

**British**  
**Gymnastics**  
More than a sport

## **Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy**



## Safeguarding & Protecting Children Policy

### Approval

Approved by:	Name:	Dept.:	Date:
<b>Standards Committee</b>	Michelle Fulford	Corporate Services	17/07/14

### Document History

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## Foreword

British Gymnastics (BG) is committed to supporting all young people to enjoy and excel in the sport and fully recognises that children need a safe, protective and nurturing environment if they are to fulfill their potential and remain in the sport.

BG aims to achieve a high standard in the safeguarding of members and has a key role in supporting gymnastics clubs to ensure safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a fundamental consideration in everything they do. Anyone who provides or delivers gymnastics activity has a duty of care towards young people and needs to ensure that they offer a protective and child-friendly environment that gives parents reassurance that their children will be happy and safe.

Since the 2008 policy, there has been considerable progress in developing the network of trained Welfare Officers' across the sport. As a condition of membership, all BG registered clubs are required to have a Welfare Officer with the designated responsibility for safeguarding. The Welfare Officer plays a key role supporting child-centered practice and ensuring robust safeguarding arrangements are in place in the club. BG remains fully committed to developing the Welfare Officer network and continually improving our safeguarding practice and support to help ensure gymnastics has a positive impact on all children involved in our sport.

# Key Policy Information

## About the Policy

The British Gymnastics (BG) policy is informed by the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children – a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, HM Government 2013'. This guidance, which is applicable in England, sets out the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provides the framework to which Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) monitor the effectiveness of local services.

BG policy translates for the gymnastics community the statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. The BG policy is also informed by other key pieces of legislation, which are highlighted in the relevant parts of the policy. BG policy is developed in consultation with the NSPCC CPSU and is informed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The British Gymnastics (BG) Safeguarding and Protecting Children policy 2014 replaces the 2009 policy. **The document is now presented in four parts, namely: Policy, Recognising and Responding to Abuse and Poor Practice, Safe Recruitment and Safe Environment** and links to a number of other supplementary policies and procedures. In complying with the policy, affiliated organisations' can be reassured that they meet their statutory responsibilities.

## To Whom Does the Policy Apply?

BG is a UK wide Governing Body of Sport with affiliated Home Country Governing Bodies in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Although BG policy is based on the English guidance and legislation, in the light of the common principles and similar approaches taken by all Home Countries, most elements of this document are fully applicable to all individual members and affiliated organisations'. Any necessary differences have been highlighted in the document and reference made to any complementary home country policy/procedures.

The policy is applicable to all levels of the sport and provides a framework for those involved in gymnastics to meet their duty of care towards young people. The policy, where applicable, is mandatory for all BG staff, members and volunteers (except where there are home country variations arising from legislative differences). Any individual or organisation that is providing a service to BG must also demonstrate that they comply with these standards.

Anyone who manages, or has overall responsibility for, a gymnastics club or organisation must support their Welfare Officer in to fulfil their role and ensure their organisation is fully compliant with this policy. All BG members should also read and comply with the policy.

## How Should the Policy be used?

The policy is the key source of reference for all safeguarding and protecting children related matters. The main users of these policies and procedures are likely to be Welfare Officers', as it is their role to guide their organisation to plan, prioritise and implement the various safeguarding responsibilities and activities.

The policy also provides important guidance for anyone involved in gymnastics including parents, coaches, officials, and other volunteers. It offers practical guidance for those involved in providing gymnastic activities for children and relevant sections should be reproduced in an appropriate format and widely shared across the gymnastics community to increase general awareness and good practice.

## **How Will the Policy Remain Up-to-Date?**

Although the policy takes into account all relevant current legislation, the document will need to be amended as required in response to changes in the gymnastics, sport, political, legal, ethical, social and technological environment in which we operate. Any amendments will be recorded and communicated to all relevant parties.

BG will also review its Safeguarding and Protecting Children policy on an annual basis and as required by the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU), UK Sport and Home Country Sports Councils. The policy may also be reviewed following introduction of any new internal or external safeguarding process and as a result of any significant child protection case within gymnastics or other sports

## **Acknowledgements**

BG wishes to express its gratitude to the NSPCC CPSU, for their support and guidance in developing this document.

# POLICY

## Introduction

Safeguarding Children is described in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 as the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm, which involves:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; **and**
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Therefore, everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe, irrespective of their role and whether they are paid or volunteers.

Children may be harmed in any environment, including the home, at school or in a sports club. Although young people are more likely to be abused in their own home, cases of abuse have occurred, and continue to occur, in gymnastics and in other sports. BG acknowledges that gymnastics provides significant access to young people and can provide opportunities for an individual who wants to harm children. However, it is also recognised that those having regular contact with young people have a key role in promoting their welfare and are ideally placed to notice signs that a child may be being abused. It is therefore essential that anyone in contact with young people through their involvement in gymnastics is fully aware of the early signs of abuse and/or neglect and understands the appropriate steps to report these concerns.

In addition, it is important to be aware that some children may be more vulnerable than others. These may include disabled children with specific additional needs and children with special educational needs and children training at a high performance level within sport.

BG is fully committed to providing support, information and training opportunities to make certain that individuals understand their role and responsibilities, and fully understand the risk factors linked to abuse within the sport.

BG strives to create an environment where all children can thrive and realise their potential and, in accepting a duty of care towards children, will set the standards and define best practice for working with children within the sport. BG strives to ensure that child-centered safeguarding principles are fully embraced by the whole gymnastics community as an integral part of all BG and club activities.

## Key Principles

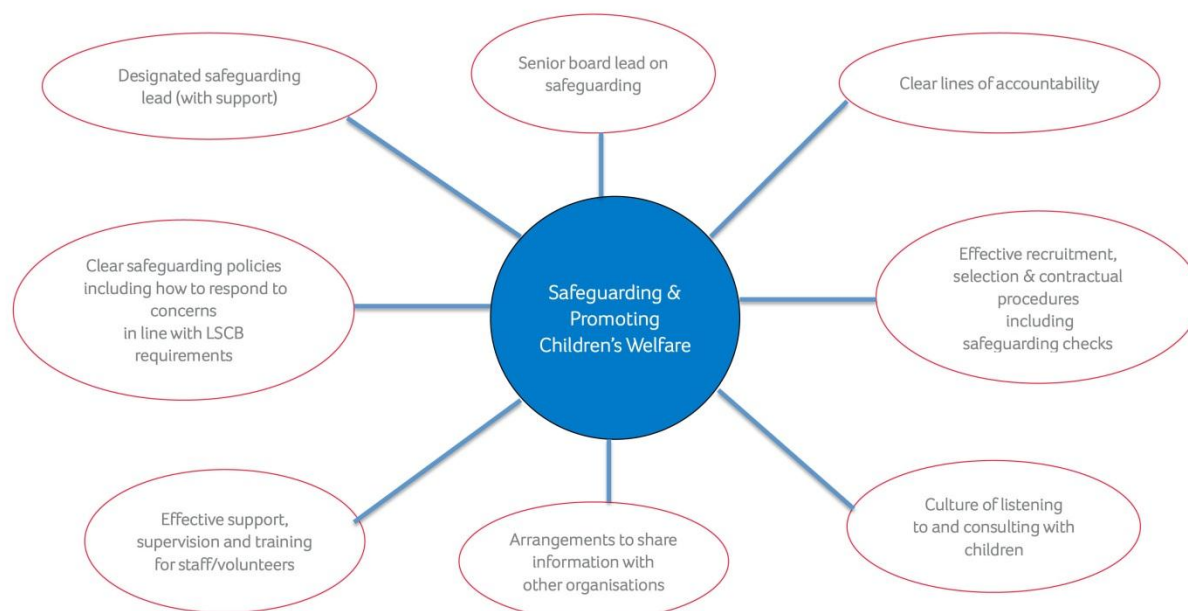
The policy is based upon the following fundamental principles:

- The welfare of children (anyone under the age of 18 years) is paramount;
- All children, regardless of ability, age, disability, sexual orientation, parental status, race, religion or belief or socio/economic background have a right to be protected from abuse;
- Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility – every individual and organisation must play their part in ensuring the sport is safe;
- A child-centered approach – gymnastics provision will better meet the needs of children if it is informed by a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

## Background

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 provides the overall framework on which the BG policy is based. The guidance highlights the important role played by voluntary organisations' and private sector providers in the delivery of services to children and expects such organisations' to put in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Working Together 2013 also highlights that both the paid and voluntary workforce need to be aware of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and how they should respond to child protection concerns and make a referral to local authority children's social care or the Police if necessary.

### Statutory requirements for all organisations providing services to children in England Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013) Section 2.4



The BG policy puts into a gymnastics context these requirements; outlining the minimum standards to which all BG staff, members and volunteers must adhere. In addition to the main policy, there are various additional policies that must also be applied.

## Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of the BG policy is to ensure that everyone participating in the sport of gymnastics does so in a safe, holistic and child-centered environment that supports children to meet their potential. This can only be achieved if everyone involved in the sport is fully compliant with the policy. The key objectives of the policy are as follows:

- To ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding;
- To ensure everyone who comes into contact with children is able to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people;
- To promote positive practice and challenge poor practice;
- To ensure robust systems are in place to manage any concerns or allegations;



- To develop a skilled and competent safeguarding workforce;
- To ensure everyone who is involved in a role with children completes training at a level appropriate to their role in the sport, which covers the above areas;
- To ensure everyone who is involved in a role with children has been through appropriate pre-recruitment checks, including the appropriate level criminal record checks;
- To ensure young people and their parents/carers are consulted and, where appropriate, fully involved in decisions that affect them.

## BG Responsibility

The overall responsibility for safeguarding children in gymnastics rests with the BG Board, and sits within the portfolio of the Executive Director for Corporate Services.

All Directors are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children participating in the sport. BG has prepared a clear policy that provides a framework for any club, or individuals, working with children.

BG Standards Committee (formerly the Ethics and Welfare Committee) is responsible for:

- development of policy, rules and regulations;
- monitoring the implementation of the Safeguarding Policy and agreeing training needs;
- monitoring the effectiveness of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and reviewing the policy as required;
- providing reports to the Board on all matters relating to safeguarding.

BG will ensure that it fulfills its responsibilities to work jointly with others to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. BG will work in partnership with Home Country and Regional gymnastics organisations' in order to support the development of robust arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children.

BG recognises that it has a duty to help ensure affiliated organisations' and individual members understand and fulfill their responsibilities through the provision of clear guidance and support. BG guidance has been formulated with the underlying aim of minimising risk to children and, wherever possible, avoiding situations where it is known that abuse or neglect can occur. BG will support this duty through the development and provision of learning opportunities for members.

BG will work closely with the NSPCC CPSU to review and continually develop our safeguarding practice and ensure it is evidence-based.

Central to the policy is the need for BG to support and develop the network of designated Welfare Officers' with the lead responsibility for safeguarding and protecting children. BG will be responsible for appointing the network of Regional Welfare Officers' (RWOs). BG will provide training and development opportunities for both Home Country, Regional and, where relevant, County Welfare Officers' and support them to develop their local network of Club Welfare Officers'.

BG recognises the responsibilities of Statutory Authorities and is committed to working with Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and Local Authority Designated Officers (LADO) in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013).

BG, and where relevant in consultation with Home Country Organisations', will ensure that any allegations or suspicions of abuse or significant harm to any child are reported without delay to the relevant Statutory Authorities in line with established information sharing protocols.

BG will comply with the principles set out in the [Data Protection Act 1998](#) and [Information Sharing for Practitioners \(HM Government, 2006\)](#) in relation to confidentiality and information sharing. Information that is confidential in nature may be shared, without consent, where there is a legitimate and lawful reason for disclosure.

In the event of an abuse allegation against a BG member, employee or other person with an involvement in the sport, BG will take action to ensure young people are protected and, where appropriate, will support the prosecution of individuals accused of a criminal offence against a child/children.

All other misconduct or poor practice issues/non-compliance with policy and procedure will normally be managed in partnership with the affiliated organisation that is closest to the point of complaint or disclosure.

BG provides a [Case Referral Management Group](#) with the responsibility for agreeing:-

- the referral route for all cases that deal with the welfare of children;
- whether suspension of BG membership is required;
- the appropriate course of remedial action.

BG will refer to the [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)](#) anyone we believe is or has been, or might in the future be, engaged in [regulated activity](#) whose BG membership has been revoked (or would, or might, have been withdrawn if the individual had not otherwise ceased involvement in the sport) on the grounds that they harmed a child or pose a risk of harm, or received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.

BG will ensure that robust systems are in place to help prevent people who present a risk to children from becoming involved in the sport, and to support the removal of anyone who is considered unsuitable.

## Home Country Responsibilities

In partnership with BG, the responsibility to lead the implementation of this policy is shared with the Home County Gymnastics Governing Bodies who will need to:

- adopt the BG policy and procedures, or have in place a full or supplementary policy and procedures that are compliant with relevant home country legislation and guidance;
- ensure there is a Lead Officer operating at a senior level in the organisation responsible for safeguarding children;
- ensure all clubs have a trained Welfare Officer in line with Service Level Agreements;
- establish and strengthen Welfare Officer networks;
- provide support and professional development for Welfare Officers’;
- offer sufficient learning opportunities to meet local needs; **and**
- work in partnership with BG to provide timely solutions to the resolution of poor practice concerns and disputes.

## Club Responsibilities

All clubs who provide services to children have a common law duty of care to take such steps that, in the circumstances of a gymnastics club, are reasonable to ensure the safety and welfare of these children. BG policy and procedures set out the minimum standards that clubs should apply. BG will provide support and guidance to help clubs to meet their responsibilities.

All clubs must ensure that: -

- the overall responsibility for safeguarding sits at the most senior level of their organization;
- there is at least one suitably trained and competent Welfare Officer designated within the club to take the lead role in dealing with safeguarding issues. The responsibilities of the individual should include:
  - promoting the welfare of children and importance of safeguarding;
  - ensuring that young people are listened to and are involved in decision making;
  - ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding;
  - responding to child protection and poor practice concerns;
  - liaising with BG and local Statutory Agencies;
  - working with other organisations' as required;
  - acting as the designated person for criminal records checks;
- the Club Welfare Officer has attended BG approved Safeguarding and Protecting children awareness training and the BG Time to Listen course;
- the Club Welfare Officer holds a minimum of BG Bronze membership, and has undertaken a criminal record check in line with [BG Criminal Records Checks Policy and Guidelines](#);
- all staff, and volunteers, who are working with children receive appropriate training, updated every three years, and have access to advice on child protection, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children through the Club Welfare Officer;
- all children and young people, and their parents, are aware of behaviour that is not acceptable and how they can help to keep themselves safe;
- they support [Whistle Blowing](#) and take steps to ensure members, their parents/carers, and others, feel able to raise concerns without fear of negative repercussions;
- confidentiality is maintained in relation to concerns and referrals, and information is only shared on a genuine '[need to know](#)' basis in line with [BG Confidentiality and Information Sharing Guidance](#);
- they comply with the [BG guidance on safe recruitment](#) to prevent unsuitable people from obtaining, or remaining in, positions of trust or responsibility;
- they comply with the all applicable supplementary policy and guidance, and accept responsibility for identifying and responding to any deficiencies or weaknesses in its arrangements for safeguarding and promoting welfare of children;
- they work in partnership with BG to ensure poor practice is addressed and any required remedial action is taken.

It is not the role of Club Officials to investigate possible abuse or neglect. However, they have a key role to play by referring concerns about those issues to Children's Social Care Services and/or BG and providing information for police investigations.