



## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY**

**(Charity registration number 1161323)**

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## Section 1:

### Introduction

Sport can and does have a very powerful and positive influence on people – especially children experiencing mental health problems. Not only can it provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement; it can also develop valuable qualities such as self-esteem, leadership and teamwork. These positive effects can only take place if sport is in the right hands – in the hands of those who place the welfare of children first and adopt practices that support, protect and empower them. Instructors and other organisers of sport and physical activity are seen in a position of trust and they must take great care to maintain this trust with children and their families/carers.

The reality is abuse does take place in sport and in some cases coaches and other trusted adults in sport have been convicted. Hundreds of historical accounts of abuse in sport surfaced in late 2016 but these related mainly to the 1980s and 90s, and emphasise the lack of safeguarding procedures available at that time. Since the beginning of the millennium there has been a huge change in safeguarding in sport and although incidents of abuse still occur the safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by organisations ensure they are recognised and dealt with speedily and appropriately.

Sport in Mind is committed to working with all agencies to ensure that information and training opportunities are available to ensure best practice when working with all children. Adopting best practice will help to safeguard these participants from potential abuse as well as protecting instructors and other adults in positions of responsibility from potential false allegations of abuse.

Sport in Mind's Safeguarding Children Policy will allow children to excel in sport and physical activity in a safe environment and transmit a reassuring signal to parents/carers. This document details procedures for administrators, instructors, officials, volunteers, parents and the children themselves.

**N.B. the safety and protection of adults at risk (often referred to as vulnerable adults) is also of primary concern to Sport in Mind and a specific Safeguarding Adult's Policy has been produced because there are significant differences that are best addressed under separate policies**

**Important Note:**

*The term **parent** is used throughout this document as a generic term to represent parents, carers and guardians.*

*The term **children / child** refers to anyone under the age of 18 yrs.*

*The term **agency** refers to a recognised sports club, governing body of sport, the NHS and local authority.*

## 1.1 Review

Sport in Mind's Safeguarding Children Policy and associated procedures will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if there are significant changes to legislation, and will:

- ensure that documentation reflects the organisation's role, current legislation and government guidance
- ensure compliance with the recruitment, induction and training processes
- carry out an examination of reported and recorded cases
- effectively communicate the policy to all partners and staff
- consult with children

## 1.2 Policy Statement

Sport in Mind is committed to ensuring the safety and welfare of all children, coaches and volunteers taking part in sport and physical activity.

The aim of this policy is to increase awareness and promote good working practice to everyone in sport and physical activity. Sport in Mind will ensure:

- that all people involved with working with children implement good working practices to ensure a safe and healthy environment
- everyone involved is aware of safeguarding and child protection issues both in the context of organised activities and within the home and community
- standard procedures are in place to protect the child first and foremost when suspected abuse or actual abuse is reported and that everyone involved in Sport in Mind understands these procedures

These procedures are mandatory for all staff, paid coaches and volunteers who are direct deliverers of Sport in Mind's programmes. The charity will:

- adopt appropriate recruitment, selection, employment and deployment procedures
- require those working (paid or voluntarily) within Sport in Mind's programmes acquire minimum operating standards, including an enhanced DBS check
- require all paid personnel involved in Sport in Mind to be appropriately trained in safeguarding awareness and dealing with disclosures/allegations
- raise awareness of good practice amongst parents and participants
- ensure that all facilities used as part of Sport in Mind's work meet the stipulated minimum operating standards
- respond swiftly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations via clearly established communication lines

### 1.3 Principles

The guidance given in this policy is based on the following principles:

- the welfare and safety of children and young people (defined by the Children Act 1989 as under 18 years of age) is of primary concern.
- all children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- everyone has a responsibility to report concerns, but it is the responsibility of child protection professionals to decide whether or not abuse has taken place
- all incidents of suspected poor practice and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- confidentiality will be upheld in line with the Data Protection Act (1998), the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Protection of Freedoms Act (2012)
- all staff shall have recourse against any allegation made against them and be supported if they report a concern
- this policy will be promoted to all staff, instructors, volunteers and partners.

### 1.4 Responsibilities

Sport in Mind is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children whilst they are engaged in any activity provided by or through the charity. Sport in Mind will:

- embed safeguarding arrangements into all of the charity's work
- require all staff and volunteers to adopt and abide by this Policy
- ensure that all staff and volunteers are clear in their role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- accept the moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures to safeguard children and protect them from abuse
- undertake recruitment procedures that take account of the need to protect children and include arrangements for appropriate checks on new staff and volunteers, in accordance with Sport in Mind's recruitment practice
- train and supervise employees and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse, and reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse against themselves
- ensure that parents, children, staff and volunteers are provided with information about this policy, what it does, and what they can expect from Sport in Mind
- ensure that parents, children, staff and volunteers are provided with clear procedures to voice their concerns or lodge complaints if they feel unsure or unhappy about anything
- promote a culture that ensures that children are listened to and respected as individuals
- ensure that the inclusion of adequate safeguarding arrangements is a key element of all partnership agreements

- respond to any allegations and concerns appropriately and implement the appropriate disciplinary and appeals procedures, in accordance with Sport in Mind's disciplinary procedures
- maintain confidentiality and ensure information is shared as appropriate with other agencies in all cases involving safeguarding, in line with current legislation
- lead on the production, implementation, monitoring and review of this policy and procedures

#### **1.4.1 Role and responsibilities of the Sport in Mind Trustee Board**

The Trustee Board, as the strategic steering body for Sport in Mind, will:

- ensure that safeguarding remains a central principle of the operations and development of the organisation
- have strategic accountability for the development of policies for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in sport and physical activity
- have strategic accountability for effective implementation of organisational policies and procedures to safeguard children including those related to safe recruitment
- represent the organisation's approach to safeguarding and protecting children and communicate this approach to other organisations, as appropriate.

#### **1.4.2 Role and responsibilities of Senior Management**

The Senior Management Team will:

- oversee arrangements to ensure the organisation fulfils its duty of care towards children in line with this Policy
- contribute to the development and implementation of policies for the safeguarding and protection of children in sport and physical activity
- develop, maintain and review other organisational policies and procedures which contribute to safeguarding, including those related to safer recruitment, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- work collaboratively with external agencies on cases of poor practice or abuse
- implement an organisational culture of listening to children as reflected in organisational plans and practices
- ensure partner organisations have adequate safeguarding policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding
- ensure that the inclusion of adequate safeguarding arrangements is a key element of all partnership agreements
- represent the organisation's approach to safeguarding and children and communicate this approach to other organisations as appropriate

### **1.4.3 Role and responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Officer**

Sport in Mind's Designated Safeguarding Officer will:

- lead the development and implementation of Sport in Mind's approach to safeguarding vulnerable people
- lead in maintaining and embedding the CPSU (NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit) Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport
- provide the first point of contact for and respond to any communications and/or concerns regarding safeguarding
- work with partners to maintain, develop and review policies and procedures to safeguard vulnerable people in line with national guidance
- advise staff and volunteers on implementation of Sport in Mind's safeguarding policies and procedures
- advise on development of and implementation of staff and volunteer training
- implement reporting procedures and maintain relevant records in line with organisational procedure, maintaining confidentiality as appropriate
- represent the organisation's approach to safeguarding and protecting vulnerable people
- advise on adequate safeguarding arrangements as a key part of all partnership agreements
- co-ordinate dissemination of policy, procedures and resources as appropriate
- provide advice and support to designated safeguarding officers within partner organisations
- direct individuals to sources of support during and following an incident, allegation of abuse or complaint

### **1.4.4 Role and responsibilities of staff and volunteers**

All staff will:

- be aware of what is meant by safeguarding children
- be alert to the risks which individual abusers, or potential abusers may pose to children, particularly in relation to sport and physical activity
- demonstrate knowledge of Sport in Mind's policies and procedures and how to apply these in practice
- listen to children, take any allegations/disclosures seriously and report all concerns in line with the organisation's procedures
- ensure that the inclusion of adequate safeguarding arrangements is a key element of partnership agreements, where these are relevant
- represent the organisation's approach to safeguarding and protecting children and communicate this approach to partners

## **1.5 Abuse and Neglect and Definitions**

To ensure that all children are protected from harm, we feel it is important that people understand what types of behaviour constitute as abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger (for example, via the internet).

### **Abuse may be committed by adult men or women or by other children!**

Victims of abuse frequently suffer more than one category of abuse.

#### **1.5.1 Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. It can also include misuse of medication or medical process and inappropriate restraint or inappropriate actions or inactions.

Examples of physical abuse in sport and physical activity may be when the nature or intensity of training and competition exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body.

#### **1.5.2 Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Examples include:

- Threats of harm or abandonment
- Humiliation, shaming or ridicule
- Harassment, bullying, intimidation
- Control or coercion
- Deprivation of choice or privacy
- Deliberate social isolation

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse in sport and physical activity may occur if children are subjected to constant criticism, name calling sarcasm, bullying or unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations consistently.

### **1.5.3 Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In sport and physical activity, coaching techniques that involve physical contact with children could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed. The power of the instructor over the young participant, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing. One of the issues in assessing whether sexual abuse has occurred is that of exploitation (see below).

### **1.5.4 Exploitation**

Exploitation is the shift in the balance of power between the child and the other person at the time that the sexual activity first occurred. Thus, exploitation is considered to have occurred if the activity was unwanted when first began and/or involved a misuse of conventional age, authority or gender differentials (*see Home Office Guidelines on Caring for Young People and the Vulnerable*).

### **1.5.5 Bullying**

It is important to recognise that in some cases of abuse, it may not always be an adult abusing a child. It can occur that the abuser may be a child, for example in the case of bullying.

Bullying may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can include:

- physical assaults
- name-calling, sarcasm and racist taunts
- threats and gestures
- unwanted physical contact
- graffiti
- stealing or hiding personal items
- being ostracised or ignored
- cyberbullying (online bullying)

For more advice on bullying, including cyberbullying, go to:

[www.bullying.co.uk/general-advice/](http://www.bullying.co.uk/general-advice/)  
[www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/](http://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/)

### **1.5.6 Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect in sport and physical activity could include an instructor not ensuring children are safe, exposing them to undue cold, heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

### **1.6 Indicators of abuse / bullying**

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. However children may have no physical signs therefore staff need to also be alert to behavioural indicators of abuse.

Indicators that a child may be being abused/bullied include the following:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go to school, training or sports club
- a drop off in performance at school or standard of play
- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruises, cuts or burns
- unexplained changes in behaviour (i.e. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outburst of temper)
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- a child describes what appears to be an abusive act involving him/her
- a child may disappear or fail to attend an activity for no apparent reason
- variations in eating patterns

- distrust of adults, particularly those whom a close relationship would be normally be expected
- has difficulty making friends
- is prevented from socialising with other children

It should be recognised that this list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place.

## **Section 2 Procedures: Prevention**

### **Introduction**

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. These procedures will be adopted whether staff are paid or voluntary, full or part-time.

### **2.1 Pre-recruitment Information**

The following pre-recruitment checks will always be carried out:

#### ***Advertising***

If any form of advertising is used to recruit staff, whether paid or voluntary, it will reflect the following:

- Aims and objectives of Sport in Mind and where appropriate, the particular programme involved
- Responsibilities of the role
- Level of relevant experience or qualifications required
- Sport in Mind's open and positive stance on child protection
- The requirement for DBS checking and references.

#### ***Pre-Application Information***

Pre-application information sent to interested or potential applicants will contain:

- A job description including roles and responsibilities
- A person specification (e.g. stating qualifications or experience required)
- An application form

## ***Applications***

All applicants whether for paid or voluntary, full or part-time positions will complete forms which will elicit the following information:

- Name, address and National Insurance Number (to confirm identity and right to work).
- Relevant experience, qualifications and training undertaken.
- List of past career or involvement in sport and physical activity (to confirm experience and identify any gaps).
- The applicant's consent to have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, if required.
- The names of at least two people (not relatives) willing to provide written references that comment on the applicant's previous experience of, and suitability for, working with children.

The forms will also state that failure to disclose information could lead to exclusion from the interview selection.

## ***DBS Checks and References***

All Sport in Mind employees and volunteers working directly on programmes with access to children must undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS). Third party DBS's will NOT be used by Sport in Mind for contracted staff members or volunteers.

External coaches used to deliver short-term programmes in partnership with other agencies must provide evidence of an enhanced DBS within the last three years through a relevant body, as agreed in their service level agreement with Sport in Mind.

All DBS's must be disclosed to Sport in Mind's Designated Safeguarding Officer prior to any work placement so the required procedures can be completed.

**External coaches, Sport in Mind staff & volunteers without an enhanced DBS will NOT under any circumstances be allowed to work unsupervised on Sport in Mind's programmes working with children.**

Written references from a minimum of two non-related individuals will be taken up and at least one will be associated with former work with children. If an applicant has no previous experience of working with children, then training will be offered. Written references will be confirmed by telephone.

Two forms of identification must be provided to confirm identity – e.g. a passport, driver's license, birth certificate. At least one form of identification must be photographic ID. (Please note photocopied documentation will not be accepted as proof of identity)

**Note: It is an offense for an employer to knowingly employ a person to work in regulated activity with children and/or vulnerable people who has been barred from doing so.**

## 2.2 Pre-employment Interview

Potential employees will be required to undertake an interview carried out to acceptable protocols and recommendations of Sport in Mind, including:

- A check that the application form has been completed in full. Any gaps or inconsistencies in employment history should be identified
- Qualifications should be substantiated
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified to the candidate.

## 2.3 Induction and training

It should be clearly recognised that pre-employment checks are only a part of the process. It is important that the recruitment and selection process is followed by a needs analysis as part of the induction process and then provision of appropriate training.

All staff will undergo an induction process, part of which will familiarise them with the safeguarding policy, associated procedures and their specific responsibilities.

All staff will be provided with opportunities to learn about how to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns. Assistance will be provided to ensure that individuals can access appropriate awareness courses.

Staff with designated responsibilities in relation to safeguarding will have a written job description for that role, and will be provided with relevant training to enable them to develop the necessary skills and knowledge, and to have regular opportunities to update their knowledge and understanding.

Any members of staff whose role specifically requires working with children, young people or vulnerable adults should be provided with relevant training. The SCUk course, Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport is a readily available basic awareness course suitable for people working with children in sport.

Specific training will be provided for those responsible for dealing with complaints and disciplinary processes in relation to safeguarding and inappropriate behaviour towards children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Training and/or written guidance on safer recruitment practice will be provided for those responsible for recruiting, selecting and deploying staff and volunteers. Training should also include guidance and help for staff and volunteers to recognise additional vulnerability of some children, young people and vulnerable adults and the extra barriers they face to getting help. Barriers may include:

- Race
- Gender
- Age

- Religion
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Social background
- Culture
- Mental Health

## **2.4 Monitoring and Appraisal**

All coaches and volunteers will have the opportunity to update identified training needs and set new goals at an annual review meeting. A record will be kept of relevant staff training and required DBS checks.

## **2.5 Complaints**

Sport in Mind will ensure that all people involved in its work are aware of the procedure for complaints and know how and where to access disciplinary and grievance procedures and appeals procedures.

## **Promoting Good Practice with Children**

### **Introduction**

Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with children in order to harm them. A staff member, instructor or volunteer may have regular contact with children, and be an important link in identifying cases where a child needs protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice / suspected abuse should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. When a child joins Sport in Mind having been subjected to abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving their self-esteem. In such instances, Sport in Mind must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

Instructors should also be aware of the relevant NGB good practice guidelines and codes of conduct, and should follow these accordingly.

## **2.6 Good Practice Guidelines**

It is possible to promote the welfare of young people simply by reducing situations in which abuse can occur. Sport in Mind advocates the following common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within sport. Sport in Mind also recognises additional vulnerability with some people and that extra measures may have to be put in place to support their participation.

Good practice means:

- ensuring the safety of all children by careful provision, proper pre-planning of sessions, using methods, equipment and facilities that are safe and appropriate to the age and needs of the child
- always putting the welfare of each young person first - before winning or achieving goals
- treating all children equally, and with respect and dignity – encouraging them to speak openly and **listening** to what they say
- recognising the rights, development needs and capacity of performers and not over train or exert undue influence
- building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision making process
- being an excellent role model ensuring that high personal and professional standards are maintained at all times - promoting positive behaviour in others, including not smoking / drinking alcohol in the company of children
- giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback and guiding participants in accepting responsibility for their own performance and behaviour, rather than negative criticism
- always working in an open environment, being visible and identifiable as the instructor
- not letting any incidents/allegations of abuse go unchallenged or unrecorded
- not allowing any rough or dangerous play, bullying, use of bad language or inappropriate behaviour
- encouraging all children not to discriminate on the grounds of age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief, sexual identity, social class, fitness levels or ability
- not abusing members physically, emotionally or sexually
- not engaging in a sexual relationship with a young person for whom they are responsible
- making sport fun, enjoyable and always promoting fair play
- not touching performers where possible (eg when demonstrating techniques) but adhering strictly to NGB guidelines. If there is a need to touch a young person consent must be sought.
- keeping up to date with the technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport;
- securing parental consent in writing to act *in loco parentis*, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment
- awareness of any medicines being taken by participants, existing injuries or additional needs
- keeping a written record of any accident/incident that occurs, along with details of any treatment given and informing the designated person and others where it is appropriate/relevant bearing mind the need for confidentiality around sensitive information

- ensuring that use of photographic and filming equipment is appropriate and permission of parents has been sought

### **Recognition of Poor Practice, Abuse and Bullying**

Poor practice includes any behaviour that contravenes the Sport in Mind or relevant NGB codes of good practice. Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Instructors and volunteers, whether paid or voluntary are not experts at such recognition but they do have a responsibility to act if they have any concerns about the behaviour of someone (an adult or another child) towards a young person by reporting their concerns in line with these procedures.

### **2.7 Recognised Poor Practice**

Instructors and volunteers should never:

- condone or promote the use of illegal substances
- condone or promote the use of unhealthy activity, including the use or consumption of alcohol and cigarettes,
- use inappropriate language in the presence of young people
- bully;
  - physically : pushing, hitting, kicking, pinching, etc,
  - verbally : name-calling, spreading rumours, constant teasing and sarcasm,
  - emotionally : tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring,
  - racially : taunts, graffiti and gestures,
  - sexually : unwanted physical contact or abusive
  - sending nasty or malicious messages via texts, e-mails or social media sites
- spend time alone with children away from others
- take children alone on car journeys, however short
- take children to your home where they will be alone with you.
- engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- share a room with a child
- allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make comments about a child's appearance or disability e.g nicknames
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun
- reduce a child to tears as a form of control
- fail to act on allegations made
- do things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves
- invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised
- constantly shout at and / or taunt a young person to 'keep control'
- communicate electronically with participants unless parents are able to monitor and have granted permission
- have their participants as 'friends' on social networking sites

NB: Staff, instructors and volunteers are strongly advised, in their own interests, to take steps to ensure that their personal data is not accessible to anybody who does not have permission to access it. They also need to be aware that many employers and other agencies now carry out web and social network service searches to find online information about staff – background, interests, career experiences and self-presentation. All staff need to be advised to ensure that information available publicly about them is accurate and appropriate.

If any of the following incidents occur, you should report them immediately to another colleague and make a written note of the event. Parents should also be informed of the incident:

- if you accidentally hurt a performer
- if a performer seems distressed in any manner
- if a performer appears sexually aroused by your actions
- if a performer misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done

### **Be Aware**

It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should be carried out with the full understanding and written consent of parents and the participants involved.

There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on an instructor or volunteer, they should talk with him/her about what they are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if it involves any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or physically assisting a child to carry out particular activities. Anything of this nature should be done in the presence of others. Instructors and volunteers should avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which they are not appropriately trained.

### **Section 3, Procedures: Responding to Disclosure, Suspicion and Allegations** *(What to do if you're worried a child is being abused)*

Concerns about possible abuse can arise through:

- a direct **disclosure** by a young person of poor practice/abuse
- an **allegation** of poor practice/abuse by a third party
- a **suspicion** that poor practice/abuse may have taken place based on other signs or indicators.

The extremely sensitive nature of issues regarding abuse should be understood by all, along with the need for appropriate confidentiality. If a young person says/indicates that he/she is being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a person is being abused, immediate action should be taken.

However, it is **not** the responsibility of anyone working under the auspices of Sport in Mind in a paid or voluntary capacity, or those working in affiliated organisations to investigate, take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse/bullying is taking place. ***There is, though, a responsibility to respond to concerns in order that appropriate agencies can then make enquiries and take any necessary action to protect the young person.***

### 3.1 Responding to Allegations of Abuse or Bullying

The person receiving information concerning disclosure should respond immediately and:

- react calmly so as not to frighten the child or deter the informer
- tell the child he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell
- take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child who has a speech disability and / or difference in language
- say little but give the child time to talk and listen carefully
- where appropriate, ask open questions but keep them to a minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said; do not ask probing or leading questions or make the person feel that they are being interrogated.
- reassure the child but do not make promises of confidentiality which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- ensure the safety of the person – if they need immediate medical treatment, call an ambulance and inform that you suspect a child or vulnerable adult protection issue.
- make a full record of what had been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible using the incident report form (it is vital for accurate records that the child's own words are used in records)
- pass the information onto the designated officer or Police or Children's social services. There are some circumstances where a child or young person may be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared (e.g. where a parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). Advice should be sought from NSPCC/CPSU, Police or Children's Services

**NB** it may not be that all children are able to express themselves verbally. Disability or cultural background may present communication difficulties making it hard for them to complain or be understood.

It is recommended that the person receiving the information **DOES NOT:**

- panic
- allow shock or distaste to show
- probe for more information than is offered
- speculate or make assumptions
- make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- approach the alleged abuser
- make promises or agree to keep secrets

NB the person receiving the information can assure the victim that it will be dealt with confidentially

### **3.2 Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)**

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Officer to consult with or refer to Children's Services where abuse is indicated or suspected. The DSO will be responsible for following up any referral in writing within 24 hours. If the DSO is not available or the concern is about the DSO the referrer should contact the Children's Services or police directly.

#### **3.2.1 A Designated Safeguarding Officer should be**

- someone who understands the context in which instructors and young people are operating
- someone who has basic knowledge of core legislation, government guidance and roles and responsibilities of statutory agencies, along with Sport in Mind's policy and procedures
- someone who has the skills, knowledge and understanding of development of young people
- someone who understands the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people and can recognise poor practice or abuse
- someone who has undertaken appropriate checks (eg DBS) and received the appropriate level of training

#### **3.2.2 Responsibilities of Designated Safeguarding Officer**

- to be familiar with safeguarding procedures of the partnership and national and regional policies, and maintain up to date knowledge
- ensure there are effective internal procedures to handle concerns
- ensure that systems are in place for effective record keeping
- be the link person with Children's Services or Police and consult or refer to /with Children's Services or Police on concerns that have been raised
- to attend training provided by Children's Services or other welfare agency
- to ensure information is reported (directly or via statutory agencies) to the relevant NGB or other partner (eg LA) if the allegations concern a volunteer/instructor who operates in a specific sport or within another agency
- to receive, advise and act on reports or disclosures about safeguarding issues
- to offer an advice service to assist potential referrers to clarify their concerns
- update appropriate third parties (including NGB's, LA's and schools) on the results of investigations in the interests of young people
- establish and maintain a record system in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act

### **Expert Advice**

On occasions the DSO may be informed of situations where there is uncertainty about whether an allegation constitutes abuse or not and therefore is unclear about what action to take. There may be circumstances where allegations are about poor practice rather than abuse but the DSO should always be informed, and may seek advice from Children's Services, Police or NSPCC before agreeing on an appropriate course of action. This is because it may be just one of a series of other instances which together cause concern. For anyone unsure of what to do advice can also be obtained by telephoning the NSPCC 24 hour free phone help line on 0808 800 5000

### **3.3 Procedures to follow**

Any staff member who receives a disclosure, complaint, or concern should report this to Sport in Mind's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) as soon as possible:

The DSO will take action and forward the details to the relevant professional body. If a DSO cannot be contacted contact should be made directly with Children's Services or where immediate risk of harm is suspected, contact the police.

The person receiving information completes the Incident Report Form. As part of this process, when appropriate, a 'Body Map' (Appendix 3) highlighting where injuries are evident should be completed

1. Contact should be made immediately with the DSO and arrangements made to pass on the completed Incident Report Form. If the DSO is unavailable the person with concerns should not delay and should contact Children's Services or police using the numbers on Appendix 4. At the earliest opportunity they should inform the DSO of their concerns and actions and pass on the completed Incident Report Form
2. The DSO will consult Children's Services or police to form a view about whether the matter will be dealt with as a poor practice incident (if concerns relate to a member of staff or volunteer) or be investigated by the statutory agencies as possible abuse.
3. The written record will be sent to the appropriate professional Children's Services by the DSO and follow up to confirm receipt
4. When an immediate referral to Children's Services is not indicated the DSO will seek professional advice in order to establish an appropriate response.
5. Where advice is given to a third party to contact statutory services, the DSO should also follow-up to confirm what action has been taken by the third party.

### 3.4 Records and Information

Information passed to the Children's Services or Police must be as helpful as possible. It is therefore essential to make a detailed record using the Incident Reporting Form at the time of disclosure/concern or as soon as possible thereafter. Information should include the following:

- the nature of the allegation/ concern
- a description of any visible injuries – by use of a 'Body Map' highlighting injured areas
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened, how any injury occurred
- witnesses to the incident(s)
- any times, dates, places or other relevant information
- a clear distinction between what is fact and opinion or hearsay
- contact details for all parties.

Reporting the matter should not be delayed by attempts to obtain more information or if the DSO is not available (although the DSO should be informed at the earliest opportunity). A record of the name of the member of Children's Services staff or Police Officer to whom the matter was passed, together with the date and time of the call is needed also.

### 3.5 Confidentiality and Storage of Information

Confidentiality is a key issue and whilst information should not be shared freely, it must be shared with appropriate agencies to ensure that a child is not left unprotected. Decisions on who needs to be informed should be taken after discussions with Children's Services by DSO.

Information should be stored in a secure place in line with Data Protection Laws (e.g. that information is accurate and is regularly updated), relevant and secure. Access will be limited to designated people:

- Sport in Mind Designated Safeguarding Officers
- Appropriate social care
- The Police
- The parents of any child who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child)\*

\*Seek Children's Services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

### 3.6 Sharing Concerns with Parents

There is always a commitment to work in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations, it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify any initial concerns. For example, if a child seems withdrawn, there may be a reasonable explanation. He/she may have experienced an upset in the family, such as a parental separation, divorce or bereavement.

However, there are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared (e.g. where a parent/carer may be responsible for the abuse or not able to respond to the situation appropriately). In these situations or where concerns still exist, any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported and recorded as soon as possible to the DSO rather than parents or carers.

### **3.7 Action Towards the Bully (if bully is a young person):**

- talk with the bully, explain the situation, try to get the bully to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim
- inform the bully's parents
- insist on the return of 'borrowed' items
- provide support for the instructor and significant others of the victim
- impose sanctions as necessary
- encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour
- hold meetings with the families to report on progress
- inform other instructors and designated officer of action taken
- keep a written record of action taken.

### **3.8 Allegations against Staff or Volunteers**

This includes anyone working in a paid or voluntary capacity on behalf of Sport in Mind. It is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child, arising from abuse or harassment by a member of staff or volunteer, should be reported to the DSOs immediately and an incident form completed.

Any allegations regarding a member of staff must be reported immediately by the DSOs to the Sport in Mind CEO. If the allegation concerns a child then the DSO will also notify the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 1 working day

- Where the concern is about an individual who is a volunteer and not an Sport in Mind employee, the DSO should refer to the statutory services
- The staff member may need to be suspended from work whilst the matter is investigated according to the existing disciplinary procedures operated by Sport in Mind. Any action will be taken in consultation with statutory agencies. Where this is deemed necessary, consideration should be given as to whether the accused is allowed to access potentially incriminating evidence, or devices which may contain this
- Suspension will not be automatic and the decision will take into account the relevant circumstances and advice from statutory agencies
- The reinstatement or not of an individual will follow procedures operated by Sport in Mind following the conclusion of any investigations (both internal and external) and an assessment of all available relevant information.

The following circumstances may lead a member of staff to suspect that a fellow member of staff or volunteer is abusing a child:

- an allegation is made by a child or adult
- an allegation is made by a staff member, against a fellow member of staff
- a member of staff notices inappropriate behaviour by another member of staff.
- concerning information comes to light through DBS check or another agency

### **3.8.1 Procedures to Follow**

Reporting procedures are the same as for other concerns ie contact the DSO and complete the Incident Report Form.

The flow chart (Appendix 1) illustrates the steps that need to be taken in the event of a suspicion or allegation against a staff member. Of primary concern is the welfare of the child.

### **3.8.2 Types of Investigation**

When there is a complaint of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer, the following types of investigation may occur:

- Criminal; Police
- Child Protection; Children's Services/Police
- Internal; Sport in Mind

It is also a possibility that civil proceedings could be initiated by the alleged victim, or by their family, or indeed the person who has been accused.

### **3.9 Whistle Blowing Policy**

A variety of feelings and concerns may be generated by the discovery that a member of staff or a volunteer is, or may be abusing a vulnerable person and this may raise concerns amongst other staff and volunteers. Sport in Mind operates a Whistle Blowing Policy which makes it clear that Sport in Mind will fully support all staff and protect anyone who, in good faith and without malicious intent, reports his or her concern about a colleague's practice or the possibility that a person may be being abused without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. Concerns should be raised with the immediate line manager or the DSO, depending on the seriousness or sensitivity of the issue.

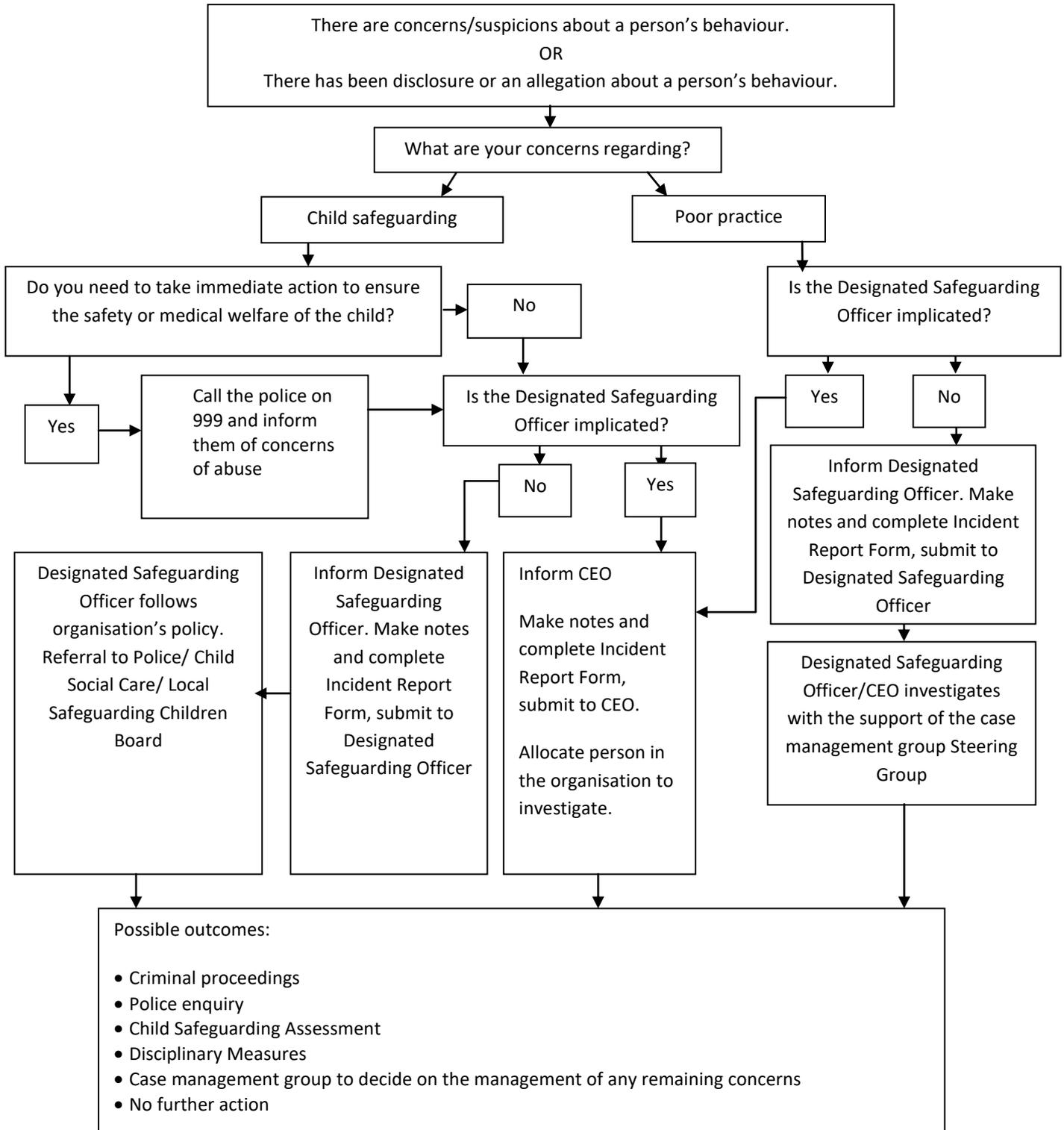
### **3.10 Support to Deal with the Aftermath**

Details of disciplinary and grievance procedures are available through the Sport in Mind staff handbook. Depending on the nature of the situation the following options will be considered to support children, parents, members of staff and the alleged perpetrator:

- Use of help lines
- Support groups
- Training
- Open meetings

## Appendix 1. Safeguarding Children Flowchart

### Dealing with Concerns, Suspicions or Disclosure



## Appendix 2: Safeguarding Incident Report Form

<b>Your Name:</b>		<b>Role:</b>	
<b>Contact info:</b>	Tel:	Email:	
<b>Referrer's details</b>			
<b>Child's Name:</b>			
<b>Child's Address:</b>			
<b>Child's DOB</b>		<b>Gender:</b>	MALE / FEMALE
<b>Disability:</b>	YES / NO	<b>Ethnicity:</b>	
<b>Parents/Carers Names:</b>			
<b>Parents/Carers Address (if different from above):</b>			
<b>Date, time and location of suspected/alleged incident(s):</b>			
<b>Details of the reported incident or concerns:</b>			
<p>State exactly what the child said and what you said: (Remember, do not lead the child – record actual details. Continue on separate sheet if necessary)</p>			
<b>Your Observations:</b>			

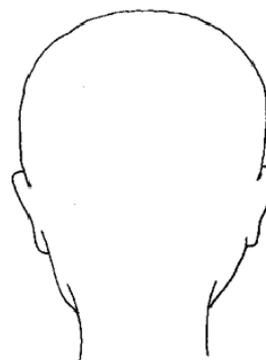
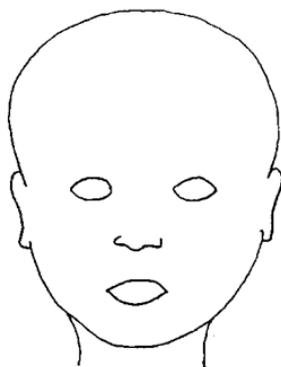
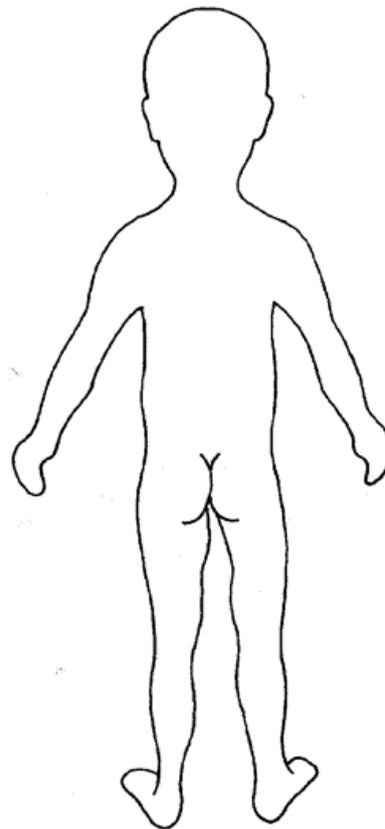
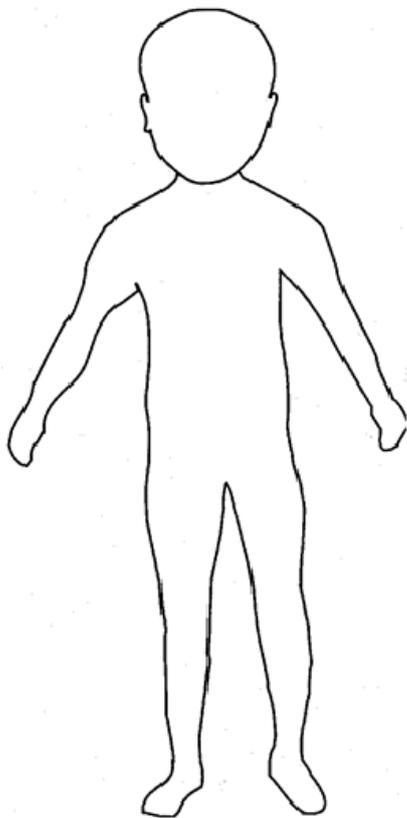
<b>Action taken so far:</b>	
<b>Details of suspected / alleged abuser:</b>	
Name:	
Address:	
Contact:	
<b>Has the incident been reported to any external agencies?</b>	
YES [ ]    NO [ ]	Agreed action or advice given:
If YES please provide further details:	
Name of agency:	
Contact person:	
Telephone numbers:	
Email address:	
<b>Have the parents been informed that contact is going to be made with Social Service or Police</b>	
YES [ ]    NO [ ]	
NB – parents should always be informed except in cases where doing so could place the child at risk of further harm. If in doubt seek advice of Children’s Services / Police.	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Print name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

**A copy of this form should be sent to the Designated Safeguarding Officer who will refer it on to Social Services, as required.**

**Remember to maintain confidentiality and do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know.**

**Appendix 3 - Body map for recording areas of physical injury or alleged abusive contact (This must be completed at time of observation)**

<b>Name of Child</b>	<b>Date of Birth</b>
<b>Name of person completing observation:</b>	<b>Date and time of observation:</b>



**FRONT**

**BACK**

## Appendix 4: Essential Contacts

<b>SAFEGUARDING OFFICER</b>		
Phil Warner	volunteering@sportinmind.org	Sport in Mind
		Rivermead Leisure Centre,
		Reading, Berkshire RG1 8EQ
<b>LOCAL CHILD SAFEGUARDING</b>		
	<b>OFFICE HOURS</b>	<b>OUT OF HOURS</b>
<b>Berkshire</b>		
Bracknell	01344 352005	01344 786543
Reading	0118 9373641	01344 786543
RBWM	01628 683234	01344 786543
Slough	01753 690924	01344 786543
West Berkshire	01635 503090	01344 786 543
Wokingham	0118 908 8002	01344 786 543
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>	01296 383485	0800 999 7677
<b>Dorset</b>		
Bournemouth	01202 458101	01202 657279
Poole	01202 735046	01202 657279
Dorset	01202 228866	01202 657279
<b>Hampshire</b>	0300 555 1384	0300 555 1373
<b>Kent</b>	03000 41 61 61	03000 41 91 91
<b>Oxfordshire</b>	0345 050 7666	0800 833 408
<b>Surrey</b>	0300 470 9100	01483 517898
<b>Sussex</b>		
East Sussex	01323 464222	01273 335906
West Sussex	01403 229 900	0330 222 6664
<b>POLICE CONTACT</b>		
Non-emergency	101	
Emergency	999	
<b>NATION CONTACTS</b>		
<b>NSPCC</b>	0808 800 5000	
<b>Childline UK</b>	0800 1111	