

**AT A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF  
THE SIDMOUTH RUNNING CLUB HELD IN SIDMOUTH ON  
WEDNESDAY 30 MARCH 2011 IT WAS AGREED TO ADOPT  
IN ITS ENTIRETY THE WELFARE POLICY OF UK  
ATHLETICS AS DETAILED BELOW:**

## **UKA Welfare Policy**

This document contains a copy of the United Kingdom Athletics (UKA) welfare policy (incorporating Child protection). It is with the kind permission of David Brown CBE, Welfare Officer UKA, that the policy is reprinted here.

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### **Abbreviations**

- AAAE = Amateur Athletic Association of England
- ACPC = Area Child protection Committee
- CPC = Child Protection Committees
- CP = Child Protection
- CPSU = Child Protection in Sport Unit (inside NSPCC, co-funded by Sport England)
- CRB = Criminal Records Bureau
- CRBS = Criminal Records Bureau Scotland
- IAAF = International Association of Athletic Federations(s)
- HC's = Home Country Athletic Associations: Scottish Athletics Ltd., Northern Ireland Athletics Federation, Athletics Association of Wales, Amateur Athletics Association of England
- NIAF = Northern Ireland Athletics Federation
- NSPCC = National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
- PECS = Pre-employment Consultancy Service
- POCA = Protection of Children Act
- POVA = Protection of Vulnerable Adults
- SCUK = Sports Coach UK (formerly national Coaching Foundation)
- SAL = Scottish Athletics Limited

- TA's = Territorial Athletics Associations: North of England Athletics Association, Midland Counties Athletics Association, South of England Athletics Association.
- UKA = United Kingdom Athletics
- UKSI = United Kingdom Sports Institute
- WA = Welsh Athletics
- WO = Welfare Officer (incorporating Child Protection)

## **Introduction**

It is intended that the Athletics Welfare Policy and Procedures will become living, working documents that coaches, officials, administrators, athletes, parents and other individuals will want to adopt. The policy, procedures and subsequent implementation strategies are a statement of the confidence we have in our sport and in our systems to deliver on such issues. The policies state not only what our core values are but also what we define as acceptable within our sport. The documents serve to demonstrate our accountability as a provider of a service irrespective of the status of the provider, whether they are volunteers or paid people within the sport. The policy and procedures also demonstrate that in line with other voluntary agencies and also in line with other sports in the UK, we are cogniscent of the need to determine what good standards are.

While the content of the welfare policy and procedures are primarily intended to develop a sense of awareness as well as procedural guidance for athletics in relation to child protection, it is essential that the key principles contained in this document are recognised as being founded on key principles of equality and social justice for all in our sport. These principles extend to all who take part in athletics irrespective of gender, disability, vulnerable persons, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity religion and political view. The Welfare Policy therefore serves as a template for further action in each and all of these areas. It serves to guide all in the sport and those from outside the sport as to the strength and robust nature of the duty of care that the sport has for all those involved in athletics throughout the UK. The welfare policy document should be both a consultative document and a living document and UK Athletics and HC's are committed to expanding the remit of the welfare policy so that it is as inclusive as possible. Those reading the document should be mindful therefore that while the central focus currently is the identification of one of the more vulnerable groups in the sport (i.e. children) the document also serves to outline policies and procedures, which could equally apply across a range of issues in that UK Athletics and HC's will be adding to the document as a matter of course.

UK Athletics, AAAs, NIAF, SAL, WA will promote the welfare of the child as the paramount consideration in all activities and events and will encourage and support children and young people to express their views about matters which affect them. We will promote working in partnership with parents and people with parental responsibility. With support from partner agencies, we will undertake a regular review of welfare information

## **Roles and responsibility**

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all within the sport. It is the responsibility of UK Athletics to lead the strategic planning for welfare, to direct, monitor, and evaluate welfare implementation programs and to manage welfare cases as outlined in diagram 1 and 1a of the UKA and Home Country Welfare Procedures. It is the responsibility of AAAs, NIAF, SAL and WA to share in the strategic planning process for welfare

implementation in the UK, to strategically plan and manage the implementation of the welfare procedures in each respective Home Country and to deal with concerns about welfare as outlined in diagrams 1 and 1a of the UKA and Home Country Welfare procedures.

## **Policy statement**

UK Athletics, AAAofE, NIAF, SAL and WA (HC's) believe that everyone involved in athletics should thrive, fare well and enjoy safety, security and protection from abuse, maltreatment or misconduct. Every individual involved in athletics events and programs is responsible for upholding this belief.

UK Athletics and HC's also recognise that they have a responsibility to ensure the highest standard of care to all (including children) involved in athletics. UK Athletics will support and guide the home nation delivery partners and take all necessary steps to ensure the welfare of all (including children) involved in athletics.

All athletics agencies will:

- accept the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures to provide a duty of care for all people (including children) within the sport, safeguard their well-being and protect them from abuse
- respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of people taking part in athletics including young people, disabled and/or vulnerable adults
- recruit, train and supervise its employees and volunteers to adopt best practice in all equality issues, to safeguard and protect young people from abuse, and themselves against false allegations
- require staff/volunteers to adopt and abide by the Athletics Welfare Policy and Procedures, Athletics Codes of Conduct and Investigatory, Grievance, Disciplinary and Appeals procedures.
- respond to any allegations appropriately and implement the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures.

UK Athletics will support, guide, regulate, monitor and provide accountability. They will work with the home nations to:

- Promote adherence to the Welfare policy through providing education, training and information
- Develop good practice guidance in relation to recruitment, selection, training of coaches, officials and volunteers
- Establish welfare officers at National level and support the selection of welfare officers at local level
- Establish protocols between Home Countries and other sports and organisations in relation to welfare policies
- Produce information material for those involved in athletics

As a National Governing Body, UK Athletics frequently operates in partnership with other individuals and organisations, including the home country athletic associations, UK Sports Institute and home country Sports Councils. UK Athletics will meet its moral and legal obligations in respect of child protection, duty of care and standards of welfare for all, and expects its national and local partners and collaborators to do the same.

This document sets out the key aims of the 'Athletics Welfare' policy. It also explains the principles that underpin this policy that should be observed by everyone within the community of athletics. It is the responsibility of each home country athletic association to ensure that it has in place approved procedures that will guarantee the effective implementation of this policy.

## **Aims**

The aims of UK Athletics and HC's in relation to the 'Athletics Welfare' policy are to:

1. ensure the highest possible standards of safety and welfare for all athletes of all ages and others engaged in UK Athletics activities and events, especially children and vulnerable adults
2. embed a process of continuous improvement in its ongoing work on welfare in the sport
3. work with its partners to ensure that quality assured training is offered to all staff and volunteers engaged in UK Athletics programs, either directly or through the appropriate agencies such as the NSPCC, the CPSU, SCUUK, Sports Councils, UKSI and Home Country Governing Bodies
4. adopt and promote good practice in the welfare and protection of athletes and other athletics personnel
5. demonstrate ethical standards of leadership and behaviour in all its work

## **Principles**

The main principles underpinning this policy are:

- Safety - the welfare of the athlete will always be paramount
- Equality - the right of everyone involved in athletics to equitable treatment, regardless of age, sex, race, religion, ability, sexual orientation or social background, will be upheld
- Responsiveness - all allegations or suspicions of abuse or violations of athlete welfare will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately and speedily. Those found to be spreading malicious or false allegations will be disciplined according to the relevant procedures
- Consent - those with parental responsibility will be consulted if it becomes necessary to invoke the procedures that accompany 'Athletics Welfare'
- Compliance with the statutory system in each of the HC's - UK Athletics and HC's will operate within the law, including guidelines and rules set down by the CRB, CRBS and PECS and the Home Office. UK Athletics will work in partnership with Social Services/Work Departments, Police Child Protection Units, ACPCs, CPCs, the CPSU, Children First and other relevant agencies in order to ensure compliance with this policy
- Fairness - the human rights of staff, coaches, athletes or volunteers facing allegations will be embodied in disciplinary and appeals procedures

This policy recognises and builds on legal and statutory definitions of a child.

- The distinction between ages of consent, civil and criminal liability are recognised but in the pursuit of good practice in the delivery and management of athletics a child is recognised as being under the age of 18 years.
- Adults looking after children in the absence of the person with parental responsibility have to take reasonable care in all circumstances, regardless of the age of the child.
- The child's welfare is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All incidents of suspicious poor practice and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All children have a right to participate in athletics in an enjoyable and safe climate.
- Young athletes have a right to expect appropriate management, support, personal and social development with regard to their involvement in all levels of athletics.
- It is the responsibility of the child protection experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place but it is everyone's responsibility to report any concerns.
- Confidentiality should be upheld in line with the Data Protection Acts 1984 and 1998, and the common law of confidentiality.

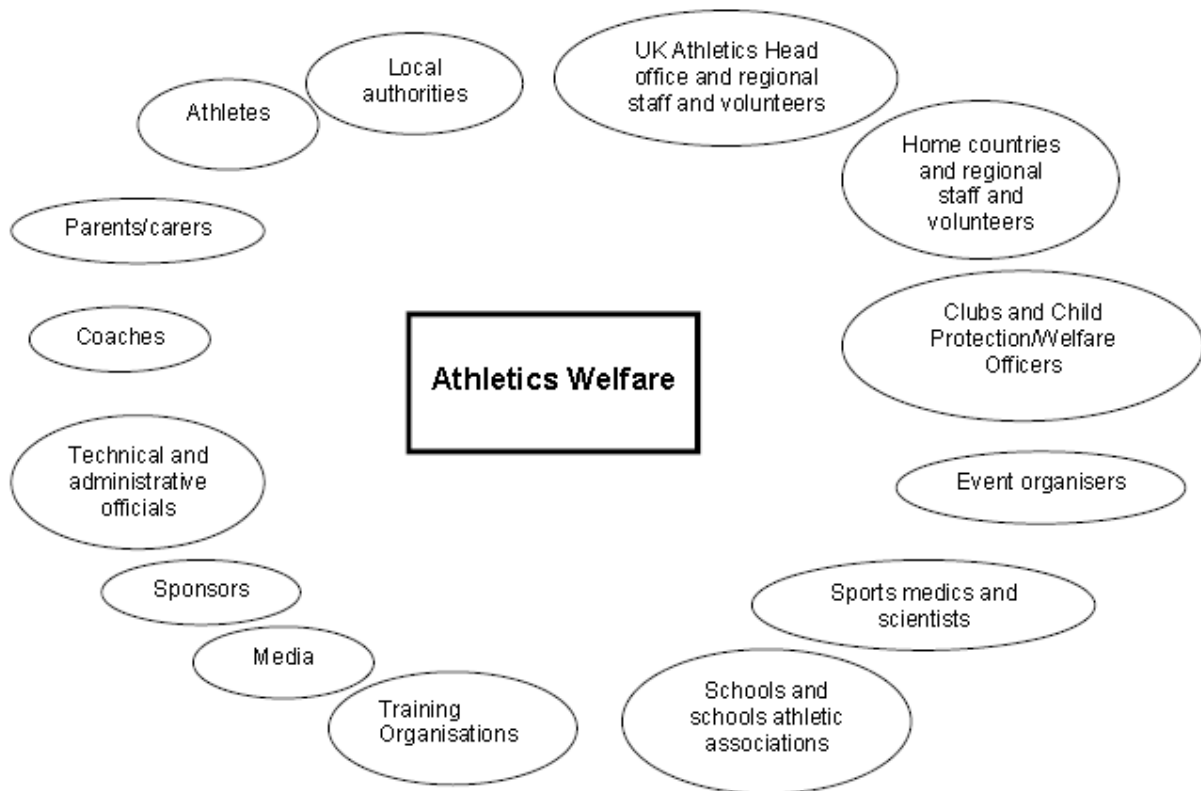
## **Scope**

Athletics stakeholders (see Figure 1) need to respond to four main dimensions of athlete welfare and protection by:

1. recognising and referring to the appropriate agency anyone who has been subjected to poor practice, abuse or misconduct by someone else, whether inside sport (by another staff member or athlete) or outside sport (such as the family or peer group);
2. observing and encouraging good practice when working with athletes in order to avoid perpetrating poor practice, abuse or other types of misconduct;
3. taking precautions to avoid false allegations against themselves;
4. safeguarding the good name and integrity of the sport of athletics.

The procedures adopted by partner athletic organisations should assist with safe practice with respect to all four dimensions of welfare in the sport. The 'golden rule' for all involved in athletics in relation to welfare and protection is that it is not your responsibility to judge whether or not a welfare violation has taken place but it is your responsibility to act on any concerns you may have.

**Figure 1 Stakeholders in 'Athletics Welfare'**



## Definitions

- Abuse of trust - whereby a person in a position of power exploits or distorts that relationship for their own gain or to further their own social, political or religious views; it also includes the misuse of power to influence the development of attitudes towards training, drugs or cheating that conflict with those embodied in this policy. In certain circumstances an abuse of trust will be a criminal offence (Sexual Offence Amendment Act 2000)
- Agency - another organisation involved in a partnership arrangement with UK Athletics. This includes the home country and area athletic associations/territories, education, sports development, local authority partners and sponsors involved either directly or indirectly in athletics provision (see Figure 1).
- Career - any adult, such as a coach or a team manager, looking after a child in the absence of a person with parental responsibility.
- Child or young person - For the purpose of the welfare policy for each of the HC's anyone under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989 definition). (NB. The Children (S) Act 1995 defines anyone under the age of 16 as a child, however legislation around the safe recruitment of adults working with children states that a child should be anyone under the age of 18). Any person acting in charge of a child will be required to undergo the appropriate HC disclosure check.
- Child abuse - anything done by someone which harms or poses a risk to a child including emotional, sexual, or physical abuse or harassment, neglect or bullying.
- Emotional abuse - a failure to show due care and attention to another; use of threats, sarcasm, taunts or shouting that undermines another's [self confidence](#) or self esteem;

manipulation or misuse of power; placing of unrealistic pressure or expectations on someone.

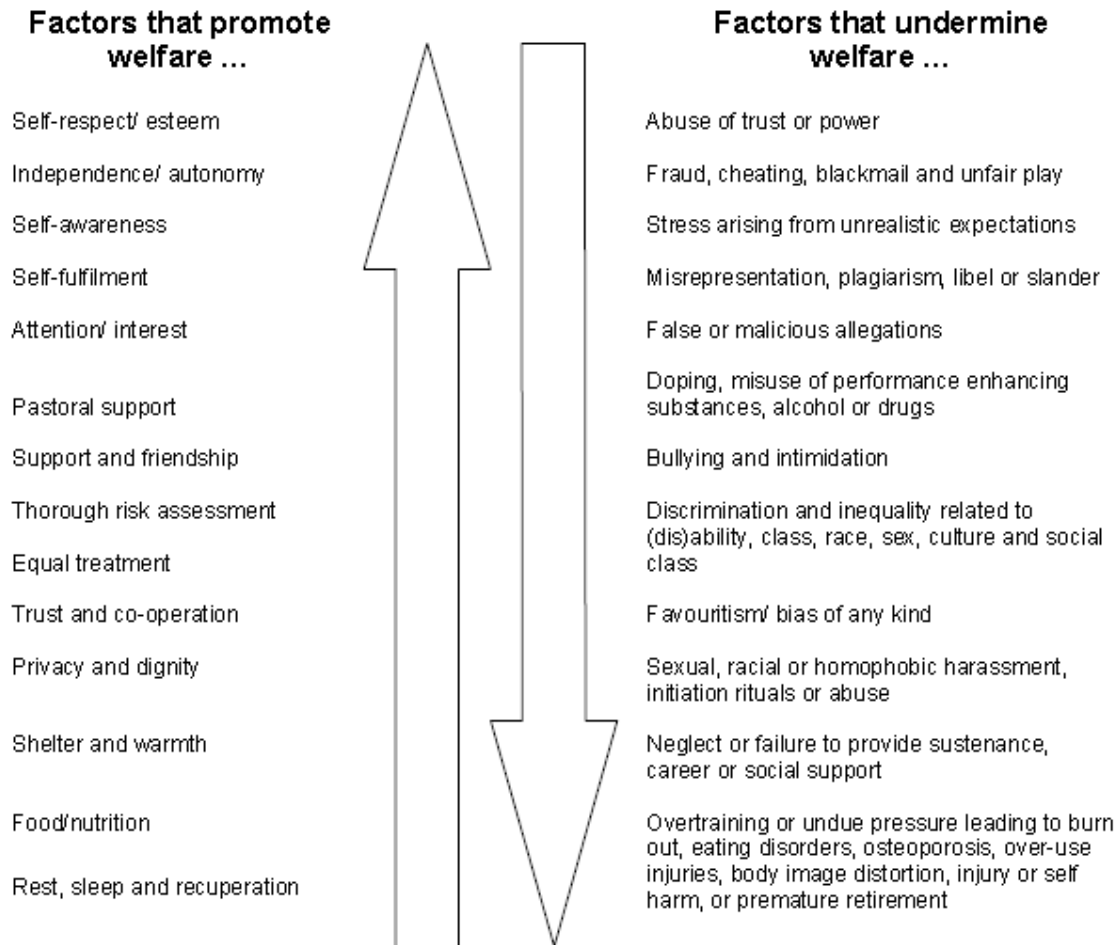
- Harassment and bullying - behaviour towards another that is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, malicious, degrading, offensive or harmful through intent or negligence.
- Neglect - failure to provide for basic needs (for food, shelter, warmth or care) of a dependent person such as a child or disabled athlete; leaving a dependent person without proper supervision or placing them at risk of injury; expecting someone to carry out tasks for which they do not have the necessary skills or safety training. Neglect also includes the imposition of inappropriate nutritional and/or weight control regimes.
- Physical abuse - infliction of injuries or failure to prevent these. This includes, amongst others: giving alcohol to a child or forcing someone to drink alcohol unwittingly or against their will; administering or condoning the use of inappropriate drugs; and, expecting an athlete to train or compete at an intensity or in ways that are inappropriate to his or her stage of growth or physical capacity or when ill, injured or exhausted.
- Poor practice - behaviour by a responsible adult that sets a poor example and thus negatively affects the experience of another, especially where they are young or dependent: this is not the same as abuse.
- Responsible adult - any staff looking after children, young or vulnerable people who are taking part in a UKA programme or event or taking part in non athletics events but organised by athletics (e.g. club social events).
- Sexual abuse - exploitation of males or females for sexual gratification, including: trading sexual activities for fear or favour; sexual bullying or intimidation, sexual joking or harassment.
- Staff - all those working in a paid or unpaid capacity for athletics events or programs in the UK.
- Stakeholder - a group or individual that has a stake or interest in the management of athletic disciplines.
- Welfare - the overall well-being of athletics personnel, especially relating to children and young people, including the maintenance of appropriate safety, security, nourishment and shelter, and protection from all forms of misconduct (as defined above and in Figure 2).
- Vulnerable adult - a person, being aged 18 or over, may be considered to be vulnerable if that person:
  1. receives personal care, or nursing, or support to live independently in their own home, or a care home
  2. receives any health or social services
  3. has a substantial learning or physical disability, or
  4. a physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including addiction to alcohol or drugs, or
  5. a substantial reduction in physical or mental capacity due to advanced age or illness

## **Breaches of Welfare**

There are many different types of misconduct that adversely affect someone's welfare. However, These usually have the common result of victimising one or more persons. Of particular concern to UKA are welfare violations that affect children, young people and vulnerable adults. Such violations include child abuse, harassment or abuse, extortion, fraud

and cheating (see Figure 2). In addition to causing personal harm, any misconduct is likely also to bring the sport of athletics into disrepute.

**Figure 2 Factors that promote or undermine welfare**



### **Action by Uk Athletics and its Partners**

UKA expects all partners and stakeholder agencies, including sponsors, medics and paramedics, agents and promoters, to comply with the ‘Athletics Welfare’ policy OR to demonstrate that they subscribe to an equivalent policy prior to commencing a partnership or collaboration.

Everyone involved directly in delivering athletics under the auspices of UKA will be able to receive training in the awareness, recognition and referral of welfare issues more generally and child protection issues in particular. Through its partnerships with the home countries, UKA will promote education and training opportunities, using agencies such as the CPSU, Children First or Sportscoach UK, to help its staff to identify the signs and indicators of such violations. As part of their welfare procedures, the home country associations will also provide mechanisms for the receipt and management of complaints, disclosures and allegations of wrongdoing.



Adults engaged in athletics in the UK, in either front line or in ancillary roles that support athletics, and who may come into contact with athletes, will be required to observe codes of practice stipulated by the relevant home country association.

UKA expects its partners to ensure that informed consent has been given by those persons with parental responsibility before any child engages in athletics in an affiliated club or team. This includes consent for the use of photographic images by UKA or HCs.

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the HCs, each of which has adopted detailed procedures for this purpose. Child abuse issues should be referred immediately to local social services and/or police and the HC / UKA. All other misconduct issues will normally be dealt with by the athletics body that is closest to the point of complaint or disclosure. Where necessary, the Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures will be invoked.

## **Acknowledgements and Sources**

The Athletics in the UK welfare Policy and Procedures are based on documents originally prepared on behalf of the sport of Athletics by Professor Celia Brackenridge, Leisure and Sport Research Unit, Cheltenham and Gloucester College of HE

UK Athletics gratefully acknowledges the assistance provided by the many sporting and other organisations whose previous work on child protection and ethics in sport has informed this document. Sources used in researching this document include:

- Officials of UK Athletics who kindly agreed to give interviews and/or who provided comments on earlier drafts
- The National Coaching Foundation/Sportscoach UK (2000) Child Protection Policy and Implementation procedures: Guidelines for Governing Bodies of Sport and Local Authorities. Leeds: Sports Coach UK
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## **Note**

UK Athletics is happy for the contents of this document to be shared by other organisations, provided its origins are acknowledged but accepts no liability for the advice provided.