

uk:athletics

**'ATHLETICS WELFARE' POLICY
(incorporating Child Protection)**

June 2001

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FOREWORD

The sport of Athletics has a long and noble history. From time to time, however, it has been tainted by undesirable behaviour and unsavoury events. uk:athletics has therefore introduced this policy to ensure that *everyone* involved in the sport is both protected from harm and supported in their personal development. It is a further extension of the "joined up thinking and joined up action" evident in our development plan *Fun to Fulfilment*. The policy applies especially to children and young people, disabled and vulnerable people but also embraces the needs and rights of all others engaged in our sport. It sits alongside existing equity, child protection and disability initiatives and policies in other athletics bodies and is intended to compliment and strengthen them.

uk:athletics operates under the broad umbrella of the International Amateur Athletics Federation and subscribes to the IAAF Code of Ethics for Coaches which says:

Fair play is defined as much more than playing within the rules. Fair play is a way of thinking, not just a way of behaving. Fair play can be expressed as a philosophy of coaching and incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others and always of playing in the right spirit. This philosophy also integrates concerns with the elimination of cheating, doping, gamesmanship, physical and verbal violence, exploitation, unequal opportunities, excessive commercialisation and corruption.

(IAAF 1996: 1)

We hope that you will endorse this policy and work together with us to ensure that it safeguards the standards that we all aspire to.

David Moorcroft
Chief Executive, uk:athletics

David Hemery
President, uk:athletics

INTRODUCTION

uk:athletics (UKA) believes that everyone involved in athletics should thrive, fare well and enjoy safety, security and protection from abuse, maltreatment or misconduct. Every individual involved in UKA events and programmes is responsible for upholding this belief.

As a National Governing Body, UKA frequently operates in partnership with other individuals and organisations, including the home country athletic associations*, UK Sports Institute and home country Sports Councils. UKA will meet its moral and legal obligations in respect of child protection, duty of care and standards of welfare for all, and expects its national and local partners and collaborators to do the same.

This document sets out the key aims of UKA 'Athletics Welfare' policy. It also explains the principles that underpin this policy that should be observed by everyone within the community of athletics. It is the responsibility of each home country athletic association to ensure that it has in place approved procedures that will guarantee the effective implementation of this policy.

* The policy and/or procedures documents of the appropriate home country association should be read in conjunction with this document.

AIMS

The aims of the UKA in relation to its 'Athletics Welfare' policy are to:

1. ensure the **highest possible standards of safety and welfare** for all athletes of all ages and others engaged in UKA activities and events, especially children and vulnerable adults
2. embed a process of **continuous improvement** in its ongoing work on welfare in the sport
2. work with its partners to ensure that **quality assured training** is offered to all staff and volunteers engaged in UKA programmes, either directly or through the appropriate agencies such as the NSPCC, the CPSU, SCUK, Sports Councils, UKSI and Home Country Governing Bodies
4. adopt and promote **good practice** in the welfare and protection of athletes and other athletics personnel
5. demonstrate **ethical standards of leadership** and behaviour in all its work

PRINCIPLES

The main principles underpinning this policy are:

- Safety** – the welfare of the athlete will always be paramount
- Equity** – the right of everyone involved in athletics to equitable treatment, regardless of age, sex, race, religion, ability, sexual orientation or social background, will be upheld
- Responsiveness** – all allegations or suspicions of abuse or violations of athlete welfare will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately and speedily. Those found to be spreading malicious or false allegations will be disciplined according to the relevant procedures
- Consent** – parents/carers or those *in loco parentis* will be consulted if it becomes necessary to invoke the procedures that accompany 'Athletics Welfare'
- Compliance with the statutory system** – UKA will operate within the law, including guidelines and rules set down by the Criminal Records Bureau and the Home Office. UKA will work in partnership with Social Services Departments, Police Child Protection Units, ACPCs, the CPSU and other relevant agencies in order to ensure compliance with this policy
- Fairness** - the human rights of staff, coaches, athletes or volunteers facing allegations will be embodied in disciplinary and appeals procedures

SCOPE

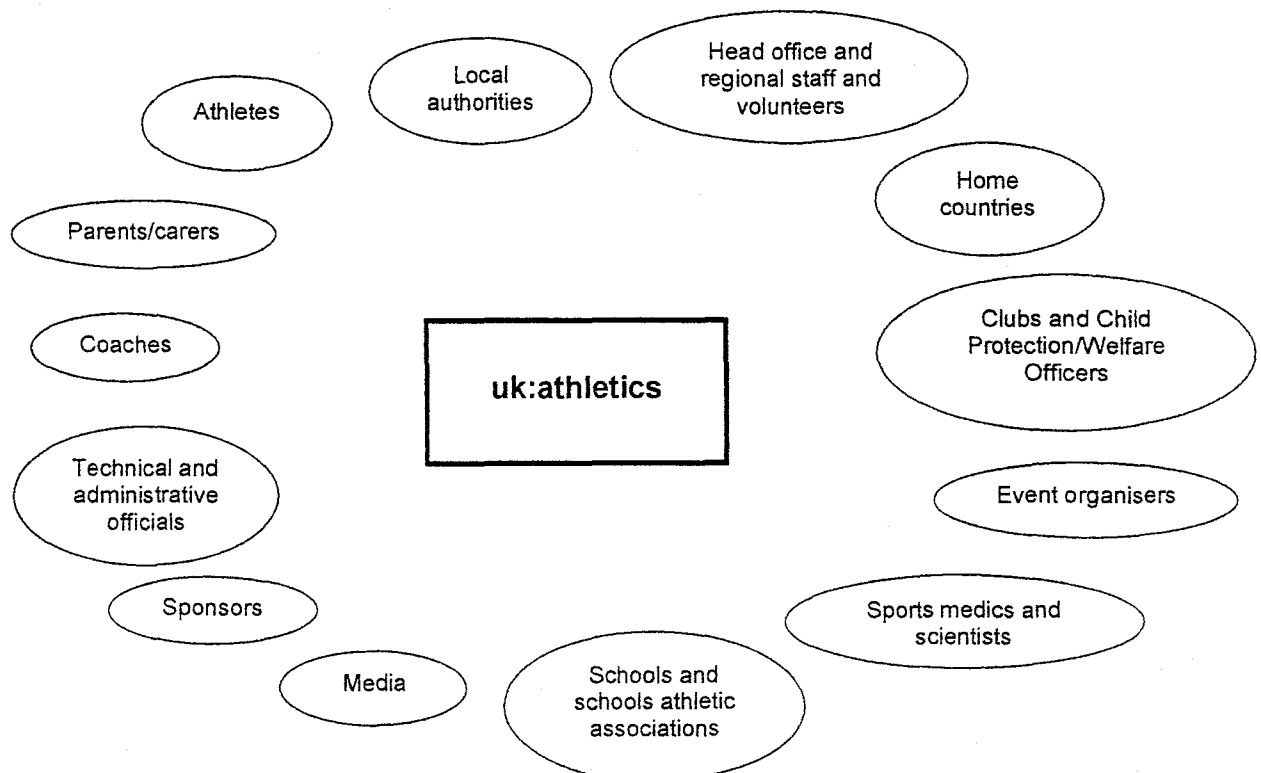
Athletics stakeholders (see Figure 1) need to respond to four main dimensions of athlete welfare and protection by:

1. **recognising and referring** to the appropriate agency anyone who has been subjected to poor practice, abuse or misconduct by someone else, whether *inside* sport (by another staff member or athlete) or *outside* sport (such as the family or peer group);
2. **observing and encouraging good practice** when working with athletes in order to avoid perpetrating poor practice, abuse or other types of misconduct;
3. **taking precautions to avoid false allegations** against themselves;
4. **safeguarding the good name and integrity of the sport of athletics.**

The procedures adopted by partner athletic organisations should assist with safe practice with respect to all four dimensions of welfare in the sport.

The 'golden rule' for all involved in athletics in relation to welfare and protection is that it is not your responsibility to judge whether or not a welfare violation has taken place but it is your responsibility to act on any concerns you may have.

Figure 1 Stakeholders in 'Athletics Welfare'



DEFINITIONS

Abuse of trust – whereby a person in a position of power exploits or distorts that relationship for their own gain or to further their own social, political or religious views; it also includes the misuse of power to influence the development of attitudes towards training, drugs or cheating that conflict with those embodied in this policy.

Agency – another organisation involved in a partnership arrangement with UKA. This includes the home country and area athletic associations/territories, education, sports development, local authority partners and sponsors involved either directly or indirectly in athletics provision (see Figure 1).

Carer - an adult *in loco parentis*, such as a guardian, schoolteacher, coach or team manager.

Child or young person – anyone under the age of 18.

Child abuse - anything done by someone which harms or poses a risk to another including emotional, sexual, or physical abuse or harassment, neglect or bullying.

Emotional abuse – a failure to show due care and attention to another; use of threats, sarcasm, taunts or shouting that undermines another's self confidence or self esteem; manipulation or misuse of power; placing of unrealistic pressure or expectations on someone.

Harassment and bullying – behaviour towards another that is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, malicious, degrading, offensive or harmful through intent or negligence.

Neglect – failure to provide for basic needs (for food, shelter, warmth or care) of a dependent person such as a child or disabled athlete; leaving a dependent person without proper supervision or placing them at risk of injury; expecting someone to carry out tasks for which they do not have the necessary skills or safety training. Neglect also includes the imposition of inappropriate nutritional and/or weight control regimes.

Physical abuse – infliction of injuries or failure to prevent these. This includes, amongst others: giving alcohol to a child or forcing someone to drink alcohol unwittingly or against their will; administering or condoning the use of inappropriate drugs; and, expecting an athlete to train or compete at an intensity or in ways that are inappropriate to his or her stage of growth or physical capacity or when ill, injured or exhausted.

Poor practice - behaviour by a responsible adult that sets a poor example and thus negatively affects the experience of another, especially where they are young or dependent: this is not the same as abuse.

Responsible adult – any staff looking after children, young or vulnerable people who are taking part in a UKA programme or event.

Sexual abuse – exploitation of males or females for sexual gratification, including: trading sexual activities for fear or favour; sexual bullying or intimidation, sexual joking or harassment.

Staff - all those working in a paid or unpaid capacity for the UKA for its events or programmes.

Stakeholder – a group or individual that has a stake or interest in the management of athletic disciplines.

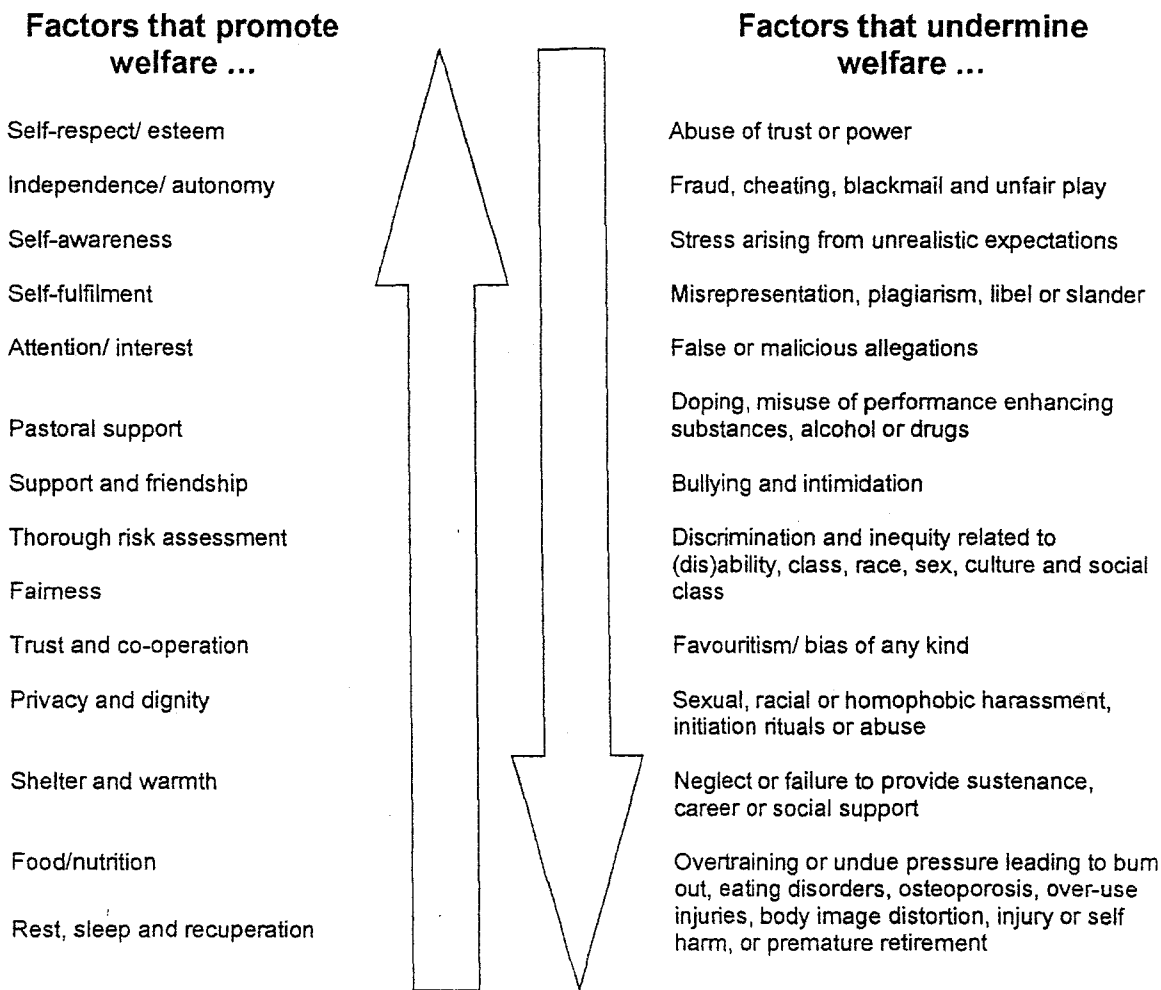
Welfare - the overall well-being of athletics personnel, especially relating to children and young people, including the maintenance of appropriate safety, security, nourishment and shelter, and protection from all forms of misconduct (as defined above and in Figure 2).

Vulnerable adult – anyone over 18 years of age with learning difficulties, or with other impairments, that cause them to require particular support and care.

BREACHES OF WELFARE

There are many different types of misconduct that adversely affect someone's welfare. However, These usually have the common result of victimising one or more persons. Of particular concern to UKA are welfare violations that affect children, young people and vulnerable adults. Such violations include child abuse, harassment or abuse, extortion, fraud and cheating (see Figure 2). In addition to causing personal harm, any misconduct is likely also to bring the sport of athletics into disrepute.

Figure 2 Factors that promote or undermine welfare



ACTION BY UKA AND ITS PARTNERS

The UKA expects all partners and stakeholder agencies, including sponsors, medics and paramedics, agents and promoters, to comply with the 'Athletics Welfare' policy OR to demonstrate that they subscribe to an equivalent policy prior to commencing a partnership or collaboration.

Everyone involved directly in delivering athletics under the auspices of the UKA will be able to receive training in the awareness, recognition and referral of welfare issues more generally and child protection issues in particular. Through its partnerships with the home countries, UKA will promote education and training opportunities, using agencies such as the CPSU or Sportscoach UK, to help its staff to identify the signs and indicators of such violations. As part of their welfare procedures, the home country associations will also provide mechanisms for the receipt and management of complaints, disclosures and allegations of wrongdoing.

Adults engaged by UKA, in either front line or in ancillary roles that support athletics, and who may come into contact with athletes, will be required to observe codes of practice stipulated by the relevant home country association.

UKA expects its partners to ensure that parents/carers and guardians have provided informed voluntary consent before any child engages in athletics in an affiliated club or team. This includes consent for the use of photographic images by UKA or home country association.

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy rests with the Home Country Amateur Athletic Associations, each of which has adopted detailed procedures for this purpose. Child abuse issues should be referred immediately to UKA and the local social services and/or police. All other misconduct issues will normally be dealt by the athletics body that is closest to the point of complaint or disclosure. Where necessary, the UKA *Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures* will be invoked.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SOURCES

UKA gratefully acknowledges the assistance provided by the many sporting and other organisations whose previous work on child protection and ethics in sport has informed this document. Sources used in researching this document include: officials of the UKA who kindly agreed to give interviews and/or who provided comments on earlier drafts; the National Coaching Foundation/Sportscoach UK (2000) *Child Protection Policy and Implementation procedures: Guidelines for Governing Bodies of Sport and Local Authorities*. Leeds: The National Coaching Foundation [permission pending]; Netball England (1999) *Duty of Care Guidelines: for Netball Clubs and Associations* Hitchin: AENA; AAAE (2000) *Memorandum and Articles of Association*; AAAE (undated) *Amateur Athletic Association of England: Background information* (from Recruitment pack for Regional Development Co-ordinators); AAAE (May 2000) *AAA of England Equity Policy*; AAAE (undated) *Code of Discipline*; AAAE (July 2000) *Child Protection Policy for Athletics*; AAAE (March 2001) *Development Plan* (final draft); AAAE (undated) *Staff Handbook*; IAAF (1996) *Code of Ethics for Coaches*; IAAF (undated) *Code of Ethics for Coaches – Summary*; Northern Ireland Athletic Federation (undated) *Model club constitution*; Northern Ireland Athletic Federation (undated) *Constitution* (draft); Runner's World (undated) *Eating Disorders: A guide for Friends and Relatives/An Athlete's Guide/A Coach's Guide* Runner's World Buddy Scheme; Scottish Athletics (April 2000) *SAFe CHILD: A Child protection Policy for Scottish Athletics*; UKA (2000) *Memorandum and Articles of Association*; UKA (undated) *An Introduction to Athletics Risk Assessment*; UKA (undated) *uk:athletics Structure Past and Present*; UKA (undated) *clubs:future1 – club:audit*; UKA (2001) *Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures for Coaches*; UKA (February 2001) www.ukathletics.org/UKAdata/team.idc?; UKA (2000) *Fun to fulfilment: the development of athletics in the UK: 2000-2005*; Wales Athletics (December 1999) *Child Protection Policy for Athletics* (updated version); Wales Athletics (December 1999) *Constitution* (updated version).

Note: uk:athletics is happy for the contents of this document to be shared by other organisations, provided its origins are acknowledged but accepts no liability for the advice provided.