



## **Safeguarding Policy**

**Spenn Valley Vipers has adopted the Basketball  
England Safeguarding Children Policy**

**Updated: December 2024**

Definitions of terms used in this document can be found [HERE](#)

### **Basketball England child safe commitment**

Basketball England is committed to the wellbeing and safety of children. We will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of our policies that surround this commitment and ensure that child safety and well-being is acknowledged throughout our work at all levels across the organisation. We insist that all concerns are reported to maintain this commitment.

Basketball England has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse or maltreatment in any form. We take all concerns no matter how small they might appear seriously. We actively support the rights of all children. Sport can have a very powerful and positive influence on people – especially young people. Not only can it provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement; it can also develop valuable qualities such as self-esteem, leadership and teamwork. These positive effects can only take place if sport is in the right hands - in the hands of those who place the welfare of all young people first and adopt practices that support, protect and empower them.

Basketball England is committed to working in partnership with all agencies to ensure that information and training opportunities are available to ensure best practice when working with children and young people. Adopting best practice will help safeguard these participants from potential abuse and neglect and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made about adults in positions of responsibility in basketball.

### **Basketball England Policy Statement**

This policy is mandatory for the game as a whole and provides guidelines to all individuals involved in basketball under the jurisdiction of Basketball England. By participating or being involved in any capacity in basketball, everyone is deemed to accept and agree to this policy. Our organisation acknowledges its duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. It is committed to ensuring safeguarding practices reflect statutory responsibility, government guidance, and complies with best practice and working together to safeguarding children (2023) requirements.

We are committed to ensuring that all children who take part in Basketball England activities can have fun and participate in an environment that keeps them safe from harm.

Our guiding principles are:

- A child is recognised as being under the age of 18 years (Children's Act 1989 definition)

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- The child's welfare is paramount
- The voice of the child should be heard at all levels of the game
- Adults should be vigilant and notice when things are troubling a child
- All young people, regardless of any protected characteristic including their age, gender, ability, any disability they may have, culture, racial origin, religious belief and sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse
- All incidents of poor practice or suspicions of poor practice and allegations of neglect or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- It is the child protection experts and agencies' responsibility to determine if abuse has occurred, but it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns
- Confidentiality will be maintained appropriately at all times and the child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration when making decisions on whether or not to share information about them
- All safeguarding concerns reported will be conducted fairly and in accordance with principles of natural justice. Investigations and outcomes will be fair and proportionate
- Working in partnership with children, their parents and other agencies is essential for safeguarding. Basketball England recognises the statutory responsibilities of the appropriate bodies such as Children's Social Care services, the Police, the Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) to ensure the welfare of children
- Any person in charge of children and young people involved in a sports club or activity has a duty of care and should take all reasonable care for their safety. The duty when involved in a sports club is reasonably straightforward, it is comparable to the duty of a teacher in charge of a class of children of the same age

## **Responsibilities**

The staff and volunteers working with children in sports settings play an important role in building relationships, identifying concerns, and providing direct support to children; they can often be the first trusted adult to whom a child reports abuse. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all, by being involved in Basketball you:

- Accept the legal and moral responsibility to report all concerns no matter how small they might appear

- Accept the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures to provide a duty of care for young people, safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of young people
- Provide young people with appropriate support in accordance with their personal and social development regarding their involvement in basketball
- Recognise that some young people could face additional barriers to getting help because of additional vulnerabilities which could include their ethnicity, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social background or culture
- Ensure best practice is adopted to safeguard and protect young people from abuse, and to reduce the likelihood of allegations being made against themselves
- Accept and abide by the Safeguarding Policy, Safeguarding Regulations, Procedures and the Basketball England Code of Ethics and Conduct as well as all other policies and procedures

### **Equality**

All young people have the same rights to be safeguarded from abuse, but it should be recognised that some children may face additional vulnerabilities and extra barriers to getting help. This could be because of their personal characteristics such as race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social background or culture. There should be awareness that these characteristics may mean that they are at greater risk of abuse because of factors such as prejudice, discrimination, reduced ability to resist or report abuse, communication barriers or myths based on stereotypes.

### **Talented athletes**

There are also factors that can make some talented athletes more vulnerable to harmful behaviours, either from themselves, their coaches or parents, or members of support staff.

These factors include:

- Win at all costs approach
- Intense coach-athlete relationships
- A self-image that is linked closely with performance excellence
- Child athletes operating in an adult-focused environment
- Being away from family and support networks

- Fear of losing funding or a place on the program if they speak out

Athletes at all levels of sport deserve to train and compete in a safe, healthy and stimulating environment. Basketball England affiliated organisations have a responsibility to create a safe, athlete-focused environment for all.

### **Promoting good practice**

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can generate strong emotions in those having to deal with such an allegation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about what action to take. Neglect or abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people to harm them.

A teacher, coach, official or club volunteer may have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where protection is needed. All suspected cases of poor practice, or alleged abuse should be reported following the guidelines in this document. When a person enters a club having been subjected to abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the person's self-esteem. In such instances the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the young person receives the required support.

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour to protect young people and to protect themselves from allegations. The relevant sections of the Basketball England Safeguarding Regulations and Code of Ethics and Conduct should be studied. In addition, the following are common sense examples of good practice and how to create a positive culture when working in basketball:

- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals
- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging an open environment with no secrets)
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers young people to share in the decision-making process
- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Treating all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance both emotionally and physically
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport

- Ensuring that where teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by some staff who are the same biological sex and sited where possible in different accommodation or on different floors within the accommodation
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms unless in an emergency. If an adult is working in a supervisory capacity, they should only enter children's rooms when accompanied by another adult. A written account should be kept of the reasons for doing so
- Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol whilst supervising children and promoting a healthy diet
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given, which is then reported to the parents at the first opportunity
- Ensuring children are not subjected to verbal or racial abuse from any source, especially from the bench and spectator gallery, including references to height, weight etc
- Ensuring all safeguarding principles are applied to all children (U18s) involved in basketball, including players, officials, and coaches
- Not subjected to bullying, threats or undue pressure from any source
- Do not provide lifts home to U18s

### **Supervision and staff ratios**

It is important to ensure that, in planning and running training sessions, fixtures or events for children and young people, consideration is given to providing an appropriate staffing/supervision ratio of adults to participants. This is to minimise any risks to participants, enhance the benefits children draw from the activity, reassure parents/carers, and provide protection for those responsible for providing the activity in the event of a concern or incident arising.

While it is not possible to recommend a one size fits all, please account for the key considerations below and follow the minimum ratio guidance.

Key considerations:

- Suitability to supervise children
- It is the responsibility of those commissioning, planning or providing sessions/activities to ensure the suitability of those running the activity

This includes:

- Being appropriately qualified for their role and the activity
- Being subject to a safe recruitment process, including criminal records checks for eligible roles
- Having insurance appropriate to their activity
- Signing up to comply with Basketball England regulations and policies
- Understanding their responsibility to safeguard children and having appropriate training
- Obtained the necessary licence through BE and fulfilled all associated requirements
- Factors that should inform supervision levels

In the planning of all activities, and regardless of any other assessments that may be required (for example of equipment or for Health and Safety purposes), a risk assessment should be undertaken which specifically informs decision-making about appropriate supervision levels.

Key factors to assess include:

- Ages of children
- Additional supervision/support needs of some or all participants (for example due to disability)
- Competence/experience of participants for the specific activity
- Nature of the venue - whether closed (e.g. sports hall) or open (e.g. outdoor games areas); private and exclusive to the group or open and accessible to the public; and what types of equipment children may have access to

### **U18s**

Those aged 17 and under should not be included in staffing ratios, even if they have a coaching qualification. A person cannot become a qualified Level 1 coach until they are 16 years old, and it is expected that the person leading the session will be at least Level 2 qualified (for which you have to be 18 years old).

### **Parents**

Parents should be encouraged to accompany their children to activities, but they should not be included in supervision calculations unless they are members of the club and acting in a volunteering role or other capacity during the activity. In these circumstances, they should meet all appropriate Basketball England requirements for working with children (see above, suitability to supervise children).

### **Minimum recommended guidance**

Whatever the recommended ratio of adults to participants is, at least two adults must be present. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of something impacting on the availability of one of the adults during the activity (e.g. in the event of one participant requiring the attention of an adult during the activity following an accident).

These are minimum numbers, the risk assessment may well indicate the need for an enhanced level of supervision and staffing for a particular event.

CHILD/YOUNG PERSON'S AGE	NUMBER OF ADULTS	NUMBER OF CHILDREN
0 – 2	1	3
2 – 3	1	4
4 – 8	1	6
9 – 12	1	8
13 – 18	1	10

### **Changing rooms**

Considerations regarding changing rooms will vary depending on venue used, public access, and use by juniors/adults.

Please consider:

- Adults and children mixed use of a changing facility should only be permitted if absolutely unavoidable. In this situation 2 members of staff (of the same biological sex as the children) should supervise the group
- Supervision may also be necessary when children are too young to be left alone, leisure facilities have established guidelines that any child below the age of 8 must be accompanied, if the group includes disabled children who require additional support and assistance, children could injure themselves or access a potential risk (eg. swimming pool), there are concerns about bullying, fighting or

other harmful behaviours taking place that need to be managed, and there are concerns about photographs being taken in the changing rooms

- Adult staff must not change or shower at the same time as children
- Separate facilities should be available for any mixed gender team
- If a young person is uncomfortable changing or showering in public, no pressure should be placed on them to do so and they should be encouraged to do this at home
- If the club has children with disabilities, involve them and their parents in deciding how they should be assisted and ensure they are able to consent to the assistance that is offered but club members should avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which they are not appropriately trained
- All players and staff should be aware that no photographic equipment (including but not limited to cameras, video cameras, mobile phones) should be used in the changing room environment

### **Late collection**

Every club is advised to develop and publicise their policy on the late collection of children. Clubs should make clear that it is not their responsibility to transport children home on behalf of parents who have been delayed. Clubs are advised to follow a procedure such as:

- Promoting a staff contact number for parents to phone if there is any likelihood of late collection. Coaches may not be able to answer their phone during training/games, but it should be possible to leave a message
- Asking all parents to provide an alternative contact name and number to be used if they cannot be reached on their usual numbers

In cases of late collection, staff should:

- Attempt to contact the child's parent on their contact numbers
- Use the alternative contact name/number if possible
- Wait with the child at the sports facility, with other staff or parents present if possible. If the child is not collected within 30 minutes of the end of the session, the staff member should speak to the Club Welfare Officer to decide whether it is necessary to contact Children's Social Care, for example, where the staff member has not been able to make contact with a parent/guardian
- Remind parents of the policy relating to late collection

In cases of late collection, staff should not:

- Take the child home or to any other location without speaking to their parents. Ideally, in this situation there should be 2 adults present in the vehicle
- Send the child home with another person without permission from a parent
- Leave the child on their own
- Ask the child to wait in a vehicle or sport facility with you alone

### **Missing participants**

Team staff are responsible for supervision of players in their team. If a player is found to be missing, the procedure below should be followed. A description of the player should be completed and circulated to those involved in searching and the player's card or photograph should be used to provide identity.

Particular times can give rise to increased risk, namely arrival time and time for leaving. Team staff should ensure good communication with players and families to ensure everyone is aware of changes in arrival/collection plans (e.g. a child being collected by parents or not going on the team coach).

Schedule of actions:

- Absence of child noticed
- If not already aware, head coach to be notified. Event welfare officer and club welfare officer notified immediately
- Search of immediate area
- If player not found within 20 minutes, event or club welfare officer to contact police. Parent/guardian to be contacted, ideally by head coach
- Incident to be logged on incident report form by event/club welfare officer and immediately reported to Basketball England Safeguarding Team

### **Photography, video, and live streaming**

Please see the Photography and Video Guidance and [Live Streaming Guidance](#) for further information.

Please note that the key consideration is consent. No image of a child should be taken or shared without the consent of the child and parent/carer. Particular care must be taken when sharing images of children on social media, even with the necessary consent. Conversations regarding filming at junior games/any adult games with junior players must take place with the relevant clubs beforehand and this must include where the images will be stored and shared.

### **Positions of trust**

A position of trust involves a person in a position of authority over another person. There is a need to protect young people aged 16 and 17 who, despite reaching the age of consent for sexual activity, are considered to be vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation, in defined circumstances. This includes sexual activity and relationships with adults who hold a position of trust, responsibility or authority in relation to them and, as a result, have a considerable amount of power and influence in their lives. It is against the law for someone in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a child in their care, even if that child is over the age of consent (16 or over). This law surrounding this was extended in 2022 to include Sports Coaches.

The power and influence that a member of staff or volunteer has over someone attending a group or activity cannot be underestimated. If there is an additional competitive aspect to the activity and one person is responsible for the other's success or failure to some extent, then the dependency will be increased. It is therefore vital for people to recognise the responsibility they must exercise in ensuring that they could not be considered to have abused their positions of trust.

Coaches and everyone involved in supervising children and adults at risk should be careful to ensure that the appropriate boundaries remain in their working relationships between themselves and participants.

Even where there is no alleged criminal offence, Safeguarding Case Management Disciplinary Procedures will be instigated if it comes to Basketball England's attention that an inappropriate relationship, inappropriate communication or other perceived 'grooming' behaviour has been demonstrated by a Basketball England affiliated member in a supervisory capacity with Under 18s. Basketball England will refer to statutory agencies including the LADO and Police, and proceed with a referral to the DBS Barred List when necessary.

Relationships with children should always be supportive, positive and aimed at improving the young person's skill and progress.

### **Requirements for working with children**

It is essential that all people working or volunteering with young people are appropriately recruited. Clubs should develop a safe recruitment process based on the Basketball England guidance to include procedures such as checking documents to confirm the person's identity, obtaining references and conducting an interview if possible.

Please note, our safeguarding regulations stipulate that where a DBS is required, this **MUST** be verified with Basketball England before the activity commences. For example, all coaches are required to have a DBS check and therefore a person should not coach

until this check is complete and verified with Basketball England. See the regulations for further.

Please ensure that the appropriate self-declaration form is completed and note that you must declare any period of residency outside of the UK as additional checks may be required in this instance.

Please see our [Safer Recruitment](#) document

### **Recognition of poor practice, lower level concerns and possible abuse**

Affiliated members of Basketball England are not expected to be experts at recognition of child abuse. However, they do have a responsibility to act if they have any concerns about the behaviour of someone (an adult or young person) towards a child and to follow the reporting procedures in this document.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

### **Poor practice and lower-level concerns**

Allegations may relate to poor practice where an adult's or another young person's behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing concern/harm to a child. In the application of this policy, poor practice and lower-level concerns includes any behaviour bringing the game into disrepute of a child protection nature or contravening any Basketball England policy or guidance, infringing an individuals' rights and/or is a failure to fulfil the highest standards of care.

Examples of poor practice and lower level concerns:

- Use of excessive, physical or humiliating punishments
- Being over friendly with a young person and/or having favourites. This includes engaging with under-18s on personal social media platforms or through private communication channels such as WhatsApp
- Using images of young people in a way which contravenes BE or club policy
- Failure to act when you witness possible abuse or bullying
- Being unaware of or breaching any Basketball England policy such as the Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others.
- Inviting or allowing young people into your home
- Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative activity, including horseplay
- Allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged

- Making sexually suggestive comments even in fun
- Reducing a person to tears as a form of control
- Allowing allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Doing things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves
- Sharing a bedroom with a young person you are not related to, even with parental permission
- Failing to meet the basic needs of children such as not allowing them to hydrate or not adhering to risk assessments put in place for their safety

Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse. Lower-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a young person/people, parent or other adult within or outside of the sport; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

Basketball England affiliated members need to be educated on, and encouraged to self-refer, where, for example they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards expected by Basketball England. We call this neutral reporting.

If any of the following incidents occur, you should report them immediately to another colleague and make a written note of the event. Parents should also be informed of the incident:

- If you accidentally hurt a player
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner
- If a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said or done

### **Responding to poor practice or low-level concerns**

It is crucial that all lower-level concerns are shared responsibly with the right person and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively should also protect staff from becoming the subject of potential false lower-level concerns or misunderstandings.

### **REPORT A CONCERN**

## **Physical contact in basketball**

It is recognised that there are circumstances in sport when it is appropriate for an adult to touch (have direct physical contact with) a child, but it should always be for the benefit of the child, not the adult.?

**Children** have a right to say what level of contact they are comfortable with from adults.

**Parents** need to feel confident that contact between those running sports activities and children are safe and appropriate.

**Adults in sport** need confidence that their actions cannot be misinterpreted, by the young people they are working with or by observers.

You must follow these principles when working with children:

- Firstly, you must consider utilising alternatives to physical contact. Such as demonstrating a technique with an adult, eg. an assistant coach, or allowing children to demonstrate together
- Any physical contact should come after an adult has explained the nature and reason for the physical contact and asked the permission of the child, proceeding only if they are satisfied the child is comfortable
- Contact should never involve touching genital areas, buttocks, breasts or any other body parts likely to cause a child distress or embarrassment
- Physical contact should always be in an open or public environment
- Children should be encouraged to voice any concerns
- Please be aware that well-intentioned gestures, such as a hand on the shoulder, can make a child uncomfortable and may lead to a concern regarding behaviour being reported.

## **Abuse**

Somebody may abuse a young person by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger.

The effects of abuse can be extremely damaging and if untreated, they may follow a person into adulthood.

For example, a person who has been abused as a child may find it difficult or impossible to maintain stable, trusting relationships, become involved with drugs or prostitution or attempt suicide.

## **Types of abuse**

There are four main types of abuse; Physical, Emotional, Sexual Abuse and Neglect. In addition, there are also other types of abuse, and issues affecting young people which are important to be aware of in the context of the sport.

### **Physical abuse**

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### **Emotional abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only as far as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

### **Sexual abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

## **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **Other types of abuse**

### **Extremism**

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable (including the young) by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

### **Child sexual exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

### **Bullying and cyberbullying**

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

## **Child-on-child abuse**

Please see our [child-on-child abuse policy](#).

## **Female genital mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non- medical reasons. It is also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting' but has many other names. FGM is a form of child abuse. It is dangerous and a criminal offence in the UK.

## **Self-harm**

Self-harm can take lots of physical forms, including cutting, burning, bruising, scratching, hair- pulling, poisoning and overdosing.

There are many reasons why children and young people try to hurt themselves. And once they start, it can become a compulsion. That is why it is so important to spot it as soon as possible and do everything you can to help.

Self-harm is not usually a suicide attempt or a cry for attention. Instead, it is often a way for young people to release overwhelming emotions. It is a way of coping. So, whatever the reason, it should be taken seriously. The NSPCC provides more guidance on this area. [Understanding Child Self-Harm & Keep Them Safe | NSPCC](#)

## **Young people with disabilities**

In respect of disabled young people, additional forms of abuse can occur: 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.

## **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.

## **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.

## **Discriminatory abuse**

Including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability or other protected personal characteristic as defined in the Equality Act 2010, as well as other forms of harassment, slurs or similar unfair treatment.

### **Indicators of abuse**

Indications that a young person may be being abused include the following:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving themselves
- Someone else (a young person or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper)
- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- Has difficulty in making friends
- Is prevented from socialising with other young people
- Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
- Sudden weight change
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is taking place. A good working relationship with parent/guardians will help to identify any concerns that a young person may be experiencing, e.g. family bereavement which could cause some of the changes listed above. However, you must be aware that in some cases, informing the person with parental responsibility may put the child at risk of harm and in many instances, referral to the club Welfare Officer is the most appropriate course of action. The Welfare Officer can then contact Basketball England's Safeguarding Team and Children's Safeguarding services where required.

Remember it is not the responsibility of those working in basketball to decide if child abuse is occurring, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting them.

### **Additional vulnerabilities**

Some children and young people can be at increased risk of neglect and or abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, social deprivation, children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences, those with communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse happens, or who have a high level of tolerance in respect of neglect.

Special consideration and attention should be given to children who are:

- Disabled or have special educational needs
- Looked After Children (i.e. those in care, or those who have experienced being in care)
- Living in a known domestic abuse situation or chaotic or dysfunctional household
- Affected by known parental substance misuse or parental criminality
- Asylum seekers
- Living away from home
- Vulnerable to being bullied or engaging in bullying
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Living transient lifestyles
- Living in neglectful and unsupportive home situations
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion or sexuality
- Involved directly or indirectly in child sexual exploitation and trafficking for sexual, domestic servitude, or criminal exploitation
- Do not have English as a first language
- Talented and elite athletes

The presence of these factors does not mean that child abuse or neglect will occur, but staff should use their professional judgement to assess their significance for a particular child and they should be considered alongside any concerning factors.

Training courses are available on Basketball England's website to enable staff to familiarise themselves with wider contextual challenges being faced by young people.

### **Online safety**

Children and young people may expose themselves to danger, whether knowingly or unknowingly when using the internet and other technologies. Additionally, some young people may find themselves involved in activities which are inappropriate, or possibly illegal through social networking sites etc including 'cyber-bullying'. Young people who send naked or inappropriate photos of themselves to other people are actually sending indecent images of children and therefore committing a criminal offence. Although a lot of young people may see taking, sharing or receiving images as harmless, this can have a long-term lasting effect including blackmail, bullying, emotional distress and presents an opportunity for grooming and non- contact abuse to take place.

Where possible we should educate young people in the appropriate behaviours to enable them to remain both safe and legal when using the internet and related technologies.

Staff must ensure they adhere to the guidance outlined in the Basketball England Appropriate Communication and Social Media guidance. The guidance is in place to protect children and those working with children. [Guidance & Templates | Basketball England](#)

### **Reporting procedures**

How to respond to a concern or allegation raised by a child:

- Stop and listen
- React calmly so as not to frighten or deter the child or person reporting the concern.
- Listen carefully and take what they say seriously
- Keep the questioning to a minimum- you can ask clarifying open questions to gather important information that will assist you in assessing the immediate risk to a child. By using TED (Tell, Explain, Describe) questions you will not contaminate possible evidence
- Tell them they are not to blame and that they are right to tell
- Reassure them and explain you have to share what they have said. Clarify what you will do next and who you will need to share this information with. This could include the police or statutory agencies, if you are concerned about their immediate safety, or the Club Welfare Officer and Basketball England's Safeguarding Team

- It is not for you to decide if abuse has taken place but to report the concerns
- Write down everything said (in their words as far as possible) and what was done – accuracy and detail is important. Where appropriate, record on a body map the location of any bruises, cuts or abrasions
- Be aware that medical or criminal evidence might be required
- If someone is talking about non-recent abuse, act at all times as if you believe what they are saying is true

Take action to immediately safeguard the child or children. This may include seeking medical attention, contacting Children’s Social Care or the Police. You must contact your Club Welfare Officer, who in turn must contact Basketball England’s Safeguarding Team who will provide further advice. If they are not immediately available, then you should contact your local Children’s Social Care, LADO or Police without delay. If you are concerned about the immediate safety of someone, call 999. Expert advice can also be provided by the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000. You must clarify on the incident form whether the person, or a staff member or volunteer has contacted a relevant outside agency using the Incident Report Form.

### **Actions to avoid**

The person receiving the disclosure should not:

- Panic or allow their shock to show
- Ask questions other than to clarify that you have enough information to act
- Speculate or make assumptions
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- Approach the alleged abuser
- Discuss the allegations with anyone who does not have a need to know
- Take sole responsibility
- Delay in reporting the concerns

It should be noted that not all young people are able to express themselves verbally. Communication difficulties may mean that it is hard for them to explain or be understood. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the signs of abuse from the symptoms of some disabilities or conditions, in relation to the nature of an individual’s impairment. However, the welfare of the child is paramount and where there are

concerns about the safety of a young person, record what has been observed in detail and follow the procedures to report these concerns.

### **Records and information**

Information passed to Children's Social Care, or the Police must be as helpful and comprehensive as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern. Ideally this information should be compiled utilising the [Report a Concern](#) Form.

Information which may be required at the referrals stage:

#### **Young person/complainant**

- Name/age/gender/disabilities/ethnicity/address/details of parents/agencies
- Already working with the family/relationship between them and the person under consideration

#### **Person under consideration**

- Name/date of birth/gender/address/position in sport and occupation etc
- Any other allegations/previous incidents
- If known, it is useful to advise statutory agencies about whether the person has their own children and when the person under consideration will next be at a club/event

#### **Primary evidence**

- Facts from the person making the allegation including dates/times/venue/witness details
- Records with dates, including any documents such as emails
- Has anyone else been informed or is anyone else already involved in the investigation?

Reporting the matter to the Police or Children's Social Care department should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information. Wherever possible, referrals should also be made of the name and designation of the Children's Social Care member of staff or Police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow up is needed.

A copy of this information should also be sent directly to the Basketball England Safeguarding team within 24 hours and a copy should be retained by the club welfare officer.

#### **Confidentiality**

Where a child is considered to be at risk of harm, consent to share concerns with appropriate agencies is not required.

It is considered good practice to discuss any actions with the parent/carer/legal guardian but should not be done when this may place the child at risk of further harm or there are suspicions of Fabricated Induced Illness. If in doubt, contact the Safeguarding Team at Basketball England.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people. Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained with information shared on a 'need to know' basis only within organisations, in line with the 7 Golden Rules for Information Sharing. See the Data Protection section of this policy. Please see our Data Protection policy for more.

### **Procedures**

It is acknowledged that the suggestion that a child has/is being abused can evoke strong emotions. It can be very difficult to hear suspicions or allegations, but it is important that concerns are acted on. There are different procedures set out for reporting concerns about behaviour within basketball and another for concerns outside of basketball.

It is not for you to decide if abuse has taken place but to report the concerns. It is helpful if an incident referral form is completed as this sets out the sort of information which is useful. You should be careful to report as much detail as possible but avoid hearsay or assumptions.

Basketball England's Safeguarding Team are available Monday – Friday to assist with cases at all levels.

The Basketball England Case Management Group (CMG) may decide if it is appropriate and/or possible to protect the identity of the complainant, although it should be noted that in some cases this may be apparent. If a complainant is particularly concerned about their name being disclosed this should be discussed when making the referral. Where possible, those who have provided information will be informed about the progress and conclusion of the investigation.

### **Suspension**

See the Basketball England Safeguarding Regulations [basketball-england-safeguarding-regulations-final.pdf](#)

### **Appeals**

The Basketball England appeals process contained within the [appeals policy](#) is application to all decisions made under these regulations.

## **Support to deal with the aftermath**

Consideration should be given as to whether any support may be appropriate for young people and others affected such as parents and members of staff. Use of helplines, support groups and meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. Thought should also be given to what support may be appropriate for the person under consideration. See the list of essential contacts for expert organisations.

## **Escalation**

Should you feel a concern has not been dealt with appropriately then this can be escalated by raising a complaint by contacting Basketball England [HERE](#).

You can also speak to your Local Authority Safeguarding Department or the [Child Protection in Sport Unit NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit](#) should you prefer to do so.

## **How to respond to a concern or allegation made by a child**

Process flow:

1. Concern identified
2. If there is an immediate safeguarding concern contact the police and/or Children's social care. If the child requires medical attention call an ambulance/seek help through A&E. Provide all detail of the concern to the agency you speak to
3. Report incident/concerns to the club welfare officer or the relevant designated person who will complete the Basketball England incident referral form and, with serious concerns, report to the Basketball England safeguarding team and refer immediately to children's social care/police if the safeguarding team are not available
4. Basketball England safeguarding team conducts initial assessment to determine if immediate statutory services referral is required
5. Basketball England safeguarding team decides on the route the case should take :
  - 5a. No case to answer
  - 5b. Alleged poor practice

Poor practice outcomes to include:

- Referred to club or region with advice on process to be followed
- Sanctions as outlined below via CWO or disciplinary panel
- Referral to another basketball England department or another organisation
- Complaint resolved with agreement between parties

- Referral to case management group

#### 5c. Alleged serious poor practice or possible abuse

If more significant concerns emerge from 5b or 5c occurs, go to 6

#### 6. Serious poor practice case/child abuse:

- Referral to statutory services or LADO, basketball England action dependent on statutory services investigation
- Information gathered from involved parties
- Case management group referral
- Case management group to meet and to decide on outcome

#### 7. Possible outcomes (not an exhaustive list):

- No case to answer/no further action

Disciplinary sanctions including but not limited to:

- Warning as to future conduct
- Fine, temporary/permanent suspension
- Training/mentoring
- Conditions placed on continued involvement in basketball
- Information shared/referred to others
- Referral to the independent safeguarding authority

#### **What to do if you are worried child is being abused outside the basketball environment**

- A concern is identified that a child may be at risk of or being abused outside of basketball
- If there is an immediate safeguarding concern contact the police and/or Children's social care. If the child requires medical attention call an ambulance/seek help through A&E. Provide all detail of the concern to the agency you speak to. Ensure that once the emergency services are notified that the Basketball England Safeguarding Team are also notified
- If the concern is not an immediate one, contact your club welfare officer, regional welfare officer, or the Basketball England Safeguarding Team. If you have escalated your concern to a statutory agency in the first instance (police,

ambulance, child services) contact the Basketball England safeguarding team within 24 hours.

- Create a record of events, detailing the concern and what action you have taken. If you have spoken to a young person detail what they have said and any observed behaviours

### **Allegations of non-recent abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a young person but felt unable to say anything at the time). Where such an allegation is made, the club must follow the reporting procedures because other children, either within or outside sport, may still be at risk from the person under consideration.

### **Useful contacts and links:**

- Spen Valley Vipers Club Welfare Officer: Greg Dolan by [email](#) or call 07843240588
- Basketball England safeguarding team by [email](#) or call 0300 600 1170
- Basketball England's [Report a Concern](#) form
- CHILDLINE: 0800 1111 (for children - 24 hours)
- [NSPCC](#): 0808 800 5000 (for adults)
- [CPSU](#): 0116 234 7278