



Child Wellbeing & Protection

POLICY & GUIDANCE

May 2022



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Scottish Gymnastics believes that every child has the right to take part in gymnastics in a safe, fun and inclusive environment.

1 Purpose

This policy is designed to outline Scottish Gymnastics' commitment to ensure everyone who participates and performs in our sport can do so in a safe, fun and inclusive environment.

Scottish Gymnastics' child wellbeing and protection policy outlines the behaviours expected from all within the 'gymnastics family'¹ and provides a standardised process on how to monitor, record and respond to concerns effectively.

2 Scope

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and this policy applies to all within the 'gymnastics family'¹.

3 Consultation

Scottish Gymnastics always welcomes feedback. Consultation has taken place with

- Scottish Gymnastics wellbeing & protection committee
- Children 1st

4 Policy Statement

Scottish Gymnastics is fully committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of all children and young people in our care. Raising awareness of children and young people's wellbeing, recognising what needs to be done and the requirement to act on this when a child or young person needs our help and support

We value a rights-based approach within our sport. Our Child Wellbeing and Protection Policy takes into account the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014, the principles of "Getting it Right for Every Child" (GIRFEC) and we recognise the general principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Staff and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of children and young people. Scottish Gymnastics is committed to ensuring every child and young person who takes part in gymnastics can participate in an enjoyable and safe environment which promotes inclusion and protects them from harm, poor practice, exploitation, bullying and abuse.

¹The "gymnastics family" refers to everyone involved in the sport of gymnastics at all levels of including individuals, clubs, disciplines, technical committees, and other organisations, regardless of their role, paid, contractor or voluntary, or whether they are members of Scottish Gymnastics or not.'

5 Definition of a Child

For the purposes of this policy, in line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years. This policy applies to all children regardless of age, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, socio-economic status, gender or family circumstance.

6 Monitoring and Review

This policy and these procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed, with a full review being carried out every two years. The policy and procedures will also be reviewed in accordance with changes in legislation:

- Changes in Scottish Gymnastics or its governance
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children within Scottish Gymnastics or the wider sport of gymnastics
- On advice from Scottish Gymnastics wellbeing & protection committee, the independent conduct in sport panel, **sportscotland** and/or Children 1st

This policy will be monitored by:

- Keeping records of cases brought and their outcomes
- Accepting comments from clubs on the ease of implementation and effect of the policy
- Internal reviews/advice from Scottish Gymnastics independent conduct in sport panel or Scottish Gymnastics wellbeing & protection committee

7 Equality

We believe the principles of equality should be integral to every aspect of our sport - development, delivery, decision-making

Discrimination is unacceptable and we will endeavour through our policies, procedures, actions and decision making, to ensure that no member of the gymnastics family receives less favourable treatment or is discriminated against on the grounds age, sex, gender identity, disability, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, race, ethnic origin, nationality, political beliefs, socio-economic status or sexual orientation.

8 Principles

This policy is based on the following key principles:

- **Child Centered** - the wellbeing of the child is the primary concern
- **Prevention** - it is always better to take action before harm occurs. It is **everyone's** responsibility to promote and safeguard children within our sport
- **Protection** - all suspicions and allegations of poor practice, wellbeing concerns or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- **Empowerment** - children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish
- **Accountability** - ensuring transparency and accountability in our safeguarding practice where the role and responsibilities of everyone involved are clear
- **Proportionality** - the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- **Working together** - we strive to work in partnership with the young person, clubs, carers/family/support workers and statutory agencies to achieve the best result for the individual. Clubs have a part to play in preventing and managing wellbeing concerns, preventing poor practice and abuse. Scottish Gymnastics recognise the statutory responsibility of local authority social work and police departments to ensure the welfare of children and it is committed to complying with Local Area Child Protection Procedures.
- **Support** - clubs, technical committees, disciplines and other organisations involved in the sport of gymnastics will be provided with the appropriate support, education/training to ensure the effective implementation of this policy. Staff, coaches and volunteers working with children should access all available education and training opportunities to ensure best practice becomes the norm.

9 Roles and Responsibilities

Scottish Gymnastics strives to ensure that children and young people are protected and kept safe from harm whilst participating in gymnastics activities. We will endeavor to promote the highest standards of care for participants. For effective implementation of this policy all gymnastics providers must work in partnership, each with a role to ensure the protection of the children and young people in their care.

Scottish Gymnastics will

- Promote the health and wellbeing of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in gymnastics safely
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children by ensuring a culture of listening to and engaging in dialogue with children
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures, support and guidance to safeguard the wellbeing of children and protect them from wellbeing concerns, poor practice and abuse
- Require everyone in the gymnastics family including staff, volunteers, affiliated clubs and their members to adopt and abide by this child wellbeing protection policy & guidance, the safe recruitment policy and anti-bully policy
- Ensure best practice is extensively promoted, and clubs, coaches/teachers, officials and all members are encouraged and required to follow guidelines set down by Scottish Gymnastics and that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and protecting children
- Recruit, train, support and supervise staff and volunteers to adopt best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse and to reduce risk to themselves
- Maintain registration with the relevant disclosure service with Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Service (VSDS) or directly with Disclosure Scotland to facilitate appropriate criminal records check for both our own activity and as a service for member clubs to prevent unsuitable people from working within our sport
- Provide a suitable programme of training via the inclusion and integration of wellbeing and protection and child protection issues within Scottish Gymnastics' coach education programmes as well as specific training opportunities for club members to attend workshops on Child Wellbeing & Protection in Sport, networking sessions and other relevant training on contemporary issues
- Require all those who are deployed by Scottish Gymnastics or in the wider gymnastics family who work with children including those who act in a pastoral role whilst on trips, to have an appropriate disclosure check and attend child protection training
- Appoint a head of wellbeing & protection to provide guidance on safeguarding, child wellbeing and protection and a safeguarding team to deliver the Scottish Gymnastics wellbeing and protection strategic plan
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with the relevant policy
- Initiate disciplinary proceedings when necessary
- Maintain the semi-independent conduct in sport panel to ensure all child protection related incidents are dealt with appropriately
- Work in partnership with other home nations in proactive safeguarding approach for the sport of gymnastics and also inform British Gymnastics of any incidents or allegations of poor practice or abuse which crosses borders and co-ordinate a joint approach to such practices where appropriate.
- Maintain confidential records of all complaints, concerns and sanctions against clubs and individuals

The club must

- Adhere to the guidelines and procedures contained within this policy
- Ensure the club has its own safeguarding policy
- Champion best practice and implement Scottish Gymnastics guidelines on key areas – minimum coach to child ratios, transport, accident reporting, behaviour management, consent forms, social media, overnight trips/accommodation, safe use of public facilities etc
- Ensure that the Scottish Gymnastics equity policy is adhered to, and that discrimination is prohibited at all levels
- Accept that all office and committee members have a responsibility in this area and be prepared to respond to any indication of wellbeing concerns, poor practice and abuse
- Appoint a safeguarding officer
- Promote an environment where concerns can be raised without fear of victimisation or reprisal
- Maintain confidentiality, should an allegation be made, of the child and the person against whom the allegation is made
- Report any serious incident of wellbeing concerns, poor practice or abuse to Scottish Gymnastics safeguarding team
- Be prepared to challenge and alter bad practice
- Implement any recommendations of Scottish Gymnastics relating to this area
- Promote an open-door policy
- Ensure all those coming into the club to work with children and protected adults regardless of whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, including those who act in a pastoral role on trips are safely recruited in accordance with the Scottish Gymnastics' recruitment policy. This includes a satisfactory disclosure/PVG check and Scottish Gymnastics wellbeing and protection training
- Have all staff, volunteers, coaches, gymnasts and parents/carers agree to and sign the club's code of conduct

The club safeguarding officer will

- Counsel/advise the club committee on matters of policy relating to child wellbeing, poor practice and protection and safe recruitment
- Ensure all persons working with children and young people at the club are fully aware of what is required of them within the guidelines of their club, Scottish Gymnastics child wellbeing & protection policy and code of practice
- Conduct the administrative work associated with the safe recruitment of coaches, helpers and officials, including criminal record checks (verify ID documentation)
- Maintain club records to ensure all persons within the club who work with children regardless of whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, including those who act in a pastoral role on trips have a satisfactory disclosure/PVG check and Scottish Gymnastics wellbeing and protection training
- Liaise closely with the club's staff and volunteers, particularly young, inexperienced or trainee coaches, ensuring that the agreed procedures for the prevention of risk are followed
- Be the first point of contact for coaches, helpers, parents and gymnasts on any issues concerning the wellbeing of the club members, (poor practice or potential alleged abuse).
- Ensure that all incidents are correctly recorded and reported in accordance with Scottish Gymnastic policy and procedures

Adults Working with Children (positions of trust)

- All adults who work with children and young people are in a position of trust which has been invested in them by the parents, the sport and the young person. This relationship can be described as one in which the adult is in a position of power and in influence by virtue of their position
- The Scottish Gymnastics code of practice and the club's codes of conduct cover in detail expected behaviour and boundaries and it is the responsibility of individuals to be familiar with these documents and to abide by them
- In the sport of gymnastics there are certain boundaries between the adults with roles in the sport eg coach/official/volunteer and the young gymnast which must not be crossed. The relationship is no different to that between a teacher and the young people in their care - it is a position of trust
- Adults must not encourage a physical or emotionally dependent relationship to develop between themselves and the young person in their care
- Sexual activity or touching by an adult with a child under the age of 16 years is unlawful and is sexual abuse; even where there is apparent consent from the child. Any sexual relationship between an adult in a position of trust within the gymnastics setting and a young person over 16 years of age [consensual or otherwise] is a breach of the Scottish Gymnastics wellbeing & child protection policy and will result in disciplinary action being taken.
- Adults who do not observe best practice with young people will be in breach of both their club and Scottish Gymnastics policies and codes
- Breaches of policies and codes will be investigated and addressed either locally or if required through the Scottish Gymnastics conduct in sport process

10 Safeguarding Children & Young People

Wellbeing concerns, poor practice and abuse can occur in many situations including the home and within the gymnastics environment and community. We know that within sport sometime children hurt each other and there are individuals who will actively seek access to children and young people via sport to harm them.

We are safeguarding children from:

- wellbeing concerns
- poor practice
- abuse

11 Wellbeing Concerns

Definition: A wellbeing concern is if a child's wellbeing (measured using the eight SHANARRI indicators: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible, and included), has been or is at risk of, being adversely affected in any manner

A wellbeing concern may be identified by the child, or by anyone who knows or supports the child and can be identified for many reasons, such as (but not limited to) the following:

- a child may be worried, anxious or upset about an event/set of circumstances, including socio-economic circumstances
- a coach/parent/carer or family member may have noticed a change in the child's behaviour, demeanour or developmental progress
- a coach/parent/carer may have concerns about the impact on the child of an event or set of circumstances

Or can be identified using the SHANARRI indicators for example:

- healthy – the child has started to self-harm, is depressed or shows other signs of poor physical or mental health
- achieving – the child has struggled to master and develop skills at training that are normal for the age and stage of child
- included – a child who is being excluded or bullied

12 Poor Practice

Definition: Is behaviour of an individual in a position of responsibility which falls below the required standard as set out in the code of practice, the child wellbeing & protection policy or accompanying guidelines. It is behaviour that does not respect children's rights or those of their parents/carers. Poor practice may not be immediately dangerous or intentionally harmful to a child but is likely to set a poor example. While poor practice falls short of abuse it has a negative and adverse effect on the wellbeing of children and is considered unacceptable.

The following definitions set out common areas within sport where poor practice can occur:

- breaches of Scottish Gymnastics'/club's child wellbeing & protection policy and guidance
- breaches of recognised best practice in coaching or the Scottish Gymnastics' code of practice – this can include actions that would be considered unacceptable as part of routine/regular practice e.g. being alone with a child or adult at risk but that may be appropriate in unforeseeable or emergency circumstances.
- practices that may be carried out with the best intentions but fall into a category of behaviours that are used by people who sexually abuse or 'groom' children/young people

It is essential that everyone challenges poor practice within gymnastics, even where there is a belief that the motives of an individual are well meaning. Failure to challenge poor practice can lead to an environment where abuse is more likely to remain unnoticed and accepted.

13 Abuse

Definition: abuse and neglect are when a person inflicts or fails to prevent significant harm to a child. All forms of child abuse involve the elements of a power imbalance, exploitation and the absence of true consent, whether they concern acts of commission or acts of omission.

“Abuse is the wrongful application of power by someone in a dominant position”
Lord Clyde

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. This definition includes placing children at risk through something a person has done to them or something a person is failing to do for them and is split into four types of abuse:

- emotional abuse
- physical abuse
- neglect
- sexual abuse

These types are not mutually exclusive, e.g., a child experiencing physical abuse is undoubtedly experiencing emotional abuse as well. The definitions indicate the different ways in which abuse may be experienced by a child but are not exhaustive, as the individual circumstances of abuse will vary from child to child. (All definitions taken from ‘National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014’)

14 Identifying Abuse

There are many indicators that a child may be suffering abuse, some general signs are included in the following list. Please note that this list is not exclusive.

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if
- situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent
- Someone else (a child or adult) expresses concern about the welfare of another child
- Unexplained changes in the behaviour (e.g. becoming very quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper)
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or behaving in a sexually explicit way
- Distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected and seems to have difficulty in making friends
- Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite
- Refusal to remove clothing for normal activities or keeping covered up in warm weather
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt or loses/gains weight for no apparent reason

The presence of one or more of the indicators is not proof that abuse is actually taking place. It is not the responsibility of those working in sport to decide that child abuse is occurring, but it is our responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting them via the appropriate channels.

15 Responding to Concerns

A complaint, concern, incident or allegation may come from a number of sources: the child, one of their friends, their coach, a parent or someone else within the organisation. It may involve the behaviour of a volunteer/employee, or something that has happened to the child outside the sport e.g. at home or at school. Children may confide in adults they trust, in a place where they feel safe.

A report/concern may range from mild verbal bullying to physical or sexual abuse. If you are concerned that a child may be being abused, it is NOT your responsibility to investigate further BUT it is your responsibility to:

- Reassure the person making the report they have done the right thing in raising a concern
- Listen openly without judgment
- Record anything that is said
- Report it to the appropriate statutory authorities and Scottish Gymnastics

Following Scottish Gymnastics' published procedures when dealing with concerns and discourses helps:

- To avoid those receiving information from engaging in judgements
- Reassure those who report concerns that an appropriate course of action will ensue
- Support those responsible for managing concerns by providing them with a step-by-step process to follow
- Safeguard the rights of those against whom complaints or allegations have been made

16 Responding to a disclosure

If an individual discloses a concern, it is important that they are provided with appropriate support and guidance but in a way that does not jeopardise any potential investigations.

It takes considerable courage for a child to tell someone that something is wrong (wellbeing concerns/poor practice/abuse). Concerns from children about things that are negatively affecting them, and allegations of abuse must always be taken seriously. False allegations are very rare. Disclosures need to be handled sensitively to avoid causing further distress to the child.

Where a member of staff or volunteer receives information about a safeguarding concern, they should explain to the individual to whom it relates that they have a responsibility to share the concern with the Scottish Gymnastics' safeguarding team or a senior person/manager in the organisation. It is important to reassure the individual, who may be fearful of any repercussions and provide appropriate support to help them understand why it is necessary to share this information.

Scottish Gymnastics is primarily concerned with the wellbeing and safety of all its members and participants and Scottish Gymnastics will support anyone who in good faith and where he/she has reasonable grounds for doing so, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

ALWAYS

- Listen and reassure
- Stay calm – ensure that the child is safe and feels safe
- Show and tell the child that you are taking them seriously
- Gather the outline of the disclosure
- Be aware of interpreting what is said, especially if they have learning or physical disabilities which affect their ability to communicate, or English is not their first language
- Be careful about physical contact, it may not be what wanted
- Explain what will happen next
- Be honest, explain that you will have to tell someone else to help
- Make a record of what the individual has said as soon as possible after the event
- Follow Scottish Gymnastics child wellbeing and protection procedures

NEVER

- Delay making a report or taking action
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- Make promises you cannot keep (e.g. you won't tell anyone)
- Make the child repeat the story unnecessarily.
- Ask more questions than are necessary for you to be sure that you need to act
- Take sole responsibility – consult someone else (ideally Scottish Gymnastics' safeguarding team or the person in charge or someone you can trust) so that you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself

YOU MUST

- Report all direct disclosures from children or any situation where you have not received a disclosure but you suspect that a child is at risk or experiencing abuse
- Reporting disclosures and concerns ensures that a child receives appropriate help and support, this ensures that appropriate action is taken against those who pose a risk to children and will help protect not only the child involved but all other children.
- Where there is uncertainty about what to do with the information, Scottish Gymnastics safeguarding team (or an appropriate senior manager within the organisation) must be consulted for advice on the appropriate course of action
- However, if Scottish Gymnastics is unavailable or an immediate response is required, the police and social work services must be consulted for advice. They have a statutory responsibility for the protection of children, and they may already hold other concerning information about the child.
- Record any advice given.

17 Historical Allegations

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event e.g. an adult who was abused as a child by someone who was (or still is) involved in the sport.

- If somebody raises a child/adult protection concern in relation to a coach/staff member/volunteer who was or is currently active within the sport then you should follow the 'Responding to Concerns' procedure (noted within this policy)
- Record the information using the incident report form and signpost the individual to Scottish Gymnastics safeguarding team and Police Scotland on '101'
- If you have a concern about a child or adult's immediate safety then this should be passed on to police or social services, and after ensuring the child/adult has been made safe, record and report as normal to Scottish Gymnastics safeguarding team

18 Reporting

Having to make a report about someone you know or about someone who is causing harm to or abusing a child can be very challenging on a personal level. Although it can be difficult to report such matters, you must remember that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- being vigilant helps to protect others
- everyone has a duty of care to report any concerns they have immediately
- a good reporting structure ensures that concerns are dealt with fairly

Scottish Gymnastics assures all members, staff and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports a concern where someone within the sport is or may be harming or abusing a child.

Who to report to:

The club safeguarding officer – Is your first point of contact when you have a concern about club activity

- If the club safeguarding officer is unavailable or is implicated, talk directly to a senior club officer or go directly to Scottish Gymnastics safeguarding team for advice
- When on an away trip, inform the person who has responsibility for safeguarding, this may be the team manager or head coach

Parents/Carers of the child, to clarify any initial concerns about how a child is presenting e.g. if a child seems withdrawn or had a difficult session that evening.

Partnership working with parents is an important part of safeguarding. In most situations, the club safeguarding officer or Scottish Gymnastics' safeguarding team will involve parents/carers as part of incident management. There are some situations where they are not involved.

Do NOT speak to the parents or carers if:

- A parent or carer may be responsible for the abuse or may not be able to respond to the situation appropriately they should not be involved, as it may place the child at greater risk
- Where it is unclear whether the parents/carer's involvement may place the child at risk further advice should be sought from Scottish Gymnastics safeguarding team or the child's school/social work before involving them

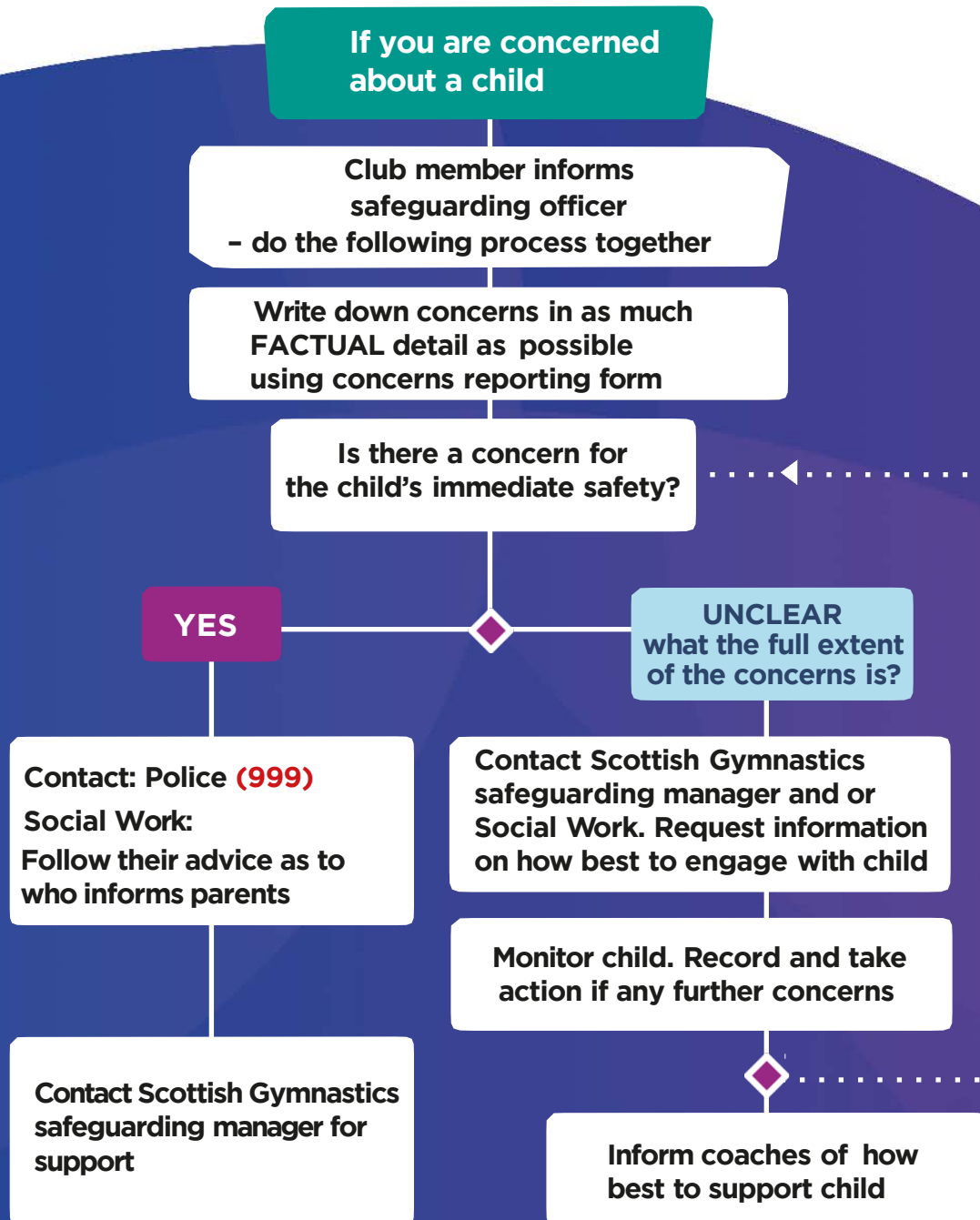
Scottish Gymnastics safeguarding team (or senior staff member) must be informed of all allegations of abuse and persistent poor practice as soon as possible in order to decide the following:

- what further action should be taken by the club or if the issue should be referred to Scottish Gymnastics' conduct in sport process
- whether further action, advice or investigation is needed by/from the police or social work
- passing on this information is important because the matter may be just one of a series of other instances which together cause concern. It supports the safeguarding team to act appropriately to support/deal with the concern and to analyse trends and improve existing policy and guidance.
- if Scottish Gymnastic is unavailable or an immediate response is required, the police and social services must be consulted for advice. They have a statutory responsibility for the protection of children and they may already hold other concerning information about the child. Record any advice given.

Statutory authorities - In any case where there is suspected abuse or where a child's safety is at risk, you should contact one of the following statutory agencies immediately:

- your local police child protection team or in an emergency dial 999
- the police should be involved if the incident you are concerned about appears to be of a criminal nature, potentially abuse or if the incident involves a person outside the child's family. A record should be made of the crime reference number
- local authority social work
- in an emergency the Samaritans (08457 909 090) will hold the duty officer's contact number
- all telephone referrals to the above bodies should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours to Scottish Gymnastics safeguarding team. You should record the following:
 - name and job title of the member of staff to whom the concerns were passed
 - the time and date of the call and a summary of the information shared and the response received

Child Concern Flow Chart



You can email Scottish Gymnastics team confidentially at safegym@scottishgymnastics.org

Coach Complaint Flow Chart

If you are concerned about the conduct of coaches, helpers, staff or volunteers

**Record the concern on the incident/
concern report form.
Report to the club safeguarding officer**

A

**Initial assessment to
establish the facts**

B

**Consider precautionary
suspension where appropriate**
(seek advice from Scottish
Gymnastics safeguarding manager)

**POOR PRACTICE,
POSSIBLE BREACH OF
CODE OF PRACTICE?**

Report concerns to the
safeguarding officer. Ensure copy
sent to Scottish Gymnastics
safeguarding manager

Safeguarding officer or line
manager will investigate in
accordance with club procedures

Case to answer yes: disciplinary
procedures initiated. Inform Scottish
Gymnastics safeguarding manager.
Case to answer no: inform all parties

Possible outcomes: complaint
upheld - formal discussion, further
training, referral to Scottish
Gymnastics, or no case to answer

**SERIOUS POOR
PRACTICE OR
MISCONDUCT?**

Report concerns to safeguarding
officer and to Scottish Gymnastics
safeguarding manager,
investigation initiated

Concerns will be managed in
accordance with club disciplinary
and Scottish Gymnastics conduct
procedures

Case to answer, yes: disciplinary
procedures initiated. Inform Scottish
Gymnastics safeguarding manager.
Case to answer, no: inform all parties

Possible outcomes: complaint
upheld - disciplinary hearing,
sanctions issued, referral to Scottish
Gymnastics, or no case to answer

**POSSIBLE
CRIMINAL
BEHAVIOUR?**

Safeguarding officer or Scottish
Gymnastics safeguarding manager
will report concerns to the Police

Case will be managed in
accordance with legal proceedings

Would depend on the outcome
of the judicial process

Possible outcomes: criminal
proceedings, Conduct in Sport
hearing, referral to Disclosure
Scotland where PVG criteria met

You can email Scottish Gymnastics team confidentially
at safegym@scottishgymnastics.org

19 Media Enquiries

If there has been an allegation, incident or recent court case the media may contact Scottish Gymnastics or an affiliated club for comment. All such enquires will be handled by Scottish Gymnastics CEO/Communications team. Affiliated clubs should seek advice in relation to any such enquires from Scottish Gymnastics

20 Record Keeping

All concerns that you may receive should be recorded, ideally using the Scottish Gymnastics incident report form.

- You are recording this information for:
- Yourself, so you have a record of what happened
- The club safeguarding officer or other designated safeguarding person within your club, who will coordinate any action that needs to be taken
- Scottish Gymnastics' safeguarding team so that they can advise you
- The police/social services if appropriate

It is NOT appropriate to share sensitive and confidential information with other people, e.g. general members of your club, personal acquaintances, your family members etc

When making a report remember:

- to include relevant details, names, dates, contact details and a description of the concern/what happened
- to confine yourself to the facts – what you have observed/seen, heard or had reported to you
- to distinguish between what is your own personal knowledge and what you have been told by other people
- not to include your own opinions on the matter. Be clear where you are giving either your own or others' interpretation of events and the reasons for this (e.g. context, individual's response to challenge)

21 Information Sharing

Information sharing between organisations can be essential to protect individual rights, facilitate access to support and services and may be vital in protecting people from being harmed.

- Information sharing from a safeguarding purpose is primarily focused on information sharing about abuse or neglect concerns, information sharing may also be appropriate in other circumstances to promote the welfare or wellbeing of a 'child in need'
- The third-party organisations with whom safeguarding concerns may need to be shared include:
 - statutory authorities e.g. police and social services.
 - gymnastics organisations i.e. where clubs or affiliated organisations share information with Scottish Gymnastics and vice-versa.
 - other organisations e.g. British Gymnastics or Welsh Gymnastics or other sports organisations or community clubs where risks posed by an individual cannot be managed without the disclosure of information

- Confidential information can be shared with other organisations where there is an overriding justification to do so without consent, for example where there is a significant safeguarding concern.
- The sharing of personal information is regulated principally by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. These laws provide a legal framework for the use of personal information about living and identifiable people.
- Data protection laws should never be a barrier to sharing information that is necessary to protect children or to prevent a crime. However, any decision to share information needs to balance the individual privacy and human rights and consequences for those whose personal information is being shared against the potential impact on children or others at risk if information is not shared.
- If you would share the information irrespective of whether the individual consents because of safeguarding concerns about the individual or about others who may be at risk if the information is not shared, it is not appropriate or necessary to ask for consent. However, it is always best practice to be open and honest with the individual from the outset as to the reason why and with whom their information will be shared and try to get their agreement to share, where it is appropriate and safe to do so, especially where the individual may not expect their information to be shared.
- In the context of safeguarding a child or young person, the principles of the Children (Scotland) Acts that state that the welfare of children is paramount mean that the needs of children who may be at risk must always be the key consideration.
- Anyone who makes decisions about whether to disclose confidential information to a third-party organisation is accountable under data protection law for these decisions. Decisions about who needs to know and what information needs to be shared should always be taken on a case-by-case basis and the justification for any sharing decisions should be recorded.
- Scottish Gymnastics requires that all affiliated clubs report any safeguarding concerns about Scottish Gymnastic members who may present a risk to others to the Scottish Gymnastics' safeguarding team. In these cases, the safeguarding team will assume responsibility for any further information sharing decisions in consultation with the club and/or affiliated organisation and relevant statutory authorities.
- Where a safeguarding concern is external to the sport, if a club or affiliated organisation is not clear that information should be shared, advice about whether sharing is appropriate can be sought from the Scottish Gymnastics safeguarding team or the police or local authority

