

British Athletics & The Home Country Athletics Federations

ADULT SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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SECTION 1: ADULT SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy Objectives

This policy and related documents apply to the following governing bodies in athletics:

- British Athletics (BA)
- England Athletics (EA)
- Athletics Northern Ireland (ANI)
- Welsh Athletics (WA)
- Scottish Athletics (SA).

In this document, any reference to British Athletics means British Athletics and the above-listed Home Country Athletics Federations (HCAFs).

Most adults can live their lives safely and free from harm. However, for some individuals, there may be times when, due to a range of circumstances, their ability to protect their own wellbeing, safety, or rights may be temporarily or permanently reduced.

British Athletics and the four HCAFs are committed to safeguarding adults at risk in line with relevant national legislation and relevant national and local safeguarding guidance.

We will safeguard adults at risk by ensuring our activities are delivered in a way that promotes safety, dignity, and wellbeing for all participants. We will foster a culture of zero tolerance towards harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

Safeguarding should apply to everyone, not just those considered at risk, through promoting good behaviour, inclusive culture, and addressing concerns early. However, the formal safeguarding framework for adults at risk is more specific, focusing on those who meet the legal definition and therefore may require additional protection.

Within athletics, concerns relating to adults may arise in different ways and while recognising that all are taken seriously and may require action, it is important to distinguish between safeguarding, welfare and misconduct.

Safeguarding Adults refers specifically to actions taken to protect an adult at risk (as defined by the relevant legislation) who has care and support needs and may be unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect. These concerns may require formal safeguarding procedures and, where appropriate, referrals to statutory agencies. Adult Safeguarding concerns should always be reported to the British Athletics Safeguarding Team.

Adult Welfare relates to the overall wellbeing, safety and experience of all adults in sport. This includes creating a culture that is respectful, inclusive, and free from poor practice or inappropriate behaviour, regardless of whether an individual is considered at particular risk. If a concern does not meet the threshold for adult safeguarding, then it should be referred to the relevant HCAF for review and potential investigation.

Misconduct and Poor Practice refers to behaviour that breaches codes of conduct, rules or expected standards within athletics. This may include bullying, harassment, discrimination, or inappropriate relationships. While not all misconduct meets safeguarding thresholds, it can still have a significant impact on welfare and may be managed through disciplinary or regulatory processes.

In some instances, non-Safeguarding cases or concerns may be addressed locally through a club's own policies and procedures, and the relevant HCAF will revert matters back to the club to manage through their own processes.

If you are unsure how to categorise a concern, or which process it should follow, you should not delay reporting. Please contact the [British Athletics Safeguarding Team](#), or the relevant HCAF, who will:

- Provide advice and guidance
- Assess the nature and level of risk
- Triage the concern to the appropriate team or process (e.g. safeguarding, disciplinary, welfare or club matter).

This ensures that all concerns are managed consistently, proportionately, and in a timely manner.

All concerns, regardless of categorisation, must be recognised, recorded, reported and responded to appropriately. It is important that the response be proportionate to the level of risk. This ensures that athletics provides a safe environment for all participants, while also meeting its responsibilities to protect those most at risk of harm.

This includes:

- recognising adults who may be experiencing risk or vulnerability in each context
- understanding how abuse, exploitation, and neglect may present
- ensuring concerns are responded to and reported appropriately.

It is important to note that not all adults with disabilities, health conditions, learning difficulties, or additional support needs are considered “adults at risk” under the relevant legislation.

Under the legislation (as outlined in the ‘Definition of an Adult at Risk’ section below), an “adult at risk” is defined by specific criteria relating to care and support needs, risk of abuse or neglect, and an inability to protect themselves because of those needs.

Safeguarding responsibility in athletics therefore applies both to:

- adults who meet the legal definition of “adult at risk”; and
- adults who may experience situational or contextual vulnerability within sport.

British Athletics and the four HCAFs are committed to best safeguarding practice and to upholding the rights of all adults to live free from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that everyone involved in athletics understands:

- the relevant legislation, policy, and procedures for safeguarding adults
- their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding adults at risk
- what actions to take and who to contact if they have concerns about an adult’s welfare or wellbeing.

Table 1: Definitions of an Adult at Risk

The definitions of an 'adult at risk' vary across the Home Countries. The following table outlines the legislation in each:

England - The Care Act 2014

An **adult at risk** is an individual aged 18 years and over who:

- a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of those needs) **and**;
- b) is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect **and**;
- c) 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.

Northern Ireland - Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership 2015

An **adult at risk of harm** is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect **may** be increased by their a) personal characteristics and/or b) life circumstances.

- a) **Personal characteristics** may include, but are not limited to: age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain.
- b) Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to: isolation, socio-economic factors, and environmental living conditions.

An **adult in need of protection** is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect **may** be increased by their a) personal characteristics and/or b) life circumstances **and**

- c) who is unable to protect their own wellbeing, property, assets, rights or other interests and where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed.

In order to meet the definition of an 'adult in need of protection' either (a) or (b) must be present, in addition to both elements (c) and (d).

Scotland - Adult Support and Protection Act 2007

An **adult at risk** is an individual aged 16 years and over who:

- a) is unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights or other interests
- b) is at risk of harm, **and**
- c) because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity, is more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.

Wales - Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014

An **adult at risk** is an individual aged 18 years and over who:

- a) is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, **and**
- b) has needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of those needs) **and**
- c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against abuse or neglect, or the risk of it.

Where a Local Authority or equivalent statutory agency has reason to believe that an adult may be at risk, it has a responsibility to make appropriate enquiries and determine what action may be required to protect the individual and promote their wellbeing.

In some nations, including Scotland and Wales, legislation provides powers that may enable authorities to gain access to an adult where there is concern that they may be experiencing harm, and access is being prevented by another person.

The actions required to safeguard an adult at risk may involve a range of agencies, including Adult Social Care, Health Services, the Police, and other statutory or voluntary organisations.

Effective safeguarding relies upon cooperation and information sharing between relevant agencies. Within athletics, British Athletics and the HCAFs may be required to take safeguarding action as part of a multi-agency response.

This may include implementing protective measures, applying safeguarding procedures, or using disciplinary and regulatory processes where concerns relate to the conduct of a participant, coach, official, volunteer, or member of staff.

Local Authorities and equivalent statutory agencies are responsible for maintaining multi-agency safeguarding arrangements that coordinate the actions of relevant organisations to protect adults at risk from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Background Checks for Regulated Roles

Further information regarding background checks can be found by visiting the relevant HCAF area websites:

- Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020
- Gov.uk (England and Wales)
- Access NI (Northern Ireland).

Principles

British Athletics and the four HCAFs believe that everyone has the right to live free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and harm, regardless of age, ability, disability, sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital status, or gender identity.

We are committed to creating and maintaining a safe, inclusive and positive environment, and to fostering an open and listening culture in which individuals feel able to raise concerns without fear of discrimination, disadvantage, or retribution.

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to the prevention of harm through the protection and promotion of the welfare of all adults involved in our sport.

We recognise that factors such as health, wellbeing, disability, ability, and the need for care and support can affect a person's resilience and capacity in certain situations. We also recognise that barriers to communication, access to support, and disclosure may vary across individuals and may change over time.

We acknowledge that safeguarding adult responsibilities are underpinned by the legal frameworks in place across the 4 Nations, for example the Care Act 2014 in England, which sets out duties to safeguard adults who have needs for care and support and who are unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect as a result of those needs.

We will act in accordance with relevant safeguarding adult legislation and statutory guidance, and with local authority safeguarding procedures where applicable.

All actions taken under this policy will be consistent with the principles of adult safeguarding, ensuring they are lawful, proportionate, necessary, and person-centered, and that the voice, wishes, and feelings of the adult concerned are considered and respected.

Application

Adult Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures apply to all individuals involved in British Athletics and the four HCAFs, and to all safeguarding concerns relating to adults at risk arising within the context of athletics activity.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- board members, staff, coaches, officials, and volunteers
- members and affiliated clubs
- participants in events licensed or sanctioned by BA or the HCAFs
- contractors, consultants, and service providers delivering services on behalf of BA or HCAFs
- anyone engaged in athletics in a paid or voluntary capacity.

We also expect partner organisations, including suppliers and sponsors, to demonstrate commitment to safeguarding principles consistent with this policy when working within athletics.

Commitments

To implement this policy, British Athletics and the four HCAFs will ensure:

- Everyone involved in athletics is aware of adult at risk safeguarding procedures and understands how to respond to and report concerns.
- All concerns that an adult at risk may be at risk of harm are taken seriously, responded to promptly, and managed in line with this policy and procedures where appropriate.
- The wellbeing, safety, and rights of adults at risk are prioritised, and individuals are supported to express their views, wishes, and desired outcomes.
- The voice of the adult at risk is respected and central to decision-making, unless there is a lawful, proportionate reason not to do so (e.g. risk of serious harm or statutory intervention).
- All actions taken are proportionate to the level of risk and respect the dignity, autonomy, and rights of the individuals involved.
- Clear, accurate, confidential records of safeguarding concerns and decisions are maintained and stored securely in line with data protection legislation.
- Practice aligns with recognised safeguarding guidance from relevant bodies including UK Sport, Sport England, Sport Wales, sportscotland, Sport Northern Ireland, NSPCC, Ann Craft Trust, and Children First.

- Cooperation with Police, Adult Social Care, and other statutory agencies where safeguarding concerns require external intervention.
- All relevant personnel complete appropriate safeguarding adult training and refreshers relevant to their role.
- Appropriate information sharing takes place with relevant agencies (e.g. Police, Disclosure and Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland, Local Authority safeguarding teams) where there is a lawful basis to do so.
- Safeguarding cases and actions are reviewed by the Independent Safeguarding Case Management Group, relevant Boards, and senior leadership on an annual basis.
- This policy and associated procedures are reviewed at least every two years, or sooner where required due to changes in legislation, statutory guidance, or significant safeguarding developments.

Implementation

British Athletics and the four HCAFs are committed to developing and maintaining a capability to implement this policy and its procedures.

In order to do so, the following will be in place:

- A designated HCAF individual to liaise with the British Athletics Safeguarding Department.
- An independent Safeguarding Case Management Group incorporating British Athletics and the four HCAFs, with an appointed Chair and clear Terms of Reference.
- A clear line of accountability within the relevant governing body for the safety and wellbeing of all adults at risk.
- Access to relevant legal and professional advice.
- Regular management reports from the Head of Safeguarding to the relevant governing body Board detailing how risks to adult at risk safeguarding concerns are addressed and how any reports have been addressed.
- Aligned adult at risk safeguarding procedures that deal effectively with any concerns of abuse or neglect, including those caused through poor practice.
- Arrangements to work effectively with other relevant organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults, including arrangements for sharing information.
- Codes of conduct for all relevant roles and individuals that specify zero tolerance of abuse in any form.

- Risk assessments that specifically include safeguarding of adults at risk where required
- Policies and procedures that address the following areas and which are consistent with this Adult Safeguarding Policy:
 - ✓ Equality, diversity and inclusion
 - ✓ Codes of conduct
 - ✓ Discipline and grievance
 - ✓ Whistleblowing
 - ✓ Safe recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers
 - ✓ Information policy, data protection and information sharing
 - ✓ Adult Safeguarding Procedures (Responding to and managing a concern about an adult).

Equality

British Athletics and the four HCAFs endorse the principle of equality and will strive to ensure that everyone who wishes to be involved in athletics (in all its disciplines and forms):

- has a genuine and equal opportunity to participate to the full extent of their own ambitions and abilities, without regard to their age, sex, gender identity, disability, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, religion, race, socio-economic status or sexual orientation.
- can be assured of an environment in which their rights, dignity and individual worth are respected and that they are able to enjoy their sport without the threat of intimidation, victimisation, harassment or abuse.

SECTION 2: SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Key Points

- There is a legal duty on Local Authorities (and equivalent bodies across the UK nations) to provide safeguarding support to adults who meet the statutory definition of an “adult at risk” under relevant legislation, including the Care Act 2014 in England and equivalent legislation in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
- The definition of an “adult at risk” is set out in legislation and varies across the four Home Countries. The specific criteria applicable in each nation are detailed within this policy
- Safeguarding legislation applies to all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation that may impact an adult at risk’s health, wellbeing, and rights.
- The legislation provides a framework for safeguarding practice that prioritises the safety, wellbeing, and outcomes of the adult at risk, while balancing their rights, autonomy, and wishes.
- Across all four Home Countries, safeguarding law and guidance emphasise a person-centered approach, ensuring adults at risk are supported to make their own decisions wherever possible and appropriate.
- The law provides a framework for assessing and applying mental capacity principles, supporting decision-making where an adult may lack capacity in relation to specific decisions.
- The law provides a framework for organisations to refer safeguarding concerns about adults at risk to Local Authorities and statutory safeguarding partners.
- The law enables and supports lawful, proportionate, and necessary information sharing between organisations to protect adults at risk from harm.
- Safeguarding legislation supports cooperation between organisations, ensuring effective multi-agency working to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- In addition to statutory “adults at risk”, British Athletics recognises that individuals may experience contextual or situational vulnerability within sport and may require safeguarding support even where statutory criteria are not met and will consider these on a case-by-case basis.

Adult Safeguarding Legislation

Safeguarding adults at risk in all Home Countries is compliant with United Nations directives on the rights of disabled people and commitments to the rights of older people.

It is covered by:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation.

The practices and procedures within this policy are based on the relevant legislation and government guidance:

- England – The Care Act 2014
Care and Support Statutory Guidance (especially Chapter 14)
- Northern Ireland – Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership 2015. Many other pieces of UK and Home Country legislation also affect adult safeguarding
- Scotland – Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 Code of Practice 2014
- Wales – Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019.

These include legislation about different forms of abuse and those that govern information sharing. For example, legislation dealing with:

- Physical assault
- Sexual offences
- Forced marriage
- Theft and fraud
- Hate crime
- Domestic abuse/Coercive control
- Female genital mutilation
- Modern slavery and human exploitation
- Harassment

Listing and barring of those unsuitable to work with adults with care and support needs.

Each Home Country also has legislation about the circumstances in which decisions can be made on behalf of an adult who is unable to make decisions for themselves:

- England and Wales – Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Scotland – Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
- Mental Capacity (Northern Ireland) 2016.

There are specific offences applying to the mistreatment of, and sexual offences against, adults who do not have mental capacity, and specific offences where mistreatment is carried out by a person who is employed as a carer (e.g. wilful neglect and wilful mistreatment).

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse, neglect and exploitation are violations of an individual's human and civil rights and can occur in any setting, relationship, or environment. They may result in harm to a person's health, wellbeing, dignity, safety, independence, or quality of life.

Abuse, neglect and exploitation can occur through a single act, repeated acts, deliberate actions, omissions, negligence, poor practice, or a failure to act where action is required.

There are many forms and patterns of abuse and neglect, and the circumstances in which they occur can vary significantly.

Safeguarding legislation across the Home Countries categorises abuse in slightly different ways.

However, the following categories are recognised across all nations:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Psychological or Emotional Abuse
- Neglect & Acts of Omission
- Financial or Material Abuse.

In addition, legislation and statutory guidance may recognise other forms of abuse, including:

- Domestic abuse
- Coercive or controlling behaviour
- Modern slavery and human trafficking
- Forced marriage
- Sexual exploitation
- Criminal exploitation, including county lines activity
- Radicalisation and extremism
- Discriminatory abuse and hate crime
- Online abuse, cyberbullying, and digital exploitation
- Organisational or institutional abuse
- Scams and fraud.

Abuse, neglect and exploitation can occur in any relationship and may be perpetrated by a person known to the adult or by a stranger. The person causing harm is often in a position of trust, authority, influence, or power.

Within athletics, abuse, neglect or exploitation may be perpetrated by any individual involved in the sport, including staff, coaches, officials, volunteers, participants, parents, carers, spectators, or others connected to athletics activities.

Examples within a sporting context may include:

- Harassment, bullying, or discriminatory behaviour based on disability or any other protected characteristic
- Failing to make reasonable adjustments or meet an individual's support needs, resulting in harm or exclusion
- Physical assault or the inappropriate use of physical force
- Grooming, sexual misconduct, or sending unwanted sexual communications
- Coercive, controlling, intimidating, or degrading behaviour
- Persistent emotional abuse, humiliation, or blaming of an individual
- Financial exploitation or misuse of an individual's property, funds, or benefits
- Using a power imbalance to cause an adult at risk harm.

Table 2: Categories of Adult Abuse and Harm in each Home Country's Safeguarding Legislation

England The Care Act 2014	
• Physical • Emotional / psychological / mental • Financial or material abuse • Organisational / institutional • Domestic abuse (including coercive control)	• Sexual • Neglect and acts of omission • Discriminatory • Self-neglect • Modern slavery
Northern Ireland - Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership 2015	
• Physical • Psychological / emotional • Institutional • Exploitation • Human trafficking	• Sexual violence • Financial • Neglect • Domestic violence • Hate crime
Scotland - Adult Support and Protection Act 2007	
• Physical • Financial • Neglect	• Psychological • Sexual
Wales - Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014	
• Physical • Psychological • Financial	• Sexual • Neglect

Wellbeing Principles

The success of sport, in terms of helping people achieve their potential, making the most of existing talent, and attracting new people to sport, relies on putting people – their safety, wellbeing and welfare – at the centre of what sport does.

Duty of Care in Sport Independent Report to Government (2017)

The concept of “wellbeing” is embedded within safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance across the UK. Wellbeing encompasses many aspects of a person's life, including their physical and mental health, personal dignity, relationships, independence, participation in work, education and recreation, connection to their community, and overall quality of life.

Being able to live free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and avoidable harm is a fundamental component of wellbeing. Safeguarding legislation recognises that actions taken to protect adults should promote their overall wellbeing and be proportionate to the level of risk identified. When responding to safeguarding concerns, British Athletics and the HCAFs will seek to balance the need to protect individuals from harm with respect for their rights, choices, independence, and personal circumstances.

Making Safeguarding Personal

The Care Act 2014 and equivalent legislation across the Home Countries promote a person-centred approach to safeguarding. This approach is often referred to as "Making Safeguarding Personal". Adults at risk have the right to make choices about their own lives, including decisions that others may consider unwise or that involve a degree of risk.

Safeguarding should not be about making decisions on behalf of adults at risk who have capacity to make their own choices. Instead, it should focus on working with people to understand what matters to them, what outcomes they want to achieve, and how they can be supported to reduce risk and improve their safety and wellbeing.

A person-centered safeguarding approach means engaging adults at risk in conversations about how best to respond to concerns in ways that enhance their involvement, choice, and control. The adults at risk's views, wishes, feelings, beliefs, and desired outcomes should be central to decision-making wherever possible.

Treating people with dignity and respect, supporting informed decision-making, and promoting independence are important elements of safeguarding practice and can contribute significantly to a person's recovery, confidence, and overall wellbeing.

Where an adult at risk experiences substantial difficulty in understanding, participating in, or communicating their views and wishes, they may be supported by an appropriate advocate. This may be a trusted family member or friend of their choosing, or an independent advocate where required by law or identified as appropriate.

Table 3: The principles of adult safeguarding in each Home Country

Scotland - Adult Support and Protection Act 2007

The overarching principle underlying Part 1 of the Act is that any intervention in an individual's affairs should provide benefit to the individual and should be the least restrictive option of those available to meet the purpose of the intervention.

This is supported by a set of guiding principles which, together with the overarching principle, must be taken account of when performing functions under Part 1 of the Act. These are:

- the wishes and feelings of the adult at risk (past and present)
- the views of other significant individuals, such as the adult's nearest relative; their primary carer, guardian or attorney; or any other person with an interest in the adult's wellbeing or property
- the importance of the adult taking an active part in the performance of the function under the Act
- providing the adult with the relevant information and support to enable them to participate as fully as possible
- the importance of ensuring that the adult is not treated less favourably than another adult in a comparable situation
- the adult's abilities, background and characteristics (including their age, sex, sexual orientation, gender, religious persuasion, racial origin, ethnic group and cultural and linguistic heritage).

Wales - Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014

The Act's principles are:

- **responsibility** – safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- **wellbeing** – any actions taken must safeguard the person's wellbeing
- a **person-centred approach** – understand what outcomes the adult wishes to achieve and what matters to them
- **voice and control** – expect people to know what is best for them and support them to be involved in decision making about their lives
- **language** – make an active offer of use of the Welsh language and use professional interpreters where other languages are needed
- **prevention** – it is better to take action before harm occurs.

Northern Ireland - Adult Safeguarding Prevention and Protection in Partnership 2015

The Act's principles are:

- **a rights-based approach** – to promote and respect an adult's right to be safe and secure, to freedom from harm and coercion, to equality of treatment, to the protection of the law, to privacy, to confidentiality, and freedom from discrimination
- **an empowering approach** – to empower adults to make informed choices about their lives, to maximise their opportunities to participate in wider society, to keep themselves safe and free from harm, and to enable them to manage their own decisions in respect of exposure to risk
- **a person-centred approach** – to promote and facilitate full participation of adults in all decisions affecting their lives, taking full account of their views, wishes and feelings and, where appropriate, the views of others who have an interest in their safety and wellbeing
- **a consent-driven approach** – to make a presumption that the adult has the ability to give or withhold consent, to make informed choices, to help inform choice through the provision of information and the identification of options and alternatives, to have particular regard to the needs of individuals who require support with communication, advocacy or who lack the capacity to consent, and intervening in the life of an adult against his or her wishes only in particular circumstances, for very specific purposes and always in accordance with the law
- **a collaborative approach** – to acknowledge that adult safeguarding will be most effective when it has the full support of the wider public and of safeguarding partners across the statutory, voluntary, community, independent and faith sectors working together, and is delivered in a way where roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are clearly defined and understood. Working in partnership and a person-centred approach will work hand-in-hand.

England - The Care Act 2014

The Act's principles are:

empowerment – people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent

prevention – it is better to take action before harm occurs

proportionality – the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented

protection – support and representation for those in greatest need

partnership – local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse

accountability – accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Mental Capacity and Decision Making

We make many decisions every day, often without realising. UK law assumes that all people over the age of 16 can make their own decisions, unless it has been proven that they can't. It also gives us the right to make any decision that we need to make and gives us the right to make our own decisions even if others consider them to be unwise.

We make so many decisions that it is easy to take this ability for granted. Law states that to make a decision we need to:

- Understand information
- Remember it for long enough
- Think about the information
- Communicate our decision.

A person's ability to do this may be affected by things such as learning disability, dementia, mental health needs, acquired brain injury and physical ill health.

Most adults have the ability to make their own decisions given the right support. However, some adults with care and support needs have the experience of other people making decisions about them and for them.

If someone has a disability that means they need support to understand or make a decision, this must be provided. A small number of people cannot make any decisions. Being unable to make a decision is called 'lacking mental capacity'.

Mental capacity refers to the ability to make a decision at the time when a decision is needed. A person's mental capacity can change. If it is safe/possible, wait until they are able to be involved in decision making or to make the decision themselves.

For example:

- A person with epilepsy may not be able to make a decision following a seizure.
- Someone who is anxious may not be able to make a decision at that point.
- A person may not be able to respond as quickly if they have just taken some medication that causes fatigue.

Mental capacity is important for safeguarding for several reasons.

Not being allowed to make decisions one can make is abuse. For example, a disabled adult may want to take part in an activity but their parent who is their carer won't allow them to and will not provide the support they would need. Conversely, the adult may not seem to be benefiting from an activity other people are insisting they do.

Mental capacity must also be considered when we believe abuse or neglect might be taking place. It is important to make sure an 'adult at risk' has choices in the actions taken to safeguard them, including whether or not they want other people informed about what has happened. However, in some situations, the adult may not have the mental capacity to understand the choice or to tell you their views.

Recording and Information Sharing

British Athletics, the four HCAFs and affiliated clubs and organisations must comply with applicable data protection regulations, including the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and the UK General Data Protection Regulation.

Information gathered when responding to concerns of abuse will include personal data. It is therefore important to be clear as to the grounds for processing and sharing information about concerns of abuse.

Sharing information, with the right people, is central to good practice in safeguarding adults. However, information sharing must only ever be with those with a 'need to know'. This does NOT automatically include the person's spouse, partner, adult, child, unpaid or paid carer. Information should only be shared with family and friends and/or carers with the consent of the adult, or if the adult does not have capacity to make that decision and family/friends/carers need to know in order to help keep the person safe.

The purpose of Data Protection legislation is not to prevent information sharing but to ensure personal information is only shared appropriately. Data protection legislation allows information sharing within an organisation.

When information is shared without the consent of the adult, this must be explained to them, when it is safe to do so, and any further actions should still fully include them.

If you are in doubt as to whether to share information, seek advice from the British Athletics Safeguarding Team and/or contact the relevant Local Authority and explain the situation without giving personal details about the person at risk or the person causing harm.

Any decision to share or not to share information with an external person or organisation must be recorded, together with the reasons to share or not to share information.

Multi-Agency Working

Adult at risk safeguarding legislation gives the lead role for safeguarding to the Local Authority. However, it is recognised that safeguarding can involve a wide range of organisations.

In athletics, we may need to cooperate with the Local Authority and the Police to:

- provide more information about the concern you have raised
- provide a safe venue for the adult at risk to meet with other professionals (e.g. Police/social workers/ advocates)
- attend safeguarding meetings
- coordinate internal investigations (e.g. complaints, disciplinary) with investigations by the Police or other agencies
- share information about the outcomes of internal investigations
- provide a safe environment for the adult to continue their sporting activity/their role in the organisation.

Associated Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents, policies and procedures:

- Codes of Conduct
- Adult Safeguarding Procedures (Responding to and Managing a Concern About an Adult)
- Club Safeguarding Toolkit
- Safe Volunteer Recruitment Procedures
- Disciplinary Regulations
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Child Safeguarding Procedures (Responding to and managing a concern about a child).

Glossary

HOS	Head of Safeguarding for British Athletics or the relevant Home Country
CWO	Club Welfare Officer
Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	Facilitate information-sharing and decision-making on a multi-agency basis between Local Authorities, health agencies and the Police (this process may vary across Home Countries)
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service in England and Wales
PVG Scheme	Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme operated by Disclosure Scotland
AccessNI	Protection of Vulnerable Groups system operating in Northern Ireland
ACT	Ann Craft Trust
Adult at risk	Those who fulfil the criteria set out in each Home Country (Table 1)
Adult in need of care and support	Determined by a range of factors, including personal characteristics, factors associated with their situation, or environment and social factors. A person's disability or condition does not mean that they will inevitably experience harm or abuse
Affiliated club	Means any club, non-voluntary organisation or virtual club affiliated to BA or the Home Country Affiliated Federations
HCAF	Home Country Athletics Federation

SECTION 3: APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

National Safeguarding Contact Details

Governing Body	Email	Phone
British Athletics	safeguarding@uka.org.uk	07345 470821
England Athletics	welfare@englandathletics.org	07464 522426
Welsh Athletics	safeguardingandwelfare@welshathletics.org	07792 242153
Athletics Northern Ireland	welfare@athleticsni.org	02890 602707
Scottish Athletics	welfare@scottishathletics.org.uk	

Action on Elder Abuse

A national organisation based in London. It aims to prevent the abuse of older people by raising awareness, encouraging education, promoting research and collecting and disseminating information.

Tel: 020 8765 7000

Email: enquiries@elderabuse.org.uk www.elderabuse.org.uk

Ann Craft Trust (ACT)

A national organisation providing information and advice about adult safeguarding. ACT have a specialist Safeguarding Adults in Sport and Activity team to support the sector.

Tel: 0115 951 5400

Email: Ann-Craft-Trust@nottingham.ac.uk www.anncrafttrust.org

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline

Tel: 0800 999 5428

National 24-Hour Freephone Domestic Abuse Helplines

England	Tel: 0808 2000 247 www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/Contact-us
Northern Ireland	Tel: 0808 802 1414 www.dsahelpline.org X: www.twitter.com/dsahelpline Facebook: www.facebook.com/dsahelpline
Scotland	Tel: 0800 027 1234 Email: helpline@sdafmh.org.uk Web chat: sdafmh.org.uk
Wales	Llinell Gymorth Byw HebOfn/ Live free from fear Helpline Tel: 0808 8010 800 Type talk: 18001 0808 801 0800 Text: 078600 77 333

Men's Advice Line

For male domestic abuse survivors. Tel: 0808 801 0327

Rape Crisis

Rape Crisis exists to provide a range of facilities and resources to enable the continuance and development of Rape Crisis Groups throughout the UK.

- www.rapecrisis.co.uk www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk <https://rapecrisisni.org.uk>

Respond

Respond provides a range of services to victims and perpetrators of sexual abuse who have learning disabilities, and training and support to those working with them.

- Tel: 020 7383 0700 or 0808 808 0700 (Helpline)
- Email: services@respond.org.uk www.respond.org.uk

Stop Hate UK

Works to challenge all forms of hate crime and discrimination, based on any aspect of an individual's identity. Stop Hate UK provides independent, confidential and accessible reporting and support for victims, witnesses and third parties.

- 24-hour service:
- Telephone: 0800 138 1625
- Web chat: www.stophateuk.org/talk-to-us Email: talk@stophateuk.org
- Text: 07717 989 025
- Text relay: 18001 0800 138 1625 Post: PO Box 851, Leeds LS1 9QS

Suzy Lamplugh Trust

The Trust is a leading authority on personal safety. Its role is to minimise the damage caused to individuals and to society by aggression in all its forms – physical, verbal and psychological.

- Tel: 020 83921839
- Fax: 020 8392 1830
- Email: info@suzylamplugh.org www.suzylamplugh.org

Victim Support

Provides practical advice and help, emotional support and reassurance to those who have suffered the effects of a crime.

- Tel: 0808 168 9111
- www.victimsupport.com

Women's Aid Federation

Women's Aid is a national domestic violence charity. It also runs a domestic violence online help service.

- www.womensaid.org.uk/information-support
- www.womensaid.scot www.womensaidni.org