



Valley Striders Cycling Club (VSCC) Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures

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Valley Striders Cycling Club (VSCC)

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

INTRODUCTION

VSCC is committed to ensuring that everyone participating in cycling does so in a safe and enjoyable environment.

VSCC recognises the policies of the National Governing Body, as set out in the "British Cycling Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy 2019".

This policy and supporting procedures set out a framework to fulfil our commitment to good practice and the protection of children in our care.

Children may be harmed in any environment and those having regular contact with young people have a key role putting their welfare first, adopting these practices that protect and support them.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- The welfare of children is paramount.

(A child is defined by law in England and Wales as a person under the age of 18 years.)

- All children, regardless of their Age, Race, Religion or Belief, Disability, Gender identity or Sexual Orientation, have the right to protection from abuse.
- All concerns and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- We recognise the authority of the statutory agencies, Working Together under the Children Act 2004, and any legislation and statutory guidance which supersedes these.
- Everyone will work in partnership to promote the welfare, health and development of children.
- **VSCC** owes a legal duty of care to children on our premises or engaged in our activities. That duty is to take reasonable care to ensure their reasonable safety and the duty is higher than it would be for adults.

OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the policy is to ensure that everyone participating in the sport does so in a safe environment that supports children and young people to meet their potential.

VSCC will work to promote the principles of safeguarding children by:

- Reviewing policy and procedures every three years or whenever there is a major change in legislation or a significant organisational change.
- Using appropriate recruitment procedures to assess the suitability of volunteers and staff working with children and young people in line with guidance from British Cycling.
- Following procedures to report welfare concerns and allegations about the behaviour of adults and ensuring that all staff, volunteers, officials, parents and participants, including children, are aware of these procedures.
- Directing staff, volunteers, coaches and officials to appropriate safeguarding training and learning opportunities, where this is appropriate to their role.
- Acknowledging the additional vulnerability of some groups of children (e.g. disabled, looked after children, those with communication differences). Ensuring that the environment is appropriate for the child and tailored to their needs.
- Reassuring parents and carers that all children and young people will receive the best care possible whilst participating in club activities.
- Ensuring that children and their parents/carers are informed and consulted and, where appropriate, fully involved in decisions that affect them.

1. Mandatory Safeguarding Requirements for Clubs

VSCC will comply with the British Cycling Mandatory Safeguarding Requirements set out below.

- Adopt and implement the British Cycling Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, ensuring that it is understood by all and procedures are put in to practice.
- Recruit, appoint, register and arrange for the training of a Club Welfare Officer (CWO), with a clear role description, who is the designated contact for Safeguarding issues.
- Ensure that your Club Welfare Officer holds a current Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) through British Cycling.
- Display and communicate the contact details for the Club Welfare Officer where possible.

- Ensure that all those working or volunteering with children in Regulated Activity hold a current Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) through British Cycling.
- Display and communicate the clubs own Safeguarding Policy Statement where possible.
- Follow the British Cycling reporting procedures, referring all concerns and allegations to the British Cycling Lead Safeguarding Officer.

2. Recruitment and Training of Staff and Volunteers

2.1 Recruitment

VSCC understand that getting the right volunteers in place is key to a well organised club providing a safe and supportive environment.

Each role which involves an element of responsibility with regard to children, particularly those involving the regular supervision of children, whether voluntary or paid, should be assessed to establish which qualifications, checks and other requirements are necessary. These will include the following:

- An application form
- A self-disclosure form
- A minimum of 2 reference checks (this may be from the applicant's last employer and/or from someone able to comment on the applicant's experience in working with children or young people. A friend or neighbour would not be considered a suitable referee)
- Details of previous volunteering experiences or relevant employment working with children
- A Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check (where eligible)

All volunteers and staff recruited with responsibility for and significant contact with children must agree to inform the club if they are subsequently investigated by any agency or organisation in relation to concerns about their behaviour towards children or young people.

VSCC will report this to the British Cycling Safeguarding Lead Officer who will advise on the appropriate course of action.

Where such an individual has significant contact with or responsibility for children in a specified role at an event organised or sanctioned by British Cycling then that individual must directly inform the British Cycling Lead Safeguarding Officer.

2.2 Criminal Records Checks

2.2.1 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

DBS checks are another tool in the recruitment process. These must be renewed every three years.

The type of DBS check required will be determined by the role someone has, the frequency of that role being carried out and whether or not the role is supervised.

Anyone needing a DBS check must complete an application through British Cycling. Use of the update service and/or DBS checks through other organisations are not be accepted.

If a DBS certificate contains any information, then British Cycling will want to see the complete copy.

A criminal record will not necessarily prevent an applicant from working or volunteering with children and young people but a suitability assessment will be conducted, and the applicant may be asked to provide additional information and references.

British Cycling will take in to account the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and only consider offences which are relevant to the care, supervision and training of children.

If the applicant fails to engage in this process, then **VSCC** will be informed, and the applicant will be required to cease any involvement in **VSCC** activities.

British Cycling will not inform **VSCC** about the details of any offending but we will be informed whether or not the applicant is considered suitable to work with children and young people.

2.3 Training

All staff, volunteers, coaches and officials should be offered access to appropriate safeguarding training. **VSCC** will follow British Cycling's recommendation of attendance at a recognised face to face safeguarding course and all volunteers and staff who have significant contact with children should attend. A refresher course should be completed every three years.

Appropriate safeguarding training should be mandatory for all individuals in 'Regulated Activity.'

Legislation sets out what 'Regulated Activity' with children is. It is determined by the role someone has, the frequency of that role being carried out and whether or not the role is supervised.

3. COMPLAINTS, CONCERNS AND ALLEGATIONS

- 3.1** If any individual has a concern about the welfare of a child, or the conduct of another person (whether they are an adult or child, parent, coach, member or otherwise), these concerns should be brought to the attention of **VSCC** Welfare Officer without delay.

The person reporting the concern is not required to decide whether abuse has occurred, but simply has a duty to share their concerns and any relevant information to the **VSCC** Welfare Officer

Please refer to the Flowchart "Dealing with Concerns" below for further details.

- 3.2** You may receive information regarding the welfare of a child or young person who is involved in cycling, yet the concern itself does not relate to someone within the sport (eg the concern relates to the child's home or other social setting) In these circumstances you should still follow the same procedures.

Please refer to the Flowchart "Dealing with Concerns" below for further details.

- 3.3** All concerns will be treated in confidence. Details should only be shared on a 'need to know' basis with those who can help with the management of the concern.
- 3.4** Concerns will be recorded on an Incident Report Form and sent to the British Cycling Lead Safeguarding Officer within 24 hours.
- 3.5** **VSCC** will work with British Cycling and other external agencies to take appropriate action where concerns relate to potential abuse or alleged poor practice. Disciplinary procedures will be applied and followed where appropriate.
- 3.6** Any information about an individual that relates to their suitability to work, volunteer with or participate alongside children and young people will be reported to the British Cycling Safeguarding Lead Officer.

A safeguarding risk assessment will be completed by British Cycling and British Cycling disciplinary procedures will be applied and followed where appropriate

- 3.7** In the event of a child making a disclosure of any type of abuse, the following guidance is given:
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing to share the information
 - Listen carefully and take what they say seriously
 - Do not make promises that cannot be kept, such as promising not to tell anyone else
 - Do not seek to actively question the child or lead them in any way to disclose more information than they are comfortably able to: this may compromise any future action. Only ask questions to clarify your understanding where needed e.g. can you tell me what you mean by the word xxxxx?
 - Record what the child has said as soon as possible on an incident report form.

VSCC will give careful consideration as to whether the parents of the child involved should be informed of the concern at that stage, if they are responsible for the abuse or are unable to respond to the situation appropriately then this could put the child at greater risk.

VSCC will seek advice from the British Cycling Lead Safeguarding Officer where possible.

If the British Cycling Lead Safeguarding Officer is not available and a delay cannot be justified then **VSCC** will seek advice from the local Children's Social Care department, the Police or the NSPCC.

3.8 VSCC understand that the NSPCC Helpline is available to discuss concerns regarding poor practice and abuse in confidence with members of the public who need support. The Helpline number is 0808 800 5000.

3.9 Safeguarding children and young people requires everyone to be committed to the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability. **VSCC** supports an environment where staff, volunteers, parents and the public are encouraged to raise safeguarding and child protection concerns.

Anyone who reports a legitimate concern (even if their concerns subsequently appear to be unfounded) will be supported.

All concerns will be taken seriously.

3.10 VSCC may take action to restrict a member's involvement in cycling during an ongoing investigation. This is a neutral act. At a later stage the individual may be subject to action under the appropriate disciplinary regulations.

3.11 VSCC are aware that all concerns reported to the British Cycling Lead Safeguarding Officer will be referred to the British Cycling Case Management Group who will advise on the appropriate course of action to take and ensure that all allegations, incidents and referral relating to the safeguarding of children are dealt with fairly and equitably.

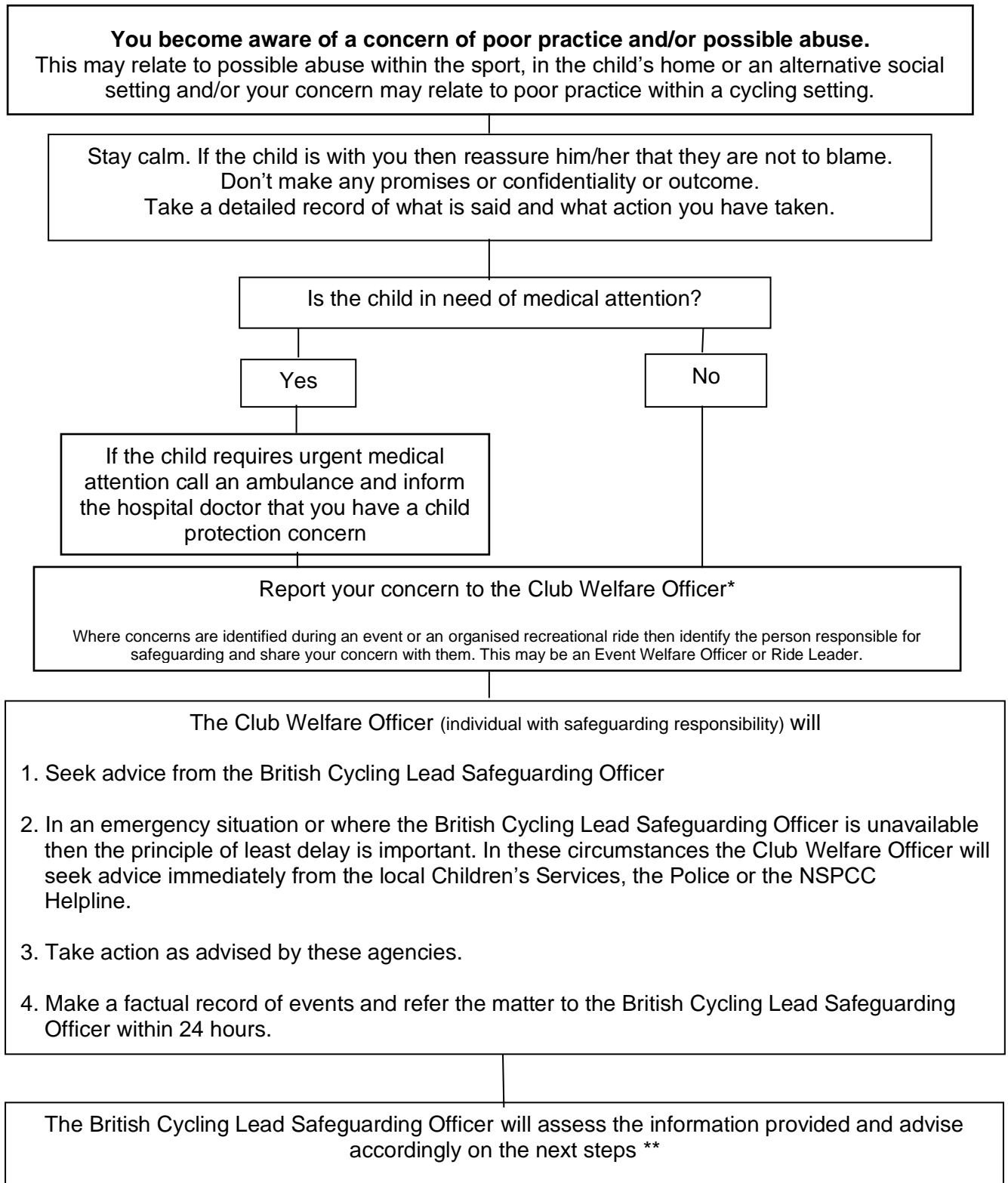
3.12 Details relating to children and young people will be kept on file and secure.

Details of a child or young person will not be shared with a third party without parental consent unless the information is required in the interests of safeguarding and the child or young person may be at greater risk if the parents are aware.

All concerns/allegations will be dealt with confidentially and information will only be shared on a need to know basis, either internally or externally depending on the nature/seriousness of the concern/allegation.

FLOWCHART 1

DEALING WITH CONCERNS



* If the Club Welfare Officer is not available, or the concerns relates to the Club Welfare Officer/individual with safeguarding responsibility then contact the British Cycling Lead Safeguarding Officer or refer the matter directly to Children's Social Care/Police as a delay may place the child at further risk.

**If the concern is about the British Cycling Lead Safeguarding Officer then report your concerns directly to the local Children's Social Care, the local Police or the NSPCC Helpline.

4. GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

4.1 Emergencies and Incidents

Where children are participating in events or activities, or attending organised coaching sessions, Parental Consent Forms will be obtained. These forms will be retained, treated in confidence and only shared with those who require the information they contain to perform their role effectively.

4.2 Supervision

4.2.1 During coaching sessions, coaches will conduct a risk assessment to inform decision making about appropriate supervision levels.

Coaches should consult their British Cycling Coaching guidelines for specific coaching ratios.

Regardless of the recommended ratio of adults to participants, it is recommended that a minimum of two adults should be present. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of something impacting on the availability of one of the adults during the activity.

4.2.2 Parents may be encouraged to stay for coaching, activities & other events where their children are of an age where greater levels of parental supervision is required.

4.2.3 Parents should be made aware that where there is limited changing room space there may be occasions when adults and children may need to share the facilities.

4.2.4 Parents should be aware that supervision is only provided when their child is attending and engaged in specific coaching sessions and activities.

4.2.5 Special arrangements will be made for away trips. Parents will receive full information about arrangements for any such trip and will be required to provide their consent for their child's participation.

4.3 Behaviour of adults and children

4.3.1 Adults who work with children are placed in a position of trust in relation to children, and therefore it is important they behave appropriately and provide a strong positive role model for children, both to protect children and those working with children from allegations of poor practice.

4.3.2 **VSCC** requires that all staff and volunteers working with children to adhere to the standards set out in the Code of Conduct relevant to their role. Similarly, children, parents and all participants are expected to follow their respective Codes of Conduct to ensure the enjoyment of all participants and assist **VSCC** in ensuring their welfare is safeguarded.

4.3.3 Responsible interaction between adults and children helps bring mutual respect and understanding and should be encouraged during activities. Adults should always be aware, however, that age related differences do exist and conduct themselves in a manner that both recognises this and prioritises the welfare of any children involved.

4.3.4 Physical contact with children by coaches or volunteers should always be intended to meet the needs of the child and the sport, not the adult. For example, to develop technique, to protect the child from injury, to provide first aid or treat an injury. It should always take place in an open environment, and should not, as a general principle, be made gratuitously or unnecessarily.

4.4 Changing Rooms

4.4.1 Changing rooms may be used by a number of individuals at events or activities.

When children are attending events and activities parents will be made aware that adults may use changing rooms throughout the day for changing & showering.

Where a parent/carer does not consent to their child accessing the changing rooms, it is their responsibility to either supervise the child while in the changing rooms or ensure that they do not use them.

4.4.2 Members of staff, volunteers, coaches and officials will not shower or change at the same time as the children and young people that they have been working with.

4.4.3 No photographic equipment should be used in changing rooms. This includes cameras, video camera, mobile phones and any other device capable of taking and recording images.

4.5 Transport

4.5.1 **VSCC** believes it is primarily the responsibility of parents to transport their children to and from events and activities. It is not the responsibility of **VSCC** staff, volunteers, officials or coaches to transport children and young people to and from events, activities or coaching sessions.

4.5.2 Arrangements for transport may be made in exceptional circumstances, such as team events. Where this is the case, the written permission of the parent of will be sought.

The drivers used will be checked for their suitability to transport and supervise children and their insurance arrangements verified.

Consideration will be given to accident, breakdown and recovery cover.

4.6 Social Media

Social media provides unique opportunities to engage and develop relationships with people in a creative and dynamic forum where users are active participants.

However, the range of social networking sites also introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks to children and young people.

It is important that members of staff, volunteers, officials and coaches follow best practice guidelines.

Additional care may be needed with some children in terms of internet safety depending on their age, understanding and development. This may be something to consider with the child and their parents.

5. ANTI BULLYING PROCEDURES

5.1 VSCC believe that every effort must be made to eradicate bullying in all its forms.

Bullying can be difficult to define and can take many forms which can be categorised as:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Emotional

Bullying can take place anywhere but is more likely to take place where there is inadequate supervision. Bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

Bullies no longer rely on being physically near to the victim. It can happen face to face or online. Cyberbullying is when a person uses technology to deliberately upset someone.

A bully can be anyone involved in the sport, a parent, coach, child, member of staff, volunteer or official.

VSCC will not tolerate bullying in any of its forms during activities, events, competitions, coaching or at any other time.

5.2 Take a Positive Approach

VSCC will:

- Ensure that Anti-Bullying policies are promoted
- Ensure all staff and volunteers working with children adhere to the standards set out in the Code of Conduct relevant to their role.
- Ensure that all children, parents and participants follow their own Code of Conduct
- Have discussions about bullying and why it matters and how we will respond to it
- Develop an open environment that encourages children and young people to share their concerns

- Report any concern of bullying to the British Cycling Lead Safeguarding Officer
- Take the problem seriously

6. CHILDREN AT INCREASED RISK OF ABUSE

Any child can be abused but it is recognised that there are some factors that increase the risk to children and make them more vulnerable to abuse.

Children with disabilities, children in care, children from black and mixed ethnic backgrounds, LGBT young people and children who have previously suffered abuse are all at increased risk of harm.

Children whose parents are suffering from mental health problems, pressure, drug or alcohol abuse or domestic violence within the family are at increased risk of harm.

However, just because a child is living in these circumstances does not mean they are suffering harm.

6.2 Children and Young People with Disabilities

A child's disability may not always be obvious or visible (for example a child with a learning disability).

When members of staff, volunteers, officials and coaches are working with children with disabilities **VSCC** understand that extra safeguards may need to be put in place.

Everyone working with the child should understand what their impairment actually means.

VSCC will consult with the parents and the child to make sure that there is an appropriate plan in place to meet any additional needs.

6.3 Elite Athletes

Moving through the talent pathway offers fantastic experiences and rewards for athletes, however there are specific factors in elite sport that can make talented athletes more vulnerable to harmful behaviours, either from themselves, their coaches or parents, or members of their wider support team.

This may take the form of over-training or being pushed to far there the focus is on the goals to achieve success, rather than the needs of the young person.

These factors include:

- a win at all costs approach
- intense coach-athlete relationships
- a self-image that is linked closely with performance excellence
- young athletes operating in an adult-focused environment
- being away from family and support networks

- fear of losing funding or a place on the programme if they speak out

VSCC will ensure suitable boundaries are maintained and any concerns are challenged and reported appropriately.

6. Useful Contacts

British Cycling Contacts		
Name	Address	Number
Lead Safeguarding Officer	National Cycling Centre Stuart Street Manchester M14 4DQ	Tel: 0161 2742000 Email: compliance@britishcycling.org.uk (Address your email FAO the Lead Safeguarding Officer)

National Contacts		
The NSPCC	National Centre 42 Curtain Road London, EC2A 3NH	Tel: 0808 800 5000 help@nspcc.org.uk
Childline UK	Freepost 1111 London N1 0BR	Tel: 0800 1111
NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit	3 Gilmour Close Beaumont Leys Leicester LE4 1EZ	Tel: 0116 234 7278 cpsu@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline for Professionals		0808 028 0285
NSPCC Freephone 24 hour Helpline		0808 800 5000
Local Police child protection teams		101
In an emergency contact 999		In an emergency 999
Manchester Children's Services		0161 234 5001 (open 24 hours a day, seven days a week) Email: mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk Email: socialcare@manchester.gcsx.gov.uk (if you are sending sensitive information)
Samaritans		08457 90 90

CATEGORIES OF CHILD ABUSE

Abuse can happen on any occasion or in any place where children and young people are present.

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. Children can be abused by adults, either male or female, or by other children.

Safeguarding is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Child Protection is the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer significant harm.

There are 4 main types of abuse: neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse. Children and young people can also be harmed through poor practice and bullying within a sport setting.

Neglect is when adults consistently or repeatedly fail to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs which could result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development e.g. failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing; failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger; or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include refusal to give love, affection and attention.

Examples in sport could include a coach or supervisor repeatedly failing to ensure children are safe, exposing them to undue cold, heat or extreme weather conditions without ensuring adequate clothing or hydration; exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury e.g. by ignoring safe practice guidelines, failing to ensure the use of safety equipment, or by requiring young people to participate when injured or unwell.

Physical abuse is when someone physically hurts or injures children by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning or otherwise causing harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

Examples in sport may be when the nature and intensity of training or competition exceeds the capacity of the child's immature and growing body; where coaches encourage the use of drugs or harmful substances to enhance performance or delay puberty; if athletes are required to participate when injured; or when sanctions used by coaches imposed involve inflicting pain.

Sexual abuse is where children and young people are abused by adults (both male and female) or other children who use them to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse, kissing and sexual fondling. Showing children pornographic material (books, videos, pictures) or taking pornographic images of them are also forms of sexual abuse.

Sexual abusers groom children, protective adults and clubs/organisations in order to create opportunities to abuse and reduce the likelihood of being reported.

Examples in sport may include coaching techniques involving physical contact with children creating situations where sexual abuse can be disguised and may therefore go unnoticed. The power and authority of, or dependence on, the coach if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing. Contacts made within sport and pursued e.g. through texts, Facebook or Twitter have been used to groom children for abuse.

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity

(a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or

(b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

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

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or even the over protection of a child. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child.

Examples in sport may include children who are subjected to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm, bullying, racism or pressure to perform to unrealistically high expectations; or when their value or worth is dependent on sporting success or achievement.

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It can happen anywhere – in a club, at school, at home or online (cyberbullying). It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Bullying behaviour can often stay confined to 'bullying hotspots', which are locations in a club or venue that might be more secluded or have fewer witnesses, such as changing rooms.

Bullying can take many forms, examples in sport may include:

- Physical – hitting, pushing, kicking or other physical assault
- Verbal abuse – offensive name-calling, insults or gossiping
- Non-verbal abuse – offensive hand signs or text messages
- Racial, sexist or homophobic – racist remarks, sexist jokes or comments, or homophobic, transphobic or gender-related jokes or comments
- Sexual – abusive sexualised name-calling, inappropriate and uninvited touching, or an inappropriate sexual proposition
- Indirect – spreading nasty stories or rumours about someone, intimidation, exclusion from social groups, manipulating or constantly undermining someone

POOR PRACTICE IN SPORT

There is a requirement for all clubs/teams affiliated to British Cycling to report any safeguarding concerns, including concerns relating to poor practice.

Understanding what kind of behaviour constitutes poor practice and abuse will help you respond appropriately when concerns are raised.

Poor practice is behaviour of an individual in a position of responsibility which falls below the organisation's required standard (typically as described in the Code of Conduct relevant to their role).

Anyone working or volunteering with children should avoid putting themselves in situations where their conduct is questionable.

Poor practice may not be immediately dangerous or intentionally harmful to a child, but is likely to set a poor example.

Poor practice is potentially damaging to the individual, the organisation and to children who experience it.

For example, coaching with alcohol on the breath, smoking, swearing in front of children, or not paying due care and attention to participants all constitute poor practice.

Poor practice can sometimes lead to, or create, an environment conducive to more serious abuse. It may also lead to suspicions about the individual's motivation, even where no harm is intended. For example, if a coach is giving one child too much attention, regularly transports children in their car, or encourages physical contact with children without obvious justification.