be supported external to the club from parents/carers, or other relatives.
- The club may consider holding a reconciliation meeting to help address the issues between the bully and the bullied person.

# Abuse of Position of Trust

## Contained within this section is:

Poor Practice

BG believes anyone in a position of trust who engages in sexual activity within a relationship of trust is in serious breach of the BG Policy and is likely to be considered unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults in gymnastics.

## Poor Practice

Poor Practice can be split into a number of groupings. These include: -

- [Practices that may be on the fringe of abuse and/or if repeated again and again, would amount to abuse.](#)  
[Most of the examples are linked to emotional abuse.](#)  
Examples include:
  - Name-calling
  - Constant criticism of a vulnerable adult
  - Exerting excessive pressure
  - Forcing a vulnerable adult to do something against their will
  - Use of inappropriate language
  - Harassment.
- [Breaches of BG Vulnerable Adults Policy](#)  
Examples include:
  - No welfare officer within a club
  - Inadequate safeguarding arrangements
  - Providing inadequate supervision and/or care
  - Failure to respond appropriately to concerns
  - Expelling anyone from the club who raises a concern?
  - Excluding parents/carers from observing or asking questions about training
  - Inappropriate use of photographic equipment or materials.
- [Breaches of recognised best practice in coaching](#)
  - Providing coaching or running a session without another responsible adult present
  - Exceeding level of competence and/or qualification
  - Employing practices that are inappropriate for the stage of psychological and physical development of the individual
  - Excessive training or competition
  - Inappropriate/excessive supporting or stretching.
- [Practices that may be carried out with the best intentions but that fall into a category of behaviours that are used by people who sexually abuse vulnerable adults to 'groom' their victim](#)  
Examples include:
  - Offering to give a vulnerable adult a lift home alone
  - Giving a vulnerable adult gifts
  - Having unnecessary physical contact with a vulnerable adult e.g. excessive handling/supporting, cuddling, kissing, 'friendly' taps etc
  - Socialising/having friendships with vulnerable adults outside training.
- [Practices that are known to be significant risk factors in cases of abuse and can never to be condoned:](#)
  - Taking vulnerable adults to your home or other place unaccompanied by others.
  - Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games.
  - Sharing a room with a vulnerable adult.
  - Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching.
  - Making sexually suggestive remarks.
  - Reducing a vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control.
  - Using or allowing vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
  - Allowing allegations made by a vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
  - Carrying out personal care for a vulnerable adult that they can do unaided
  - Departing from the premises without first supervising the safe dispersal of the vulnerable adults.
  - Abusing a privileged position of power or trust.
  - Resorting to bullying tactics, or verbal abuse.
  - Causing a participant to lose self-esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining the individual.
  - Spending excessive amounts of time alone with a vulnerable adult away from other adults.

It is essential that everyone challenges poor practice, even where there is a belief that the motives of an individual are well meaning. Failure to challenge poor practice can lead to an environment where abuse is more likely to remain unnoticed.

BG accepts that on occasion there may be unplanned situations where the unexpected does occur, which leads to a responsible person being alone with a vulnerable adult. In addition, situations arise where a vulnerable adult may:

- become distressed
- be accidentally hurt by someone else
- misunderstand/misinterpret something that has been said or done
- appear to become sexually aroused

In these situations, the individual involved must report the incident immediately to the welfare officer or a senior colleague and compile a brief written report of the event. The parent/carer should also be informed of any significant incident with the consent of the vulnerable adult if they have capacity.

# Club Trip Checklist

The following checklist is a quick guide to check health, safety and welfare procedures when organising a club trip.

## CHECKLIST

	YES	NO	DATE
1. Have you identified the roles required and responsibilities for trip staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
2. Have you followed recruitment procedures as outlined in the BG Safeguarding policy including Criminal Record Bureau checks on all staff over the age of 14 years who are in a regulated activity in contact with children and/or vulnerable adults as part of their role on the trip?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
3. Have all trip staff completed Safeguarding and Protection training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
4. Do you have a sufficient ratio of trip staff as per 'Overnight stay' and are they of the appropriate gender?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
5. Have you a designated (Child) Protection Welfare Officer for the trip?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
6. Has the designated Welfare Officer attended relevant Safeguarding training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
7. Have you circulated responsibilities and contact details for all staff to parents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
8. Have you addressed any specific special needs of the participants? e.g. Diet, Medication, Disability related, Religious etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
9. Have you completed a risk assessment for the trip?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
10. Have you completed a detailed itinerary and circulated it to participants and their parents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
11. Has a Service Provision Checklist been completed (if required)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
12. Do you have Codes of Conduct for Staff and participants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
13. Have you ensured that all coaches are suitably trained, updated and qualified?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
14. Have you made arrangements for overnight accommodation and considered room allocation and layout?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
15. Have you made arrangements for transport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>



	YES	NO	DATE
16. Do you have adequate First Aid provision?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
17. Do you have a process for recording accidents and incidents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
18. Are all trip staff and participants members of British Gymnastics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
19. Have you considered any additional insurance needs for the trip?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
20. Do you have a procedure in place in the event of a participant going missing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
21. Do you have all necessary directions and maps?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>
22. Have you ensured that all new members have completed registration and consent forms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text"/>

# Communication

All clubs should have a communication policy that covers the use of communication devices and the manner in which coaches can communicate with vulnerable adults.

The following key points must be included:

- Mobile phones should be turned off in the gym except in the case where a phone is used as a club contact number or for emergencies.
- It is unacceptable for adult members to communicate with vulnerable adults by:
  - text message
  - through internet chat rooms/social networking sites
  - e-mail
- All communication by the above methods should be through the parent/carer
- Subject to parental/carer consent, coaches can communicate with vulnerable adults over the age of sixteen years but a copy of all correspondence must be sent to either the welfare officer or a senior official.
- Coaches should limit communications to training related issues

However, if it necessary to make contact with 16 and 17 year old coaches via email or text then this must be done in mass.

Communication as part of a club communication involving several adults and several children including the club welfare officer is acceptable as it ceases to be personal.

1 to 1 communication between coach and a vulnerable adult is unacceptable.

As technology develops, the internet and its range of services can be accessed through various devices including mobile phones, computers and game consoles. Although the internet has many positive uses, it provides the key method for the distribution of images of abuse. In addition, networking sites and chatrooms have increasingly been used by people for the purpose of 'grooming' vulnerable adults for abuse and by others as a means of bullying. In the event of a gymnast showing a coach a text message, image or email that is considered to be inappropriate for a the vulnerable adult to have, the coach must inform the appropriate welfare officer.

All staff, volunteers, parents and members should always behave responsibly and respectfully when online or texting.

- They should not post or discuss unfavorable comments about coaches, gymnasts, any helper or volunteer, parent or club/s
- Coaches should not make contact or hold discussions with gymnasts via social networking sites or texting.

# Confidentiality Policy

## Contained within this section is:

Introduction  
Responsibilities  
General Principles  
Operational Practice  
Staff or Membership Suspensions  
Sharing information within British Gymnastics  
Subject access requests  
Electronic Information  
Email Addresses  
\*Data Protection Act 1998 - Eight Principles

## Introduction

British Gymnastics (BG) recognises that a guarantee that members' personal information is kept safe and secure is vital to ensure trust and confidence in the organisation.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- establish a clear and agreed understanding of what confidentiality means within BG
- encourage uniformity in practice
- ensure that BG members volunteers and external agencies working with BG are aware of the standards they can expect

There are some situations where confidential information may be shared without consent. These circumstances are set out in BG Information sharing to safeguard vulnerable adults policy.

This policy applies to all BG members and continues to apply after their service or involvement with BG has come to an end.

## Responsibilities

- The Board has the overall and final responsibility for ensuring that BG meets its legal responsibilities regarding confidentiality in relation to the Data Protection Act 1998, Human Rights legislation and the common law duty of confidentiality. Board Members must also maintain confidentiality as a requirement of the Company Act 1989
- The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Confidentiality Policy is put into practice. In particular the Chief Executive will ensure that:
- Line Managers and BG Officials are aware of their responsibilities to their staff and volunteers
- Arrangements are in place to monitor and implement this policy
- Breaches of the policy are dealt with proportional to the implications of the breach

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 BG is required to register with the Information Commissioner. The Act regulates the handling of all personal data held on an individual. While the majority of BG affiliated organisations will be exempt from registration if the data they hold is purely to service their membership, everyone must comply with the eight data protection principals\* set out in the Act.

## General Principles

- Information belongs to the person or agency entrusting it to a member of staff, a member or volunteer of British Gymnastics.
- Information provided by an individual or organisation should be treated as confidential unless it has been expressly stated otherwise.
- Once received by British Gymnastics, information may not be used for any purpose other than that for which it was given; nor may it be passed on to any person or agency outside British Gymnastics without the express permission of the data subject. Except when required for legal reasons?

## Operational Practice

- BG keeps extensive records, using paper files and computers. Where necessary, personal details of BG Staff and members are recorded in these systems.
- Every BG member or employee has a right of access to any personal information that BG holds on them in a 'relevant filing system'\*\*\* and to have changed any information that is inaccurate. ??Confidential information that has been provided by a third party may be removed from a file prior to its examination.

- BG will maintain an appropriate level of security, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will adequately protect information about individuals that is held in these systems. Paper files will be kept in a locked area and computer-based files will be password protected.
- The use of information for reports, monitoring and funding applications will avoid any specific detail about members that might lead to their identification unless they have given their prior consent.
- Consent must be obtained from the relevant individuals prior to any personal information being publicised either in print or on a website. The accuracy of the information must also be confirmed.
- BG will seek permission from the relevant member, volunteer, employee or organisation before any information that is held by BG is passed on to a third party where that information specifically identifies them or might lead to their identification. In the case of employees, this does not include their professional contact details.

## Staff or Membership Suspensions

Where a BG member or member of staff is temporarily suspended, the CEO has overall responsibility for determining who should be informed. The suspension and the reasons behind the decision will be treated as a confidential matter and will not be disclosed unless there is a justifiable reason. When deciding whether or not to disclose information, it is vital to consider if a proposed disclosure is a proportionate response to protect the welfare of children or other members. The amount of confidential information disclosed and to whom should be no more than is strictly necessary to ensure the welfare of BG members and young people.

## Sharing Information within British Gymnastics

It is sometimes desirable to share information with other BG staff or officials to allow them to fulfill their role. Information given to staff members or officials acting on behalf of BG will only be given on a 'need to know' basis. It should be absolutely clear to all attending meetings or taking on a role on behalf of BG that they must comply with the rules of confidentiality and ensure confidential matters are not disclosed.

BG Committee members include individuals from various backgrounds, some of whom are there in a formal capacity on behalf of other agencies which have statutory duties, e.g. members of the Case Referral Management Group. Such representatives should normally regard information that they learn in their capacity as members of a BG Committee as confidential, however, if, as a result of their membership of the Committee, they become aware of information that they feel needs to be shared, the individual should bring this to the attention of the relevant Committee so that the statutory or other implications can be formally acknowledged.

## Subject access requests

The Data Protection Act 1998 provides all data subjects with the right to request access to their personal file. BG holds membership files and other records for young people under the age of eighteen. As a general rule a person with parental responsibility will have the right to apply for access to information held on file or in a membership record relating to their child if the young person is under the age of sixteen. Where a child is considered capable of making their own decisions, their consent will be sought before a person with parental responsibility will be given access to their file or record. Where an individual is over the age of 16, subject access requests must come direct from the individual unless it can be demonstrated that the data subject lacks capacity to make their own decisions.

## Electronic Information

Each user is responsible for securing (or limiting access to) documents and folders, which can be accessed via the BG network. On no account should confidential work be stored in shared folders. All BG Computers that contain sensitive or confidential data are password protected. Users should not disclose passwords or security details to others except when required to do so by a manager.

## Email Addresses

Personal email addresses should be treated in the same manner as private telephone numbers and should only be given out with the explicit consent from the individual.

BG staff should use standard signatures, which refer to the confidentiality policy when posting email externally.

## \* Data Protection Act 1998 - Eight Principles

1. Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless –
  - at least one of the conditions in Schedule 2 is met; and
  - in the case of sensitive personal data, at least one of the conditions in Schedule 3 is also met.

2. Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes, and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
3. Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed.
4. Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
5. Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.
6. Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under this Act.
7. Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.
8. Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area, unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection of the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

\*\*\* To fall under the Data Protection Act 1998, personal data held manually must be organised into a 'relevant filing system'. Manual files would only fall within the scope of the Act if the filing system is sufficiently sophisticated to provide the same or similar speed of accessibility as computerised files.

# Contact Information

## Club information sheet

### Club Welfare Officer

Name:

Tel:

### Regional Welfare Officer

Name:

Tel:

### Local Authority Services

Adult Social Care Services

Tel:

### Out Of Hours Contact Number

Tel:

### Police Abuse Investigation Team/Unit

Tel:

### British Gymnastics

0845 129 7 129

[ethics@british-gymnastics.org](mailto:ethics@british-gymnastics.org)

### Ann Craft

The Ann Craft Trust

Centre for Social Work

University of Nottingham

University Park

Nottingham

NG7 2RD

0115 9515400

[www.anncrafttrust.org](http://www.anncrafttrust.org)

### Careline

08451 228622

[www.carelineuk.org](http://www.carelineuk.org)

### Disability Information Service

[www.diss.org.uk](http://www.diss.org.uk)

### Mencap

0808 808 1111

[www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

### Mental Health Foundation

[www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

### Mind

0845 766 0163

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### Help for adults

Help and Advice

0808 800 5000

### DAS

Commercial Advice (for BG registered clubs)

0117 933 0617

### Counselling Helpline

0117 934 2121

### Regional Welfare Officers

#### UK Lead Officer (inc England)

Heidi Saxon - 0845 1297129

[heidi.saxon@british-gymnastics.org](mailto:heidi.saxon@british-gymnastics.org)

#### Scotland Lead Officer

Lorna Whyte - 01786 466232

[lorna@scottishgym.org](mailto:lorna@scottishgym.org)

#### Northern Ireland Lead Officer

Miriam McAtackney - 0845 129 7 129 ext 2347

[Ethics@british-gymnastics.org](mailto:Ethics@british-gymnastics.org)

#### Wales Lead Officer

Cerri Dando

[Cerri.dando@welshgymnastics.org](mailto:Cerri.dando@welshgymnastics.org)

#### North

Enid Harrison - 01642 457168

[north@baga.co.uk](mailto:north@baga.co.uk)

Lynda Kouache - 07882 856434

[lynda.kouache@btinternet.com](mailto:lynda.kouache@btinternet.com)

#### North West

Angela Robson - 07950 044364

[pctc@uwclub.net](mailto:pctc@uwclub.net)

Justine Carroll - 07817 710782

[justinecarroll@hotmail.com](mailto:justinecarroll@hotmail.com)

#### Yorkshire

Helen Monks - 07811 382153

[helendmonks@homecall.co.uk](mailto:helendmonks@homecall.co.uk)

#### West Midlands

Hollie Styles - 07946 850097

[hollie\\_styles@hotmail.com](mailto:hollie_styles@hotmail.com)

#### East Midlands

Veronica West

[vwest@gotadsl.co.uk](mailto:vwest@gotadsl.co.uk)

#### East

Karly Good - 07711 903611

[karlygood@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:karlygood@hotmail.co.uk)

Verity Adams - 07762 529271

[verityadams@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:verityadams@hotmail.co.uk)

East County Welfare Officers

Tyree Robinson (Norfolk) - 07968 444885

[tyetyre@yahoo.com](mailto:tyetyre@yahoo.com)

Angela Smith (Bedfordshire) - 07922

034441

[a.smith55@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:a.smith55@hotmail.co.uk)

Debbie Fountain (Essex) - 07708 743047

[debfontain48@hotmail.com](mailto:debfontain48@hotmail.com)

Teresa O'Neill (Hertfordshire) - 07780

706264

[teresakett@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:teresakett@hotmail.co.uk)

Tina Stagg (Suffolk) - 07970 772713

[tina.stagg@sky.com](mailto:tina.stagg@sky.com)

Andrew Aistrup (Cambridgeshire) - 07805

208693

[andrew.aistrup@cangaroos.org](mailto:andrew.aistrup@cangaroos.org) or [aaistrup@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:aaistrup@yahoo.co.uk)

#### South West

Chris O'Hagan - 07739 512208

[christine.ohagan@british-gymnastics.org](mailto:christine.ohagan@british-gymnastics.org)

#### South

Val Brown Val Brown - 0118 926 3868

[VFBrown07@googlemail.com](mailto:VFBrown07@googlemail.com)

#### South East

Mike Gervaux - 07905 019357

[mgevaux1@suttonlea.org](mailto:mgevaux1@suttonlea.org)

#### London

Lorna Goddard - 07504 420629

[welfare@londongym.org.uk](mailto:welfare@londongym.org.uk)

# Duty of Care

Clubs have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of gymnasts, coaches, volunteers, officials and visitors. This responsibility applies to all clubs, regardless of their size or structure. There is a legal responsibility to ensure that participants are protected against harm or danger whilst taking part in gymnastics or related activities. This is legally termed the 'Duty of Care'.

When working with vulnerable adults, an adult who carries out a supervisory role would take on certain responsibilities while the adult was in their care. This may include:

- Holding a responsibility for care and well-being during training
- Safe dispersal after training
- Providing first aid
- Chaperoning
- Team Managing

The expected standard for behaviour is based on reasonableness. The Duty of Care starts from the time a vulnerable adult arrives at a club or event, until the vulnerable adult is returned to their parent/carer.

In order to fulfil the 'Duty of Care', gymnastics activity providers must make sure that the following areas are properly covered:

- Safeguarding and welfare
- Safe environment including safe apparatus and equipment
- Safe development of the individual through appropriate physical and psychological preparation and progressive skill development
- Provision of suitable first aid support and emergency procedures
- Exercising reasonable care at all times.

Those with an overall responsibility for running a club or providing gymnastics activity must ensure that policies and procedures are in place and implemented to ensure that the 'Duty of Care' is met. However, BG Policy, training courses and resource materials are designed to provide the prudent club, welfare officer, coach, judge, official and parent with a sufficient basis of knowledge and guidance to enable them to make informed judgements in respect of safeguarding and the promotion of the welfare of vulnerable adults in their care.

The guidance in this section will assist gymnastics providers to ensure the approach to safeguarding and the promotion of welfare fulfils the 'duty of care' and meets reasonable expectations in relation to the standards required by organisations that provide services for vulnerable adults. Any reports of failure to comply with the guidance in this section will be investigated as breach of Policy.

# Good Practice and Poor Practice for Clubs and Coaches

## Contained within this section is:

Good Practice for Coaches and Club Officials

Good Practice for Clubs

## Good Practice for Coaches and Club Officials

All participants have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. The promotion of good practice will reduce the possibility of abusive situations occurring. A good caring coach will continually reflect upon their own coaching style, physiology and practices to ensure the safety and well-being of the participant at all times. Although this policy and Guidelines are written with coaches in mind they are applicable to all adults with access to vulnerable adults through gymnastics. Failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action.

The following are examples of good practice:

- Always be publicly open when working with vulnerable adults. Ensure that a coach and an individual vulnerable adult can always be seen.
- Always ensure there is at least one other responsible adult present at all times during training sessions.
- Care should be taken when providing manual support (spotting). Recognised techniques for spotting should be used.
- Treat all participants with respect and dignity
- Always place the safety and the welfare of the participants as the highest priority
- Behave in an exemplary manner and provide a role model for excellent behaviour within the club and at all BG recognised events/competitions
- Keep up to date with your knowledge and technical skills
- Do not exceed the level of your qualifications
- Respect the needs and wishes of all participants.
- Motivate the participants through positive feedback and constructive criticism
- Create a safe and enjoyable situation
- Maintain a written report of any accident, incident or near miss regardless of the injury together with any subsequent treatment or action
- Ensure all members of BG adhere to the codes of ethics and code of conduct and anti doping policy
- Do not take a vulnerable adult in a car alone except in unforeseen circumstances (i.e. hospital)

## PRACTICE NEVER TO BE CONDONED

You should never:-

- Take a vulnerable adult to your home or other place where they will be alone with you
- Engage in rough physical or sexual provocative games
- Share a room with a vulnerable adult
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour
- Engage in any form of sexual related relationship with a vulnerable adult
- Make sexually suggestive remarks to a vulnerable adult – even in fun
- Reduce a vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control
- Encourage children or vulnerable adults to bully vulnerable adults verbally, racially or physically
- Allow allegations made by a vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves, unless you have been instructed to do so by the parents/carer and then only with the consent of the vulnerable adult. An adult, with capacity, should make their own decisions.
- Depart from the premises until you have supervised the safe dispersal of all the vulnerable adults
- Abuse your privileged position of power or trust with vulnerable adults
- Resort to bullying tactics, or verbal abuse (i.e. Shouting, screaming, physically poke or make fun of)
- Cause a participant to lose self esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining the individual
- Allow vulnerable adults to form an inappropriate relationship with a coach
- Text, or use any social networking sites to engage in conversation with gymnasts. Always communicate with the person themselves and parents/carers if appropriate. See communication policy
- Coaches must not provide intimate care e.g. toileting, assisting with changing



## Good Practice for Clubs

It is essential that the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults is paramount for all club activities, not only to provide the best possible protection for vulnerable adults in gymnastics, but also to avoid allegations of poor practice and to ensure the safety of staff and participants. Failure to follow guidelines could place vulnerable adults, coaches and the club in a vulnerable situation. Further guidance can be found under 'Running a Safe Club'.

Clubs must:-

- Provide a designated person (welfare Officer) for dealing with safeguarding within the club. (See Recruiting a Welfare Officer)
- Provide an open door policy where parents can observe the vulnerable adult if the adult so wishes
- Adopt the British Gymnastics Safeguarding and Protecting Vulnerable Adults Policy as part of their registration to the organisation
- Promote the policy to all club members and parents/carers to show the club commitment to a safe environment
- Promote an environment where all legitimate concerns can be raised without fear of victimisation or reprisal (See Whistle Blowing)
- Establish procedures through which complaints or concerns can be voiced and dealt with confidentially
- Ensure that all staff, coaches, volunteers and helpers who have regular contact with children or vulnerable adults are Criminal Record Bureau checked through British Gymnastics
- Keep written records of any poor practice or child/adult protection related incidents and accidents and any action taken
- Provide provision for regular training for all coaches, assistants and officials in Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults (Sports Coach UK Coaching Disabled Performers, How to Coach Disabled People in Sport, Equity in your Coaching)
- Ensuring that there are at least two responsible adults present at all training sessions
- That coaches, staff, helpers or volunteers are not placed in a position by the club that will place them in breach of the BG policies and procedures, rules and regulations
- Ensure that good practice is in place for all trips away from the normal training venue. (See Overnight Stays policy)
- Ensure that equal opportunities and equity policies are adhered to, and that discrimination is prohibited at all levels
- Ensure careful screening of coaches, helper, volunteers or officials according to the safe recruitment guidelines
- Adopt the British Gymnastics policy on photography

Keep parents/carers fully informed, as appropriate and with the consent of the vulnerable adult of the vulnerable adults development and any changes to the normal training routine.

## Guidance for Parents/Carers

It is important that parents/carers are able to feel confident that vulnerable adults will be protected from harm while attending a gymnastics club. The following information will allow parents/carers to make informed decisions about whether a club has taken an appropriate response to safeguarding vulnerable adults in its care. Parents/Carers should be encouraged to talk to the vulnerable adult about training.

Parents should check that:

- The club has a published safeguarding and protecting vulnerable adults policy
- The club has an anti-bullying policy.
- The club has codes of conduct for all members including coaches, staff and volunteers, parents and gymnasts.
- There is a designated person (Welfare Officer) in place with a responsibility for safeguarding
- The club encourages members and their parent/carers to raise concerns without fear of victimisation or reprisal.
- There are procedures in place for dealing with complaints and disciplinary issues.
- The club has procedures in place for safe recruitment including the use of CRB disclosures.
- All coaches have BG Coaching qualifications and only coach to the level of their qualification
- There are always at least two responsible adults present during training sessions. (NB The second adult could be a parent helper or club official)
- Coaches must not provide intimate care e.g. toileting, assisting with changing
- All staff and volunteers have attended relevant training
- All staff and volunteers have a BG Criminal Records Disclosure
- The club has a transport policy
- The club has a changing-room policy
- Parents/carers are not discouraged from watching or becoming involved.
- The club has an Equality policy.

When working with vulnerable adults, over the age of eighteen, then their wishes etc need to be taken into account and their consent sought for any decisions that affect them, not the parents/carer. Parents/carers should be included when appropriate and if the person lacks capacity.

# Information Sharing

## Contained within this section is:

Introduction  
Core Principles  
Type of Information that will be shared

## Introduction

Information relating to safeguarding concerns is often highly sensitive and needs to be kept confidential. However, where the welfare, rights and liberties of a vulnerable adult may be at risk by not disclosing the information it may be necessary to breach confidentiality. Confidential information should be shared if the public interest in safeguarding the welfare of a vulnerable adult overrides the need for confidentiality.

## Core Principles

When making a decision whether or not to share information, the welfare of the vulnerable adult is the paramount consideration. The following points outline the British Gymnastics approach for sharing information relating to vulnerable adult protection concerns.

- BG will share information where there is a reasonable belief that it is necessary to share in order to protect or safeguard a vulnerable adult
- BG will explain openly and honestly, or at least notify, at the outset what information will or could be shared, and why, and seek agreement – except where doing so puts the vulnerable adult or others at risk of significant harm
- Consent to share information will usually be sought from the individual to whom the information relates unless:
  - Non consent may put the vulnerable adult or other parties at risk of harm
  - Refusal to consent is unreasonable or not in the public interest
  - Consent cannot be obtained
  - BG is advised by a statutory agency not to do so.
- If consent is refused or there are good reasons not to seek consent, consideration will be given as to whether there is a sufficient public interest for the information to be shared (principles of openness, consultation and inclusion)
- BG will respect the wishes of vulnerable adults (families) who do not consent to share confidential information unless it is judged that there is sufficient reason to override that lack of consent
- BG will share no more information than is necessary for the specific purposes of safeguarding the vulnerable adult (principle of proportionality)
- In order to ensure there is transparency in the application of this policy, BG will ensure that people to whom this policy applies are aware of the content and ensuing implications
- BG will indicate when sharing information which aspects of the disclosure is factual (to the best of our knowledge) and which is an expression of professional opinion.
- BG will ensure that the way that information is shared is appropriate to the level of urgency but in the event that information is shared by phone, it will be supported by a written report
- Information that is shared will be accurate, up to date, necessary for the purpose for which it is being shared, shared only with those with a need to see it and shared securely
- Records will always be kept of the decision to share, or not to share, information and the reasons for this decision
- Where information is shared during the course of an investigation, the outcome will be shared with those to whom the original information was sent

## Type of Information that will be shared

- Information relating to safeguarding/welfare concerns which meet the threshold for referral to external safeguarding agencies (Police or Adult Social Care Services) will be shared in all cases
- In respect of CRB information which raises safeguarding concerns, BG will disclose on a need to know basis the personal details of any individual that the BG Case Referral Management groups determined unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults
- Information indicating safeguarding concerns but which is not acted on by statutory agencies (for example, where prosecution is not possible, or has been unsuccessful; where a referral is 'bounced back' by Adult Social Care Services or the Police as not meeting their threshold, but the CRMG believes that concerns remain; or where risks are identified from information arising as a result of recruitment or other internal processes
- Information relating to poor practice cases (for example, breach of codes of conduct/ethics) involving a perceived risk to vulnerable adults, but not meeting the threshold for referral to external agencies, and:
  - Where BG has either suspended or excluded the individual, or
  - Has put in place special arrangements or monitoring to ensure vulnerable adults welfare as a result of its disciplinary process

Abuse concerns meeting the threshold for police or Adult Social Care Services action should be managed by those agencies. In circumstances where BG believes that a concerning individual may be operating with vulnerable adults in another organisation(s), BG will seek the advice of the statutory agencies when consideration is being given to sharing information with the other organisation(s).

# Involving Vulnerable Adults

Each Vulnerable Adult is a unique individual with varying degrees of need and ability. Some people will have a combination of physical and learning disability, others may have one or the other; some may have mental health needs and a combination of other complex disabilities such as Epilepsy, Diabetes, Down's Syndrome, visual or hearing impairment. The appropriateness of involving parents/carers in any gymnastics and welfare related decision making will depend on the individual needs and circumstances of the Vulnerable Adult and, most of all, upon their wishes. Often Vulnerable Adults feel strongly that they want to maintain independence and make decisions for themselves; such views should be encouraged and supported wherever possible. Ideally, good practice suggests a partnership model of working involving the coach, or club welfare officer, the vulnerable adult and their parent/carer. In these circumstances it is important that the Vulnerable Adult is at the centre of the decision making process.

The provisions in the Mental Capacity Act (2005) should be considered in relation to Vulnerable Adults and decision-making. Those without the capacity to make decisions under this legislation will be more dependent on their parent/carer or responsible adult in the decision making process.

The act provides that:

a person is unable to make a decision for them self if they are unable -

- (a) to understand the information relevant to the decision,
- (b) to retain that information,
- (c) to use or weigh that information as part of the process of making the decision, or
- (d) to communicate their decision (whether by talking, using sign language or any other means).

(2) A person is not to be regarded as unable to understand the information relevant to a decision if they are able to understand an explanation of it given to them in a way that is appropriate to their circumstances (using appropriate language for the individual, visual aids or any other means).

(3) The fact that a person is able to retain the information relevant to a decision for a short period only does not prevent them from being regarded as able to make the decision.

(4) The information relevant to a decision includes information about the reasonably foreseeable consequences of-

- (a) deciding one way or another, or
- (b) failing to make the decision."

British Gymnastics encourages the individual's development of independence, confidence and self-esteem on a personal level and in their gymnastics activities. Hence it is important that everyone in BG is aware of the need to balance the involvement of parents/carers and the needs and wishes of individual participants in cases where Vulnerable Adults are concerned.

Some ideas on involving vulnerable adults:

- Establishing a forum to seek the views of vulnerable adults within the club.
- Identifying a representative to communicate the views of vulnerable adults in formal settings such as Club Committee Meetings.
- Involving vulnerable adults in helping develop literature, posters and website information on safeguarding issues.
- Carrying out questionnaire based surveys to seek views and comments from vulnerable adults.
- Holding meetings with the vulnerable adult when considering changes to policies and gather their views.

# Late Collection of Vulnerable Adults

## Contained within this section is:

Late Collection of Adults

Persistent failure to collect a vulnerable adult on time

## Late Collection of Adults

The following information provides guidance for clubs on how to respond where a parent/carer, for whatever reason, does not arrive at the required time to collect the vulnerable adult.

All parents/carers must be advised that in the event that they are delayed for any reason, they must:

- Contact the club at the earliest opportunity
- Provide clear guidance on what they wish the club to do e.g. consent for another parent/carer to transport the vulnerable adult home.

The club must:

- Maintain a list of parent/carer contact details and emergency numbers
- Carry out appropriate assessments of situations as they arise.

The club officers must not

- Take the vulnerable adult home or to another location.
- Ask the vulnerable adult to wait in a vehicle or the club with them alone.
- Send the vulnerable adult home with another person without permission.

If the parent/carer is considered by the club as being unduly late, the Club officers should:

1. Attempt to contact the parent/carer
2. Attempt to contact the emergency contact person nominated.
3. If there is no reply from the emergency contact, ask the adult if there is another family member who may be contacted.
4. Wait with the vulnerable adult(s) at the club with at least one other official/coach/ teacher/volunteers or parents.
5. Respond to any instructions received from the parent/carer
6. If no-one can be reached, contact the local police or Adult Social Care Services/Social Services to enquire about the best course of action.

## Persistent failure to collect a vulnerable adult on time

Parents/Carers, who persistently fail to collect a vulnerable adult on time or have not arrived after a reasonable period of time, and have given no prior notice or informed the club they are delayed, may be failing to provide adequate care for the vulnerable adult.

If the parent/carer makes no effort to contact the club or provide reasonable explanation for the delays, the club Welfare Officer and another club officer should arrange to meet with the parent/carer to discuss the matter.

If there is no change the club Welfare Officer should either contact the adult's team at the local Adults Social Care Services/Social Services or seek advice from the BG Head of Membership or BG Safeguarding and Compliance Officer.

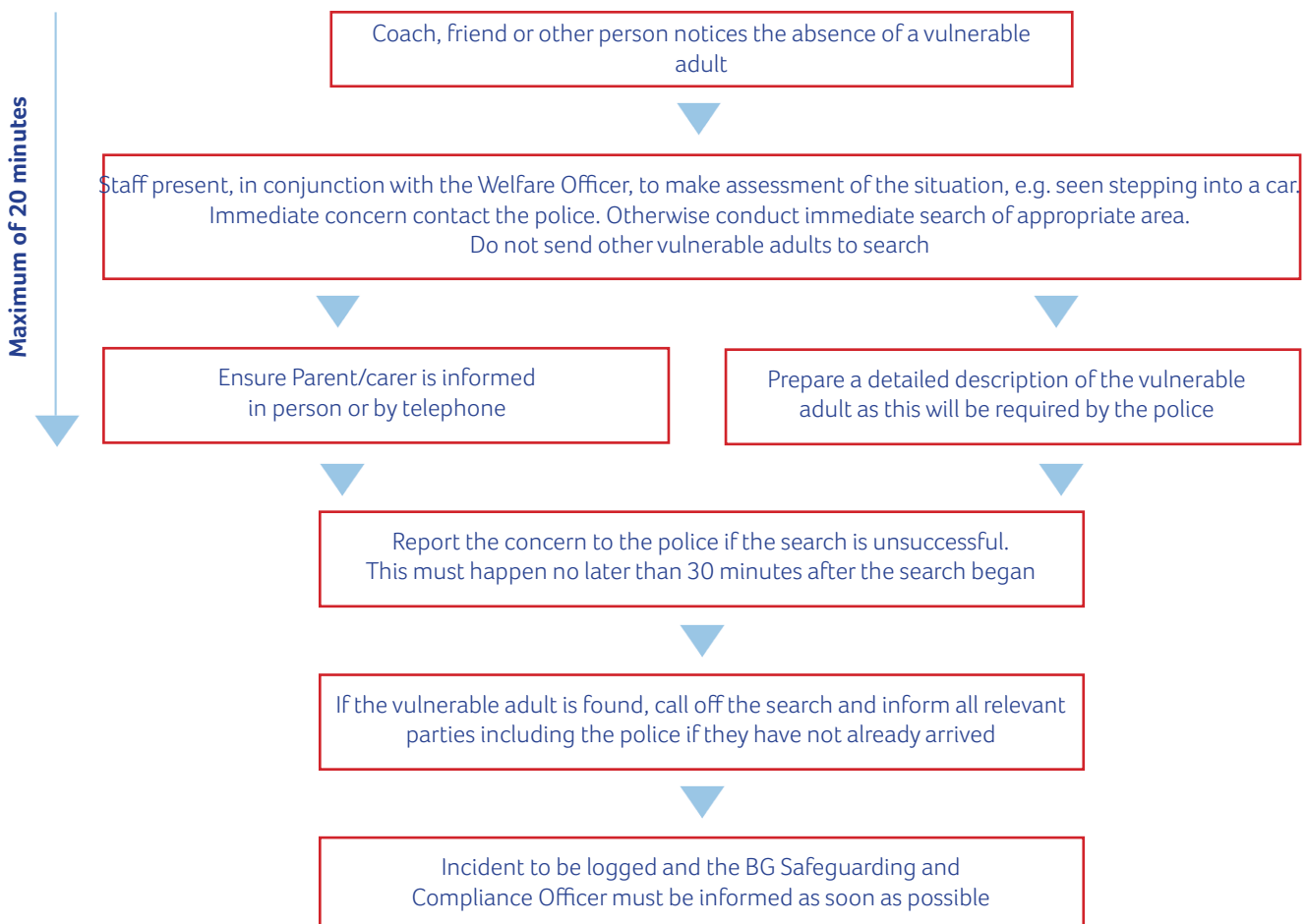
If a parent/carer arrives to collect a vulnerable adult and there is concern that the parent's/carer's ability to take appropriate care of the adult may be impaired (e.g. the parent/carer is considered to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs to the extent that she/he is unfit to drive, and/or take care of the vulnerable adult) the club should seek advice from the police or Adults Social Care Service immediately.

# Missing Vulnerable Adults

In the rare event that a vulnerable adult goes missing from a club, the following guidelines have been devised to outline the actions that should be taken. At the point that a vulnerable adult has been identified as missing the club should:

- Ensure that other vulnerable adults in the group are looked after appropriately while a search for the adult concerned is conducted.
- Inform the parents/carer if they are present, or nominate an appropriate person to telephone them and advise them of the concern. Reassure them that everything is being done to locate the adult.
- Organise all available responsible adults by areas to be searched. It is best to take a short time to organise the search properly so that all places are searched fully.
- Search the area in which the vulnerable adult gone missing including changing rooms, toilets, public and private areas and the club grounds.
- Request all those searching report back to a nominated adult at a specific point.
- Make a note of the circumstances in which the vulnerable adult has gone missing and where he/she was last seen
- Prepare a detailed physical description of the vulnerable adult, including:
  - Approximate height
  - Build
  - Hair and eye colour
  - Clothing he/she was wearing, as this will be required by the police
- Report the concern to the police if the search is unsuccessful. This must happen no later than 30 minutes after the person's disappearance is noted, even if the search is incomplete.
- Follow police guidance if further action is recommended and maintain close contact with the police
- Ensure that you inform all adults involved including the parents/carers, searchers and police if at any stage the vulnerable adult is located
- Refer the concern ASAP to the BG Child Safeguarding Manager.

If a vulnerable adult is suspected of being missing, the flow chart below must be followed.



# Overnight Stays

## Contained within this section is:

Overnight Stays

Accommodation

Areas of Responsibility for Welfare Officers at Events

## Overnight Stays

BG requires that when a club takes a gymnast(s) under the age of 18 years or vulnerable adults on a journey involving an overnight stay, the club must ensure that there is a designated trained person responsible for safeguarding on the trip. This person must not be related to or in a relationship with the coach attending the trip.

The training for the designated person involving vulnerable adults should be one of the following Sports Coach UK courses Coaching Disabled Performers, How to Coach Disabled People in Sport, Equity in your Coaching.

To enable you to have adequate insurance cover when taking gymnasts abroad, BG is obliged to approve your arrangements. Please complete the forms relating to overseas travel which can be found on the BG website under Events & Travel/Downloads/ Overseas travel application

Please note that the BG Insurance does not cover Travel or Emergency Medical Expenses, we recommend that you either take out Travel Insurance with ourselves available at the following website [www.britishgymnasticstravelinsurance.co.uk](http://www.britishgymnasticstravelinsurance.co.uk) or provide details of an alternative insurer.

When an event is local, it is often the case that clubs arrange for everyone to meet at the event venue. However, where an event is further away, the best option is often for the club to co-ordinate transport arrangements. It is good practice for a club to ensure the following steps are taken in advance of any trip :

- Check on driving licence, car insurance and MOT (if the car is over three years old)
- Ensure there are seatbelts for each passenger and booster seats as required
- Check driving experience (additional training may be required for anyone driving a mini-bus – contact Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) for further details)
- Additional check on driver (see policies for recruitment of staff/volunteers)
- Organise central pick-up and drop-off points (to avoid the driver being alone with a gymnast)
- Obtain consent from parents/carers to allow the vulnerable adult to be transported to an event
- Plan the route and breaks (if necessary)
- Obtain contact numbers for parents/carers

At non-residential events the designated person need not always be on site but must be contactable and ready to act if required. Everyone should be made aware of the designated person's name and contact details if they are not at the event. Contact details must be included in the event programmes.

Where events involve an over-night stay, it is vital to have a designated trained person who is not involved in the delivery of the training. (NB: Please note this is only applicable if the club is responsible for the provision of overnight accommodation). This person's role will depend on the scale of the event, but in addition to the responsibility for responding to concerns, tasks could include supervision and co-ordination of accommodation, holding pre-event welfare briefings and daily de-briefs and monitoring compliance with codes of conduct.

Ensure that when taking mixed gender teams away on trips, at least one male and one female of staff accompany the gymnasts.

In non-residential events, the role of the designated person could be undertaken by an existing member of staff or volunteer but it is vital that the person identified is able to take a child-centred approach and has the confidence of young people taking part in the event.

It is important to have contingency plans in place before departing on any trip. It may be helpful to consider a 'worst case scenario' and to have procedures, and all the necessary information, in place to deal with any problem that might arise. At the least, the following issues need to be addressed to ensure a stress free trip: -

- **Risk Assessments:** The Team Manager/Group Leader will need to ensure an ongoing process of risk assessment. (See BG Health & Safety Policy for guidance)
- **Supervision:** BG recommends a minimum of 1:10 adult as a minimum level for supervision on trips. This ratio may need to be increased depending on the level of disabilities, or the trip is of a nature where more supervision may be required- i.e. trips abroad. If the group is mixed sex there should be at least one male and one female supervisor.

- **Medical issues/first aid:** A list of emergency contact numbers, medical information on each vulnerable adult attending the event and a first aid box should be taken on any trip.
- **Club Insurance:** Clubs must arrange adequate travel insurance.
- **Overnight stays:** When large groups are travelling it is advisable to ensure accommodation is booked well in advance. This can help to ensure that groups are kept together in a hotel. Room allocation should, if possible, be planned prior to the trip.
- **Facility providers/Tour Operators:** To help ensure that any arrangements made with facility providers or tour operators are formalised, BG recommends the use of a Service Provision checklist.
- **Consent forms:** It is essential for parents/carers to complete a consent form for a trip. This is especially important when the event involves an overnight stay.

**Communication with parents/carers:** Parents/Carers need to be fully informed of all details in relation to the trip.

As a minimum, parents/carers should be informed of:

- Transport arrangements
- Key timings – Pick up, Departure and Return
- Destination and contact details
- Room allocation
- Code of conduct
- Contact details for trip staff
- Trip requirements – pocket money, kit etc

This is not a full list of factors that should be considered, but it should assist with planning for a trip. The checklist in appendices of this document will also support clubs when planning a trip.

## Accommodation

Where accommodation is required for overnight stays gymnasts must be suitable accommodated according to their age and gender.

- Coaches, helpers, volunteers are not permitted to share a room with any gymnasts regardless of the situation.
- It is advisable that the coaches should arrange their accommodation so that they are at least on the same floor as the gymnasts and if possible arrange for them to be in the room next door to the gymnasts.
- Gymnasts should be supplied with an emergency contact number for them to call in the night should they need to.
- Parents/carers may be accommodated with only their own children / individuals they are responsible for as a carer.

## Areas of Responsibility for Welfare Officers at Events (including Competitions) or Trips

### Role of the welfare officer at events

- Ensuring that parents/carers and vulnerable adults are aware of the role and responsibilities
- Reporting any incidents in line with BG reporting procedures (Welfare Officers should have access to all emergency contact numbers including BG)
- Taking a focused approach and responding to the needs of vulnerable adults during the event
- Working in partnership with other staff to resolve any welfare related issues that need to be addressed at the event
- Assisting the event organiser with the implementation of procedures for photography and the use of video cameras at the event and managing any issues that arise out of these policies

### Further roles applicable to residential events

- Supervision and co-ordination of accommodation at the event
- Leading the supervising of the gymnasts during non-training periods

Ensuring all participants fully understand their responsibilities in relation to the code of conduct

# Photography and the use of Imagery

## Contained within this section is:

General Principles concerning the use of Photographs or Recorded Images  
Photography at Gymnastics Events  
Use of Videos as an aid to coaching

## General Principles concerning the use of Photographs or Recorded Images

Implicit within the British Gymnastics policies and procedures for the protection of vulnerable adults is the commitment to ensure that all publications and media represent participants appropriately and with due respect. It is not the intention of British Gymnastics to prevent parents/carers from taking pictures of the sport of gymnastics but rather to ensure that photographic practices are carefully managed and effective prevention measures in place to deter anyone with undesirable intentions from taking and publishing inappropriate images.

All BG registered organisations must comply with the following guidelines:

- A photograph, video clip or other image of a gymnast should not be published whether in print or electronically (e.g. on a website) without written consent from the gymnast concerned (or in the case of a vulnerable adult unable to give their consent. This must be obtained from their parent/carer), and personal information of the individual, other than their name and their club, should not accompany the image. (Particular provisions apply in connection to photography at public events such as competitions and displays below).
- While some editing of images is acceptable, images taken of gymnasts should not be modified, merged or manipulated in a way, which might cause embarrassment or distress to the subject or cause the final image to be inappropriate.
- Simultaneous “live” streaming of images onto a website is forbidden. Only pre-recorded and edited material should be made available after any inappropriate images have been edited or deleted.
- Any instance of the use or publication of inappropriate images of gymnasts should be reported to British Gymnastics who may then inform the appropriate authorities.
- Clubs are recommended to introduce a consent form, ideally as part of the process applied when a gymnast joins the club, concerning the taking of images for training purposes.

British Gymnastics recognises that there is a potential for abuse of any image placed on the Internet or within other forms of media. Although the exploitation of such images may be rare, British Gymnastics has a responsibility to provide guidance on how images of vulnerable adults should be used to reduce any risk.

Those creating or administering websites should carefully monitor their content to eliminate the use of inappropriate images or improper text.

When determining whether it is appropriate to publish a photograph on a website or another form of media, consideration should be given to both the potential for inappropriate use of an image and the possibility that an individual could make contact with a vulnerable adult by using any personal and club details placed on line.

The following steps can be taken to reduce the risk from the publication of imagery:

- Do not use any personal details if it is possible from the image to ascertain a specific location or there are any details on your site about the training venue.
- If it is not possible to ascertain any training or competitive location, consider using a first name only next to an image.
- The dress of a vulnerable adult should be considered when using the photo:
  - i) If it is a posed shot for example taken during a medal presentation, try to ensure that the vulnerable adult is fully clothed in a tracksuit or similar attire.
  - ii) If it is an action shot, try to use profile imagery and avoid full-length shots. Alternatively, use digital software to blur the facial features.
- Do not use images that can appear staged and potentially provocative.
- Avoid using images that appear to focus unnecessarily directly on the groin area in movements where legs are in a split position.
- Always use a consent form to request the use of a vulnerable adult’s image for publication. The parent/carer should be encouraged to discuss the matter with the vulnerable adult before signing a consent form.

British Gymnastics should be informed of any inappropriate use of imagery on Gymnastics websites or any other form of media, which is not in keeping with this guidance. Anyone discovering a vulnerable adults image that appears to be being used illegally on any website, should report the matter to the police.



## Photography at Gymnastics Events

British Gymnastics does not wish to discourage the use of video or photographic equipment at events for appropriate use, but will take all reasonable precautions to protect members against the possible inappropriate use of films or photographic images. British Gymnastics has therefore developed Photography Regulations (which are published on the BG website), which require those organising gymnastic events to regulate the taking of photographs and apply, as a minimum, the BG Conditions for Photography at Gymnastic Events.

Training sessions within Clubs or at other gymnastic venues are not normally public events at which participants would reasonably expect to be photographed. It is the responsibility of the senior coach present in a gym or other venue to regulate the taking of photos in this environment and photos should not be taken without the senior coach's permission. Coaches giving permission should apply, with any necessary adaptations, the same principles underlying the conditions applicable to photography in other circumstances. In training situations/events where it is possible to control the individuals who are photographed or appear in material that is intended for publication, informed consent should be sought ideally prior to the event and must be obtained prior to publication.

If the event organiser/welfare officer (or authorised representative of the event organiser/welfare officer) suspects inappropriate photography or filming, the officer/organiser should exercise her/his powers under the Conditions to request the person to leave the venue and to surrender any film or delete any images relating to the event. Any person present at an event who has any concerns about any images being taken by any person should bring them to the attention of the competition organiser or other designated person.

Additional provisions and accreditation procedures are in force regulating the taking of photographs for commercial use or for publication.

## Use of Videos as an aid to coaching

The use of video equipment can be a valuable aid to coaching. The guidelines below should be implemented to safeguard against inappropriate practice.

- Ensure that the performers and their parent/carer are aware of the purpose of the filming as a coaching aid and consent is obtained.
- Ensure that the person designated for participants' welfare and one other responsible and approved adult is present to ensure that performers are protected against inappropriate filming.

Care should be taken to securely store the video materials to avoid inappropriate usage.

# Recruiting a Welfare Officer

## Contained within this section is:

Welfare Officers - Responsibilities

Raising awareness of the role

What support structures should be in place?

How can the Welfare Officer ensure they are visible and known to club members?

## Welfare Officers - Responsibilities

Although the responsibility for safeguarding falls on everyone, a critical element in safeguarding is the designation of an individual who is responsible for safeguarding and promoting welfare of vulnerable adults within the club. All BG clubs and gymnastics events are required to have a welfare officer to be responsible for:

- Responding to poor practice concerns
- Providing support and advice in the implementation of procedures that safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable adults
- Assisting the club to more be focused in its activities e.g. involving vulnerable adults in decision making processes.

In order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest, the role must not be taken on by a key member of the coaching team or member of her/his immediate family, however an individual who has a more limited involvement in coaching can take on the role in the event that there is no other acceptable alternative.

The ideal candidate may be a parent/carer or other volunteer with professional experience in safeguarding e.g. police officer, social worker, teacher etc. As it can often be very difficult to find a suitable candidate for the role, the following information provides some suggestions on how this might be addressed and how the organisation can assist with the role.

## Raising awareness of the role

It is important that everyone connected with the club or organisation is aware of the need to appoint a welfare officer.

Some of the methods that have proved successful include:

- Writing to anyone who may be interested in the position
- Circulating a profile of the role in the club newsletter
- Advertising on the club notice board or website
- 'Head hunting' - making direct approaches to individuals who have the appropriate experience
- Holding an open evening for parents/carers and inviting the regional welfare officer or a welfare officer from another club to talk about the position

It is important that prospective candidates are provided with full details of what the role entails and how they will be supported in the position (sample job/task descriptions and person specifications for the different levels/types of welfare officer are contained in the appendices). It is also useful to provide potential candidates with relevant information about the club/squad e.g. policy for volunteers, codes of conduct etc.

## What support structures should be in place?

Before finalising the appointment of a welfare officer, the club should ensure that the safe recruitment procedures have been fully applied.

The organisation must ensure that the welfare officer is fully empowered to fulfil the role and has the full support from the relevant committee/management/owners to make any appropriate changes to procedures and practices.

## How can the Welfare Officer ensure they are visible and known to club members?

The welfare officer does not need to attend every training session or competition but it is critical that everyone understands the role and the responsibilities it entails. It is important that the welfare officer is fully involved in the club's activities and vulnerable adults and parents/carers are fully aware of how to raise concerns. The following are suggestions may help clubs to ensure that everyone knows the welfare officer and understands her/his role

- Put a poster on the club notice board with the welfare officer's name and contact details. This might include a photograph and a list of times when the welfare officer will be present at the club.
- Make sure that all club paperwork includes the welfare officer's contact details
- Ensure the welfare officer details are included in new member information packs
- Introduce the welfare officer at club events
- Allow the welfare officer to hold an introduction evening

Allow the welfare officer to engage with vulnerable adults in the club. This may include developing/revising codes of conduct, electing a representative to represent views, involve vulnerable adults in decision making etc.

# Responding to Allegations of Abuse

## Contained within this section is:

Safeguarding Concerns  
Responding to disclosure of abuse  
Reporting the concern  
Confidentiality and Information Sharing  
Allegations of Historical Abuse  
A quick guide to procedures if abuse is suspected

## Safeguarding Concerns

In addition to ensuring all BG members are fully aware of the importance of safeguarding, it is essential that anyone who comes into contact with vulnerable adults as part of their role in the sport understands what action should be taken in response to concerns, disclosures and allegations against others involved in the sport.

It is not the role of BG or anyone in the sport to conduct enquiries into possible abuse concerns. The following procedures outline the responses that should be taken in the event of an allegation or suspicions of abuse or significant harm. This section also provides guidance sharing relevant information with Adult Social Care Services and/or police and other relevant organisations without delay and within agreed protocols.

Concerns fall into two categories,

- Gymnastics related
- External to the sport e.g. at home

The concern may relate to a current situation or past events and may be about allegations or disclosures of abuse or poor practice by an individual or relating to perceived failure to safeguard by a BG registered organisation.

Concerns may arise from:

- A disclosure from a vulnerable adult
- Direct or reported observations of possible abuse, neglect, suspicious behaviour or poor practice
- Significant or multiple changes in the vulnerable adult's behaviour, appearance, attitude or relationship
- Reports from external agencies or individuals

Everyone has a responsibility to respond to these concerns whether they relate to a vulnerable adults home/family or community situation or involve incidents within the club/gymnastics community.

It is important to note that some vulnerable adults are unable to recognise or share concerns and often rely on other adults with whom they are in contact with to be alert to the possibility that they may be experiencing harm in some area of their lives.

British Gymnastics' primary responsibility is to ensure that concerns relating to possible abuse together with any relevant information are passed on to Adult Social Care Services and/or the Police without delay. It is vital that individuals within a club are aware of what action is required and ensure any concerns are referred to the appropriate welfare officer as shown below:

- **BG Lead Officer** – The BG Lead Officer (Head of Membership or Safeguarding and Compliance Officer) must be informed of all abuse concerns.
- **Home Country Lead Officer** – The HCLO should be informed of any concern that occurred at within the relevant home country.
- **Regional Welfare Officer** – The RWO should be informed of any concern that occurred at Regional level. The RWO should also be a source of advice and support for their network of CWO.
- **Club Welfare Officer** – The CWO should usually be the first point of call for any concerns that relate to a member of his or her club.
- **Squad/Event Welfare Officer** – There should always be a welfare officer assigned to a squad or event. Although they may not be present, they should be 'on-call' at the time of the squad/event and be contacted in the event of any concern relating to the specific squad or event.

Contact details of Regional, Home Country and BG Officers can be found on the BG website.

## Responding to disclosure of abuse

If a vulnerable adult indicates that he/she is being abused, or information is received which gives rise to concern that the adult may be being abused, the person receiving the information should:

- Stay calm and ensure that the vulnerable adult is safe and feels safe.
- Listen carefully to what is said, allowing the vulnerable adult to continue at his/her own pace.
- Explain that it is likely the information will have to be shared with others - do not promise to keep secrets.
- Keep questions to a minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said.
- Reassure the vulnerable adult that they have done the right thing in revealing the information.
- Show and tell the vulnerable adult that what he/she says is being taken seriously and recognise any difficulties inherent in interpreting what the adult says.
- Tell the vulnerable adult what will be done next, and with whom the information will be shared.
- Record in writing what was said using the vulnerable adult's own words as soon as possible. The following information should be recorded:
  - Dates and times
  - Any names mentioned
  - To whom the information was given
  - Information that fact, hearsay or opinion should be notes as such
  - Ensure the record is signed and dated make a record

If the vulnerable adult indicates that he/she does not wish others to be informed about the allegations, carefully and tactfully explain the reasons why it may be in the interests of everybody if the matter is referred to the appropriate person or department (i.e. Adult Social Care Services).

The person to whom the disclosure is made is presented with a great responsibility and it is advisable, if there is any uncertainty, to seek advice on how to deal with the issue, from Adult Social Care Services, or from the BG Head of Membership or Safeguarding and Compliance Officer.

### Actions to avoid

- Dismissing the concern
- Panicking
- Allowing shock or distaste to show
- Probing for more information than is offered
- Making promises that cannot be kept, such as agreeing not to tell someone else
- Speculating or make assumptions
- Approaching the person who is the subject of an allegation or suspicion (this may put a vulnerable adult at further risk and/or jeopardise a criminal investigation).
- Conducting a personal investigation of the case.
- Making negative comments about the accused person.
- Irrespective of whether the person receiving the information personally believes what has been said, they must always report the disclosure. Untrue disclosures, even when the source is anonymous, are very rare.

## Reporting the concern

In the event that a vulnerable adult may be at risk of significant harm, the concern must be reported to Adult Social Care Services or the Police without delay. The welfare officer is responsible for making this referral but in the event that he or she is unavailable, a senior person at the club should be advised and the matter referred directly to the Adult Social Care Services and/or the Police and the Welfare Officer informed of the action taken. British Gymnastics should also be informed at the earliest opportunity and can also make the referral on their behalf. The person advising BG may be required to also speak to the Statutory agents to clarified any details and may be required as part of their investigation.

If the concern relates to the welfare officer, a senior person at the club should be informed and the matter should be referred to Adult Social Care Services and/or the Police and BG should be notified without delay.

Whoever makes the referral must ensure that the contact details of the person to whom the referral was made are provided to BG or the relevant Home Country, together with the details of the referral without delay.

In the event that there is any uncertainty as to whether a referral is appropriate, BG Head of Membership or Safeguarding and Compliance Officer or Adult Social Care Services will be able to offer advice on what action should be taken.

If there is any suspicion that a vulnerable adult has been abused by someone in the sport, the BG Case Referral Management Group will, following consultation with the statutory agencies consider whether it is necessary to place the individual under suspension pending further Adult Social Care Services or Police enquiries. The Chief Executive Officer will have the overall authority to suspend membership from BG. British Gymnastics MUST be kept fully informed of any concerns as it is essential that an early decision is made about whether to suspend any member to avoid placing young people at risk.

### Adult Social Care Services

When a referral is made to Adult Social Care Services they have a legal responsibility to make enquiries where a vulnerable adult may be at risk of significant harm. This may involve gathering information from others who know the vulnerable adult or talking to the vulnerable adult and their family. Enquiries may be carried out jointly with the police when a criminal offence is suspected. If a vulnerable adult is at immediate risk and action needs to be taken urgently, contact the Police by dialling 999. If concerns are identified out of hours, the police and Adult Social Care Services provide an out-of-hours service.

## Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Sharing information is vital to ensure that vulnerable adult's needs are met and critical in ensuring vulnerable adults are protected from significant harm. However, there is often uncertainty about the circumstances in which information can be lawfully shared. Consent should normally be sought from the subject/s of the information in order for it to be shared, but it may be necessary for information to be shared with the Welfare Officer, Adult Social Care Services the Police and BG without consent if there is reason to believe that seeking consent could:

Place the vulnerable adult or others at increased risk of significant harm, or Place an adult at risk of serious harm, or Undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime (i.e. any crime which causes or is likely to cause significant harm to a vulnerable adult) including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

Following initial enquiries, it may be deemed necessary to share some information with others, particularly those who have contact with the subject of the allegations. Information must only be passed to those who require access to these details in the course of their safeguarding duties. A record must be maintained of all those to whom information is disclosed, and the details of the information provided. Case information must only be shared on a 'need to know' basis. Further guidance on confidentiality and information sharing can be found within the this policy

All BG registered organisations and individual members must ensure that in dealing with information relating to safeguarding concerns, there are no unacceptable breaches of confidentiality. In addition, there is a responsibility to ensure that parents/carers, gymnasts and their families understand the need to avoid unnecessary discussion of safeguarding concerns. Not only can such a breach be highly damaging to the vulnerable adult and others involved but may also prejudice a police investigation.

Case information should:

- (Where the call is incoming) only be given out over the telephone where there is absolute certainty of the identity of the person making the call or the identity of the caller is confirmed by returning the call through a switchboard number;
- (Where the call is outgoing) only be given out over the telephone and connected through a switchboard, and there is absolute certainty of the identity of the person receiving the call;
- Be backed-up in writing if any significant advice/case details is given over the phone;
- Be securely stored in a locked cabinet in a lockable room and not unnecessarily taken out of the building; and
- Be marked 'private and confidential' and sent by recorded delivery if sent by post.

### Sharing Concerns with Parents/Carers

There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents/carers where there are concerns about the vulnerable adult. Therefore, in most circumstances it would be important to talk to parents/carers to clarify any initial concerns. For example if a vulnerable adult seems withdrawn, there may be a reasonable explanation. The vulnerable adult may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation/divorce or bereavement.

In cases where a vulnerable adult may be at risk of significant harm, the Welfare Officer or person making the referral should, at the same time seek advice on what information should be provided to the parent/carer and the vulnerable adult from Adult Social Care Services or the Police.

### Records and Information

Any information passed to the Adult Social Care Services or the Police must be as accurate and helpful as possible and, ideally, should be accompanied by a detailed record providing:

- Personal details of the vulnerable adult concerned including age or date of birth, full name, gender, race, ethnic origin and address.
- Details of parent/carer and an indication of what, if any, information has been shared.
- The nature of the allegation.
- Full details of the person about whom the concern/allegation is made including full name, date of birth, address, relationship the vulnerable adult concerned and/or position held in the club, if any.

- Description of any visible injuries or bruising.
- Detailed description of the vulnerable adult's account of how the injuries or bruising occurred.
- Any times and dates or other relevant information.
- A clear distinction between what is fact, hearsay or opinion.

Reporting the matter to police or Adult Social Care Services should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. Wherever possible, referrals made by telephone, should be followed up with a copy of the incident report form within 48 hours this form is within the Sample Forms section. The Welfare Officer should record on the incident form, the name and designation of the Adult Social Care Services member of staff to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call.

A copy of the incident report form including all case information should also be sent to British Gymnastics Head of Membership or Safeguarding and Compliance Officer and the appropriate Home Country governing body Lead Officer.

### Concerns within the Sport

Allegations involving BG members or employees are sensitive and difficult issues to manage. It is crucial that everyone involved in gymnastics takes seriously any allegations made against a coach, helper, official or anyone else working with vulnerable adults and responds appropriately. The Welfare Officer must be notified immediately of any circumstances that cause concern or raise suspicions. If the welfare officer is unclear about what action to take, advice should be sought from BG Head of Membership or Safeguarding and Compliance Officer or from Adult Social Care Services. In the event that the allegations could amount to abuse and/or a vulnerable adult is at risk of significant harm, the matter should be reported to Adult Social Care Services and/or the Police in line with the procedures above.

If, following the receipt of a disclosure, an allegation or an observation of behaviour that caused concern, and where it is agreed that a referral to Adult Social Care Services or the Police is not required the club or organisation should consider the appropriate course of action. In the event that the concern is considered to be an isolated incident of poor practice, then together with the Welfare Officer, a senior person at the club should discuss the matter with the individual of the concern and agree appropriate remedial action in line with BG policy and guidance. In all cases of poor practice, the matter should be reported to BG without delay for the BG CRMG to determine the appropriate course of action. This includes:

- Allegations of poor practice concerning the Welfare Officer
- Poor practice allegations that have been previously addressed by the club but continue to remain a concern.
- Any incidents of poor practice that raise suspicions or concerns about abuse.

In some cases, it has only become apparent that a poor practice concern has been an indicator of abuse after BG has collated information from a variety of sources. It may not be possible to form a view of the significance of an isolated piece of information but it is essential that in the above circumstances information is always reported to BG.

### Action to be taken if abuse or poor practice is observed during a training session or event

It is not unknown for an act of abuse and more frequently, poor practice to occur within a training or competition environment. The following information provides instruction on what action should be taken at the point that the act of abuse or poor practice is observed. It may be helpful to note that, based on the experience of case referrals, the most likely types of abuse to be encountered in the gym environment are physical and emotional abuse. An act of possible abuse or poor practice needs to be reported without delay in line with the BG reporting procedures described above.

The individual regarding the concern should be approached immediately by the senior official and another official, ideally the Welfare Officer, (if they are on site) and informed of the concern. If the abuse or poor practice is ongoing, he/she must be instructed to stop immediately and an emergency call made to the police to provide assistance if required. It should be noted, however, that if the matter of concern is poor practice, possibly due to lack of awareness rather than abuse and the vulnerable adult is not at significant risk, a more subtle approach would be appropriate and the Welfare Officer may not need to be involved at this stage. Consideration should be given to informing the individual in a manner that will not undermine his/her position.

If the concern relates to abuse, the priority is to ensure that the vulnerable adult is made safe. The Welfare Officer or another responsible adult must remain with the vulnerable adult until their needs have been fully addressed.

If the vulnerable adult concerned requires immediate medical treatment this should be sought without delay by dialling 999 and informing the police/Adult Social Care Service that that this action is being taken. It is important the medical staff involved are made aware that the issue is potentially one of a vulnerable adult protection nature.

All BG registered clubs must put in place a procedure to deal with complaints over staff and volunteers. Parents/Carers and all members should be made aware of the procedures for raising a complaint or concern. Provision should be made in the club rules or constitution to allow complaints and disciplinary procedures to be implemented.

## Allegations of Historical Abuse

It is possible that allegations of abuse may be made some considerable time after the event. Where a historical allegation is made the Welfare Officer should report the matter to the Adult Social Care Services and the Police and make sure that BG and the relevant Home Country Governing Body are informed without delay. Although the allegation is historical, it is necessary to respond without delay as other vulnerable adults may currently be at risk from the accused person.

## A quick guide to procedures if abuse is suspected

This quick guide (opposite) is designed to provide guidance for BG members on the most appropriate action to be taken if abuse is suspected or repeated or suspicious poor practice or breaches of BG Code of Ethics and Conduct are witnessed. Further guidance can be obtained at any stage, by contacting the BG Head of Membership, Safeguarding and Compliance Officer. All reports should be made on the BG Incident Report form contained in the Sample Forms section.

### What happens next?

Where a complaint/concern of poor practice or abuse is made there may be three types of investigation:

- Criminal - Conducted by the police
- BG enquiry – Determined by the BG CRMG (Case Referral Management Group)

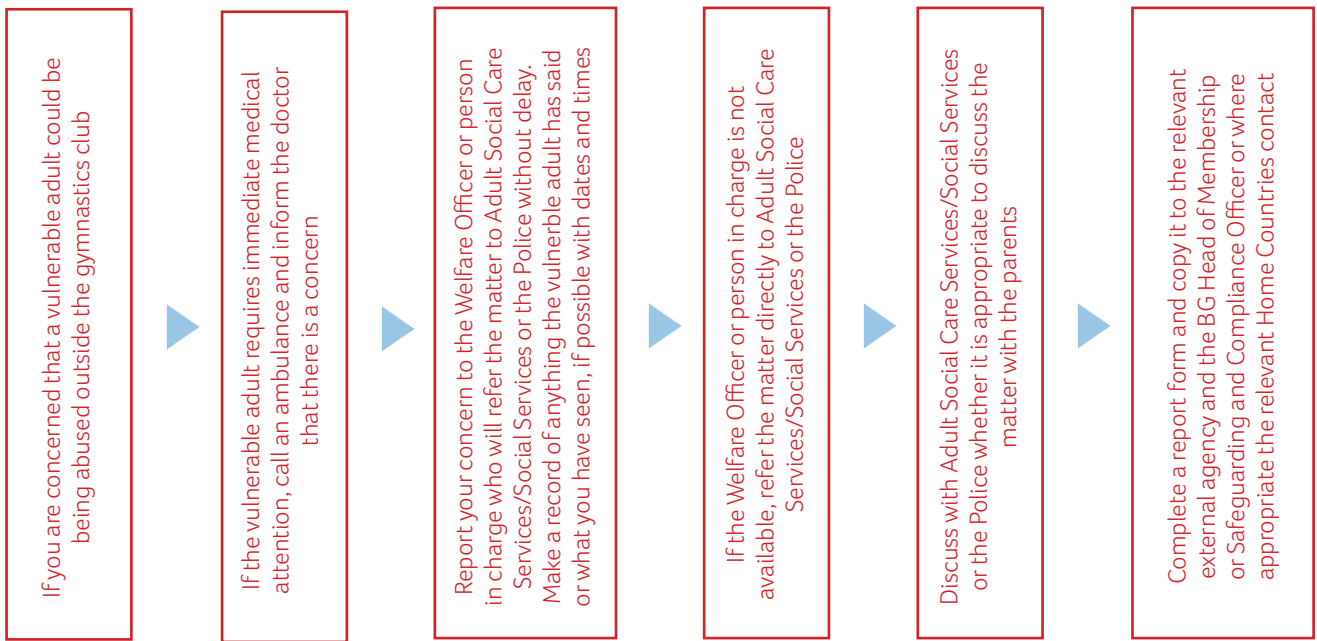
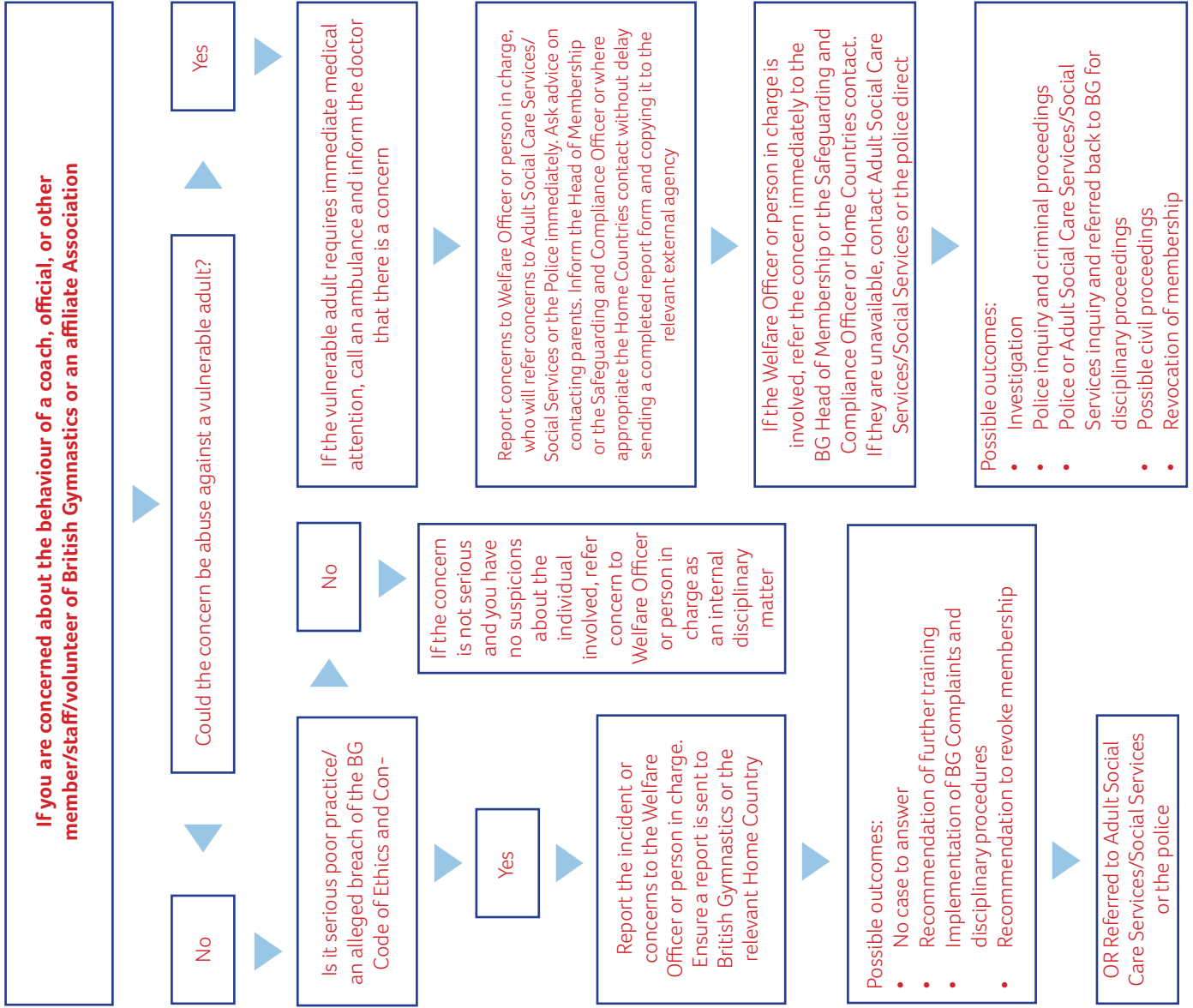
The person that made the allegation, or their family, may also initiate civil proceedings.

Where a statutory agency investigation is ongoing, BG will only act following full consultation with the relevant agencies or at the requested of the statutory agency.

The BG CRMG would consider the outcome of any criminal and/or investigation when determining what action should be taken as stated in 41 of the Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures

British Gymnastics disciplinary panels will comply with the principles of natural justice. The applicable standard of proof shall be the civil standard, of the balance of probability: whether it was more likely for the allegations to have occurred. British Gymnastics will make a referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority in any instance where a decision is reached to exclude a member from the Governing Body. Throughout these processes the welfare of vulnerable adult will remain paramount and British Gymnastics will endeavour to provide appropriate support to the vulnerable adult, parents/carers, coaches and volunteers who are affected

# A quick guide to procedures if abuse is suspected





# Responding to Media Enquiries

Abuse is an area of great interest to the media. When incidents occur it is important to have a strategy to manage any media enquiries. Although British Gymnastics and the Home Countries can deal with media enquiries, it is important for Clubs and Regions to be able to handle initial enquiries in a sensitive and appropriate manner to avoid generating any negative publicity.

If a journalist approaches any BG members, the following guidance should be followed:

- Take a note of the journalist's name and whom they represent (i.e. Newspaper, TV Company etc) and any contact details.
- Take a note of what the journalist is asking you and ask for any clarifications.
- Establish whether the journalist has any deadlines and inform them that the matter will be referred to BG or the appropriate Home Country who will contact them with a response.
- Inform the appropriate Welfare Officer or person in charge who will refer the matter to BG or the appropriate Home Country Lead Officer. An appropriate response will be formulated in consultation with BG Press and Media Officer or appropriate Home Country Officer.
- A copy of the response will be forwarded to the journalist, the club and appropriate region.

The same procedures should be followed for any subsequent enquiries and ensure that BG or the Home Country is kept fully informed of any local press coverage.

# Running a Safe Club

## Contained within this section is:

Club Registration  
Safeguarding Letter  
Codes of Conduct  
Provision of a Safe Environment  
Supervision  
Provision of Personal Care  
Spotting and Manual Support  
Flexibility/Stretching Exercises

## Club Registration

When gymnasts register with a club it is essential that the club obtain appropriate personal information about them. The type of information that should be collected at the point of registration would include:

Name and address  
Date of birth  
Parent/Carer information  
Emergency contacts  
Medical details – allergies, existing conditions  
Information on any disability or special needs, including English not being the first language  
Medical consent  
Consent for participation in gymnastics  
Consent to film gymnasts for training purposes  
Equality profile

Clubs should ensure that this information is collected at the earliest opportunity to enable any necessary risk assessments based on medical information and/or disability to be completed prior to participation.

Consent should always be sought prior to participation in 'regular club activity'. In addition, consent should be requested if there is an intention to film gymnasts for training purposes as standard part of club training.

Additional informed consent must also be sought in the following circumstances:

For participation in other activities beyond regular training e.g. competitions  
For using membership information for other reasons beyond that which was originally collected  
Photography/filming that leads to the publication of images, or use of the images for any purpose other than training (if a blanket consent has already been obtained for this purpose).

Informed consent would require the person providing the consent to have a full understanding of the circumstances for which consent is sought and should be obtained on every occasion.

## Safeguarding Letter

It is very important that new members and/or their parents/carers are provided with information about the club's approach to welfare of vulnerable adults. It is advisable that all clubs prepare a new member information pack which, in addition to providing information on training times and other club activities, should include a letter to parents/carers highlighting the following policies and where they can be accessed:

Vulnerable Adults policy and procedures.  
Anti bullying policy  
Details of what parents/carers should do if they have a concern regarding welfare  
Communication policy  
Transport policy  
Photography policy  
Equality policy  
Complaints procedure

This letter should include names and contact details of the following key club officials:

Welfare Officer.  
Chairman/Manager  
Secretary  
Coach

The letter should highlight that BG and the club are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults include the following statement:

*In a situation where a vulnerable adult is at risk of significant harm or has been harmed in connection with their involvement in gymnastics, the parent/carer should contact the club Welfare Officer who has the responsibility of referring any concerns of possible abuse to Adult Social Care Services and/or the Police and informing British Gymnastics. Alternatively the parent/carer can contact Adult Social Care Services and/or the Police direct. It is requested that where a parent/carer has made a direct referral to Adult Social Care Services and/or the Police, that the BG Head of Membership or the BG Safeguarding and Compliance Officer and, if appropriate the Club Welfare Officer is provided with the details of the concern as soon as possible so that any necessary action can be taken to safeguard all vulnerable adults in the sport.*

The club should also clearly outline the expectations that it has of its members and their parents/carers. This information may be published in the form of set of club rules and a code of conduct.

## Codes of Conduct

### Parental/Carers responsibilities

Parents/Carers play an important role in the success of the vulnerable adult. With the right kind of support and encouragement, vulnerable adults will progress steadily and enjoy a rewarding experience. It is likely that with the right support at home alongside a positive club environment a vulnerable adult will remain in the sport.

Good communication between the club/coaches and parents/carers is essential to avoid misunderstandings and to ensure co-operation. It is good practice to clearly outline what is expected of parents/carers when the vulnerable adult joins the club.

### Other responsibilities:

If parents/carers wish to raise a concern about the vulnerable adults welfare, they should contact the club Welfare Officer. If they feel they are unable to discuss this concern with the Club Welfare Officer, they should contact the Regional Welfare Officer for advice.

If parents/carers do have concerns about the coaching that the vulnerable adult is receiving they should arrange to meet with the coach involved. Coaches should always have the best interests of the gymnasts in mind. A disagreement with a coach should never be made known to the vulnerable adult as this could destroy a positive relationship between coach and gymnast.

If parents/carers remain unhappy about the vulnerable adults training and wish to move clubs, they should discuss the matter initially with the vulnerable adult and the coach before approaching another club. Parents/Carers should remember that although the vulnerable adult may no longer train at the current club, they are likely to come across the coaches and gymnasts at future competitions and events. Therefore it is important that any transfer is conducted with the minimum of upset for the vulnerable adult.

If parents/carers wish to make a complaint about any matter other than the welfare of a vulnerable adult, they should put the complaint in writing and address it to the Club Secretary. For more information, please refer to the Club Complaints Procedure.

Parents/Carers are welcome to observe training if they sit in the designated viewing area but they should not interfere or interrupt the session. It is imperative that coaches have the vulnerable adults full attention at this time. Any parent/carer who disrupts training may be refused access to the viewing area.

During competitions parents/carers and family members should adopt a positive and sporting attitude and remain in the spectator area, and not enter the competition arena. They should never dispute results and rulings of judges, coaches and officials or behave in an inappropriate way towards other spectators.

All families are encouraged to participate in Club related activities.

### Example of Parent/Carer Code of Conduct

Parents/Carers should: -

Ensure that they and the vulnerable adult abide by club rules.

Ensure that the vulnerable adult arrives at training and competitions on time and that they arrive on time to take them home. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to make any necessary transport arrangements to get the vulnerable adult to any training sessions.

Parents/Carers should not put coaches in a difficult position by requesting that they provide transport for the vulnerable adult although on occasion the Club may make arrangements to transport groups of gymnasts together, subject to parent/carer consent.

Talk to the vulnerable adult and ensure that they are aware that they have the right to be protected and free from harm. Parents/Carers should make sure that the vulnerable adult knows that if they feel they are being bullied or are concerned about the way their coach, a club official or another member of the club is treating them, they can talk to their parents/carers or the Club Welfare Officer without fear of getting into trouble.

Ensure that they and the vulnerable adults are aware of the identity of the Club Welfare Officer.

Be patient with the vulnerable adults progress. Gymnasts progress according to their age, ability and stage of maturation. Parents/Carers should bear in mind that long-term improvement is the ultimate goal and that later developers often succeed in gymnastics.

Be a supportive and a stabilising influence through the inevitable ups and downs of training and competition. Parents/Carers should encourage the vulnerable adult and provide positive feedback.

Leave the coaching to the coaches. Parents/Carers should not pressure the vulnerable adult, offer coaching advice or try to change or undermine any goals agreed between the coach and gymnast. It is the coaches' role to offer constructive advice relating to the gymnast's performance. It is helpful if parents/carers can offer the support and encouragement necessary to help the vulnerable adult feel good about themselves.

Help the vulnerable adult to develop good healthy eating habits, especially meals prior to training and competition and ensure the adult has sufficient rest.

Re-enforce high standards of behaviour and dress expected in the gym and at competition and help the vulnerable adult to maintain a positive attitude.

Stay informed by checking the club newsletter, notice board and any letters distributed at training. If a response or payment is required, this should be made promptly and on time.

Parents/Carers are very important and greatly valued in Gymnastics and it is hoped that as many parents/carers as possible will volunteer to help at the Club. Without the support of parent/carer volunteers, the Club and the Governing Body would not function effectively.

### Provision of a Safe Environment

Safeguarding is fundamental in the delivery of the sport and the conduct of those involved. Everyone must place the protection of vulnerable adults as the paramount consideration, and ensure that the environment where the gymnastics activity takes place is one where vulnerable adults are safe and helps to reduce the risk of vulnerable adults being abused through their participation within the sport.

Clubs and organisations must address the following environmental factors:

Providing open training environment

Ensuring there is a clear policy for use of changing rooms and toilets

Maintenance of apparatus, equipment and other club property e.g. minibus\*

Provision of first aid facilities\*

Storage of personal and sensitive information

\* These areas are covered in detail in the BG Health & Safety Policy.

## Open training environment

It is essential that clubs work in partnership with parents/carers and are open about training sessions. Clubs should welcome parents/carers who wish to observe and in the case of new or potential members, encourage them to view a session and remain with the vulnerable adult until they are happy to be left.

In some facilities there may be logistical problems in providing a suitable area for viewing. Clubs without viewing areas should designate a small area of the gym for viewing. This will need to be carefully managed and there may need to be limits on the number of spectators that can be safely accommodated. Clubs should also ensure that a viewing policy covering acceptable standards of conduct is in place.

An alternative way of providing viewing is to use CCTV technology. The use of CCTV would allow parents/carers to view what is going on inside and if appropriate, outside the building without taking up space in the gym. It is also possible to enable remote access with appropriate security systems in place.

It is not necessary to record images when using CCTV for viewing purposes. Clubs that wish to record CCTV images must contact the Information Commissioner for advice on compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

BG will not support clubs who actively discourage parents/carers from viewing by:

- Obscuring windows
- Refusing reasonable requests to view
- Asking parents/carers to leave without due cause
- Justifying the prohibition of viewing on spurious health and safety grounds.

The provision of an open training environment is much wider than simply providing parents/carers with a viewing area. It involves creating a culture of openness between the club and parents/carers. This will include:

- Regular written and oral communication with parents/carers
- Providing regular feedback on the vulnerable adults progress
- Opportunities to discuss the vulnerable adults progress and training regime
- Opportunity to raise concerns and receive feedback on the outcome
- Encouraging parents/carers to become involved in the club
- Inviting parents/carers to attend welfare briefings prior to an away event
- Encouraging parents/carers to attend events or keep in close contact with the vulnerable adult
- Setting up parent/carer forums
- Appointing a parent/carer liaison officer who is responsible for communication, information and encouraging involvement

## Changing facilities

All BG clubs must have a policy or rules relating to the use of changing facilities. There can be difficulties where the gymnastics activity is provided within a multi-use sports centre and will have to be subject to the availability and access to facilities, whether groups are mixed gender, and whether the changing facilities are open for public use.

Although clubs should develop a policy that best meets their specific circumstances, the following underlying principles must be adopted:

Where a club is fully responsible for changing facilities, Vulnerable adults must not be permitted to get changed in these facilities at the same time as children\*

- There must be separate changing facilities or times for males and females
- No-one should enter changing rooms whilst these are being used by members of the opposite sex
- Mobile phones must not be used in changing rooms
- Codes of conduct should address behaviour while using changing facilities
- Everyone should be aware that they must report any concerns or incidents without delay.

If the vulnerable adult needs assistance with toileting, a parent/carer must attend. In an emergency two adults of the same sex as the individual, should assist and best efforts made to retain the dignity for the individual.

Clubs, which are unable to provide safe changing room facilities, must ensure all members arrive wearing their leotards/shorts under their clothes.

\* Where a club has to use a shared changing facility that is accessible by adults, the club should ensure that the changing policy provides guidance for vulnerable adult on what they should do in the event that they have a concern about another adult who is also making use of the facility.

## Supervision

It is essential that appropriate ratios for supervision are adopted and everyone is clear of their supervisory responsibilities. When working with vulnerable adults, a competent assessment of the risk to the individual and other participants must be made when determining the ratio of gymnasts to coach. Depending on the nature of a disability, one-to-one supervision may be necessary. For further information please refer to the BG guidance on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

## Provision of Personal Care

There may on occasions be circumstances where some gymnasts will need help with personal and intimate care such as going to the toilet, changing and washing. In the main this is most likely to arise for some gymnasts with severe learning or physical disabilities.

## Spotting and Manual Support

Supporting and shaping the gymnast is an essential part of coaching gymnastics in that it helps the gymnast to understand shapes, movement patterns and complex skills, but also reduces the risk of injury due to a fall or error in performance. Detailed guidance on appropriate supporting techniques is provided as part of the BG coach education programme.

The key points on safe spotting and manual support are:

- the coach must ensure that support is only used when necessary and “over-handling” is avoided, however;
- the coach must always be alert to the possibility of performance errors or anxiety, which may increase the risk of injury;
- supporting techniques must not inhibit performance;
- physical contact should not be invasive of sensitive areas of the body i.e. genital areas, buttocks or breasts.

Infrequent non-intentional physical contact can arise out of error on the performer or coach's part. Such situations should not be ignored and need to be acknowledged through an apology to the gymnast and reported to the Club Welfare Officer or head coach and parents/carers. A written report should be made of any incident.

It is also good practice to explain and provide some written guidance, perhaps as part of an induction pack, to new members and parents/carers that some physical contact will be required but that only appropriate non-invasive techniques should be used. If a gymnast or parent/carer has any concerns, they should be raised with the club welfare officer. In any circumstance where abuse is suspected, BG reporting procedures should be followed.

## Flexibility/Stretching Exercises

There is a range of techniques and types of exercise for extending flexibility that involve the application of force. These techniques can also lead to the person applying the force coming into close proximity with the gymnast and having prolonged contact with areas of the gymnast's body.

Coaches must follow the following guidelines:

Use slow, progressive and prolonged stretching exercises, within the “discomfort zone”, rather than what might be considered to be excessive force.

Avoid exercises that place the coaches and gymnasts body in “close proximity” and might be seen as unnecessary by the less-informed parent/carer or observer.

Be sensitive to how the exercise might be perceived by the parents/carers and others.

Consider holding a parents/carers forum to explain the flexibility training techniques, so that the parent/carer is more aware and therefore less likely to misinterpret the techniques being used.

Use partner exercises with more experienced gymnasts where possible.

Individuals may have a limiting range of movement / low or high muscle tone. Seek advice from the individual/parent/carer when planning this part of the session.

# Safe Recruitment

## Contained within this section is:

Safe Recruitment  
Interviewing  
ISA Registration and CRB Disclosures  
Use of Criminal Records Disclosures and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy  
Monitoring and Appraisal

## Safe Recruitment

Safe recruitment requires safeguarding issues to be considered at every stage of the recruitment process. Although the vast majority of coaches and officials/helpers are committed, dedicated people who are motivated to work within the sport for commendable reasons, it is vital that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that any unsuitable people or people who may abuse vulnerable adults are prevented from working with vulnerable adults.

The following procedures should be adopted and applied consistently to help ensure that gymnastics organisations recruit individuals who share the organisation's values and approach to safeguarding.

As people who want to abuse vulnerable adults may seek out various avenues to gain access. These practices must be followed at all times, even where there is only one applicant for a position.

### One-off volunteers

The only current exception to this is in the case of one-off volunteers who will only have contact with vulnerable adults for limited period of time. This may include:

- Parents/Carers or other volunteers helping out at a club fundraiser or event
- Young people attending the club for a work experience

Clubs who run a dedicated facility should ensure they operate a sign-in and out system for these volunteers/visitors.

Where one-off volunteering becomes more regular e.g. more than once a month, the recruitment procedures must be fully applied.

### Parents/Carers

It should be noted that it is inappropriate, and in respect of the use of CRB disclosures would be unlawful, to require recruitment checks in the case of parents/carers whose only role is to care for their own e.g. a parent/carer of a vulnerable adult. However, in the event that the individual in question wishes to take on a role within the club that will bring responsibility for other vulnerable adults, the full recruitment procedures must be applied.

It is essential that the following recruitment and selection procedures are applied without unlawfully discriminating against candidates on grounds of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age, and are fully compliant with data protection law.

The key elements of a robust safe recruitment process will include:

### Preparing candidate information

This should include: -

- Job description** that makes reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults
- Person specification** ensuring specific reference is made to suitability to work vulnerable adults
- Application form**, which contains appropriate safeguarding sections

### Obtaining references

References that specifically address the applicant's suitability to work with vulnerable adults should ideally be taken before interview so that any issues can be addressed at this stage

### Interview

In addition to the candidates' suitability for the role, the interview process should investigate the candidate's suitability to work with vulnerable adults.

## Verifying

Applicant's identity  
Right to work in UK  
Qualifications

## ISA registration & CRB disclosure

An enhanced CRB disclosure must be completed for anyone who has not completed a CRB disclosure through BG within the last three years.

The Vetting and Barring Scheme will require anyone wishing to work with children (and/or vulnerable adults) to be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

When recruiting for a position working with vulnerable adults, safeguarding needs to feature strongly in any advertising. The recruiting organisation should prepare a safeguarding statement that should feature in any publicity about the role. In addition, the organisation should include a statement advising that a CRB disclosure will be required as part of the recruitment process.

## Obtaining references

Prior to the interview references should be sought and where appropriate, relevant qualifications or previous experience should be confirmed.

In the event that someone is being interviewed who has indicated she/he has previous qualifications/experience in gymnastics, the recruiting organisations should request, in writing on formal headed paper, confirmation from BG of: -

BG membership  
Date of last CRB disclosure  
Any BG qualifications/awards  
Any known reason for not employing/appointing the named person.

Seeking references prior to interview is always preferable in order that any concerns can be addressed with the applicant. An applicant who does not agree to their current employer being approached should be advised that in the event they are the preferred candidate for the job, they will be required to address any issues raised by the current employer prior to their appointment being confirmed.

In addition to the current employer, references should also be sought from any previous organisations where the applicant worked in paid or voluntary position with vulnerable adults. It is useful to make use of the BG reference form for positions working with vulnerable adults to ensure the referee covers all the required information.

## Interviewing

Where a position involves significant contact with vulnerable adults a formal interview should be held according to correct procedures and protocol. The purpose of the interview is to carry out an assessment of the qualities of candidates in relation to the requirements of the job and their suitability to work with vulnerable adults. There should always be a face-to-face interview, even if there is only one candidate.

Additional information can be requested at interview to support the details contained in the application form and address/ask questions relating to any information disclosed in the self-declaration of convictions. It is also important to explore any discrepancies between the information on the application form and the information obtained in pre-interview checks.

Where the post involves working with vulnerable adults, it is always preferable that there is a minimum of two interviewers to allow for a full assessment of the candidate's responses.

It is important to agree in advance the process for the interview and the questions that will be asked. These should include a number of questions that focus on suitability to work with vulnerable adults. These questions should aim to identify underlying attitudes and may require the interview panel members to be probing in their questioning techniques. Possible ways to obtain this type of information include asking how the applicant would they behave in an actual situation involving vulnerable adults.

The interview panel should take the opportunity to address any concerns arising from the information on the application form or as part of a reference. The panel should also confirm the details made in the self-declaration are correct and the willingness to complete a CRB disclosure.

## Verification processes

Anyone recruiting people to work with vulnerable adults should adopt a checklist to be applied following the selection process, without satisfactory completion of which a firm employment offer should not be made. The checklist should include:

Verification of identity

Confirmation of the right to work in the UK visit [www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk)

Verification of qualifications

To avoid any unnecessary delays, all candidates should be instructed to bring their identity documents to the interview. Candidates must also bring with them any qualification and awards certificates.

## Identity checks

It is vital to be sure that the person is who he or she claims to be. As identity verification is required as part of the CRB process, the Welfare Officer or other nominated CRB designated person should conduct the identity verification process using the CRB Identity Verification Form (IVF). Original identity documents must be provided and verification must be conducted in the presence of the applicant to ensure they are the person shown in photographic evidence.

## ISA Registration and CRB Disclosures

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 has provided the legislative framework for introducing the Vetting and Barring Scheme. Although the Independent Safeguarding Authority has been established and is now taking barring decisions.

This Scheme will require anyone working or volunteering with children and/or vulnerable adults in a regulated activity to register. For the purpose of gymnastics, regulated activity would cover any activity that involves contact with children or vulnerable adults frequently (once a month or more) and/or intensively (takes place on three or more days in a 30-day period) and/or overnight. This is likely to cover the majority of gymnastics activity. Once registered the individual will be subject to continuous monitoring and updating of their status. In other words, once an individual is registered, any new information that becomes available will be reviewed to determine whether the individual presents a risk to children and/or vulnerable adults.

Enhanced CRB disclosures are also required in line with the BG Use of CRB Disclosures and Recruitment of ex offenders Policy contained (members operating in Scotland or Northern Ireland should complete disclosures through the relevant NGB). The BG Case Referral Management Group (CRMGM) is responsible for making the recruitment decision based on the information contained on the disclosure. BG registered organisations must abide by the BG recruitment decisions.

BG requires all members who are in regulated positions to complete an enhanced CRB disclosure through BG every three years. Where an organisation is recruiting a new member of staff or volunteers who is already a member of BG and has a current disclosure, a new BG CRB Disclosure is optional.

If a CRB disclosure is required, or where the successful candidate has not previously completed a BG CRB disclosure, the individual should be provided with the required application at the earliest opportunity. The disclosure should ideally be obtained before an individual commences a role within the club. BG registered clubs will be able to confirm the status of disclosure applications using the BG online membership system.

Although an individual may be permitted to commence aspects of the role that do not involve contact with vulnerable adults (and/or children), the club must ensure the disclosure is approved before an appointment is confirmed. BG will contact the recruiting club without delay in the event that the CRB disclosure contains information of concern.

## Use of Criminal Records Disclosures and Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy

### 1 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This policy outlines British Gymnastics' policy on the recruitment of staff or volunteers with criminal convictions, the use of criminal record disclosures and the storage and use of information on convictions.

1.2 The appropriate bodies for these checks are as follows: -

Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) (England and Wales)

Disclosure Scotland/CRBS (Scotland)

Assist NI (Northern Ireland)

Anyone involved in recruitment must also be familiar with the recruitment procedures contained in the BG Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy 2009.



The following legislation advises this policy: -  
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974  
Data Protection Act 1998

- 1.5 This policy applies to all members and volunteers. A copy of this policy should be made available to any job applicants at the outset of the recruitment process where a CRB disclosure will be required as part of the recruitment process.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

Existing legislation ensures that ex-offenders are not required to disclose to prospective employers, convictions defined as 'spent'. Any applications for posts working with children and/or vulnerable adults or a managerial positions that would give influence over one or more people working in a role with children and/or vulnerable adults is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, in other words, all cautions, reprimands, final warnings and convictions must be declared, even those that are considered 'spent'. Thus, it is British Gymnastics policy to require these job applicants (including voluntary positions) to disclose any 'unspent' criminal convictions as part of their application.

British Gymnastics are commencing a rolling programme of retrospective checks on existing members or volunteers in any positions covered by the above description and will require members or volunteers to consent to disclosure on request. Failure to comply with a request for disclosure could lead to suspension.

British Gymnastics will not discriminate unfairly against applicants with a criminal record. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an applicant from working for British Gymnastics or any affiliate organisation. The nature of a disclosed conviction and its relevance to the post in question, will be considered however any cautions, reprimands, final warnings relating to offences against vulnerable adults are likely to be incompatible with working or volunteering for British Gymnastics. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. age of offender at the time of a conviction), the Case Referral Management Group may offer an individual the alternative of a risk assessment.

Where a conviction has been disclosed in an individual's application or on a Coach education exam application, the Case Referral Management Group will discuss the matter and make a recommendation to the appropriate club/individual involved in the recruitment decision. Failure to reveal information relating to unspent convictions that later shows up on a CRB disclosure could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment/voluntary role or the retention of a coaching qualification.

British Gymnastics uses the CRB disclosure services to obtain information to enable it to assess the suitability of applicants. British Gymnastics complies fully with the CRB code of practice and does not discriminate unfairly against any subject of a CRB disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

British Gymnastics complies with the CRB code in relation to the secure storage, handling, use, retention & disposal of CRB disclosures and disclosure information and with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

## 3 APPOINTMENTS REQUIRING A CRB DISCLOSURE

An appointee will be requested to submit to a criminal records disclosure request only where the assessment of the role identifies a requirement to work with children, vulnerable adults or influence over others in this position. For posts where a criminal records disclosure will be required, the further particulars of the post will contain an indication that a disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position. All subjects of a disclosure request will be made aware of the relevant Code of Practice. Any information revealed in a disclosure that is likely to lead to the withdrawal of a job offer will be discussed with the applicant before the offer is withdrawn.

**Storage & Access:** Information obtained from a disclosure will not be stored on an employee/member's personnel file but will be stored separately in lockable storage with access limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. The only information stored on a personal file will be the record of the date of issue of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure requested, and the unique reference number of the disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken. This information is necessary for monitoring purposes. A record will be maintained of all those to whom disclosure information has been revealed as it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

- 3.3 Usage: Disclosure information will only be used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent will have been obtained.
- 3.4 Retention: Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, disclosure information will not be stored for longer than necessary and will be destroyed within six months.

**Disposal:** Once the retention period has elapsed, British Gymnastics will ensure that any disclosure information is destroyed.

## Monitoring and Appraisal

All staff and volunteers should be given the opportunity to receive feedback, either through a formal appraisal or more informally through mentoring. Although this is good practice for any voluntary or paid position, appraisals are essential for positions that involve significant contact with vulnerable adults. Appraisals should be offered at regular intervals, initially at the end of a probation period and thereafter at yearly intervals. An appraisal can help to establish learning needs, review targets and consider any concerns.

All BG registered clubs must put in place a procedure to deal with complaints over staff and volunteers. Parents/Carers and all members should be made aware of the procedures for raising a complaint or concern. Provision should be made in the club rules or constitution to allow complaints and disciplinary procedures to be implemented.

## Terms of Reference

### Contained within this section is:

Club Welfare Officer  
Regional Welfare Officer  
National (Home Country) Lead Officer  
British Gymnastics (BG) Child Protection Case Referral Management Group (CRMG)

## Club Welfare Officer

### Terms of Reference

Assist the club to put in place policies and implementation plans for safeguarding and promoting welfare of young people/vulnerable adults.

Be the first point of contact for club staff and volunteers, young people/vulnerable adults and parents/carers for any issue concerning safeguarding, poor practice or potential/alleged abuse

Ensure that all incidents are correctly reported and referred out in accordance with BG guidelines

Ensure that all relevant club members have the opportunity to access appropriate safeguarding training

Ensure that BG procedures for recruitment of staff and volunteers are followed and all appropriate existing staff or volunteers have up-to-date CRB disclosures

Maintain local contact details for Adult Social Care Services/Social Services, the Police.

Ensure that codes of conduct are in place for club staff and volunteers, vulnerable adults and parents/carers

Advise club management on safeguarding issues

Ensure confidentiality is maintained and information is only shared on a 'need to know' basis

### Core Skills

Basic administration and record maintenance

Communication skills

Confidence in relation to referring cases externally

Ability to ensure policy and procedures are effectively implemented

### Training Requirements

Sports Coach UK Coaching Disabled Performers

How to Coach Disabled People in Sport

Equity in your Coaching

BG Club Management Awareness Module (includes equality training)

A Club for All (Equality training)

## Regional Welfare Officer

### Terms of Reference

Assist the Region and technical committees to put in place policies and implementation plans for safeguarding and promoting welfare of vulnerable adults.

Ensure that technical committees and event organisers are aware of the requirement to have a nominated welfare officer at all Regional events (This person must be contactable at all times throughout the event. An appropriately trained welfare officer must accompany any trips that involve an over-night stay. This role may be taken on by one of the existing staff/volunteers, providing they have completed the required training).

Offer advice and support clubs in relation to safeguarding issues  
Ensure that all incidents are correctly reported and referred out in accordance with BG guidelines  
Ensure that BG procedures for recruitment of staff and volunteers are followed and all appropriate existing Regional staff or volunteers have up-to-date CRB disclosures  
Maintain local contact details for Children's Social Care Services/Adult Social Care/ Social Services, the Police.  
Ensure that codes of conduct are in place at Regional events for staff, and volunteers, vulnerable adults and parents/carers  
Sit on Regional management committee to advise on safeguarding issues  
Ensure confidentiality is maintained and information is only shared on a 'need to know' basis

### Core Skills

Basic administration and record maintenance  
Communication skills  
Confidence in relation to referring cases externally  
Ability to ensure policy and procedures are effectively implemented  
Ability to influence key people and ensure ownership of policy and implementation plans across the Region

### Training Requirements

Sports Coach UK Coaching Disabled Performers  
How to Coach Disabled People in Sport  
Equity in your Coaching  
BG Club Management Awareness Module (includes equality training)  
A Club for All (Equality training)

## National (Home Country) Lead Officer

### Terms of Reference

Take a lead role in ensuring there is a safeguarding policy in place that is mandatory for all staff, members and volunteers and plans in place to drive its implementation.  
Ensure any required Safeguarding Standards/ Equality Standards are achieved  
Take a lead role in managing, monitoring and reviewing the safeguarding policy/vulnerable adults policy and implementation plans  
Ensure that BG members, employees, committees and event organisers are aware of their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding  
Be available to advise and support to clubs and technical committees in relation to safeguarding and welfare issues  
Ensure that all incidents are correctly managed and referred out in accordance with BG (Home Country) guidelines  
Ensure there is a strategy in place for the provision of safeguarding learning opportunities and support its delivery, including the provision of CPD for welfare officers  
Take a lead role in identification, support and monitoring of Welfare Officers  
Ensure that BG (or appropriate Home Country) internal procedures for recruitment of staff and volunteers are appropriate and existing  
National staff and volunteers complete a CRB disclosures and attend safeguarding awareness training at least every three years  
Ensure access to national and local contact details for Adult Social Care/Children's Social Care Services/Social Services, the Police.  
Ensure that the safeguarding policies and procedures are well published among all staff, members (including gymnasts), volunteers and parents/carers  
Ensure that codes of conduct are in place at National events for staff and volunteers, vulnerable adults and parents/carers  
Sit on relevant National committees to advise on safeguarding issues  
Ensure confidentiality is maintained and information is only shared on a 'need to know' basis

### Core Skills

Knowledge of key legislation and government guidance on safeguarding and vulnerable adults  
Understanding the roles of external agencies in terms of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults  
Ability to manage systems for administration and record maintenance  
Communication skills  
Confidence in relation to referring cases externally  
Ability to ensure policy and procedures are effectively implemented  
Ability to influence key people and ensure ownership or policy and implementation plan across the governing body

### Training Requirements

Appropriate Equality training

## British Gymnastics (BG) Child Protection Case Referral Management Group (CRMG)

The BG CRMG has the authority to decide on the direction of cases involving the welfare of children, and vulnerable adults. The case route will be determined by considering if a case reaches a certain threshold, i.e. would a case be considered potential poor practice or potential abuse.

The BG Case Manager will be the first point of contact for all Welfare related cases. On receipt of any concerns, allegations or information that may cause British Gymnastics to reasonably believe an individual may pose a risk to a vulnerable adult, the CRMG will be consulted on the referral route. In some instances, this may be done by telephone.

The CRMG will be made up of the following: -

Chair of Ethics and Welfare Committee

BG Safeguarding and Compliance Officer

Director of Coach/Judge Education

Relevant BG Managers (when appropriate)

Child Protection Advisors: - Individuals with relevant experience in Child Protection. Experience may involve Social Services or Police background, Specific experience of child protection/vulnerable adults in sport, Legal expertise in Children's Law

### Terms of Reference

The members of the CRMG will have experience in dealing with welfare issues.

The CRMG will be managed and co-ordinated by the BG Safeguarding and Compliance Officer, who will be the first point of contact for any referral.

The CRMG will be chaired by the Chair of the Ethics and Welfare Committee

The CRMG will operate independently from the CEO and disciplinary panel members to ensure the separation of each of the four stages of the process; referral, suspension, disciplinary and appeals.

### Procedures

The CRMG will determine the referral route for all cases that deal with the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Consideration will be given to any signed written evidence including any written representation from the accused. (Any preliminary collection of information will be carried out by the BG Safeguarding and Compliance Officer)

The CEO will sit outside this group and cannot intervene in any decisions unless there has been concern raised about a significant prior relationship, connection or interest between the accused and a member of the group.

Where abuse is suspected and any delay in action may compromise the welfare of a vulnerable adult/s, BG is authorised to inform the relevant Adult Social Care Services/Social Services or Police.

Members of the CRMG must meet or be consulted within ten working days of the receipt of any referral where it is unclear if a case should be considered potential poor practice. Although it is not the responsibility of the panel to decide if abuse has taken place, the panel must quickly decide if the case needs to be referred to Adult Social Care Services/Social Services or the police.

Any case that has already been referred to Adult Social Care Services/Social Services or Police will only be considered in relation to whether suspension from BG is required. The CRMG will only reconsider referral of the matter on completion of any investigation or action by Adult Social Care Services/Social Services or Police. Anyone who is convicted of an offence against a vulnerable adult or receives a caution in respect of an offence will be deemed to be in breach of the Association Rules.

In cases of potential poor practice or where convictions information is received from a CRB disclosure, the group may decide on an appropriate course of action. The matter will be passed back to the BG Safeguarding and Compliance Officer to manage the implementation of the agreed actions. Any actions will be reached after a fair appraisal of the case and will be in proportion with the severity of the incident. Previous allegations of a similar nature will also be considered.

### Possible Actions

Recommendation that no further action taken

A warning and remedial action plan

Referral out/back to Club, Region, Line Manager etc to deal with advice on how to proceed

Further Enquiries/interviews

Referral to CEO for full disciplinary hearing

Recommendation made to CEO to suspend member  
Devolvement to independent review panel

Members of the CRMG should declare immediately (to the group) any significant prior relationship, connection or interest which could disqualify them from any discussion on the referral pathway of a case.

Any concerns over the independence of a CRMG member on a case-to-case basis should be raised with the CEO. This can be done without fear of victimisation or reprisal. This or any other valid reason can be just cause for the CEO to request the resignation of the member from the group.

All group decisions will be communicated to the CEO for information and any necessary further action.

An individual has the right to appeal against any course of action determined by the CRMG. This must be done within ten working days of receipt of the letter informing the individual of the decision reached by the group.

The CRMG can choose to call on Legal or other advice where deemed necessary.

The CRMG will carry out a case monitoring function.

All case information is regarded as highly confidential and should not be disclosed outside the CRMG except when it is relevant to inform an external agency.

## Transporting Gymnasts

The following guidance relates to coaches who transport gymnasts to training or events/competitions. Additional guidance is provided for the official provision of transport by a club for away events.

Gymnasts are required to train a large number of hours to achieve high levels of performance therefore great commitment is required not only from the gymnasts but also from their parents/carers. In the past, it has often been the case that well-meaning coaches or officials have provided transport to members of their clubs to assist parents/carers. However, it has been identified that some adults in the sport have used this as an opportunity to get vulnerable adults alone and abuse has occurred. As a result, BG Vulnerable Adults Policy requires that BG Coaches do not take vulnerable adults alone on car journeys, except in \*unforeseen circumstances.

The following are practical suggestions to help alleviate transport problems: -

Make parents/carers aware (preferably when the vulnerable adult joins the club) that it is the coaches' responsibility to coach and not to provide transport for the vulnerable adult  
Encourage parents/carers to share transport with other parents/carers  
Transport gymnasts in groups

It is unacceptable for coaches to transport one vulnerable adult alone and in the case of transporting a group of gymnasts, best practice would require two responsible adults in the car. However, in exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, and subject to prior consent from all relevant parents/carers, a coach could transport a group of gymnasts without another adult present. This is subject to the following conditions:

The driver must ensure there are central pick-up and drop-off points to ensure they are not alone with a vulnerable adult.  
The driver should also provide parents/carers with full details of any planned breaks in the journey and departure and arrival times.  
Gymnasts must be seated in the back of the car.  
The Club Welfare Officer should be made aware of the arrangements.

In the case of gymnasts attending National squad training, parents/carers should be encouraged to team up with the parents of another squad member who lives closest to them. On occasion that the parents are unable to provide transport, a coach or official could then transport the gymnasts as a pair.

\*Unforeseen would only apply in the event of an accident or where something unexpected has happened and there is no other alternative but to take a vulnerable adult in the car and to fail to act would put the vulnerable adult at risk of harm. Where these situations are unavoidable and whenever possible the full consent of either the Welfare Officer, Head coach or Official in the club and/or the vulnerable adults parents/carers should be obtained.

# Whistle Blowing

Safeguarding children and young people requires everyone to be committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability. BG supports an environment where people feel free to raise their concerns with the knowledge that all concerns will be taken seriously.

The term 'whistle blowing' is often used in such circumstances to describe the raising of a concern about practices, procedures or conduct of an individual. In gymnastics context a whistleblower may be:

- A coach or official
- A gymnast
- A parent
- A member of the public

Concerns should be raised without delay to either the Club Welfare Officer or the BG Lead Officer or BG Case Manager. The earlier concerns are reported, the easier it will be to take action.

Anyone reporting a concern should provide as much information and detail as possible. This could include: -

- Names of the people involved
- Other witnesses
- Dates of events
- Any other relevant documentation

BG understands that whistleblowers are often very reluctant to report concerns. Thus, BG recognises that whistleblowers may wish to raise concerns in confidence. In these circumstances, the identity of the whistleblower will be kept confidential. Any subsequent reason why disclosure may be required will be discussed in detail with the whistleblower before any action is taken.

It must be recognised that concerns that are reported anonymously are frequently very difficult to investigate. The decision whether to investigate an anonymous allegation will be made by the CRMG based on the seriousness of the concerns and the credibility of the referral and the likelihood of identifying others who can confirm the allegations. Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.

All concerns raised under this procedure will be treated seriously and a decision made about whether or not an investigation is appropriate. Depending upon the nature of the matter it may be referred to the police. In these circumstances, the whistleblower may be asked to provide a written statement and give evidence to the police and/or at a BG hearing. BG will provide support to the whistleblower during this process.

BG will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take action to protect anyone who has raised a concern in good faith. Anyone who is found to have victimised or harassed a whistleblower will face disciplinary action. Anyone who raises concerns known to be untrue may also be subject to disciplinary action.

# Sample forms

## Self Declaration Form

You have a right of access to any information held on you and additional rights under the Data Protection Act 1998

### PART A

Title..... First Names(s)..... Surname.....

Previous names by which you may have been known.....

Address.....

.....

Post Code..... Tel. No.....

Email.....

Date of Birth..... Sex: Male/Female.....

Club (Please complete if appropriate).....

Please give details of the positions you currently or wish to fulfil or relevant job title.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Start date.....

Please give details of any other clubs you are or have been a member of and give details of the positions you held.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### PART B

**1) Have you ever been convicted of any criminal offences, received cautions, final warnings or reprimands?**

**YES/NO\***

If YES, please supply details of any criminal convictions.....

.....

.....

NOTE: You are advised that under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions) order 1975 as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Amendment) Order 1986 you should declare all convictions including 'spent' convictions, cautions, reprimands and written warnings

**2) Are you a person known to any Adult Social Care/Children's Social Care department as being an actual or potential risk to children/vulnerable adults under investigation for a Child Protection/Vulnerable adult related incident? YES/NO\***

If YES, please supply details.....

.....

.....

**3) Have you had a disciplinary sanction (from a sports or other organisation's governing body) relating to child abuse? YES/NO\***

If YES, please supply details.....  
.....  
.....

I certify that all information in this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and realise that false information or omissions may lead to termination of my services.

**I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE BRITISH GYMNASTICS' CHILD PROTECTION POLICY/VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY. I HEREBY CONSENT TO A CRB DISCLOSURE**

Signed..... Date.....

Print Name.....

**PART C**

**TO BE COMPLETED BY CLUB OR OTHER DESIGNATED OFFICIAL**

I confirm that I have seen identification documents (please refer to Identity Verification form for details of acceptable identification documents) for the above person, and I confirm to the best of my ability that these are accurate.

**Please provide details of documents:**

.....  
.....

Signature of club/designated official.....

Position.....



# Application Form

This form is to be completed by employees and volunteers in sport

**Confidential**

Position applied for.....

Surname and title (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss).....

First Name(s).....

Any first name, surname or maiden name previously known by.....

Date of Birth..... Place of Birth.....

*National Insurance Number*.....

Present address.....

.....

.....

Postcode..... Telephone Number(s).....

Email address.....

---

Former address (if moved within the previous three years) .....

.....

.....

---

Current occupation..... Name of organisation.....

Role..... Address.....

Start Date.....

---

Previous occupations.....

Name of organisation.....

Start Date.....

Finish Date.....

---

Relevant experience.....

Previous experience of working with vulnerable adults in a voluntary or professional capacity .....

.....

---

Qualifications.....

Academic/School.....

.....

.....

Vocational/Interests.....

.....

.....

Sporting qualifications and experience.....

.....

Reason for applying.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Name and address of two people who know you well (and are not related to you) who have first-hand experience of you working with vulnerable adults and that we can contact for a reference, or who have provided you with a reference testimonial:

With your approval we shall also contact your current employer (where appropriate) for a reference

**I am a member of British Gymnastics** (please delete where appropriate)

**YES/NO**

**FULL/ASSOCIATE**

I agree to abide by any Code of Ethics and Conduct, which the organisation has in force

Signed..... Date.....

Print Name.....

**NB: Failure to disclose this information may result in exclusion from the club or organisation**

# Reference Form

## Confidential

(Name).....has expressed an interest in becoming a coach/official/team manager/helper (please circle as appropriate) and has given your name as a referee. The post involves substantial access to children/vulnerable adults and we are anxious to know if there are any concerns about this individual having a post that allows significant access to children/vulnerable adults.

If you are happy to complete this reference, all the information contained on the form will remain absolutely confidential, and will only be shared with the applicant's immediate supervisor should they be offered the above position. We would appreciate you being extremely candid and honest in your evaluation of this person.

1. How long have you known this person?
2. In what capacity?
3. What attributes does this person have that would make them a suitable volunteer?
4. How would you describe their personality?
5. Please rate this person on the following (please tick one box for each)

	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Responsibility					
Dealing with children/vulnerable adults					
Maturity					
Patience					
Self Motivation					
Can motivate others					
Commitment					
Energy					
Reliability					
Trustworthiness					

This post involves substantial access to children/vulnerable adults. As an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of children/vulnerable adults, we are anxious to know if you have any reason at all to be concerned about this applicant being in contact with children or vulnerable adults.

**YES/NO**

If you have answered Yes we will contact you in confidence.

Name..... Organisation.....

Contact Numbers.....

Signed..... Date.....

## British Gymnastics Vulnerable Adults Incident Form

This form should be used by Club Welfare Officers to record the details of any concerns raised. A copy should be sent to the Head of Membership or Safeguarding and Compliance Officer at British Gymnastics. If there is more than one alleged victim a separate form should be completed. All efforts must be made to keep the information confidential. The information should only be shared with those that need to know if it is in the best interest of the child or vulnerable adult. Please note that where a concern is immediate please make initial contact by telephone and return the completed form as soon as possible. The form should be completed for all levels of concern, even where no immediate action may be necessary.

### DETAILS OF PERSON COMPLETING THE FORM

Name.....

Club Name.....

Position (*Welfare Officer, Coach, Club Official, Volunteer, Parent, Gymnast etc*).....

Address.....

.....

Postcode..... Contact number.....

Name/details of person who raised concern (*if different from above*).....

### DETAILS OF PERSON CONCERN IS ATTRIBUTED TO

Name.....

Club Name.....

Position.....

Relationship to alleged victim.....

### DETAILS OF ALLEGED VICTIM

Name.....

Club..... Discipline.....

Date of Birth..... Age at time of incident(s).....

Address of parent/carer.....

Postcode..... Contact number.....

Any identified special needs or disability.....

Ethnic background .....

### DETAILS OF INCIDENT

Date(s) or period (*if over a drawn out period*) of incident.....

Description of the incident/s (please include as much details as possible. If a vulnerable adult talked to you, write down the exact details of the conversation, remember not to lead the vulnerable adult. Please include any other information including location, number of incidences, any witness details etc, please continue on a separate sheet of paper if necessary).....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Any actions taken?.....

.....  
.....

Please indicate if you are in contact with any other bodies concerning this incident and include a contact name, address and telephone number

Adult Social Care.....

.....

Police.....

.....

Other.....

.....

Any other additional information.....

.....

Signed..... Date.....

# Glossary

The glossary provides the meanings, of the words and phrases that are used in the document. In recent years there have been many changes in the terminology used. The following information should also help to clarify how the current terminology and titles relate to past policy documents and training material. In addition, a brief outline has been provided on the (relevant aspects of) key pieces of legislation and guidance that relate to safeguarding.

## Gymnastics

A generic term that includes all British Gymnastics recognised activities

## Disciplines

Cheerleading, General (includes Team Gym, Gymnastics and Movement for People with Disabilities & Pre-school), Men's Artistic, Rhythmic, Acrobatic Gymnastics, Aerobic Gymnastics, Trampoline, Women's Artistic).

## Club

The term is used to describe any situation where a group of people come together with common aims or interests. In the context of gymnastics, this would include a BG registered club, a squad a competition and an event.

## Member

Describes a person participating in Gymnastics such as Staff, Official, and Volunteer etc. This policy applies either directly or indirectly to all individuals who participate in the sport of Gymnastics regardless of their role.

## Parent/Carer

A Parent/Carer is someone who has the responsibility for providing or arranging care for someone else who, because of long term illness or disability or age, is not able to care for him or herself.

## Adult Social Care Services

This is the new name for the Social Services. However many counties do not name their teams in this way.

## Confidential information

This is information that is not normally in the public domain or readily available from another source and should be subject to a duty of confidence. A duty of confidence arises when one person provides information to another in circumstances where it is reasonable to expect that the information will be held in confidence.

## Consent

This is where agreement is freely given for an action. Informed consent is where the person giving the consent fully understands what is involved and its likely consequences. Consent can be explicit or implicit. Explicit consent can be expressed either orally or in writing, although written consent is preferable since it reduces the scope for subsequent dispute. Implicit consent is where consent is implied e.g. participation in a major public event where the participant or their parent is aware that there will be TV cameras, would imply consent to be filmed.

## Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)

The CRB provides a disclosure service for employers and voluntary organizations in England and Wales. The Service is accessed through Registered Bodies or Umbrella Body. BG acts as an umbrella body for registered organizations in England and Wales. Access NI provides a function similar for employers and voluntary organisations in Northern Ireland. Central Registered Body in Scotland (CRBS) provides free Disclosures for volunteers in the voluntary sector.

## Disabled

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) defines a person as having a disability 'if he has a physical or mental impairment which has substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

## Learning Disability

The Children Act 2004 defines learning disability as: 'a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind which induces significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning'. A learning disability is a lifelong disability that is often present from birth.

## Loco parentis

In loco parentis (from Latin meaning 'in place of a parent') refers to a person who has been given explicit permission to assume parental responsibility for a child or vulnerable adult by his or her parents/carers or legal guardian. In BG terms we refer to this as 'in place of a parent' and acting as a reasonable trained adult.

## Need to know

In the context of sharing confidential information, disclosing details only to those people who have to be informed. The factors that need to be considered when determining whether to disclose information are the reason for the sharing information, the level of detail that needs to be disclosed, to whom the information should be shared and whether disclosing the information is a proportionate response to the need to protect a vulnerable adult from harm.

## Proportionality

Proportionality is a key factor in deciding whether or not to share confidential information without consent. The principle of proportionality implies that the means should not exceed the ends. In other words, the information you wish, or have been asked, to share, a balanced response to the need to safeguard a person, or to prevent or detect a serious crime.

## Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Vulnerable Adults

The process of protecting vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect, preventing impairment of their health and development, and ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care that enables vulnerable adults to have optimum life chances.

## Legislation

### Data Protection Act 1998

The Data Protection Act relates to personal data in a manual or computerised form that is easily accessible. The Act sets out the requirements for the processing of this information, which includes obtaining, recording, storing and disclosing.

### Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporates into domestic law the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights.

### Police Act 1997

Part V of the Police Act set out the measures required to obtain information about prospective employees or volunteers from the CRB (England and Wales), Disclosure Scotland and Access NI (Northern Ireland).

### Rehabilitation of Offender Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 enables some criminal convictions to become 'spent'. It helps people with minor convictions, where after a defined period will no longer have to disclose these convictions. Positions working with children are one of a number of exemptions to the Act and people with 'spent' convictions would be expected to disclose this information.

### Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 was passed as a result of the Bichard Inquiry arising from the Soham murders in 2002. The Act provides the framework to set up the Independent Safeguarding Authority and the Vetting and Barring Scheme. The main purpose is to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults.

### Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007

This Act relates to a new Scottish Vetting and Barring Scheme that builds on some of the existing provisions contained in the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003. The Act provides for two lists to be established: one for those who are unsuitable to work with children and young people younger than 18 and another for those unsuitable to work with "protected adults". Anyone who wants to work with children will be required to register with the scheme. Unless an individual is automatically barred due to a relevant offence against a child, barring decisions will be taken by a new central barring unit.

### Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007

As only part of the provisions in the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#) extend to Northern Ireland, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 replicates the remaining parts of the scheme in order to provide a seamless vetting and barring scheme.

## Mental Capacity Act (2005)

New provision relating to persons who lack capacity, a person is unable to make a decision for himself if he is unable -

*(a) to understand the information relevant to the decision,*

*(b) to retain that information,*

*(c) to use or weigh that information as part of the process of making the decision, or*

*(d) to communicate his decision (whether by talking, using sign language or any other means).*

(2) A person is not to be regarded as unable to understand the information relevant to a decision if he is able to understand an explanation of it given to him in a way that is appropriate to his circumstances (using simple language, visual aids or any other means).

(3) The fact that a person is able to retain the information relevant to a decision for a short period only does not prevent him from being regarded as able to make the decision.

(4) The information relevant to a decision includes information about the reasonably foreseeable consequences of -

*(a) deciding one way or another, or*

*(b) failing to make the decision.*

## No Secrets 2000 and Sexual Offences Act 2003

All relevant Acts and Home Office guidance documents can be obtained from [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)





British  
Gymnastics  
More than a sport