

Reporting Procedures for Concerns in Gymnastics Activities

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Introduction:

This document outlines the necessary steps to follow when there is a concern regarding the safety and well-being of a child, adult at risk, or an athlete participating in gymnastics activities. It covers various situations that may give rise to concerns and specifies the responsibilities of staff and volunteers, as well as guidelines for recognizing signs of abuse and neglect, handling poor practice, information sharing, and responding to disclosures.

1. Identifying Concerns:

Concerns may arise from several sources, including:

1. Disclosure from a child or adult.
2. Direct or reported observations of possible abuse, neglect, suspicious behaviour, or poor practice.
3. Significant changes in an individual's behaviour, appearance, attitude, or relationships.
4. Reports from external agencies or individuals.

2. Safeguarding Categories:

Safeguarding allegations fall into two categories:

- a. Gymnastics related: Allegations involving members or those in positions of trust within the sport.
- b. External to the sport: Allegations that involve individuals not connected to gymnastics, such as concerns of abuse or neglect by family members.

3. Safeguarding Responsibilities:

All staff and volunteers involved in gymnastics activities are responsible for safeguarding and ensuring the safety of children and adults. They must report concerns and understand when to refer cases to the local authorities, social services, or the police. Some individuals may be unable to recognize or share their concerns, relying on adults in their contact to be vigilant.

4. Welfare Team:

Basingstoke Gymnastics Club has a dedicated Welfare Team responsible for responding to safeguarding concerns and providing advice.

5. Recognizing Indicators:

Staff and volunteers should be attentive to signs and triggers of abuse and neglect. Coaches with a minimum Level 1 qualification should be able to identify signs as part of their training. Reporting concerns is the responsibility of the organization, not individuals.

6. Maintaining Confidentiality:

Confidentiality must be maintained, and information should only be shared within the organization with individuals having specific safeguarding responsibilities and a legitimate "need to know."

7. Addressing Poor Practice:

Poor practice within gymnastics should be challenged, even when well-intentioned. Failure to address poor practice can create an environment where abuse remains unnoticed. Incidents must be reported to the Lead Welfare Officer promptly.

8. Information Sharing:

Sharing information between organizations is crucial to protect individuals and provide support. Third-party organizations may include statutory authorities, other gymnastics organizations, or external entities.

9. Reporting Safeguarding Concerns:

Basingstoke Gymnastics Club reports safeguarding concerns about their members who may pose a risk to others to British Gymnastics' Integrity Unit. The Integrity Unit is responsible for further information sharing decisions in consultation with the club. External concerns should be advised by the police or local authority.

10. Referral for Investigation:

The role is to refer and share information with the relevant statutory authority. Immediate risk cases should be referred to Local Authority Social Services or the Police without delay.

11. Whistleblowing:

Confidentiality will be maintained for whistleblowers reporting concerns about an individual's conduct. Protections do not apply to intentionally false, vexatious, retaliatory, or frivolous complaints.

12. Responding to a Disclosure:

Provide support and guidance to individuals who disclose concerns while ensuring potential investigations are not jeopardized. Explain the need to share the concern with the appropriate Welfare Officer and reassure the individual.

13. Interim Measures:

Basingstoke Gymnastics Club may impose interim protective measures, including temporary membership suspension, during investigations, in consultation with the Welfare Officer and Club Manager.

14. Criminal Convictions:

Convictions may be sufficient to conclude harassment or abuse. In such cases, matters will be referred to the Integrity Unit in accordance with British Gymnastics Complaints & Disciplinary policy.

15. Retention of Records:

Information related to safeguarding concerns will be stored securely. Records should be retained as necessary, with a minimum of 10 years for significant safeguarding concerns involving members in positions of trust.