

# **Derwentside Athletics Club**

## **Vulnerable Adults Policy**

Our aim is to create an environment in which the vulnerable adult and their parent or carer can feel confident that the athletics club is providing a safe and wholesome setting for all participants in the sport of athletics.

As a club, we will provide support and advice to every athlete, coach, volunteer, official and officer of the club, in order to protect them from neglect, exploitation and abuse.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse against vulnerable adults will be responded to and followed up appropriately, in accordance with England athletics guidelines.

### **Key Principles**

1. A Vulnerable adult is defined as a person over the age of 18 who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or is unable to protect him or herself from significant harm or exploitation.
2. All Vulnerable adults are entitled to a duty of care and to be protected from abuse regardless of their gender, racial origin, culture, ability, religious belief and sexual orientation.
3. All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
4. The club will ensure that, all coaches, officials and volunteers who encounter vulnerable adults understand and accept their responsibility to report concerns report concerns to the appropriate officer.
5. The club will ensure that, all coaches, officials and volunteers that encounter vulnerable adults are CRB checked.

### **Code of Practice for people working in athletics with Vulnerable Adults.**

1. Be open and conduct all interactions with vulnerable adults in a public place and with the appropriate consent.
2. Avoid situations whenever possible where you are alone with an individual athlete.
3. If you have to meet or coach one athlete, ensure it is conducted in an open environment.
4. If you are travelling alone with a vulnerable adult, gain appropriate consent, avoid consistently having one vulnerable adult alone with you in the car and never share a room on your own vulnerable adult.
5. Challenge bullying, foul or provocative language or controlling behaviour that could upset individuals or reduce them to tears.

6. Never ignore bullying by parents, coaches, or children. Listen to and support the person being bullied.
7. Maintain an appropriate relationship with vulnerable adults. This means treating them fairly, with respect and avoid favouritism.
8. Be friendly and open and ensure that relationships are appropriate for someone in a position of power and trust.
9. Respect all athletes and help them to take responsibility for their own development and decision-making.
10. Avoid unnecessary physical contact. In certain circumstances, physical contact is perfectly acceptable and appropriate, as long as it is not intrusive or disturbing to the athlete and that consent for contact has been given by the individual and their parent or carer.
11. Ensure that you hold the appropriate qualifications for the activities that you are undertaking with your athletes and ensure that they are kept up to date.

Adopting best practice not only ensures the individuals welfare. It also protects you from possible wrongful allegations. Vulnerable adults very rarely make false allegations. If they do, it is usually because they are confused or covering up for someone else's behaviour and hoping their action might scare the real abuser into stopping.

### **Poor Practice**

The following are examples of poor practice and should be avoided:

1. Engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay.
2. A coach shouting comments at athletes when they are not working hard enough.
3. A coach engaging in an intimate relationship with one of his/her athletes.
4. A group of athletes ganging up on a new athlete and refusing to talk to him/her.
5. A coach taking a group of athletes away to a weekend event on their own.

This list is not exhaustive and many other examples exist. If any of the following incidents should occur report them immediately to another colleague, make a written note of the event and inform parents and/or appropriate adults of the incident.

1. If you accidentally hurt an athlete.
2. If a vulnerable adult appears distressed in any manner.
3. If a vulnerable adult appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
4. If a vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

## **Action to be taken by the Club Welfare Officers (or in their absence by an officer or officers of Derwentside AC).**

It is important that when a vulnerable adult gives information which may lead to a welfare protection investigation, the Club Welfare Officer undertakes the following procedures, preferably with the vulnerable adults parents/carers in attendance, unless there are good reasons not to do so, e.g. the parent/ carer is the suspected abuser.

1. Listen to the vulnerable adult rather than question him/her.
2. Never stop a vulnerable adult who is freely recalling significant events
3. Make it clear that you not be able to maintain confidentiality.
4. Make a note of what was said, taking care to record the time, date, setting and people present.
5. Details of witnesses
6. Any times, dates or other relevant information.
7. Any action that was taken as a result of the concerns.
8. A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
9. A copy of this information must be sent to the UKA CPLO

Any person with a suspicion or allegation of abuse shall report the matter to the Club Welfare officer or a club officer who should, without delay, refer the concerns to the UKA CPLO, who will refer the allegation to the appropriate social care services department, who may involve the police.

Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

Note: For more in depth procedures please refer to the England Athletics Welfare policy.

## **Definitions of Abuse**

Physical Abuse: Adults deliberately inflict injury on a vulnerable adult or knowingly do not prevent such injury, e.g. the nature and intensity of training or competition knowingly exceeds the capacity of the vulnerable adult's abilities. This also includes giving a vulnerable adult drugs.

Emotional abuse: Adults fail to show due care and attention or threaten, use sarcasm, taunt or shout at a vulnerable adult causing him or her to lose confidence or self esteem or become nervous or withdrawn. This may also occur when a vulnerable adult is placed under unrealistic pressure to perform to high expectations constantly.

Neglect: Adults fail to provide help and care to the vulnerable adult (meet the needs for food, clothing, warmth and medical attention). Also includes leaving a vulnerable adult without proper supervision or placing the child at risk of injury.

Sexual abuse: Adults use vulnerable adults to fulfil their own sexual needs, e.g. forcing a vulnerable adult to take part in a sexual activity, fondling or exposing the vulnerable adult to pornographic material.

**THIS POLICY HAS BEEN AGREED BY Derwentside A C, Club Committee**

**Welfare Officer :-.....**

**Date:-.....**

**Welfare Officer:-.....**

**Date:-.....**