



UK Athletics
Independent
Safeguarding
Review
Final Report

UKA | UNITED
KINGDOM
ATHLETICS

UKA Safeguarding Position Statement

Sport should always be a force for good. Sadly, it hasn't always been. In the past, athletics and many other sports allowed environments to be created in which bad things could happen under their cover.

UK Athletics are extremely grateful to Christopher Quinlan QC for the work undertaken in 2019-20, which demonstrated that UK Athletics and our Home Country Athletics Federation (HCAF) partners, as a collective, had been operating at sub-optimal levels in many areas, which is, quite frankly, unacceptable. At UK Athletics and alongside the HCAFs, we are determined to ensure that can never happen again. It is our view that sporting achievement and reputation must never again be placed ahead of the safety of athletes or the wider athletics workforce.

To deliver on that, we have recently made sweeping changes to our policies, so both athletes and the wider athletics workforce are better protected. With a zero-tolerance mindset – one offence is one too many – we now have tougher, more appropriate penalties, and UK Athletics has become the overarching safeguarding body for all the home countries for the first time, with a completely new safeguarding team appointed in 2021.

However, the successful implementation of the Quinlan recommendations is only the starting point, and changing our internal policies is only one small part of a fundamental change in culture that is required so people feel comfortable in identifying and reporting poor behaviour. Such a culture needs to be crystal clear about what is acceptable behaviour and what is unacceptable. Grey areas must be erased.

The majority of the athletics workforce are great people giving up their time to develop and grow athletes in a progressive and holistic manner. They, like us, are deeply troubled when they learn of anyone being abused, either mentally or physically, within athletics. Our sport has on occasions been dragged down by the actions of a rotten few. But we must be realistic; simply saying we will better educate the workforce will not remove threats – the few doing wrong already know they are doing wrong. We must be stronger and do more if we are to do right by our athletes and the wider athletics community.

Some poor behaviour has seemingly become normalised over the years, in particular, excessive physical contact during coaching sessions, and clear red-lines must be drawn. We are putting in place an education process for the sport to help everyone understand unacceptable behaviours and how they can challenge and report them.

We are determined to remove any barriers to this happening. We understand people will not report inappropriate behaviours if they do not have faith in the process that should be protecting them. As a result, we have developed a new athlete- and people-focused reporting mechanism, My Concern, to provide assurance that a complaint is being properly dealt with. Our new policies back that up, providing an ability to issue sanctions appropriate to the offence, protecting those making complaints. That includes ensuring people who should be banned for life are banned for life. In fact, the UKA Board has committed both within a policy and case decision making context, to adopt a zero-tolerance approach where our approach is to investigate and prosecute and ask for the maximum ban available where the case merits it and there is power to do so within the independent process.

We are also working to remove the grey areas some suspended individuals may seek to exploit. We are committed to sharing related information across sports and countries via international federations to ensure bureaucracy does not create an opportunity for those identified as risks.

We have been clear under the new Executive Team at UKA, that the sport only functions effectively when we put athletes and people first. Our enhanced approach to safeguarding is designed to do that. That doesn't mean we assume that all coaches and other roles within the sport are a problem, far from it. Our sport cannot function without brilliant people. But for too long we have allowed a few bad apples to taint the vast majority of, in particular, coaches working hard for athletes up and down the country.

We will never be complacent. We are committed to doing everything possible to ensure athletes and others in our sport operate in a safe, fulfilling and enjoyable environment at all times. But we do need help if we are to go as far as I want us to.

We are also communicating with national partners and government ministers, asking them to consult within sport on creating an independent safeguarding body to take ownership of controversial cases when a sport cannot take them further for reasons of internal conflict or financial restrictions. The truth is that some smaller sports cannot afford to take all the action they would like in these cases. We are also asking government to make all controlling abuse (sexual, physical or psychological) an offence, whether on children or adults. It is wrong that we presently deal with this based on the age of the victim (i.e., children under 18 or adults classed 'at risk') when it is unacceptable for all.

If the behaviour we are seeking to prevent and punish were to take place in any other part of society, there would be serious repercussions. We must remove any risk of those repercussions not happening in sport and ensure we have the support we need. I hope the Government will help us provide even greater protection so sport is not treated differently just because there are medals to be won.

Joanna Coates,

UK Athletics CEO, on behalf of the Board and Executive Team

1 Introduction

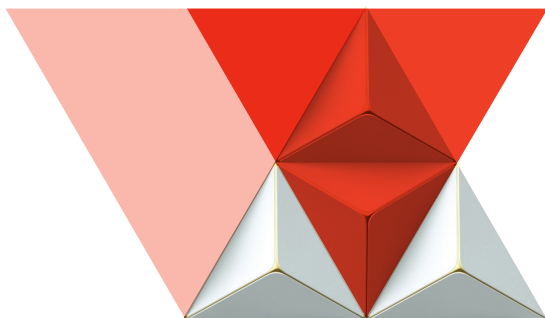
In late 2019, concern was raised to UK Athletics (UKA), UK Sport (UKS) and in the media about UKA's existing safeguarding practices. On 19 December 2019, UKA and the Home Country Athletics Federations (HCAFs) publicly announced a programme of change in respect of its welfare and safeguarding provision.

On 3 March 2020, UKA, in collaboration with the HCAFs, announced an Independent Review of Safeguarding Provision in Athletics (The Review). To ensure independence, Christopher Quinlan QC was appointed to undertake the review by Sport Resolutions (SR), an expert, independent, not-for-profit, dispute resolution service for sport in the UK.

In July 2020, a final review report was published. The Review made 6 core recommendations and 23 additional recommendations aimed at developing existing service provision and providing a framework to ensure the highest standards were maintained in the future.

To support and inform the development and implementation of effective and measurable outcomes to the review's recommendations, UKA and the four HCAFs established a project working group. The group membership includes the safeguarding officers from UKA and each home country, with additional advice and support provided by the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) and the Ann Craft Trust. The group meets every four weeks.

It should also be noted that there has been non-executive oversight and reporting in relation to the operation of the new system through the UKA Standards, Ethics and Rules Committee, as well as executive reporting through the UKA and HCAF Chief Executive Officers, the UK CEO Forum and the respective UKA and HCAF boards.



2 Impact of Covid-19

The ongoing pandemic has impacted significantly on all areas of society, and athletics clubs and organisations were either closed or functioning at a reduced level for most of 2020/21.

The development and implementation of the project outcomes, specifically in relation to the affiliation-related recommendations, were impacted by the pandemic. This meant that clubs that were only starting to re-open in April 2021 were also expected to sign up to new and mandatory safeguarding requirements through the affiliation process. UKA and the four HCAFs recognise that our clubs and affiliated organisations will need considerable ongoing support and development to ensure they comply with the safeguarding requirements by the next affiliation period in 2022.



We have recently made sweeping changes to our policies, so both athletes and the wider athletics workforce are better protected.

3 The Core Recommendations

CR1 There should be one single, universally-applicable safeguarding policy for children in athletics in the UK, and another for adults at risk in athletics in the UK (subject to any necessary variations in consequence of devolution).

CR2 The UKA child safeguarding policy should be reviewed and amended in accordance with the recommendations herein.

CR3 The UKA adults at risk safeguarding policy should be reviewed and amended in accordance with the recommendations herein.

Status: Completed.

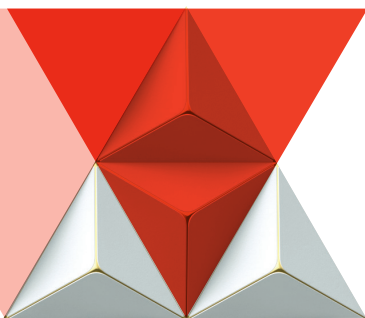
Comment: *The first three core recommendations relate to policy development.*

We set about developing separate [Child Safeguarding](#) and [Adult Safeguarding policies](#), both of which received approval by the boards of the HCAFs and UKA in early 2021.

CR4 UKA should take operational responsibility for safeguarding in the sport of athletics in the UK.

CR5 That responsibility should include (but is not limited to) the following aspects:

- ▼ The provision of effective universally applicable UK-wide safeguarding policies for children and adults at risk (subject to any necessary variations in consequence of devolution).
- ▼ Those policies should be enforced by way of a dedicated safeguarding procedure for all safeguarding cases, which has at its heart an assessment of risk.
- ▼ Safeguarding cases should be managed by the UKA safeguarding team, working with the HCAFs safeguarding leads, assisted by a bespoke case management system.
- ▼ Safeguarding investigations should be conducted and superintended by the UKA safeguarding team.



3 The Core Recommendations

CR6 In furtherance thereof, UKA should establish:

- ▼ A case management group to consider safeguarding cases, which includes the UKA and HCAFs lead safeguarding officers.
- ▼ An independent panel of suitably-experienced and qualified safeguarding experts to determine safeguarding cases referred to it.
- ▼ An independent appeal panel.

Status: Completed.

Comment: *To deliver these changes in a focused and consistent manner, the project working group delivered the following:*

- ▲ *Developed [new safeguarding procedures](#) to ensure every concern is identified, recorded and reported quickly and in a consistent manner by individuals and clubs to UKA.*
- ▲ *Produced and implemented standard [safeguarding regulations](#) for managing safeguarding referrals across and between the five governing bodies.*
- ▲ *Purchased and operationalised a new centralised electronic case management system (MyConcern).*
- ▲ *Established a safeguarding case management group to oversee the investigation of safeguarding cases.*
- ▲ *Recruited subject experts to an independent safeguarding/appeal panel cadre.*
- ▲ *In addition, UKA have appointed a full-time Lead Safeguarding Officer, and recruited two safeguarding case workers into the safeguarding team to ensure specialised expertise across the case management process.*
- ▲ *Both within a policy and a case decision making context, UKA have adopted a zero-tolerance approach where our approach is to investigate and prosecute and ask for the maximum ban available where the case merits it and there is power to do so within the independent process.*

On 14 June 2021, UKA and the four HCAFs collectively launched the new safeguarding policies, procedures and regulations.



4 Remaining Recommendations

Many of the remaining recommendations are interdependent with the core recommendations and were delivered when the work on the core recommendations concluded.

R1 The executive responsibility for safeguarding at UKA and each HCAF should be written in the job description of a full-time member of staff who is a member of the respective senior leadership team.

Status: Completed. Each HCAF has given executive responsibility for safeguarding to a full-time member of staff. In the case of HCAFs this is the CEO. In the case of UKA this is the Director of Development.

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▲▲



4 Remaining Recommendations

R2 England Athletics (EA), Athletics Northern Ireland (ANI) & Welsh Athletics (WA) should, like Scottish Athletics (SA), adopt a bespoke Code of Conduct for Club Welfare Officers and Designated Officers, and;

R3 The Codes of Conduct should, like those of SA, be amended in accordance with the recommendations herein.

Status: Completed. On 14 June 2021, UKA and the HCAFs published a revised set of [Codes of Conduct](#) which have been updated to reflect the requirements in this recommendation.

R4 Each person to whom the relevant Code of Conduct applies should be provided with two copies. One must be signed and returned to the club, which must keep a register of all signed Codes of Conduct. This applies to present and new coaches, volunteers, parents and those with parental responsibility.

Status: Completed. This requirement is written into each HCAF's affiliation requirements for 2021 with the additional undertaking that every club will implement this requirement by the next affiliation period in 2022.

R5 UKA's Photographic Policy Guidance for Athletics Clubs and Stadiums should be amended in accordance with the recommendations herein.

Status: Completed. The [Photographic Policy](#) Guidance for Athletics Clubs and Stadiums has been amended as per this recommendation and is available on our website.

R6 UKA and each HCAF should amend their websites to the extent necessary and in accordance with the recommendations made herein, including dedicated safeguarding links prominent on the homepage, clear statements of key principles of safeguarding and readily accessible resources.

Status: Completed. UKA and each HCAF have amended their websites as directed in this recommendation. [ANI](#) / [EA](#) / [SA](#) / [WA](#).



4 Remaining Recommendations

The following 3 recommendations relate to safeguarding training.

R7 UKA, EA, ANI and WA should, like SA, make mandatory a form of face-to-face safeguarding training (including virtually) for all persons including (but not limited to) coaches, Club Welfare Officers (CWOs), Designated Officers (DOs) and volunteers who work directly with children and/or adults at risk. Training should be refreshed at least once every three years.

R8 UKA and each HCAF should make mandatory a form of online basic safeguarding training at a level appropriate to their involvement for all including but not limited to athletes, members, staff, coaches, officials, board members and the members of affiliated clubs/associations/organisations' committees.

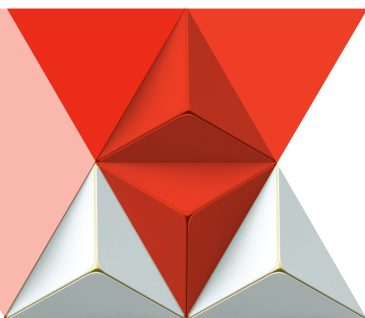
R9 The safeguarding training requirements for and obligation upon all HCAF affiliated clubs/associations/organisations, CWOs/DOs, athletes, members, officials and other participants should be formalised and recorded in writing in publicly-available documents.

Status: Completed. UKA in conjunction with the four HCAFs have agreed a safeguarding training framework, which will allow us to develop and deliver a comprehensive training programme with the support of the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU). The framework has 3 tiers or levels at which training is mandatory, dependent on both role and access to children.

In respect of R7 we have sought support from CPSU to develop a bespoke, face-to-face athletics safeguarding module. Work on that will commence shortly with a rollout planned for Spring 2022.

In respect of R8, UKA already has an online safeguarding module, which was mandatory for all coaches. Access to this module will be broadened to anyone in athletics who wishes to complete it and will be mandatory for certain roles. These roles will be clearly communicated at the appropriate time.

Whilst the safeguarding training framework delivers against the training-related recommendations, we recognise that it is the first step in what we anticipate being a 5-year programme of training and development that will transform safeguarding training in athletics.



4 Remaining Recommendations

Licensing and Criminal Record Checks (CRCs).

Criminal Record Check refers to the relevant criminal record checks in each of the home countries at the time of the appointment of any officials, staff or volunteers, and the application for or renewal of any licence.

R10 UKA must inform in writing the relevant HCAF not less than three months before expiry of a coach's or official's licence.

Status: Completed. UKA now routinely inform each HCAF as per the terms of this recommendation.

R11.1 In addition to the present process, a Criminal Records Check, at a level appropriate to their involvement, should be required, and carried out, for all CWOs/DOs, persons who wish to be licensed and/or those coaching or having close and regular supervision of children. It should be renewed every three years. It should have retrospective effect.

Status: Completed. This was always a requirement in SA but has been broadened out to be a requirement in the other three HCAFs.

R11.2 The Code of Conduct for clubs/associations/organisations should be amended to include a requirement that each must appoint a designated person with responsibility to maintain a register of Criminal Records Checks for all staff and volunteers and ensure CRC updates are obtained every three years.

Status: Completed. Revised [Codes of Conduct](#) were published in June 2021.



4 Remaining Recommendations

Recommendations 12 to 17 relate only to UKA.

R12 To enhance its CRC process, UKA should deny a licence to any person to coach, or to officiate in the presence of, children or adults at risk, who refuses, if asked, to disclose their Criminal Records Check certificate.

Status: Completed. Anyone asked by UKA, ANI or SA to disclose their Criminal Records Check certificate will be provided two opportunities and 3 weeks to do so. Failure to disclose will automatically result in a licence being refused.

Auditing requirements.

R13 At least once annually, UKA should audit each HCAF and ensure that each has in place effective child and adults at risk safeguarding policies and procedures, and is complying with its own auditing duties of member clubs/associations/organisations. A written record should be kept thereof.

Status: Completed. UKA in conjunction with HCAFs launched new safeguarding policy and procedures on 14 June 2021. Each HCAF has put in place auditing and support arrangements for their membership. The new UKA safeguarding team will review each HCAF in June 2022.

R14 UKA should devise and implement an auditing system whereby it, with the relevant HCAF will audit annually a sufficient number of member club/associations/organisations. A written record should be kept thereof.

Status: Completed. The auditing system stems from the affiliation requirements set by the HCAF in respect of safeguarding and extends to a dip sample of at least 5% (or a minimum of 10, whichever is the larger figure) of affiliated clubs. The dip sample allows UKA and the HCAF to confirm the club or organisation has in place the safeguarding policies and processes reported at the point of affiliation. It provides a support and development opportunity whereby the club is provided with direct feedback and advice on their safeguarding provision, which is followed up at regular intervals.

R15 UKA should prepare a schematic representation showing the structure of safeguarding responsibilities across the sport of athletics.

Status: Completed. The schematics are available within the respective [safeguarding policies](#) and procedures.

R16 Nomenclature across UKA safeguarding policies and procedures should be consistent.

Status: Completed.

R17 UKA should consider accepting as satisfactory for licensing and/or training requirements safeguarding courses provided or approved by SA and other HCAFs.

Status: Completed. The new safeguarding training strategy reflects this recommendation.



4 Remaining Recommendations

The following recommendations are common to England Athletics (EA) and at least one other HCAF.

R18 EA and ANI should ensure the UKA safeguarding policies and procedures upon which they rely have been properly incorporated as part of their regulatory frameworks.

Status: Completed. All HCAFs have adopted the revised safeguarding policies and procedures and incorporated them into their respective regulatory framework.

Club affiliation or membership.

R19.1 Effective child and adults at risk safeguarding policies should be a prerequisite of club/association/organisation membership or affiliation to any HCAF.

Status: Completed. This is an affiliation requirement in each HCAF and the requirement extends to each club/association/organisation adopting the national policies and procedures.

R19.2 Within 12 months of the date of The Review, all of HCAF affiliated member clubs/associations/organisations must, if they have not, put in place effective child and adult at risk safeguarding policies and inform the HCAF safeguarding manager thereof in writing. A written register should be kept by the HCAF thereof.

Status: Completed. This requirement is embedded in each HCAF's affiliation requirements for 2021. Each HCAF has committed to supporting their affiliated member clubs/associations/organisations to be fully compliant by the next auditing period in 2022.

R19.3 Copies of each HCAF affiliated club's safeguarding policies must be on public display and available to every club member, athlete, coach, official and participant at and user of the affiliated club/association/organisation.

Status: Completed. This requirement is embedded in each HCAF's affiliation requirements for 2021. Each HCAF has committed to supporting their affiliated member clubs/associations/organisations to be fully compliant by the next auditing period in 2022. Review and support checks will also be conducted as appropriate or investigated where reported not to be the case.



4 Remaining Recommendations

R19.4 As part of the club/association/organisation membership/ affiliation procedure, all HCAF clubs/associations/organisations must hitherto adopt a condition which requires all members to read and acknowledge in writing appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures as part of joining/renewing membership.

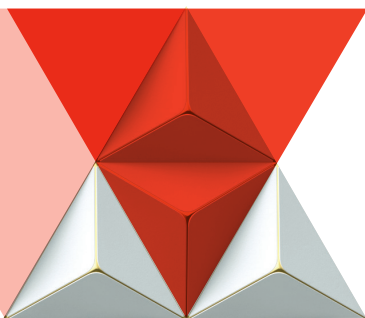
Status: Completed. This requirement is embedded in each HCAF affiliation requirements for 2021. Each HCAF has committed to supporting their affiliated member clubs/associations/organisations to be fully compliant by the next auditing period in 2022.

R19.5 Within 12 months of the date of The Review, all HCAF affiliated clubs/associations/organisations must require all members, staff, volunteers and athletes to read and acknowledge appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures, to keep a register thereof and provide the appropriate HCAF safeguarding manager with documentary proof thereof.

Status: Completed. This requirement is embedded in each HCAF's affiliation requirements for 2021. Each HCAF has committed to supporting their affiliated member clubs/associations/organisations to be fully compliant by the next auditing period in 2022.

R19.6 HCAF members'/affiliated clubs'/associations'/organisations' safeguarding policies must be reviewed by the club/association to reflect changes in legislation or guidance, and in any event at least once every three years, and the appropriate HCAF safeguarding manager informed in writing of the outcome thereof, which should be recorded in a written register thereof.

Status: Completed. This requirement is embedded in each HCAF's affiliation requirements for 2021. Each HCAF has committed to supporting their affiliated member clubs/associations/organisations to be fully compliant by the next auditing period in 2022.



4 Remaining Recommendations

The following recommendations are common to ANI and at least one other HCAF.

R20.1 The appointment of at least one suitably-trained CWO/DO should be a prerequisite of all ANI club/association/organisation membership.

Status: Completed.

R20.2 The appointment of the said suitably-trained CWO/DO should be approved by the appropriate HCAF safeguarding manager.

Status: Completed. From June 2021, each HCAF through affiliation and the requirements of R20.3, will be advised by the relevant club/association /organisation of all new appointments to the role of CWO/DO and will stop the appointment of unsuitable candidates.

R20.3 No person shall hold the position of CWO/DO without completing an appropriate CRC and disclosing, if asked, their certificate to the said manager.

Status: Completed. This is completed as per the requirements at recommendation R11.1.

R20.4: It should be a constitutional requirement of every HCAF member/affiliated club/association/organisation that the CWO reports to every club/association management committee or board meeting.

Status: Completed. This is an affiliation requirement and will form part of the auditing checks conducted by HCAFs.



UKA has become the overarching safeguarding body for all the home countries for the first time, with a completely new safeguarding team appointed in 2021.

4 Remaining Recommendations

Compliance.

R21.1 Within 12 months of the date of The Review, each HCAF must audit all of its affiliated/ member clubs/associations/ organisations and ensure that each has in place effective child and adult at risk safeguarding policies. A written register thereof should be kept by each HCAF.

Status: Completed. The pandemic has impacted on delivery of this recommendation as affiliated clubs were closed for most of the past 12 months. However, the HCAF affiliation requirements implemented in April 2021 were the main element for the audit process and are the written record for each HCAF. Over the next 12 months, UKA and the HCAF will follow up on the affiliation data to ensure all clubs have in place effective child and adults at risk safeguarding policies

R21.2 Successful completion of all safeguarding training should be documented and notified by the individual concerned in writing to the HCAF, which should keep a register thereof.

Status: Completed. This requirement exists for licensed coaches and is managed through the Trinity system. Through the safeguarding training framework, we have extended the use of Trinity to capture training data for all other mandatory roles.

R21.3 The Code of Conduct for affiliated clubs/associations/organisations must include a requirement to appoint a designated person with responsibility to maintain the training records of those required to undertake such and ensure refresher safeguarding training is attended every three years. UKA and the HCAF must be informed in writing of the identity of that person.

Status: Completed. Revised [Codes of Conduct](#) were published in June 2021.

R21.4 Within 12 months of the date of The Review, all persons including athletes, Designated Officers, officials, and coaches who have undertaken safeguarding training must notify the HCAF safeguarding manager, in writing, of (1) the nature and date of such training and (2) any available documentary evidence to support completion thereof. The HCAF should keep a register thereof.

Status: Completed. See R21.2.

In addition to the recommendations above, the following two recommendations relate solely to ANI:

R22 ANI should adopt forthwith an adults at risk safeguarding policy.

Status: Completed. See CR1, 2 and 3.

R23 The ANI child safeguarding policy should be reviewed and amended in accordance with the recommendations herein.

Status: Completed. See CR1, 2 and 3.