

Special Olympics GB: Adult Protection Policy

Protecting adults¹ from abuse of any kind is a high priority for everyone involved in any capacity with Special Olympics GB. This policy sets out how all staff and volunteers (paid or unpaid), athletes and unified partners should recognise and respond to allegations of abuse of adults.

1. Key Responsibilities

Everyone who comes into contact with adults has three main responsibilities:

1.1 Responsibility to Protect

Protect adults from abuse:

- Follow examples of good practice and the relevant Special Olympics GB Staff & Volunteer, Athlete and Unified Partner Codes of Conduct in dealing with adults
- Be open and clear about what Special Olympics GB does to avoid abuse and neglect by making sure that everyone involved with a Special Olympics GB programme knows that there are policies and procedures in use and make copies available to them on the SOGB Website Resources Section

1.2 Responsibility to Act

Please refer to Appendix A herein for the legal framework overview for Scotland.

Prevent potential further abuse:

- Always report allegations or suspicions of abuse to the appropriate local adult social care authority in. (See appendix B: flowchart (Adult))
- Where possible take immediate action to minimise the risk of further abuse (See appendix B: flowchart (Adult))

1.3 Responsibility to Record and Preserve Evidence

- Always write down details of conversations, incidents and action taken (See Appendix C: Safeguarding & Welfare Incident Reporting Form & Body Map)
- Special Olympics GB **does not** undertake Adult protection investigations (Section 47, Adults Act 1989) – Statutory agencies (police, social care and the NSPCCC) undertake this role. **Therefore you must NOT investigate an allegation of abuse.**
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis – only if it will protect the adult or vulnerable adult. Do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know.

2. Recognising Abuse or Neglect – Definitions

Adults with care and support needs – This describes adults aged 18 or over who need extra help to manage their lives and be independent.

This will include but not be limited to:

- People with an intellectual disability or physical disability
- People with mental health needs
- People with sensory needs
- People who are experiencing short or long term illness

However, it is important to note that inclusion in one of the above groups does not necessarily mean that a person is implicitly unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.

¹ ADULTS for the purpose of this policy means any person aged over 18 who is involved with Special Olympics GB including staff, volunteers, athletes with an intellectual disability or without, coaches, officials)

The Care Act 2014 describes “care and support” as - “The mixture of practical, financial and emotional support for adults who need extra help to manage their lives and be independent – including older people, people with a disability or long-term illness, people with mental health problems, and carers. Care and support includes assessment of people’s needs, provision of services and the allocation of funds to enable a person to purchase their own care and support. It could include care home, home care, personal assistants, day services, or the provision of aids and adaptations.”

3. Abuse or Neglect

Defining abuse or neglect is complex and rests on many factors. The term “abuse” can be subject to wide interpretation. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect, or occur where an adult is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not, or cannot consent.

Abuse or neglect may be the result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance. Exploitation can be a common theme in the experience of abuse or neglect. Whilst it is acknowledged that abuse or neglect can take different forms, the Care Act 2014 identifies the following types of abuse or neglect:

Physical abuse

- Including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions

Domestic violence

- Including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called ‘honour’ based violence

Sexual abuse

- Including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented 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, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks

Financial or material abuse

- Including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult’s financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

Modern slavery

- Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment

Discriminatory abuse

- Including forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment; because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion

Organisational abuse

- Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation

Neglect and acts of omission

- Including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

Self-neglect

- This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings

4. Responding abuse or neglect – What to do

When there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse, everyone must be clear about their role. All staff and volunteers (paid or unpaid) need to act impartially; not as “friends” of the adult or if applicable, their parents. It is essential that all staff and volunteers follow these procedures.

4.1 Address any immediate safety and protection needs

- Make an immediate evaluation of the risk and take steps to ensure that the adult is in no immediate danger. Where appropriate, call 999 for emergency services if there is a medical emergency, other danger to life or risk of imminent injury, or if a crime is in progress;
- Summon urgent medical assistance, if there is a concern about the adult's need for medical assistance or advice. You can call the NHS 111 service for urgent medical help or advice when it's not a life-threatening situation
- If there are other adults with care and support needs who are at risk of harm, take appropriate steps to safeguard them
- Contact the Police if a crime has been or may have been committed
- Take steps to preserve any physical evidence if a crime may have been committed, and preserve evidence through the recording of everything that has happened and been said on the Safeguarding Incident Reporting Form.
- **Contact your Special Olympics club designated Safeguarding & Welfare officer and advise SOGB Safeguarding & Welfare team (see Appendix B : Flowchart (adult))**
- Inform parents/guardians/carers only if it will not place the adult at greater risk

5. Dealing with disclosures

It is often difficult to believe that abuse or neglect can occur. Remember, it may have taken a great amount of courage for the adult to tell you that something has happened. They may fear the abuse could get worse if they tell, or fear that they will not be believed which may prevent adults from revealing the information.

- Accept what the adult is saying – do not question them or get them to justify what they are saying – reassure them that you will take what they have said seriously
- Don't 'interview' the adult; just listen calmly to what they are saying. If they want to give you lots of information, let them. Try to remember what they are saying in their own words so that you can record it later
- You can ask questions to establish the basic facts, but try to avoid asking the same questions more than once, or asking them to repeat what they have said - this can make them feel they are not being believed

- Don't promise the adult that you'll keep what they tell you confidential or "secret". Explain that you will need to tell other people but you'll only tell people who need to know so that they can help

5.1 Speak to the adult who is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect

- From the very first stages of a concern being identified, the views of the adult should be gained. This will enable the person to give their perspective about the potential abuse or neglect concerns that have been raised. There will be occasions where speaking to the adult could put them at further or increased risk of harm. This could be, for example, due to retaliation, or a risk of fleeing or removal of the adult from the local area, or an increase in threatening or controlling behaviour if the person causing the risk of harm were to know that the adult had told someone about the abuse or neglect, or that someone else was aware of it. The safety of the adult and the potential for increasing the risk should always be considered when planning to speak to the person.
- Any such situations where there is the potential for endangering safety or increasing risk should be assessed carefully and advice taken from your Special Olympics club designated Safeguarding & Welfare officer or in their absence a member of the SOGB Safeguarding & Welfare team or from an external agency as appropriate.

5.2 When speaking to the adult

- Speak to the adult in a private and safe place to discuss their concerns. It is recommended that this meeting is not attended by the Safeguarding officer alone but a secondary officer should be present. The person alleged to be the source of the risk should not be present in all but the most exceptional of circumstances
- Get the adult's views on the concern and what they want done about it
- Give the adult information about the adult safeguarding process and how that could help to make them safer
- Explain confidentiality issues, how they will be kept informed and how they will be supported
- Identify communication needs, personal care arrangements and access requests
- Discuss what could be done to make them feel safer

6. Responding to Adult Safeguarding Concerns – a summary of what to do

There are some key responsibilities and actions for anyone who identifies the possibility of abuse or neglect. These responsibilities must be addressed on the **same day** as the concern is raised.

- **Immediate protection** - Take any immediate actions to safeguard anyone at immediate risk of harm, including summoning medical assistance
- **Speak to the adult wherever it is safe to do so** – get the views of the adult on the concern or incident, and see what they would like to happen next. Listen to what they have to say, and ensure they are given the support they need from local help system in the area e.g. Adult Social Care
- **Detection and prevention of crime** - Where there is evidence a criminal offence has taken place, or a crime may be about to be committed, contact the Police immediately
- **Record and preserve evidence** - Preserve evidence through recording and take steps to preserve any physical evidence. If you are at an event and the alleged incident has just taken place, you should try to ensure that anything that might be used as evidence is not interfered with
- **Inform your Special Olympics club designated officer** or in their absence please contact Special Olympics GB's Safeguarding & Welfare team.
- **Report and inform - Report to Adults Social Care** as soon as possible, and in all circumstances on the same day as the concern is raised. (please visit your local area adult social care website for contact details)

7. Practice Guidance

7.1 Who do I speak to when I contact the police?

Different police authorities work differently. Ask if there is a special team for adults (and if required adults with an intellectual disability) or an officer who deals with vulnerable adults as victims.

Make sure that you find out:

- The name of the person you have been speaking to (you will need to record this in the SOGB Safeguarding & Welfare incident report)
- Whether they will be contacting social services or if you have to do this

7.2 Who else has to be informed?

- You need to decide whether the adult has enough understanding of the alleged or suspected abuse to give their consent to tell others about it or for it to be investigated further. You must use the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 to assess the capacity of the individual
- Remember that if a crime might have been committed you have to inform the police

7.3 What if the victim is a member of staff or volunteer?

- Follow the same guidelines. Volunteers and paid staff have the same right to be protected from abuse as athletes/unified partners do
- Provide support

7.4 What if a volunteer who has an intellectual disability first hears the allegation or suspicion?

- Give them support to follow the same guidelines

7.5 What about the person who has been accused?

- If the person who has been accused **is not** involved with Special Olympics GB it is not your job to tell them that they have been accused of abuse or neglect. You must avoid “alerting” the person accused
- If the person who has been accused **is** involved with Special Olympics GB then the managing allegations policy should be followed

8. How do I write the Report?

You should complete the standard Special Olympics GB Safeguarding & Welfare Incident Report Form with the following information:

Persons Involved:

- This should include name, gender, address, age, date of birth, what role they have with the organization or if at a sanctioned Special Olympics event or training session, what role e.g. athlete, coach, staff member, volunteer, spectator etc. If possible include a telephone number for immediate follow-up action if necessary
- Also include names and contact information of any witnesses to the incident if applicable

Incident Details:

- State factual information.
- If the adult involved in the incident is distressed or upset, keep questions to a minimum but obtain enough information to ensure you understand what is being said or communicated
- Remember you are reporting a concern, not investigating it
- If someone has been hurt in the incident, include a description of any physical marks (including the site) or any visible bruising or injuries (See Appendix C use a body map to record this. **DO NOT remove any clothing or take any photos**)

Action Taken:

- Include details of the action taken. If the incident was referred to another person or organisation (e.g. Games Medical Service, athlete's coach etc.) include the name and position of the person and their contact telephone number

Follow-up Action:

- If you feel that particular follow-up action is necessary or have suggestions to prevent this type of incident occurring again in the future, please state details and recommendations
- This guidance is on the back of the Safeguarding & Welfare Incident Report Form.
- Give the completed Incident Report Form to your Special Olympics Club Safeguarding & Welfare Officer. If you are at an event please give the completed form to the designated Safeguarding & Welfare Officer or Head of Delegation or
- Because the Safeguarding & Welfare Incident Report Form contains personal information you should not keep a copy yourself. If you need a copy later because you are going to be interviewed by the police or social services you should get this from your Special Olympics Club Safeguarding & Welfare Officer.
- Special Olympics Club Safeguarding & Welfare Officers must forward a copy of the Safeguarding & Welfare Incident Report Form to the Special Olympics GB Safeguarding & Welfare Leads.

8. Who Needs to Know?

This is a summary of who should be told about an allegation of abuse:

The Police

- You inform the local police force. If you are at an event or competition and the alleged incident has just taken place this means the police force local to the event even if it is abroad

Social Services

- You inform the local Social Services Department. The definition of local is the same as in 1 above. The Police may contact Social Services but make sure you are very clear who is going to do this

Special Olympics GB

- Your Special Olympics Club Safeguarding & Welfare Officer, or if you are at an event or competition, the Safeguarding & Welfare Officer or Head of Delegation. Special Olympics GB's Safeguarding & Welfare Leads.

9. Key Contacts

Special Olympics GB

For assistance or support in completing this form, please contact a member of the Special Olympics GB Safeguarding & Welfare team on;

- Karen Wallin 07990 573604 karen.wallin@sogb.org.uk
- Andy Heffer 07973 838988 andy.heffer@sogb.org.uk

Appendix A

Legal Framework

Gov.scot - <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Support-Social-Care/Adult-Support-Protection>

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2007/asp_20070010_en_1

Easy read – understanding the Act 2007
<http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/1095/0059478.pdf>

Adults with incapacity (*Scotland*) Act 2000
<http://www.actagainstharm.org/>

APPENDIX B: FLOWCHART – please download from Resources/Safeguarding & Welfare

APPENDIX C: SAFEGUARDING & WELFARE INCIDENT REPORT FORM AND BODYMAP – please download from Resources/Safeguarding & Welfare

SOGB WHISTLEBLOWING STATEMENT

It is important that people within SOGB have the confidence to come forward within the organisation to speak or act if they're unhappy with anything. Whistleblowing occurs when a concern is raised about dangerous or illegal activity, or any wrong doing within the organisation.

Complaints that count as whistleblowing -You're protected by law if you report any of the following:

- a criminal offence, e.g. fraud
- someone's health and safety is in danger
- risk or actual damage to the environment
- a miscarriage of justice
- the company is breaking the law, e.g. doesn't have the right insurance
- you believe someone is covering up wrongdoing

Complaints that don't count as whistleblowing

• Personal grievances (e.g. bullying, harassment, discrimination) aren't covered by whistleblowing law, unless your particular case is in the public interest. Report these under your employer's grievance policy.

The NSPCC whistleblowing advice line Call: 0800 028 0285 or E-mail: help@nspcc.org.uk will support staff who have concerns about how a child protection issue is being handled their own or another organisation.