British Biathlon Union Safeguarding Adults Policy

July 2025

2nd Edition

Updates:

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The guidance is correct at the time of publication (July 2025, updated as listed) and will be reviewed every two years or when there is a significant change in legislation.

CONTENTS

1.1 INTRODUCTION 3

1.2 SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT 4

1.3 SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK 6

1.4 THE SIX PRINCIPLES OF ADULT SAFEGUARDING 6

1.5 DEFINITIONS 7

1.6 TYPES OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT 8

1.7 BULLYING AND HARASSMENT 11

1.8 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES 11

1.9 WHISTLEBLOWING 12

1.10 FLOWCHART FOR REPORTING CONCERNS ABOUT AN ADULT 13

1.11 USEFUL SAFEGUARDING CONTACT DETAILS 14

1.1 Introduction

All those involved in British Biathlon should be aware of and ensure compliance with other relevant good practice guidance relating to safeguarding adults, young people and children, including:

- *Safer Recruitment*
- *Communication guidance*
- *Social media guidance*
- *Anti-bullying*

We also have a specific Safeguarding Children Policy and everyone working on any of our programmes, or for the BBU is required to abide by it. A child is anyone who has not yet reached the age of 18.

The following terms are interchangeable throughout the Policy: Coaches/Instructors; Parent/Carer; Employee/Volunteer.

The abbreviation SO relates to the Safeguarding Officer.

The British Biathlon Union's Responsibility

Everyone who participates in the activities of the BBU is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. The BBU has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for children, coaches and volunteers, it provides them with the highest possible standard of care.

The BBU is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone in the sport accepts their responsibility to safeguard both adults and children from harm and abuse. This means following procedures to protect them and reporting any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice and to help everyone in our sport understand the issues involved, and implement the safeguarding measures necessary to provide everyone with appropriate safety and protection whilst involved in the activities of the BBU. It aims to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues. It will help to maintain professionalism and high standards of practice.

The BBU will:

- Appoint a Safeguarding Lead (SL) and Safeguarding Officer (SO)
- Disseminate safeguarding information as required
- Provide support, guidance and training through recognised training providers for those who require it including Safeguarding and Coaching staff.
- Ensure all cases of poor practice that may be abuse and any allegations of abuse are investigated and where appropriate, referred to other agencies
- Convene a Disciplinary Panel when necessary
- Convene a Case Management Panel when necessary
- Deal with all allegations and make decisions within agreed timescales, according to our Disciplinary procedure
- Keep a list of all suspended, disciplined and disqualified persons and where appropriate refer people to the Disclosure and Barring Service and other relevant government agencies

- Recognise the role and responsibilities of the statutory agencies in safeguarding adults and comply with the procedures of Local Safeguarding Adults Boards and the procedures of countries we are operating in
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Policy.

Due to the nature of a high-performance sporting environment, we recognise our athletes, staff and volunteers may face additional risks and demands and we aim to support them to achieve their goals. The BBU values and is very grateful for the commitment volunteers make to our sport and the considerable time they give to help ensure our athletes have opportunities to participate, whilst ensuring the highest standards of safeguarding are followed.

The practices, procedures and guidance within this policy, the safeguarding section of our website and our reporting procedures are based on the principles contained within UK and International legislation and government guidance.

Your responsibility:

All individuals and affiliated organisations are required to:

- Implement and actively promote this safeguarding policy and other safeguarding information to its members
- Ensure safeguarding both adults and children is their top priority and embedded into all practices
- Ensure all children, parents, coaches and staff are aware of the BBU SO and SL
- Ensure they follow BBU Recruitment guidance including DBS disclosures (where applicable) and references
- Ensure everyone is aware it is not their responsibility to determine if abuse has taken place, but it is their responsibility to report and act on any concerns they have
- Ensure BBU reporting procedures are followed.

If you suspect an adult or child is being abused, doing nothing is not an option.

1.2 BBU Adult Safeguarding Policy Statement

Our athletes, staff and volunteers have the right to participate in a safe and inclusive environment, free from all forms of discrimination and abuse. We will put safeguards in place to ensure athletes on our programmes and our staff and volunteers are supported, know when to report concerns and how to do so.

The BBU aims in this policy to: promote best practice; meet statutory requirements; provide athletes with appropriate safety and protection whilst involved in our programmes; and to help staff and volunteers make informed and confident responses to safeguarding concerns.

The policy recognises the welfare and interests of athletes, staff and volunteers are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, socioeconomic status, sex or sexual orientation of all are respected.

BBU Safeguarding Aims

All athletes, staff and volunteers should have a positive and enjoyable experience in a safe environment. They must be protected from abuse whilst participating in any activity within the auspices of the BBU.

The BBU acknowledges that some children and adults, including talented athletes, those with disabilities or those from ethnic minority communities can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and accepts the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

The BBU will:

- Promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all athletes, staff and volunteers;
- Ensure training and support are provided for all affiliated coaches and instructors so they are aware of, and understand best practice and how to manage any concerns;
- Take all reasonable steps to protect from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings;
- Ensure all cases of poor practice that may be abuse and any allegations of abuse are investigated and where appropriate, referred to other agencies;
- Support the person raising or disclosing the concern;
- Ensure all those in a position of responsibility throughout the organisation recognise it is not their responsibility to determine if abuse has occurred, but it is their responsibility to report and act on any concerns they have;
- Ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records are kept of all safeguarding concerns and maintained and stored securely.

The BBU recognises that working in partnership with affiliated organisations essential for the protection of all athletes, staff and volunteers.

This policy will be widely promoted and is mandatory for everyone involved in BBU activities. Failure to comply with the policy will be addressed without delay and may result in disciplinary action and exclusion from the organisation. The welfare of our athletes, staff and volunteers is paramount.

This policy applies to all BBU staff and volunteers working for us and to members of all organisations affiliated to us or taking part in activities of any of these organisations. It applies to all BBU registered coaches, and non-registered coaches if working or volunteering in a role for any of the above.

For the avoidance of doubt this includes athletes and anyone working within the sport in a paid or voluntary capacity whether as an employee or on a self-employed basis.

Our Work Abroad

When working abroad athletes, staff and volunteers must adhere to the laws and correct reporting procedures pertaining to the country they are in. This would include reporting to statutory agencies in the country in which the alleged abuse took place. In addition, staff must always report the incident to the BBU SO who will support them. It may also be necessary for the incident to be reported to statutory agencies in the UK, in the interests of safeguarding other adults and the BBU SO will advise or make the report.

It is good practice to ensure you know the emergency numbers for the country you are in.

1.3 Safeguarding Adults at Risk within the BBU

Definition of an Adult at Risk

The Care Act 2014 defines an Adult at Risk as someone who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs), AND
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, AND
- As a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

The Care Act 2014 has moved away from labelling people as 'vulnerable adults'. This term used to include people with disabilities. We know that having a disability does not necessarily make someone vulnerable. However, any of our athletes, staff and volunteers could at times be at risk due to the circumstances in which they find themselves.

The Act focuses on the responsibilities that local authorities have to 'adults with care and support needs'. This includes people who have a condition as a result of physical, mental, sensory, learning or cognitive disability or illness, substance misuse or brain injury.

1.4 The Six Principles of Adult Safeguarding

- **Empowerment** - People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent. "I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens."
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs. "I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help."
- **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. "I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, as I see them and they will only get involved as much as needed."
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need. "I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want."
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse. "I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me."
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding. "I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they."

Making Safeguarding personal

Adult safeguarding should be person led and outcome focussed. It engages the person in a conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control. As well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety.

Wherever possible discuss safeguarding concerns with the adult to get their view of what they would like to happen and keep them involved in the safeguarding process, seeking their consent to share information outside of the organisation where necessary.

The BBU is mindful that adults have the right to self-determination and can choose for themselves how much, or how little, intervention or support they want. Adults are also free to make choices which someone else may consider as unwise. Our role is to support individuals to pass on concerns appropriately. With or without permission, this would be to the BBU SO, who would consult with the adult, and where appropriate statutory services, on the appropriate course of action, taking into account, wherever possible, the adult's wishes.

Wellbeing Principle

The concept of wellbeing is threaded throughout the Care Act and it is one that is relevant to adult safeguarding in sport and activity. Wellbeing is different for each of us; however the Act sets out broad categories that contribute to our sense of wellbeing. By keeping these themes in mind, we can all ensure that adult participants can take part in GB Snowsport activities fully.

- Personal dignity (including treatment of the individual with respect)
- Physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Protection from abuse and neglect
- Control by the individual over their day-to-day life (including over care and support provided and the way they are provided)
- Participation in work, education, training or recreation
- Social and economic wellbeing
- Domestic, family and personal domains
- Suitability of the individual's living accommodation
- The individual's contribution to society.

Legislation

The practices within this policy are based on the principles contained within the UK legislation and Government Guidance and take the following into consideration:

- The Care Act 2014
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 1998

1.5 Definitions

To assist working through and understanding this policy a number of key definitions need to be explained:

Adult is anyone aged 18 or over.

Adult at Risk is a person aged 18 or over who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs); and;
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and;
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Adult in need of care and support is determined by a range of factors including personal characteristics, factors associated with their situation or environment and social factors. Naturally, a person's disability or frailty does not mean that they will inevitably experience harm or abuse. In the context of safeguarding adults, the likelihood of an adult in need of care and support experiencing harm or abuse should be determined by considering a range of social, environmental and clinical factors, not merely because they may be defined by one or more of the above descriptors. In recent years there has been a marked shift away from using the term 'vulnerable' to describe adults potentially at risk from harm or abuse.

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. See 'types of abuse and neglect' for further explanations.

Adult safeguarding is protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

Capacity refers to the ability to make a decision at a particular time, for example when under considerable stress. The starting assumption must always be that a person has the capacity to make a decision unless it can be established that they lack capacity (MCA 2005).

1.6 Types of Abuse and Neglect

There are different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and circumstances in which they may take place.

The Care Act 2014 identifies the following as an illustrative guide and is not intended to be an exhaustive list as to the sort of behaviour that could give rise to a safeguarding concern.

Self-neglect – this covers a wide range of behaviour: neglecting to care for personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Modern Slavery – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment

Domestic Abuse and coercive control – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. It also includes so called 'honour' based violence. It can occur between any family members.

Discriminatory Abuse – discrimination is abuse which centres on a perceived difference particularly with respect to race, gender or disability or any of protected characteristics of the Equality Act.

Organisational Abuse – including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or

poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Physical Abuse – including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual Abuse – including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Financial or Material Abuse – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
Neglect – including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Emotional or Psychological Abuse – this includes threats of harm abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Not included in the Care Act 2014 but also relevant:

Cyber Bullying – cyber bullying occurs when someone repeatedly makes fun another person online or repeatedly picks on another person through emails or messages or uses online forums with the intention of harming, damaging, humiliating or another person. It can be used to carry out many different types of bullying (such as bullying, homophobic bullying, or bullying related to special educational needs and but instead of the perpetrator carrying out the bullying face-to-face, they use as a means to do it.

Forced Marriage – forced marriage is a term used to describe a marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will. A forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties consent to the assistance of a third party in identifying a spouse. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 make it a criminal offence to force someone to marry. The forced marriage of adults with learning disabilities occurs when the adult does not have the capacity to consent to the marriage.

Mate Crime – a 'mate crime' as defined by the Safety Net Project as 'when vulnerable people are befriended by members of the community who go on to exploit and take advantage of them. It may not be an illegal act but still has a negative effect on the individual.' Mate Crime is carried out by someone the adult knows and often happens in private. In recent years there have been a number of Serious Case Reviews relating to people with a learning disability who were murdered or seriously harmed by people who purported to be their friend.

Radicalisation – the aim of radicalisation is to attract people to their reasoning, inspire new recruits and embed their extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals of the legitimacy of their cause. This may be direct through a relationship, or through social media.

Signs and indicators of abuse and neglect

Abuse can take place in any context and by all manner of perpetrator.

Abuse may be inflicted by anyone within the organisation.

Members, workers, volunteers or coaches may suspect that an adult is being neglected outside of BBU activities. There are many signs and indicators that someone is being abused or neglected, these include but are not limited to:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present.
- Person has belongings or money going missing.
- Person is not attending / no longer enjoying their training. You may notice that a team or staff member has been missing from training sessions, not getting to training on time or is not responding to reminders from team members or coaches.
- Someone losing or gaining weight / an unkempt appearance. This could be an athlete or staff member whose appearance becomes unkempt, forgets to bring suitable kit to the hill, does not wear suitable kit or a deterioration in hygiene.
- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person. For example, an athlete or staff member may be unusually quiet, withdrawn or scared when a coach or fellow team member talks to them off the hill, in contrast to other athletes or staff whom they greet with a smile.
- They may self-harm.
- They may have a fear of a particular group or individual.
- They may tell you / another person they are being abused – i.e. make a disclosure.
- Harassment of a team member because they are or are perceived to have protected characteristics.
- A coach not meeting the needs of an athlete. E.g. this could be training without a necessary break or not allowing appropriate rest days.
- A coach having a sexual relationship with an athlete.
- A coach intentionally striking an athlete.
- A fellow athlete who sends unwanted sexually explicit text messages to another athlete.
- An athlete threatening another athlete with physical harm and persistently blaming them for poor performance.

What to do if you have a concern or someone raises concerns with you

- It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not an adult has been abused. It is however everyone's responsibility to respond to and report concerns.
- If you are concerned someone is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999/112/911/ relevant number straight away. Where you suspect that a crime is being committed, you must involve the police.
- If you have concerns or you are told about possible or alleged abuse, poor practice or wider welfare issues you must report this to the BBU SO or SL, or, if either of these is implicated then report to the BBU CEO.
- When raising your concern with the BBU SO, remember 'Making Safeguarding Personal'. It is good practice to seek the adult's views on what they would like to happen next, keep them informed about any decisions and actions taken about them, considering their needs and wishes and inform the adult you will be passing on your concern. You must always pass the information to the BBU SO, who will consult with the person over next steps considering their needs and wishes. There may be other factors they need to consider, including other athletes at risk of harm.

How to respond to a concern

- Make a note of your concerns.
- Make a note of what the person has said using his or her own words as soon as practicable. Complete an Incident Form and submit to the BBU SO.
- Remember to make safeguarding personal. Discuss your safeguarding concerns with the adult, obtain their view of what they would like to happen, but inform them it's your duty to pass on your concerns to the BBU SO.
- Describe the circumstances in which the disclosure came about.
- Take care to distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. It is important that the information you have is accurate.
- Be mindful of the need to be confidential at all times, this information must only be shared with the BBU SO. Others may be informed after consultation with the BBU SO, if deemed necessary, on a need to know basis.
- If the matter is urgent and relates to the immediate safety of an individual, contact the emergency services immediately.

Remember, it is not your responsibility to determine if abuse has occurred, but it is your responsibility to report and act on any concerns you have.

1.7 Bullying and Harassment

Bullying is any offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving a misuse of power, that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. It is usually repeated behaviour.

A coach, other staff member or athlete may have the power over someone else due to their position of authority, personal strength, popularity, or coercion through fear or intimidation. It can take many forms including verbal, threatening or insulting behaviour, practical jokes, physical abuse, damaging or hiding personal property, ostracising or excluding people and cyber bullying.

Harassment includes any physical, verbal or non-verbal behaviour which involves conduct of a sexual nature or any conduct in relation to any of the Protected Characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 but is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of the categories the Protected Characteristics cover.

The purpose or effect of harassment is a violation of a person's dignity and creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment. It can take many forms including verbal abuse, offensive jokes, pranks, lewd or suggestive comments, requests for sexual favours, leering or threatening looks, unwelcome physical contact, using e mail, social media or the internet for the purpose of bullying or making abusive or offensive remarks whether on the basis of a Protected Characteristic or otherwise.

Bullying and harassment may be more prevalent in an elite environment and the BBU has a zero tolerance of such behaviour. It will not be tolerated and should always be taken seriously. The BBU SO should be consulted and will offer advice and support.

1.8 Roles and Responsibilities

The BBU is committed to having the following in place:

- A BBU Safeguarding Officer and Safeguarding Lead who will produce and disseminate guidance and resources in support of policy and procedures.
- A clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on promoting the welfare of all adults.
- Designated Welfare Officer, or point of contact, for all BBU camps.
- Procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse or poor practice against athletes, members of staff and volunteers.
- A Case Management Group that effectively deals with issues, manages concerns and refers to a disciplinary panel where necessary (i.e. where concerns arise about the behaviour of someone within the BBU)
- A Disciplinary Panel will be formed as required for a given incident, if appropriate and should a threshold be met.
- Arrangements to work effectively with other organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults, including arrangements for sharing information.
- Appropriate whistleblowing procedures and an open and inclusive culture that enables safeguarding and equality and diversity issues to be addressed.
- Clear codes of conduct for coaches, athletes, officials, spectators and other relevant individuals and a clear process and sanctions for any breaches.
- A register of suspended, disciplined and disqualified people.
- A culture of proactively promoting best practice across the BBU. The BBU encourages all incidents or suspected incidents of harassment or abuse to be reported, regardless of the identity of the alleged offender.
- Where allegations are of a criminal nature, they will be reported by the BBU SL or CEO to statutory services.

1.9 Whistleblowing

If you feel unable to report your concerns using the Safeguarding Adult reporting procedure, due to implication of, or conflict of interest with the BBUSO (or any other reason) you are able to report your concerns via the BBU Whistleblowing Policy. We believe it is important for anyone who has concerns to speak up in confidence and wherever possible the BBU will provide anonymity.

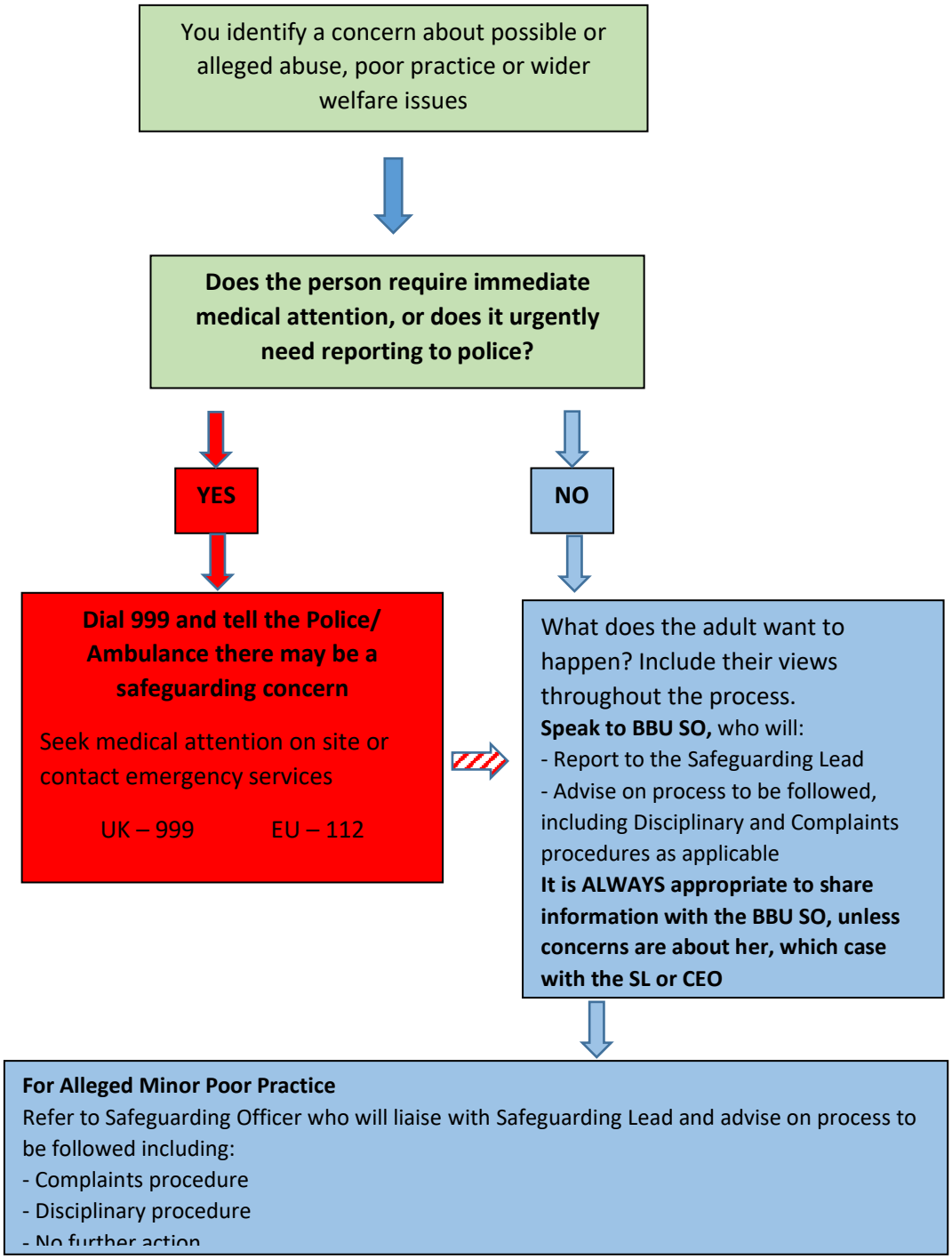
The BBU Whistleblowing policy can be found here: Whistleblowing_Policy (britishbiathlon.com)

1.10 FLOWCHART FOR REPORTING CONCERNS ABOUT AN ADULT

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

If you have concerns about an adult's safety and or wellbeing you must act on these.

It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not an adult has been abused. It is however your responsibility to act on any concerns.



1.11 Useful Safeguarding Contact Details

BBU Safeguarding Contact Details

BBU Safeguarding Lead	Sarah Greig safeguarding@britishbiathlon.com
DBS application forms or queries	Elizabeth Winfield info@britishbiathlon.com

National Safeguarding Contacts:

Police – Emergency	999 (or emergency EU no 112)
Police – Non emergency local office	101
Ann Craft Trust - Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Activity; information about safeguarding adults in sport	www.anncrafttrust.org Ann-Craft-Trust@nottingham.ac.uk 0115 951 5400
The Samaritans (Freephone from mobiles and landlines) NB In an emergency the Samaritans hold the Social Care Duty Officer's contact number	116 123