

Child Protection in Sport Unit (Northern Ireland)

Background

The NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit believes that sport plays an important and positive role in the lives of many children and young people. In addition to the obvious health benefits, children can gain important social and life skills through involvement in sport. That is why it is important everyone involved in providing sport does as much as possible to create and maintain positive and safe sporting opportunities.

Vision - The CPSU vision statement is “play sport stay safe - enjoy and achieve”

Mission - To support sport to safeguard children and young people in and through sport and lead the way in keeping children safe from harm

Principles

Sports bodies will have:

- a culture and organisation that prioritises the interests of children and young people
- the knowledge, understanding, values and commitment to promote the rights of all children and young people
- a commitment to empower children and young people by advising them of their rights and how they should be treated
- a commitment to work in partnership with staff, volunteers, parents, guardians and others to increase their knowledge of the theory and practices of safeguarding children.

Government guidance makes it clear that safeguarding children and young people is everyone’s responsibility. There are, however, many organisations that have not seen safeguarding young people as a priority.

Objectives

The CPSU has been working with sports governing bodies to ensure they have in place the necessary safeguarding policies, practices and guidance. This helps ensure preventative steps are taken and when concerns are raised that appropriate action is taken. Sports governing bodies funded by Sport NI now must have safeguarding policies in place and the CPSU is working with them to ensure the implementation of the plans which support them.

CPSU works with sport to ensure:

- An awareness at all levels of safeguarding issues in sport.
- Consistent and comprehensive standards for safeguarding children in sport are in place (see over). These standards raise awareness and help organisations know what they need to do to safeguard children involved in sport and to minimise avoidable risks.
- Partnerships are established to safeguard children and young people, nationally and locally.
- More governing bodies and sports clubs have lead officers responsible for safeguarding.
- Increased capacity and competence to safeguard children and young people through provision of education, training and advice and support to a wide range of sport and leisure organisations. Volunteers/staff/parents etc have direct access to advice and support either through the CPSU or their own sports governing body.
- There is a growing culture of safe recruitment practice in sporting organisations.
- There are agreed auditing processes and systems for governing bodies and organisations receiving funding from Sport NI.
- More funding organisations and those who hire out facilities expect clubs to have safeguarding procedures in place.
- Promotion of the Club Framework for Safeguarding Standards in Sport. For the full Framework visit the Northern Ireland section of the CPSU web site www.thecpsu.org.uk)
http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/cpsu/northern_ireland/northern_ireland_wda75817.html



Club Framework for Safeguarding Standards in Sport

If implemented fully at a local club level, the standards should provide parents with increased confidence and peace of mind. But most important of all, they will help create safer environments for children, where they can enjoy and get the very best from their involvement in sport.

Standard 1 Safe Recruitment: The club has clearly defined Recruitment and Selection procedures in place that includes;

- An application form which must include self-declaration section and request for references.
- A process for managing AccessNI disclosure checks (usually through their governing body)
- A process for requesting references.

Standard 2 Effective Management: The club has clearly defined procedures for the effective management of staff and volunteers that includes;

- Agreed Codes of Behaviour for new staff / volunteers outlining what is expected and required of them and the boundaries or limits within which they must operate.
- Induction procedures
- Training opportunities for coaches and volunteers

Standard 3 Reporting Procedures: The club has clearly defined child protection reporting procedures that are communicated to all stakeholders that includes;

- Guidelines about responding to an allegation about a staff member / volunteer?
- Advice about contacting statutory organisations
- Promoting the name and contact details of your clubs Designated Safeguarding Children Officer.
- A sample reporting pro-forma

Standard 4 Codes of Behaviour: The club has clearly defined written Code of Behaviour that is tailored to the particular structure, ethos and activities of the club that is communicated to all staff/ volunteers, children/ young people and parents that includes;

- Anti-bullying guidelines.
- Positive statements about the ethos of the club/sport and what behaviour to be avoided
- Specific guidelines for residential / away trips / travel.
- Guidelines on the promotion and inclusion of young people with a disability.

Standard 5 Sharing Information: The club has comprehensive written procedures for obtaining information from and communicating with all stakeholders that includes the promotion of;

- The clubs safeguarding requirements
- A parental consent form
- Accident/ incident forms and attendance sheets
- Guidelines on confidentiality

Standard 6 General Safety: The club has clear and comprehensive procedures relating to general safety and management of activities.

- Evidence of insurance for delivery of activities
- Guidelines on first aid, transport and risk assessment
- Adherence to sport specific supervision ratios
- Use of social media

For many of the sample pro-forma referenced above visit the resources section of Sport NI's Clubmark <http://www.sportni.net/PerformanceSport/clubdevelopment/clubmarkni/resources>

Paul Stephenson -NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit 0203 2224246 pstephenson@nspcc.org.uk Sign up now to the CPSU E-Newsletter - We can email you the latest information about child protection in sport, simply email cpsu@nspcc.org.uk (Sept 2013)

