



Scottish  
Swimming

Wellbeing &  
Protection Policy:  
Children &  
Young People



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# 1. Policy Statement

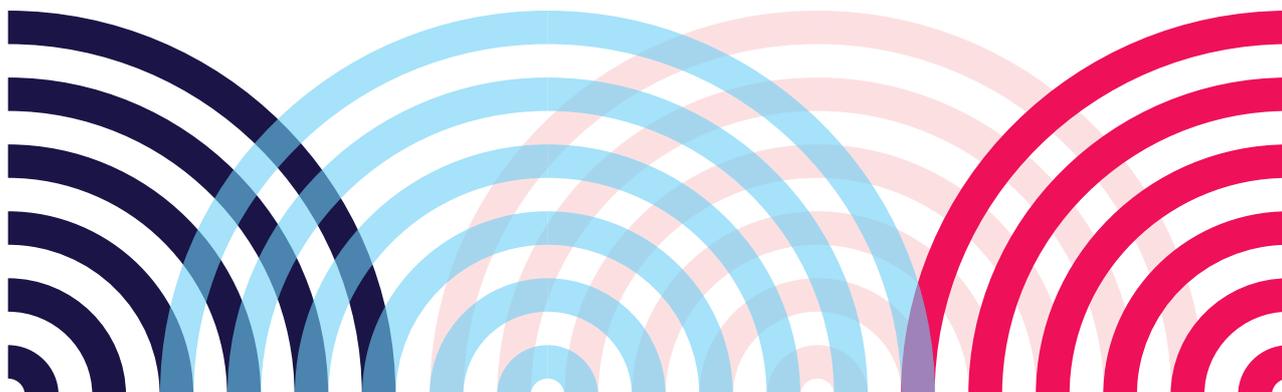
Scottish Swimming is committed to ensuring every child and young person who takes part in the sports of swimming, diving, high diving, artistic swimming and water polo should be able to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment, which promotes inclusion and protects them from harm, poor practice, exploitation, bullying and abuse.

Scottish Swimming values a rights-based approach within our sport and our safeguarding policy takes into account the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014 and the principals of “Getting it Right for Every Child” (GIRFEC) and we recognise the general principals 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.

## 1.1 Definition

Within The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 – a child is defined as anyone who has not reached the age of 18.

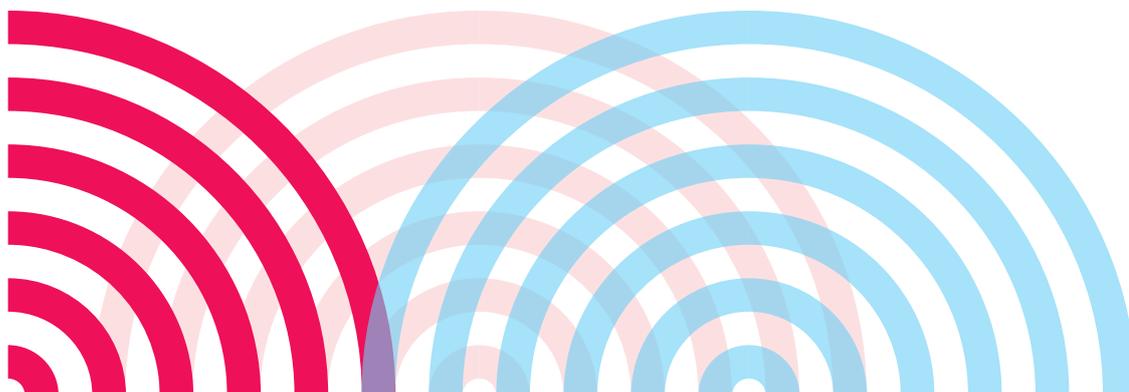
For the purposes of this policy, “children”, “child” and “young person” refer to persons under the age of 18.



## 2. Key Principles

This policy is based on the key principles:

- The wellbeing of children is the primary concern
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from all forms of harm, poor practice, exploitation, bullying and abuse
- Children have the right to express views on all matters which affect them, should they wish to do so
- Safeguarding and child protection is everyone's responsibility
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Adults working with children are provided with opportunities for education and training to ensure best practice becomes the norm
- Working in partnership with children and their parents/carers is essential for the promotion of an inclusive sport and a safe enjoyable environment



## 3. Roles & Responsibilities to Safeguard: Wellbeing & Protection

### 3.1 Scottish Swimming:

- Promote the health and wellbeing of children by providing opportunities for them to take part in aquatics safely
- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children
- Appoint a Lead Wellbeing & Protection Officer to provide guidance on child wellbeing and safeguarding
- Promote and implement appropriate procedures, support and guidance to safeguard the wellbeing of children and protect them from abuse
- 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
- Require staff, affiliated clubs and volunteers to adopt and abide by this policy and procedure
- Respond to any allegations of misconduct or abuse of children in line with this Policy and these procedures as well as implementing, where appropriate, the relevant disciplinary and appeals procedures as per the Association's Constitution (R12.0)
- Maintain confidential records of all complaints, concerns and sanctions against clubs and individuals
- Ensure best practice is extensively promoted, and clubs, coaches/teachers, officials and all members are encouraged to follow guidelines set down by Scottish Swimming
- Provide a suitable programme of training via the inclusion and integration of Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Child Protection issues within Scottish Swimming's coach education programmes as well as specific training opportunities for club members to attend workshops:
  - Safeguarding & Protecting Children Workshop
  - In Safe Hands Workshops
  - WPO Networking sessions
  - Other relevant training on contemporary issues
- Maintain registration as an Intermediary Body with Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Service (VSDS) to facilitate a Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) service on behalf of clubs to prevent unsuitable people from working within sport
- Require all member Clubs and Districts to adhere to Scottish Swimming's Safe Recruitment Guidance
- Require all those who are deployed by Scottish Swimming to work with children including those who act in a pastoral role whilst on trips, to attend child protection training
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy and these procedures

## 3.2 Affiliated Clubs:

- Adopt the Club Wellbeing & Child Protection Policy ([Appendix 6](#))
- Adhere to the guidelines and procedures contained within this policy
- Appoint a Wellbeing & Protection Officer in accordance with Scottish Swimming requirements for club affiliation ([Appendix 1 and using Appendices 2–5](#))
- Accept that all office bearers and committee members have a responsibility for safeguarding, wellbeing and child protection and be prepared to respond to any indication of abuse or poor practice
- Safely recruit club volunteers/staff in accordance with the recruitment policy ([Appendices 2–5](#))
- Champion best practice and implement Scottish Swimming guidelines on key areas – minimum coach-to-athlete ratios, transport, accident reporting, behaviour management, consent forms, social media, overnight trips/accommodation, safe use of public facilities ([Appendices 7–20](#))
- Have all volunteers, coaches, swimmers and parents agree to and sign the club's code of conduct ([Appendix 9](#))
- Be prepared to challenge and alter poor practice
- Implement any recommendations of Scottish Swimming relating to this area
- Promote an environment where all legitimate concerns can be raised without fear of victimisation or reprisal
- Require all those working with children to attend a SCUK Safeguarding & Protecting Children workshop and have a satisfactory PVG check

## 3.3 The Club Wellbeing & Protection Officer:

- Ensure all persons working either paid or unpaid with children and young people at the club are fully aware of what is required of them within the guidelines of their club, the Wellbeing & Child Protection Policy and codes of conduct
- Conduct the administrative work associated with processing of information on volunteers/staff PVG scheme applications and self-declarations ([see Appendices 3, 4 and 5](#))
- Liaise closely with club volunteers/staff ensuring that agreed procedures for the prevention of risk are followed
- Counsel/advise the club committee on matters of policy relating to child wellbeing, safeguarding and protection
- Act as the contact person for coaches/teachers, helpers, club volunteers, parents and participants on any issues concerning the wellbeing of children within the club, (poor practice or alleged abuse) as well as matters relating to child protection at the club
- Ensure all incidents are correctly recorded and reported in accordance with Scottish Swimming policy and procedures
- Work with Scottish Swimming Lead Safeguarding Officer on education, training and case management for the club

## 4. Monitoring & Review

This policy and these procedures will be regularly monitored and reviewed, with a full review being carried out every 2 years. The policy and procedures will also be reviewed in the following circumstances:

- In accordance with changes in legislation
- Changes in Scottish Swimming or its governance
- Following any issues or concerns raised about the protection of children within Scottish Swimming
- On advice from Safeguarding in Sport/**sportscotland**/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
- At least once per year the Board will receive a report which details any changes required to the policy and a summary of cases managed

## 5. Protecting Children

**Wellbeing concerns, poor practice and abuse can occur in many situations including the home and the aquatics club. We know that some individuals will actively seek access to children and young people through sport in order to harm them.**

**We are safeguarding children from:**

- a) Wellbeing concerns
- b) Poor practice
- c) Abuse

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## 5.1 Wellbeing Concerns

### **Wellbeing Concerns Definition:**

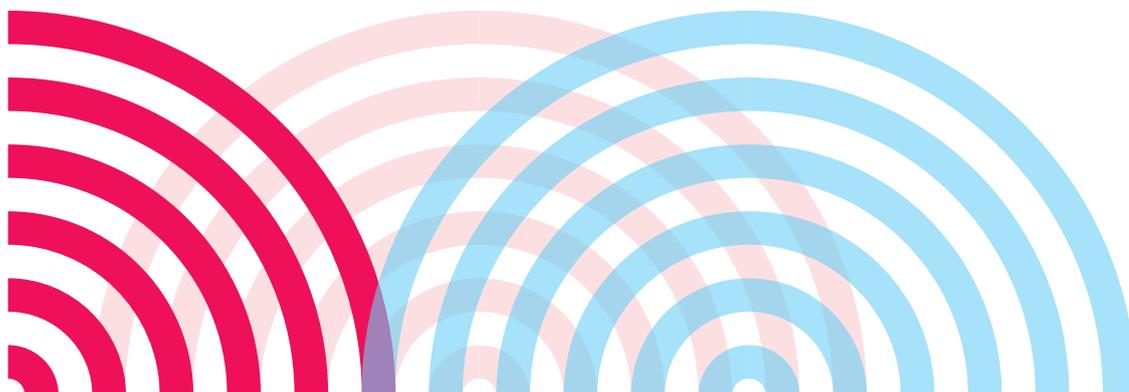
A wellbeing concern is if a child's wellbeing (measured using the 8 SHANARRI indicators: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included), is, or is at risk of, being adversely affected in any matter. ([Appendix 26 for more details on SHANARRI](#))

**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 struggles to master and develop skills at training that are normal for that age and stage of child
- **Included** – a child who is being excluded or bullied ([see Scottish Swimming Anti-Bullying Policy](#))



### Other areas which can lead to Wellbeing Concerns:

#### Negative Discrimination (including racism)

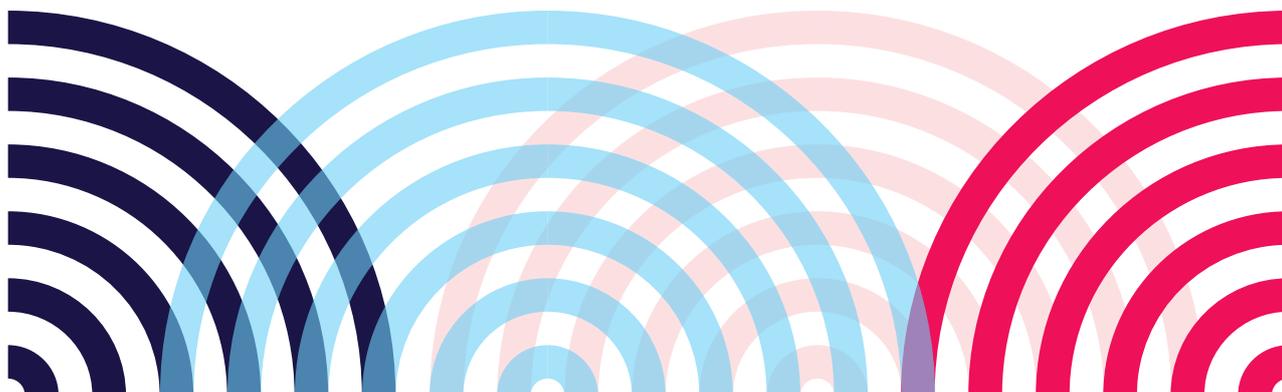
Children and young people may experience harassment or negative discrimination because of their race or ethnic origin, socio-economic status, culture, age, disability, gender, sexuality or religious beliefs. Although not in itself a category of abuse, it may be necessary for the purposes of the Child Protection Policy for negative discriminatory behaviour to be categorised as a Wellbeing concern and in serious cases emotional abuse.

#### Abuse of Position of Trust

A relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over another by virtue of their position – such as a coach, staff member, club official or other appointed volunteer. A genuine social relationship can start between two people within a relationship of trust, however it is important to recognise that relationships where an unequal power dynamic exists can become exploitative and lead to abuse. The Coaches and Teachers Codes of Conduct very clearly state that volunteers should not seek out or start personal/sexual relationships with Athletes U18. The Scottish Swimming Wellbeing and Adult Protection policy has further guidance for those over the age of 18 in adult activity.

#### Abuse of Trust

Abusive practice is where a person is indoctrinated with attitudes to training, drugs and cheating, or social, political and religious views (radicalisation) which are unacceptable to the community or rules of the sport or uses the position of trust to develop an improper personal relationship with the athlete e.g. to groom them for sexual activity.



## 5.2 Poor Practice

### **Poor Practice Definition:**

Poor practice includes any behaviour that contravenes the Wellbeing & Child Protection Policy or accompanying guidelines, any behaviour that does not respect children's rights or those of their parents/carers. Poor practice is behaviour that falls short of abuse but 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:**

(further details for each heading and specific examples are contained in Appendix 21)

- Breaches of the Scottish Swimming/Club's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Breaches of recognised best practice in coaching
- 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

## 5.3 Child Abuse

### **Child Abuse Definition:**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting, or by failing to act to prevent, significant harm to the child. 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 4 categories of abuse:

- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse

## 6. Identifying Child 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 exhaustive)**

- 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 implicit 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 their responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting them via the appropriate channels.

**For more information see Appendix 22.**

### 6.1 Children & Young People Who Are Deaf, Disabled or Have a Learning Disability

**Research, including “It doesn’t happen to disabled children” Child Protection and Disabled Children, NSPCC (2003), tells us that children and young people who have a learning or physical disability are more vulnerable to abuse. This is because:**

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- They are often dependent on a number of people for care and handling, some of which can be of an intimate nature
- They may be unable to understand the inappropriateness of the actions or unable to communicate to others that something is wrong
- Signs of abuse can be misinterpreted as a symptom of the disability
- Like other children, they are fearful of the consequences of disclosing abuse
- Attitudes and assumptions that children with disabilities are not abused
- They may be unable to resist abuse due to physical impairment
- Of negative attitudes towards children with disabilities

**Volunteers/staff should be aware of the additional vulnerabilities that may affect deaf and disabled children and be mindful of this when working with them.**

## 7. Responding to Concerns

A complaint, concern or allegation may come from a number of sources: the child, one of their friends, their coach, a parent or someone else within your 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.

### 7.1 Responsibilities

**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 Swimming

## Following set and 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 charged with 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

## 7.2 Responding to a Direct Disclosure

It takes considerable courage for a child to disclose abuse. 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. If a child says or indicates they are being abused or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused the information must be responded to on the same day in line with the following procedure:

### Always

- Stay calm – ensure that the child is safe and feels safe
- Show and tell the child that you are taking what he/she says seriously
- Reassure the child and stress that he/she is not to blame
- Be aware of interpreting what a child says, especially if they have learning or physical disabilities which affect their ability to communicate or English is not their first language
- Keep questions to a minimum so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Only ask questions to clarify
- Be careful about physical contact, it may not be what the child wants
- Be honest, explain to the child that you **HAVE** to let other people know about what they have told you, reassure them that this is to help stop the abuse continuing and to keep them safe
- The safety of the child is paramount. If they need urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is potentially linked to abuse. If there is an immediate risk to the child, then call the police
- Make a record of what the individual has said as soon as possible after the event ([Incident Report Form Appendix 32](#))
- Follow Scottish Swimming's Wellbeing & Protection procedures
- Report the incident to the Scottish Swimming Safeguarding Officer, the Club Wellbeing & Protection Officer or directly to Social Service's team in your Local Authority if necessary

### Never:

- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate
- Make promises you cannot keep (e.g. you won't tell anyone)
- Ask more questions than are necessary for you to be sure that you need to act
- Take sole responsibility – consult someone else (ideally Scottish Swimming Safeguarding Officer or the person in charge or someone you can trust) so that you can begin to protect the child and gain support for yourself

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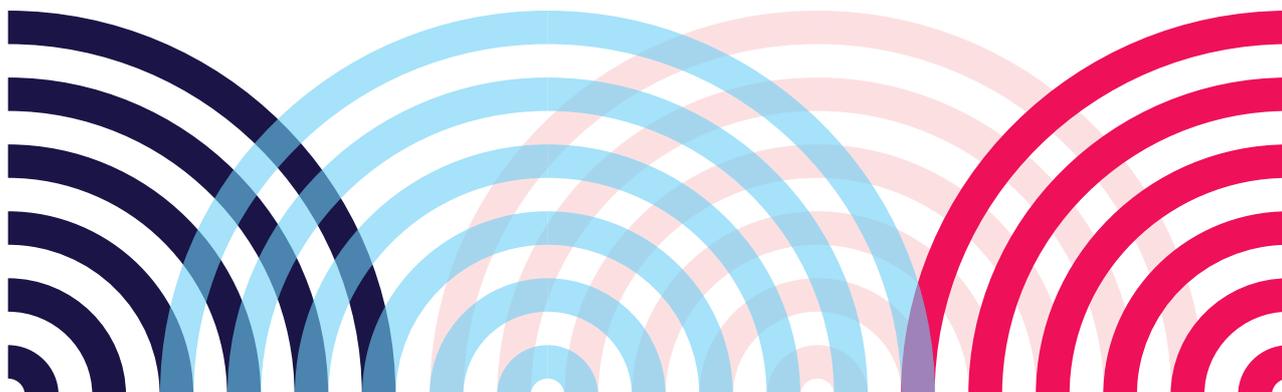
You must report all direct disclosures from children or any situation where you have not received a disclosure but you suspect that a child is at risk or experiencing abuse. Reporting disclosures and concerns ensures that a child receives appropriate help and support, resulting in appropriate action being 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 Swimming must be consulted for advice on the appropriate course of action.

**If you have any doubt – report it! If you receive a disclosure – report it!**

### 7.3 Historical Allegations of Abuse

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 aquatics.

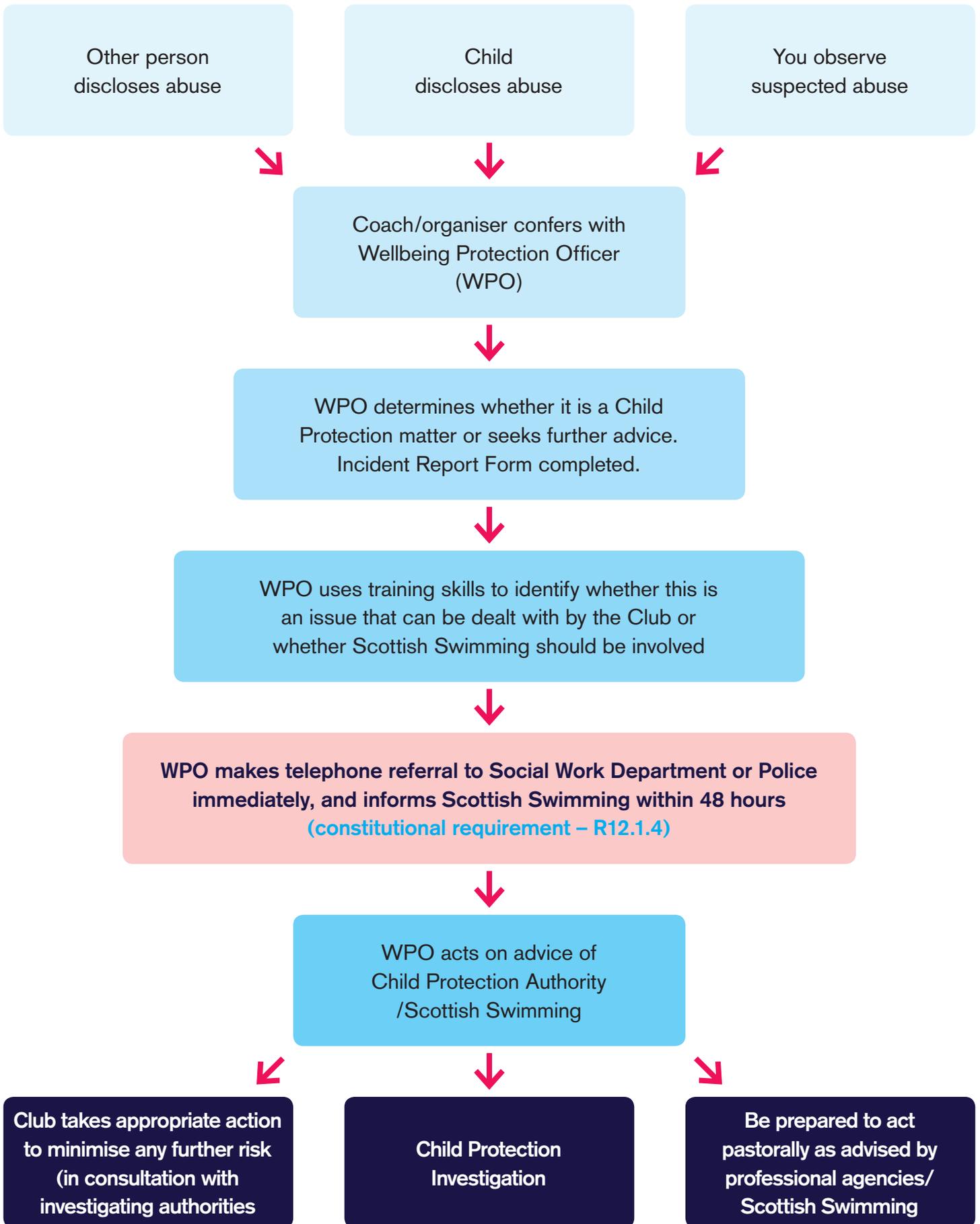
- If somebody raises a child/adult protection concern in relation to a coach/teacher/volunteer who is currently practicing then you should follow the 'Responding to Concerns' procedure (noted in this policy, with reference to the flow chart on the next page and Appendices 24, 25)
- If it is a historical allegation then you should follow the same 'Responding to Concerns' procedure (noted in this policy with reference to the flow chart adjacent and Appendices 24, 25). Record the information using the Incident Report Form (Appendix 32), and signpost the individual to 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 the child/adult has been secured, record and report as normal to Scottish Swimming





# Dealing with allegations of abuse

**NB if in doubt at any stage – consult with professionals**



## 9. Reporting the Concern

The discovery that someone you know may be abusing a child will raise feelings and concerns; 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 Swimming Whistle Blowing Policy assures all members, staff and volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports a concern that a colleague is or may be abusing a child.

### 9.1 Circumstances Where Reporting to the Club Wellbeing and Protection Officer (WPO) is Not Possible

- If the club WPO is unavailable or is implicated, talk directly to a senior club officer or go directly to Scottish Swimming's Safeguarding Officer for advice
- When on an away trip, inform the person who has responsibility for safeguarding. This may be the team manager or head coach

### 9.2 Involving Parents or Carers

- Scottish Swimming is committed to working in partnership with parents. In most situations, it is important that the club WPO or Scottish Swimming Safeguarding Officer involves parents to clarify any initial concerns e.g. if a child seems withdrawn, they may have experienced a recent bereavement
- Where 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

## 9.3 Involving Scottish Swimming

The Scottish Swimming Safeguarding Officer 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 Scottish Swimming
- Whether further action, advice or investigation is needed by/from the Police, Social Services

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 Scottish Swimming Wellbeing and Protection Officer to act appropriately to support/deal with the concern and to analyse trends and improve existing policy and guidance.

If Scottish Swimming 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.

## 9.4 Involving Statutory Agencies

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 apparent abuse is of a criminal nature 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 Services
- 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 Swimming Safeguarding Officer. 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
- A summary of the information shared and the response received

## 9.5 Requests for Information from Statutory Authorities

Scottish Swimming Safeguarding Officer or CEO will deal with any enquires if the organisation is contacted by the Police or Social Services concerning information received or a child protection complaint has been made by or about a member, volunteer or employee or member club.

### 9.5.1 Member Clubs

If a member club receives a request of this nature they are advised to contact the Scottish Swimming Safeguarding Officer for guidance and support. Clubs should co-operate fully with official requests for factual information, but do not express any personal opinions on the person's conduct.

## 10. Recording Information: Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All concerns that you may receive should be recorded, ideally using the Scottish Swimming form ([Incident Report Form Appendix 32](#))

### You are recording this information for:

- Yourself, so you have a record of what happened
- The WPO or other designated safeguarding person within your club, who will co-ordinate any action that needs to be taken
- The Scottish Swimming Safeguarding Officer 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.:

- Your club committee
- Members of your club
- Other acquaintances outside aquatics
- Any information relating to adult protection should be held under secure conditions and made available on a need-to-know basis only

## 10.1 When recording information on the incident report form you should:

- Confine yourself to the facts – what you have observed/seen, heard or had reported to you
- Distinguish between what is your own personal knowledge and what you have been told by other people
- Not 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)

## 11. Procedures for Managing Cases of Abuse and Poor Practice

After receiving an incident report Scottish Swimming Safeguarding Officer will consider the initial report and decide whether this is a case which can be dealt with by the Club, i.e. a case of **POOR PRACTICE** or for cases of **ABUSE, SUSPECTED ABUSE,** and **SERIOUS INCIDENT,** whether it should be dealt with in partnership with the club and Scottish Swimming or centrally by Scottish Swimming/statutory authorities.

For all cases dealt with by Scottish Swimming, a disciplinary procedure is set out in [Appendix 23](#) of this Safeguarding Policy for Scottish Swimming staff and volunteers and it must be read and applied in conjunction with the Scottish Swimming staff handbook and standard disciplinary policy and constitution.

A procedure for clubs to deal internally with instances of **POOR PRACTICE** is set out in the Scottish Swimming Complaints Procedure and Guidance. Clubs will receive support and guidance from Scottish Swimming to implement this process.

## 12. Disclosure and Barring Service or Voluntary Scotland Disclosure Service

Voluntary Scotland Disclosure Service (VSDS) maintains the lists of people barred from working with children or with vulnerable adults in Scotland. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) fulfils this function in England and Wales and in Northern Ireland.

**If Scottish Swimming or an affiliated club takes the following action because an individual within the club/sport has harmed a child (or adult at risk) or placed them at risk of harm:**

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- i. Permanently dismisses or removed an individual from regulated activity/work
- ii. Would have dismissed an individual if they had not resigned/retired
- iii. Moved an individual to another role with in the club/organisation which is not regulated activity/work

**Scottish Swimming and clubs have a legal responsibility to make a referral in the above circumstances and it is a criminal offence not to make such a referral.**

For guidance on the grounds and process for making a referral, contact the Scottish Swimming Safeguarding Officer for guidance.

## 13. Data Protection Act, Secure Storage and Fair Sharing Notice

Scottish Swimming will (in line with current data protection legislation) process personal information held. Information relating to employees or volunteers will form part of personnel records. The information may also be shared in certain limited circumstances in accordance with the Fair Processing Notice.

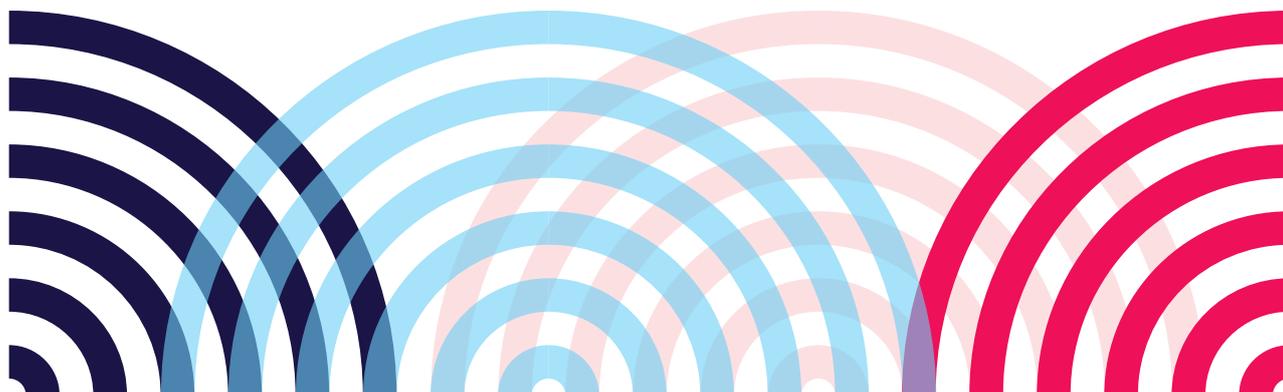
### 13.1 Fair Processing Notice — Child protection, safeguarding and wellbeing

The following information applies to Scottish Swimming professionals, volunteer coaches and other volunteers conducting 'regulated work' in Scotland, and whom are members of (or applying for membership of) the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme.

Current data protection legislation requires that you are informed about how your personal information will be used. For the purposes of child protection, safeguarding and wellbeing matters in Scotland, if the individual's club receives information of concern, the club may share information about an individual with the sport's Governing Bodies in Scotland (Scottish Swimming and on occasion British Swimming) and the appointed Scottish Swimming Wellbeing & Protection Officer and where necessary Wellbeing & Protection Officers for other member clubs.

This may be related to, but not exclusively restricted to, where it has been alerted to circumstances that might affect the individuals status as a member of the PVG scheme for regulated work with children or protected adults or their suitability to carry out the regulated work role for which the individual has applied for/been appointed to or already doing.

- In the event such sharing is deemed necessary, it will normally only be carried out between the registered Wellbeing & Protection Officers in the Club, Governing Body, and those appointed representatives within the a relevant partner organisation
- All information must be treated as confidential, stored securely and only shared with those who need to know
- If the alleged abuse took place outside the sport, the Police or Social Work department will decide who else needs to be informed, including the child's parents/carers





Scottish  
Swimming

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