

Receiving, Reporting and Recording suspicions and allegations of abuse

NB: 8 pages

'THE WELFARE OF THE CHILD IS PARAMOUNT' *Children Act 1989*

Introduction

Each affiliated club must have a Welfare Officer who has a heightened awareness through training, of Child Protection and the procedures that must be followed. Although most cases of abuse occur in the family setting, abuse can and does occur in rowing:

- All allegations **MUST** be taken seriously.
- It is not your responsibility to decide if child abuse is taking place.
- It is your responsibility to report your concerns to the appropriate agencies.
- Not acting is not an option (abuse can take the form of action or inaction)

This applies to abuse that may occur within a rowing context, but also to abuse that may be occurring elsewhere.

Members of the club may become aware of abuse happening by witnessing it, recognising signs of abuse as listed below, and also by a child/ young person or someone else disclosing abuse.

Dealing with a disclosure of abuse

Children/ young people who are being abused will almost always tell someone they trust and feel safe with, i.e. junior coach, trainer, or coordinator. By disclosing the abuse they are placing their trust in you, and want the abuse to stop. It will have taken a great deal of courage for a child to disclose abuse to you, may have taken months or years to pluck up courage, and you should respond accordingly.

If any club member should bring concerns about a child's welfare to the attention of the club Welfare Officer it would be appropriate for the Welfare Officer to discuss the concerns with the child's parents/carers.

However, in some circumstances concerns should not be shared with the parent/carer. These could include if:

- the child could be placed at greater risk,
- other children/young people could be placed at risk,
- other club members could be placed at risk,
- an inability to contact parents could cause delay in making a referral,
- sexual abuse is suspected.

If there is any doubt as to whether parents should be contacted, the Welfare Officer should seek advice from the CPGA WO (01305 780121), local Children Social Care (see Guideline G13 or G15) or the NSPCC Helpline (**0808 800 5000**)

Receiving evidence of possible abuse

- Stay calm.
- Believe what you are being told.
- Reassure the child/young person that they are doing the right thing in telling someone.

- Give them time to say what they want to say.
- Do not make comments, seem shocked or make judgments, other than to show sympathy or concern.
- Keep questions to an absolute minimum and restrict them to those that help the child to talk freely. Use open-ended questions, not those that only require a yes/no answer.
- Clarify your understanding of the conversation using their own words if you do not understand (you may need an interpreter for those whose first language is not English).
- Do not re-question the child/young person or allow any other club member to re-question the child.
- Be honest and tell them you cannot keep the conversation a secret, but you will need to inform other people in order to help.
- Explain to them what you are going to do next.
- If the child needs immediate medical attention call an ambulance, inform the paramedics of your concerns and make sure they know it is a child protection issue.
- Contact the club Welfare Officer or CPGA WO immediately for advice and guidance or your area Children's Social Care Services office/ NSPCC / Police. (Guideline G13 or G15)
- Ensure maximum confidentiality and do not discuss with anyone except your club Welfare Officer, the CPGA WO or Children's Social Care Services/ NSPCC / Police.
- Do not question or contact alleged perpetrators.

Recording information (the disclosure)

- Make notes as soon as possible after talking to the child, using actual quotes and his/her language verbatim, and including any questions you have asked, the persons present and what you were doing at the time – dated, timed and signed. They may be needed in evidence at a later date and in the event of a prosecution. This can be on any paper to hand, or on the CPGA form provided for the purpose (Form D below))
- Do not include your own opinions other than those relating to the child/young persons demeanour (i.e. were they crying, fearful, timid, anxious etc)
- Relate only the facts.
- Make it clear which is your own personal knowledge, and what you have been told by other people.
- You need this record for:
 - Yourself as a reminder
 - The club Welfare Officer
 - The CPGA Welfare Officer if you need their advice
 - The Police, Children's Social Care Services if appropriate

Reporting the concern

Any disclosure should be immediately discussed with the Club Welfare Officer to enable them to pass the information on according to procedure. If the CWO is unavailable, or is implicated, contact should be made with the local Children Social Care for advice (relevant local numbers should be quickly and easily accessible – G13). Only when this is done should you inform the CPGA Welfare Officer.

This information is highly sensitive and confidential and, therefore, the written record should only be made available to those who need to see it, namely the Club Welfare officer, the CPGA WO and Local Authority Children's Social Care Services/ Police. It should be kept somewhere secure, and should the decision be made to refer to the Local Authority Children's Social Care Services the original should be sent to them within 24 hours, and a copy passed to the CPGA WO.

Do not delay passing on information. Delay in reporting to the authorities should be as short as possible – the child needs to be protected immediately.

Alleged abuse by a member of the Club

The reporting of suspicions, allegations or incidents of abuse against a member of a club can be particularly difficult, and raise many different feelings including anger, confusion, betrayal and sometimes misplaced loyalty. It is vital to remember however, that

- the welfare of the child/young person is paramount in these situations to ensure that any further abuse is prevented.
- being vigilant helps to protect children.
- everyone has a duty of care to report any concerns they may have immediately.
- It is NOT the responsibility of club officials to investigate allegations.
- a good reporting structure ensures that concerns are dealt with fairly.

All the procedures in this document should still be followed.

Should the Children's Social Care Services or the Police be involved the CPGA will not investigate further, but will immediately suspend the individual from any further participation in rowing at that time. This action will be taken to protect the child/young person, and any other junior member, from further abuse should the allegations be proven.

If concerns are regarding poor practice, but do not constitute abuse and, therefore, have no investigation in place, the CPGA WO will consult with CPGA Officers to ascertain whether disciplinary action is appropriate, or further training and support needed by the individual or the club.

If you dismiss an individual because they have caused harm or because they may have caused harm to a child or a vulnerable adult it is your legal obligation to refer information to the 'Independent Safeguarding Authority' under the current Vetting and barring Scheme.

Contacts:

<u>Useful Contact details</u>	SPC Policy CPGA	Guideline G13
NSPCC Child Protection helpline		0808 800 5000
NSPCC Childline (free confidential counselling service for children)		0800 1111
Touchline (for adults and children)		01532 457777
Children's Legal Centre		0207 359 6251
Parentline		01268 757077
PAIN (Parents Against Injustice)		01279 850545
The Family Rights Group		0207 923 2628
Gingerbread (Lone Parent Support Group)		0207 240 0953

Cornwall SHARE (Young people's information, Advice and counselling Service)
0800 181033

Kidscape Campaign for Children's Safety 152 Buckingham Palace Road
London, SW1W 9TR
National Children's Bureau 8 Wakely Street
London, EC1V 7QE

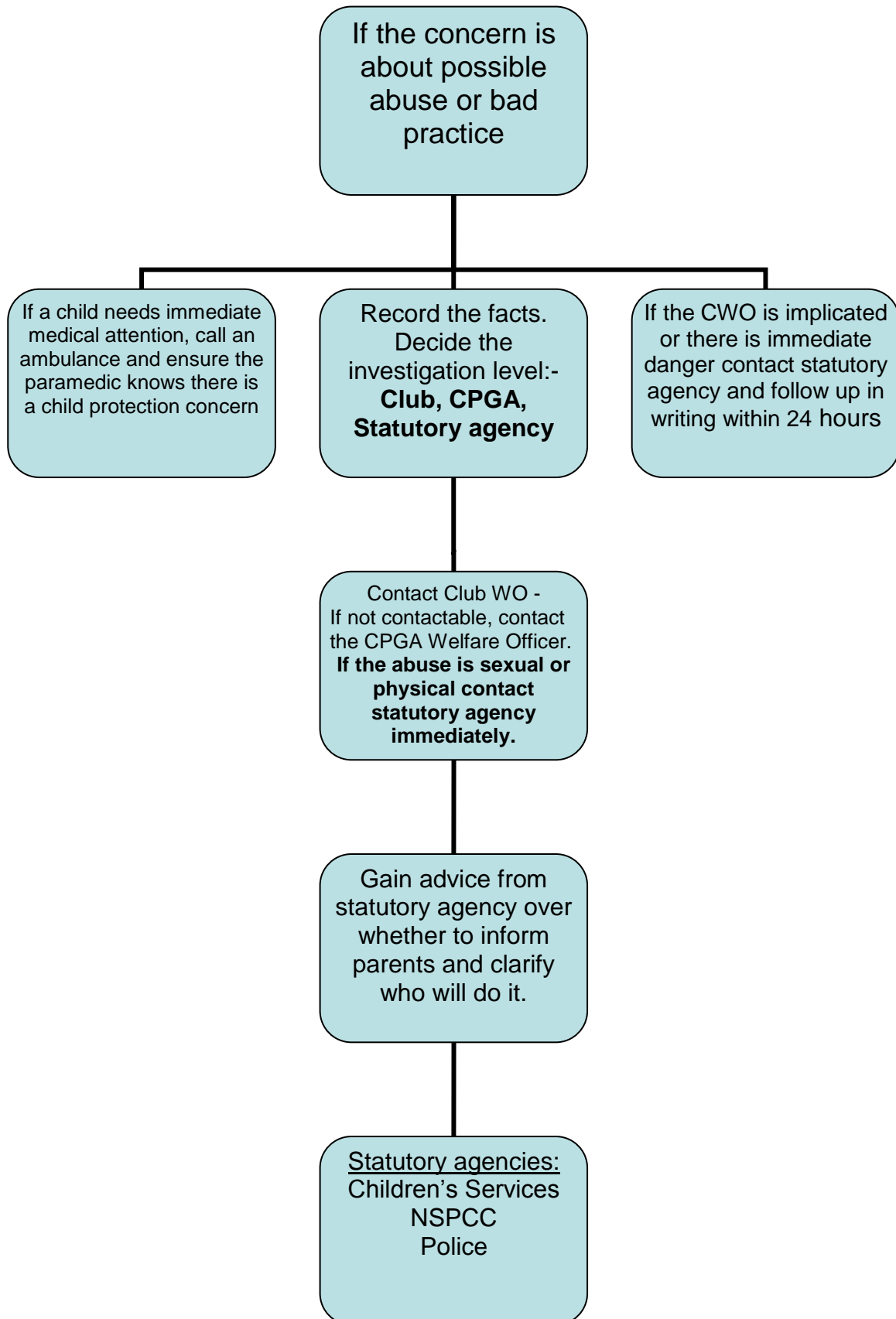
Police and Children Social Care- consult your telephone directory for local numbers

CPGA Welfare Officer (2011/12) Wendy Pearce 01305 780121 or 07876365388

Other documents:

Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy: Section 3: British Rowing

CPGA Procedure for Reporting a concern



All information should be kept confidential at all times

Form D: Record of disclosure from a child/young person

Please complete all relevant sections as soon as possible after the disclosure. For any sections that do not apply, please mark clearly as 'not applicable'. The form should be given as soon as possible to the CWO or the statutory agency involved within 24 hours.

Date and time of the disclosure:

Context: Detail the circumstances leading up to the disclosure if possible.

Names of any witnesses present at the disclosure, their positions and the role they played:

Give a verbatim account of the allegation or suspicion (cont. overleaf if required)

Any additional comments?

Has the child made the allegation about a particular individual?

(If so please record details)

Describe any visible signs of physical injury evident on the child or young person: NB; DO NOT remove any clothing *If possible draw a diagram*

If you have known the child for a period of time, have you noticed any changes in behaviour?

Received by club Welfare Officer

Name:

Signed: Date:

To be signed by the person reporting the concern

Name:

Signed: Date:

Cornish Pilot Gig Association SPC Policy Guidelines

Form E: Record of conversation with Club Welfare Officer or CPGA Welfare officer or statutory agency

CWO to keep in a secure place and copy sent to CPGA Welfare Officer

Name of club: _____

Club member reporting concern: _____

Name of CWO: _____

Brief record of conversation:

Advice sought from CPGA Welfare Officer or Statutory agency? YES / NO

If yes: Date of conversation and with whom _____

Advice given:

If no: Give reasons why advice not sought

Signed: _____ (club member)

Signed: _____ (CWO)

Date: _____