



TW Braga

Dealing with Disclosures & Concerns

It is your club's/centre's responsibility to identify and refer any safeguarding concerns. It is not your responsibility to investigate possible instances of abuse of children/young people; this is the role of the statutory agencies – Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT), PSNI and also the NSPCC.

It is your statutory responsibility to report any child protection concerns.

The IFA has procedures in place for dealing with child protection concerns/disclosures/allegations in order to support staff/volunteers, children/young people and parents/guardians through the process of reporting a disclosure or allegation. As well as reporting allegations to appropriate authorities, we will follow our own organisation's internal disciplinary procedures and refer to the Independent Safeguarding Authority barred list (if appropriate, for further information visit www.isa.gov.uk) whether or not a criminal investigation proceeds.

What might constitute a concern about a child/young person?

A concern relates to the possibility of a child/young person suffering harm. Indicators of this might include:

- Sudden, unexplained or worrying changes in behaviour
- Physical signs or symptoms that may be indicative of abuse (emotional, sexual, or neglect)
- Worrying remarks made by a child/young person
- A situation where a child/young person is exposed to potential risk of harm.

All concerns should be recorded in writing and passed to the club's/centre's Child Welfare Officer/Deputy Child Welfare Officer, no matter how insignificant they may seem, whether they relate to situations internal or external to your organisation. For instance, concerns connected to a family or school situation should be noted as well as concerns related to your organisation.

What is a disclosure?

A disclosure is when a child/young person tells a staff member, coach or volunteer that they have been or are being harmed or abused in some way. This may be physical, sexual emotional abuse, neglect or bullying.

It is important to reassure the person who has made the disclosure and offer appropriate support. All disclosures must be reported to the Child Welfare Officer/Deputy Child Welfare Officer.

What is a concern or allegation about the behaviour of staff, coaches and volunteers?

Inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour or communication, favouritism or negligence are examples of what may constitute a concern about the conduct of a member of staff, a coach or a volunteer.

An allegation about a staff member, coach or volunteer occurs when a child/young person, parent/guardian or other staff member, coach or volunteer reports specific unacceptable behaviour where a child/young person has been harmed, put at risk or abused in some way.

Allegations against staff, coaches or volunteers must be referred to the club's/centre's Child Welfare Officer/Deputy Child Welfare Officer.

In the case of allegations against one of the Child Welfare Officers, this should be reported to the Chairperson, the other Designated Officer or directly to a statutory agency.

TW Braga Reporting Concerns

Staff, coaches or volunteers witnessing any of this behaviour should report their observations immediately to the club's/centre's Child Welfare Officer/Deputy Child Welfare Officer.

DO NOT ACCUSE OR LEAP TO CONCLUSIONS

Responding to an allegation by a child/young person:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child/young person
- Tell the child/young person that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- Take what the child/young person says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what a child/young person, who has a speech problem, and/or difficulties with language. **Do not probe. Do not lead.**
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum necessary to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said
- Always re-assure the child/young person, but **do not make promises of confidentiality**, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible.

Guidelines for Reporting Allegations/ Incidents:

- Record all incidents reported or observed on an Incident Form
- 1 copy to Child Welfare Officer/Deputy Child Welfare Officer within 24 hours
- Ensure confidentiality - only "need to know basis"
- Inform parents/guardians unless to do so may put the child/young person at further risk
- The Child Welfare Officer/Deputy Child Welfare Officer will be responsible for storing any report in a safe and secure environment.

If the concern is about the behaviour of a member of the club/centre:

- The club/centre will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further Police and Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) or internal inquiries/investigations
- Irrespective of the findings of the HSCT or Police inquiries, the club's/centre's Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff, a coach or a volunteer should be reinstated and if so how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police or HSCT. In such case the club's/centre's Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true, and the implications of this for the safety of children/young people. The welfare of the child/young person should remain of paramount importance throughout.

If concern is about possible abuse external to the club/centre setting:

- Report your concerns to the Child Welfare Officer/Deputy Child Welfare Officer
- If the Child Welfare Officer/Deputy Child Welfare Officer is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact their local Social Services Department or the Police immediately
- HSCT, in consultation with the Child Welfare Officer/Deputy Child Welfare Officer, will decide how to inform the parents/guardians
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Health and Social Care Trusts

Each trust will have a Gateway team to deal with reports of abuse and also more local contacts for ongoing professional liaison for advice and concerns.

Northern HSC Trust

Tel: 0300 123 4333

Out of hours number- 028 9446 8833 recorded message providing Emergency Out of Hours number.

South Eastern HSC Trust

Tel: 0300 100 0300

Out of hours- once switchboard is closed at 5pm a recorded message will direct caller to Emergency Duty team.

Southern HSC Trust

Tel: 0800 783 7745

Out of hours number- once switchboard is closed a recorded message will direct caller to Out of Hours team.

Belfast HSC Trust

Tel: 028 9050 7000

Out of hours- number not confirmed at time of producing this document

Western HSC Trust

Tel: 028 7131 14090

Out of hours number- once switchboard is closed a recorded message will direct caller to Out of Hours team.

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

PSNI Child Abuse and Rape Enquiry Unit 028 9065 0222

Ask for your local CARE Unit

Childline Freephone 0800 1111

Sport NI 028 9038 1222

www.sportni.net

NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit 028 9035 1135

www.thecpsu.org.uk

Volunteer Development Agency 028 9023 6100

www.volunteering-ni-org

Access NI 028 9025 910

www.accessni.gov.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) 020 7238 2391

www.ceop.gov.uk

Other useful websites

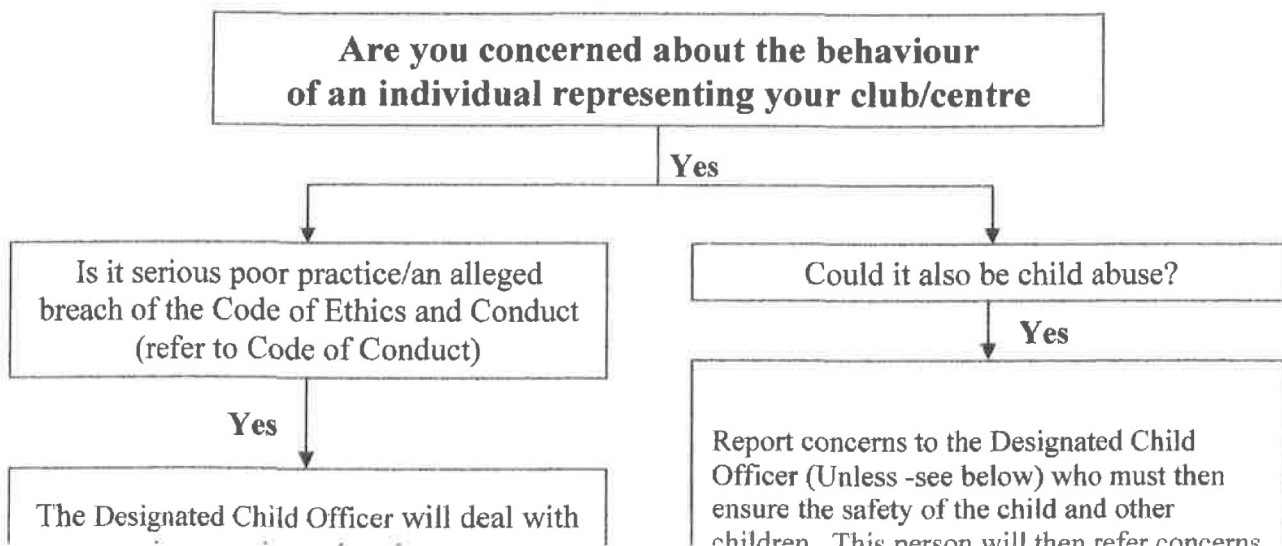
www.there4me.com – a confidential advice website for teenagers

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.parentsadvicecentre.org

www.kidscape.org.uk

www.bullying.co.uk



If you do not know who to turn to for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns with a senior colleague, you should contact the Social Services direct (or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 or Childline on 0800 1111). At any stage during the process in the left hand column the issue can be referred externally either formally or informally for advice. Following the external (right column) outcome the matter may be referred back to the club'/centre'ss Disciplinary Committee.

When the complaint is about possible abuse outside the organisation