

GATESHEAD AND WHICKHAM SWIMMING CLUB ADULTS AT RISK SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Policy Statement

Gateshead and Whickham Swimming Club is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment to safeguard any Adults at Risk involved in our sport.

Whilst our Child Protection Policy covers all persons under the age of 18 our policy for safeguarding Adults at Risk applies equally to everyone at all levels across the club. Anyone involved in the administration of club duties and activities must be committed to the principles and practice of safeguarding Adults at Risk.

Policy Principles

The guidance given in this policy is based on the following principles:

- All Adults at Risk, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status have the right to be protected from abuse and poor practice and to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- As a club we will seek to ensure that our sport is inclusive and make reasonable adjustments for any ability, disability or impairment, we will also commit to continuous development, monitoring and review.
- The rights, dignity and worth of all Adults at Risk will always be respected.
- We recognise that ability and disability can change over time, such that some Adults at Risk may be additionally vulnerable to abuse, for example those who have a dependency on others or have different communication needs.
- We recognise that a disabled adult may or may not identify themselves or be identified as an Adult at Risk.
- We all have a shared responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of all Adults at Risk and will act appropriately and report concerns whether these concerns arise within swimming (e.g. inappropriate behaviour of a coach), or outside (e.g. in the wider community).
- All allegations will be taken seriously and responded to quickly in line with the Swim England Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and Procedures.
- Gateshead and Whickham recognises the role and responsibilities of the statutory agencies in safeguarding Adults at Risk and is committed to complying with the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Adults Boards.

Definitions

Key definitions in the context of this policy:

Adult at Risk is a person aged 18 or over who is in need of care and support regardless of whether they are receiving them, and because of those needs are unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect. In recent years there has been a marked shift away from using the term 'vulnerable' to describe adults potentially at risk from harm or abuse.

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. See later section for signs and indicators.

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

Types of Abuse

The following list is not intended to be an exhaustive but an illustrative guide as to the sort of issue which could give rise to a safeguarding concern.

Discrimination – centres on a difference or perceived difference particularly with respect to race, gender or disability or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act.

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

Sexual Abuse – including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the Adult at Risk has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Emotional or Psychological Abuse – treatment which may diminish a sense of identity, self-worth or dignity including threats of harm, humiliation, blaming, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services.

Financial or Material Abuse – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect – including ignoring medical* or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

* as for children at the club any medical and/or physical needs which the club need to be aware of must be recorded on the Club Organiser system to ensure coaches and/or the requisite volunteers are fully aware and can act accordingly.

Signs and Indicators of Abuse

Abuse can take place in any context and by all manner of perpetrator. There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected, these include but are not limited to:

Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present.

Person has belongings or money going missing.

Person is not attending / no longer enjoying their sessions.

Someone losing or gaining weight / an unkempt appearance.

A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person.

They may self-harm.

They may have a fear of a particular group or individual.

They may tell you / another person they are being abused – i.e. a disclosure.

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

As a club we would encourage all our members to report any concerns they do have to the club welfare officer however coaches, officials and volunteers at the club may also be approached or may become aware of/suspect abuse in their capacity as representatives of the club.

If you become aware that abuse or poor practice is taking place, suspect abuse or poor practice may be occurring or be told about something that may be abuse or poor practice you must report this immediately to the club welfare officer to take forward as appropriate.

If you are concerned someone is in immediate danger, contact the police straight away.

It is important when considering your concern that you also consider the needs and wishes of the Adult at Risk, taking into account the nature of the issue or concern. It is important that you explain you will have to seek guidance from the club welfare officer, who may need to take the matter further, however, provide assurances around support and confidentiality.

If the club welfare officer is not available or the club feels more immediate support is required, you can report the concern to Swim England by emailing equality@swimming.org

Contact Information

Jamie Renwick, Club welfare officer - childprotectionofficer@gawswim.org.uk

Steven Speight, Club Chair - clubchair@gawswim.org.uk

Janet Robinson, Deputy Chair - janet.robinson@gawswim.org.uk

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