

Athletics athlete welfare toolkit

This toolkit is made by athletes with lived experience to help you understand some of the possible signs of abuse in coach-athlete relationships, the reporting process in athletics in the UK, and other places you can go to get help.

01

Knowing the signs: the coach-athlete relationship

Learn some key behaviours in the coach-athlete relationship that are considered abusive.

02

What happens if I decide to report?

Learn about the steps in the reporting process in athletics.

03

Who can I talk to?

Learn who your designated welfare officers in the all of the athletics' national governing bodies in the UK.

04

Where to get help

Links to useful resources & helplines



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Knowing the signs: the coach-athlete relationship

how do we spot signs of harassment, abuse or assault?

A coach or sports staff member might display some of the following behaviours if there is abuse occurring:

The below behaviours are not an exhaustive list, but are some of the key signs to look out for. Signs of abuse are not always obvious, and one of these behaviours on its own does not necessarily mean that abuse is happening.

Every warning sign and every concern should be taken seriously and can be reported to your nearest welfare officer.

- Refusing to allow an athlete privacy or to make their own decisions about personal matters.
- Insisting on physical affection such as hugging, tickling, etc. even if the athlete does not want it.
- Being overly interested in the sexual development of a child or teenage athlete.
- Insisting on time alone with an athlete with no interruptions.
- Favouritism, making a particular athlete feel 'special' compared with others.
- Picking on a particular athlete, talking about them negatively with the rest of the training group.
- Discussing or sharing sexual jokes or materials with an athlete online or offline.
- Paying for things like physio or massage for athletes, buying expensive gifts or giving athletes money for no apparent reason.

You may also have noticed some of the following changes in your own behaviour:

This is again not an exhaustive list but are some key behaviours to be aware of. There are many reasons why an athlete's behaviour may change, but it is best practice to check for these signs.

If you notice a combination of these warning signs, it is time to seek help and advice. You do not need to wait for 'proof' to report a concern - you should talk to a designated welfare officer as soon as possible.

- Suddenly having nightmares or other sleeping problems
- Becoming withdrawn or very clingy
- Personality changes or suddenly seeming insecure. Outbursts of anger, being very defensive
- Regressing to younger behaviours
- Unaccountable fear of particular places or people
- Changes in eating habits
- Becoming secretive
- Having unexplained gifts such as toys, money, mobile phones, expensive clothes

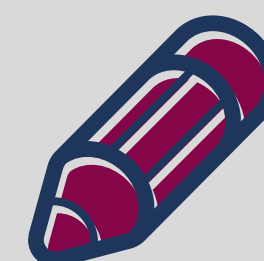
What happens if I decide to report?

helping you to know what to expect in athletics

First Contact

Once you have alerted a welfare officer or a member of staff, you can expect a safeguarding, welfare, or case management officer to get in touch with you. This individual should be fully trained in the safeguarding procedures.

STEP
01



Gathering Information

You will mostly likely be asked to briefly explain why you are reporting an individual in your initial contact, but you should not be asked to complete a written 'witness' statement at any time, especially unsupported. If you are asked to write a statement, you should ask if there is another way you could communicate your experience.

STEP
02

An Interview

If the officer needs more information from you, you will likely be invited to an interview where you will be asked some questions about your experience. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, you should be able to ask for emotional support via your national governing body.

STEP
03



Investigation

At this point, the officer will decide whether or not to conduct a full investigation which will mean the accused is temporarily suspended while the investigation is underway.

STEP
04

At the end of the investigation period, the case management officer will collate the information and present the findings to an independent case management committee.

Timeline

During the investigation you will have the opportunity to reach out for help from professionals to support you during this time. Typically this process can take up to 6 months, but may take longer, while the investigator conducts interviews.

STEP
05



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Who can I talk to?

Your first point of call

Talking can really help you process your own experience and help you understand what has happened. Consider reaching out to professionals as well as talking with family and loved ones

If you are an athlete from Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland or England, you may consider reaching out to the welfare officers for your country. British Athletics also have a dedicated welfare team to support any British Athletics athletes.



Welsh Athletics

Lead Safeguarding Officer: Carl Williams
safeguardingandwelfare@welshathletics.org
07792 242153

Scottish Athletics

Welfare Officer: Morva Mackenzie
morva.mckenzie@scottishathletics.org.uk
07983081122



England Athletics

EA Safeguarding Lead: Emma Davenport
welfare@englandathletics.org

Athletics Northern Ireland

Welfare Officer: Allister Woods
welfare@athleticsni.org,
028 9060 2707



British Athletics

UKA Safeguarding Lead: Angus Macdonald
safeguarding@uka.org.uk

my concern - online reporting form for British Athletics

MyConcern is a simple to use, safe and secure software for recording and managing all safeguarding concerns in athletics in any setting.

No matter how small a concern, you are able to log it here.

This system can be used to submit a safeguarding concern by clubs, athletes, coaches, parents or any other individual.

[Click here for MyConcern Website](#)



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where to get help

Useful resources & helplines



THINK U KNOW

UK organisation which
protects children online
& offline



ANN CRAFT TRUST

Safeguarding Adults &
Young People at Risk



GOV.UK

Domestic Abuse -
How to Get Help



NHS

Help after rape and
sexual assault



SPORT IN MIND

UK Based Mental
Health in Sport
Organisation



SPORTING WELLNESS

Mental Health Support
for Athletes



MIND

Mental Health Charity



NSPCC

UK Organisation for Child
Abuse Prevention



VICTIM SUPPORT

Support and advice for
abuse
cases in England & Wales



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