



Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

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Policy reference sheet – Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

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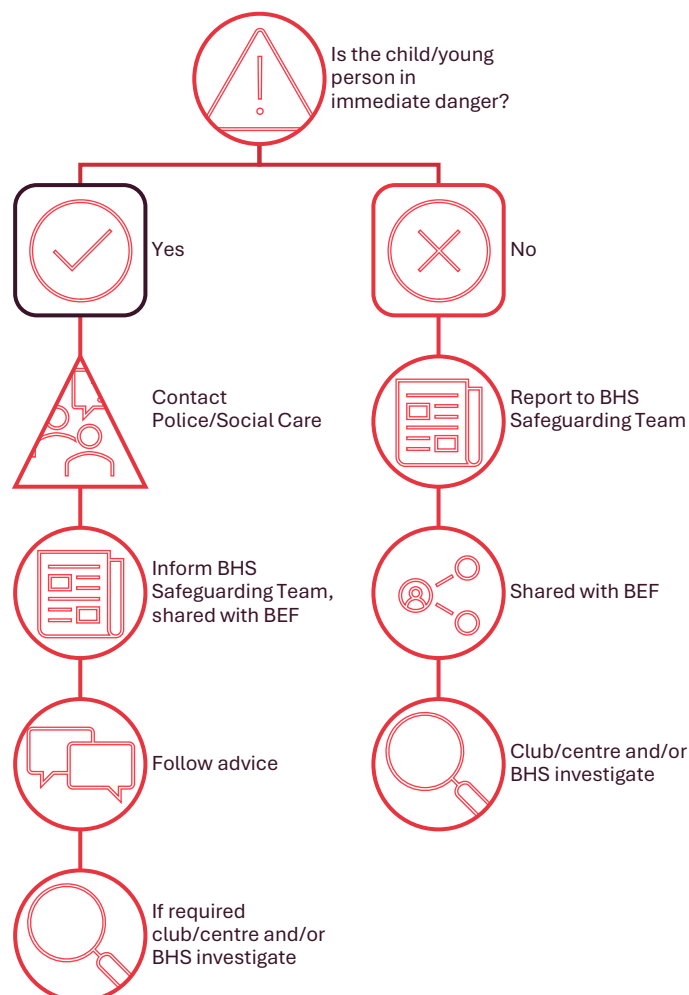
Policy component	Description	Check
1 Policy statement	This document is the British Horse Society's policy for Safeguarding Children and Young People. <i>The document is to confirm our legal duties for safeguarding children and young people and that of our stakeholders.</i>	
2 Policy audience	All internal staff and any external parties to BHS, including all Data Subjects.	
3 Review programme	Next review date is [1 September 2027] Policy will be reviewed and approved by the Policy Review Group	

Sign off	
Signed by	Policy Group
Signature	
Date	09 - 2026

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Worried about something? See something, say something

If you have witnessed something or heard something that worries you, you must pass this information on. We all have a duty to [report concerns](#) on, use this flow chart to support in finding out who this might be.



Contact details

BHS Safeguarding Team

DEI, Safeguarding & Wellbeing Manager and DEI & Safeguarding Officer

02476 840746

safeguarding@bhs.org.uk

Confidential email: cpleadofficer@bhs.org.uk

If there is an emergency or you believe that someone is in immediate danger, contact the police by telephoning 999 as soon as possible.

If the matter is not an emergency but you are concerned that a child, young person is at risk of harm, contact the police by telephoning 101 without delay. You can also contact your [local authority social care team](#).

Other contacts

British Equestrian (BEF) safeguarding@bef.co.uk or call 02476 698871

NSPCC 24-hour Safeguarding Hotline: 0808 800 5000

If you contact the [police](#) or [local authority](#) in relation to a safeguarding concern which relates to the BHS, you must inform the BHS Safeguarding Team without delay.

1. Introduction

British Horse Society (BHS) fully accepts its legal and moral obligation under The Children Acts (1989) and (2004)* to provide a duty of care to protect all children and safeguard their welfare. This commitment applies to every child and young person, irrespective of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or socio-economic background.

In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026), BHS recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs, and effective safeguarding relies on all those who work with children and families playing their part in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action. BHS is committed to ensuring that all individuals understand their roles, responsibilities, and how they work collaboratively with others to protect children and young people.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure robust safeguarding arrangements are in place to create a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which children and young people can participate, enjoy their involvement, and be protected from harm, abuse, neglect, discrimination and exploitation. BHS is committed to zero tolerance of abuse and embedding a culture where concerns are identified early, reported appropriately, and responded to swiftly and effectively, with a victim-centred approach that places the needs, rights, and voice of the child at the forefront.

BHS will take all reasonable and practical steps to:

- safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people;
- ensure individuals understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities;
- provide appropriate training and support to recognise and respond to concerns;
- maintain high standards of behaviour through compliance with BHS codes of conduct; and
- ensure that all safeguarding concerns are recorded, handled confidentially, and managed in line with this policy.

BHS fully adopts the British Equestrian Federation (BEF) Safeguarding Policy (Children and Young People).

This policy and its procedures are mandatory for everyone involved with BHS (and BHSQ). Failure to comply will be addressed without delay and could lead to disciplinary action which may result in dismissal or exclusion.

[*see Section 3](#)

2. Scope

This policy applies to England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and to any person or organisation working with or on behalf of the BHS. This includes:

- BHS Approved Centres;
- BHS Accredited Coaches;
- Affiliated British Riding Clubs;
- BHS Volunteers;
- BHS Trustees;
- BHS Employees;
- BHSQ;

- BHS Individual contractors for example Assessors; and
- All members of BHS.

Activities and settings that are included in this policy will be those carried out by or organised by the individuals or groups described above.

There is additional guidance for our [BHS Assessments](#) and [Changing Lives Through Horses Centres](#)

3. Legal & regulatory framework

The legal and regulatory framework is extensive and differs across the nations of the UK, for a full list of legislation and guidance that this policy adheres to see our [Legislation and guidance document](#)

This policy adheres to the [British Equestrian Safeguarding Policy](#) which is aligned to sport sector guidance set out by NSPCC Sport and the Ann Craft Trust.

Where there is any conflict arising between the applicable policies and the statutory framework, decision-making should be based on the core values set out above, with the safety and welfare of children and young people as the overriding principle

4. Definitions

The following are the key definitions including in the policy – there is a [full glossary of terms](#) below.

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

Safeguarding and child protection - safeguarding also includes child protection. Safeguarding means protecting children from maltreatment, ensuring they are growing up with safe and effective care, preventing the impairment of their health or development and taking action to ensure the best outcomes for children. Child protection refers to the processes, policies, and measures designed to protect children from violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Types of Abuse and harm – there are four types of abuse defined in legislation; emotional, physical, neglect and sexual but there are also further harms. A full list with definitions and where to go for further guidance can be found in our document [Types of abuse and harm](#)

Position of Trust - An adult is in a position of trust over a child if they regularly teach, train, supervise or have sole charge of the child in certain settings (e.g. hospitals, residential care, schools, sport or faith settings) or when in certain roles (e.g. teacher, care worker, coach) [Sexual Offences Act 2003]. For the purpose of working within the Equestrian Industry those who regularly teach, train, supervise or have sole charge of the child are in a position of trust, for example coaches. Sexual activity between an adult in a position of trust and a child is deemed to be an abuse of trust and is unlawful, even if the child is over the age of consent (i.e. 16 or 17).

5. Roles and responsibilities

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility and there are a variety of roles who have specific roles and responsibilities;

At a strategic level, BHS Board of Trustees and senior leadership hold overall accountability for ensuring this policy, resources, and oversight mechanisms are in place.

BHS DEI, Safeguarding & Wellbeing Manager and BHS DEI & Safeguarding Officer are responsible for translating strategy into practice. This includes maintaining policies, providing expert guidance, overseeing reporting processes, and ensuring alignment with current legislation and best practice.

All BHS employees, volunteers, and affiliates (our affiliates are defined in our procedures document and include BHS Approved Centres, BHS Accredited Professionals, British Riding Clubs and Affiliated Equestrian Access Groups) share responsibility for upholding standards, recognising and responding to concerns, and contributing to a safe, inclusive, and ethical environment. This includes adhering to codes of conduct, undertaking required training, and taking prompt action where concerns arise.

BHS are a member body of both British Equestrian and Horse Scotland (via BHS Scotland); member bodies work together to have similar policies, training and resources available.

A full list of role descriptions can be found in our [procedures document](#)

6. Safer recruitment

Effective recruitment and selection procedures are essential to help prevent abuse. They apply to employees and volunteers across BHS and its affiliates whose roles involve contact with, or responsibility for, children and young people.

Criminal record checks are an important part of this process and are required for all people in regulated activity or work (nation dependant). Regular checks are required (at least every three years) unless the individual is signed up to the update services or relevant scheme in their nation. Full guidance on criminal record checking is available on our [website](#).

Further guidance can be found in our [Safeguarding Procedures](#) document

7. Training and awareness

BHS trustees will complete regular safeguarding training, at least every three years.

The BHS Safeguarding Team will attend appropriate training regularly and the BHS DEI, Safeguarding & Wellbeing Manager is responsible for making sure the team complete continual professional development.

The BHS DEI, Safeguarding & Wellbeing Manager will be responsible for training BHS employees whose role requires safeguarding training.

Our affiliated organisations must ensure instructors, coaches, employees, and volunteers working with children should undertake the BEF approved safeguarding training (or recognised equivalent) course every three years. Refresher training should be completed either via the BEF approved online training portal or a live or virtual course.

Accredited Professional Coaches are required to attend regular Safeguarding Training (every 3 years) and must evidence their attendance at a recognised training course.

Safeguarding Officers for centres and clubs are required to attend Centre Safeguarding officer training and update this training every three years.

8. Information sharing & confidentiality

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect and promoting the welfare of the child. As part of meeting a child's needs, it is important for all stakeholders to recognise the importance of information sharing. This should include ensuring arrangements are in place that set out clearly the processes and principles for

sharing information between the centre and any referring school or agency, including low level concerns that may not warrant immediate action but that could form a pattern. People should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children.

In order to protect children and young people, at times BHS will need to disclose to appropriate agencies, such as the Police and other relevant third parties, details regarding a safeguarding concern. Please see [BHS Safeguarding procedures for children and young people](#)

9. Codes of conduct

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and as such codes of conduct are in place for those working and volunteering with children, for participants and for parents and carers.

Our accredited professional coaches are required to adhere to our code of conduct and failure to do so may result in removal from our list.

We expect our affiliated organisations to ensure the relevant codes of conduct are in place for their employees, volunteers, participants and parents and carers. Examples can be found on our [website](#)

10. Reporting concerns

A safeguarding concern is something that has been raised or brought to your attention regarding a child or young person being harmed or it might relate to their well-being or health of a child or young person. For example, a participant has told you that a family member has been abusing them*.

It may also be a concern regarding a member of staff or volunteer and their behaviour around young people. For example, a coach has been reportedly swearing and emotionally abusing young people in their lesson. It may be that you are worried that a child or young person has been radicalised. For example, they have been sharing extreme comments on social media.

The Safeguarding Officer for the centre or club or the affiliated coach will need to decide whether the concern is a minor breach of a code of conduct or safeguarding policy or low-level safeguarding concern (Level 1), or is it a total breach of the code of conduct or safeguarding policy and provides a significant safeguarding issue or concern (Level 2). The [BHS Safeguarding Threshold Document](#) will help you decide if it is something that you can deal with at your centre/club or whether it needs referring onto statutory agencies like the local authority, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or Police.

If the allegation/concern relates to an adult working or volunteering with children the LADO must be informed – they are responsible for managing allegations against adults who work with children. This involves working with police, children's social care, employers and other involved professionals.

If you are unsure on whether it is something you can deal with yourself or if it does need referring on, then please call us for further advice and information. Once a concern is disclosed to the BHS Safeguarding Team the [BHS Safeguarding procedures for children and young people](#) will be utilised.

Incidents of extremism and radicalisation should also be reported using this policy.

BHS will ensure all concerns raised directly recorded, handled confidentially, and managed in line with this policy and the relevant procedures document.

BHS will report to those charity regulatory bodies with which it is registered those incidents or events, whether actual or alleged, which result in or risk significant harm to the charity's beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact through its work or to the charity's work or reputation.

This reporting is the responsibility of the charity's trustees and is delegated to the Company Secretary who will correspond with the appropriate regulatory bodies.

*The Crime and Policing Act 2026 makes it a mandatory requirement to report sexual abuse. Reporting should be done without delay to the police and local authority.

11. Record keeping

When recording a disclosure, it is important that the information is clear, concise and a true representation of the concerns. In some instances, it may be necessary to share information with Children's Social Care, the Police, the Local Authority Designated Officer and British Equestrian hence the necessity for making detailed records at the time of the disclosure. Information should be factual and should include the following:

- The facts about the allegation or observation.
- A description of any visible injuries or signs.
- The child's account, if this has been disclosed, of what has happened and how any injuries occurred.
- Any witnesses to the incident(s).
- Any times, dates or other relevant information
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A record of any non-verbal behaviours
- Action taken as a result of the concern
- The name, address and date of birth of those involved.

The record must then be signed with the name and designation clearly printed beneath. This record should be shared with BHS immediately, ensuring that the sharing is done securely. You should encrypt the email if you can or password protect any documents/attachments and mark the email as Private and Confidential – FAO Safeguarding Officer/Team. Do not use a general or group mail address if at all possible.

Keep your record secure. Do not allow anyone access to it unless they have a specific need to do so. Make sure the device and file storage you use is secure and accessible only by those who have appropriate training in managing personal data.

In England, Scotland and Wales, records should be kept until the child is 25 (this is seven years after they reach the school leaving age) (Information and Records Management Society (IRMS), 2019). In Northern Ireland, the government recommends that child protection files should be kept until the child's 30th birthday (Department of Education, 2016). For further guidance see the [NSPCC Sport website](#)

12. Provision of support for victims and witnesses

BHS will endeavour to support all those involved in a safeguarding concern. Witnesses and victims will be signposted to support organisations and we will keep them updated with the progress of the case regularly. The timescale for this will be discussed with them beforehand.

13. Allegations against staff members and those who work with children

Should anyone find themselves in a situation whereby an allegation of abuse or other has been made against them, they should contact their line manager. Do not discuss the allegation with other people or approach the child.

You should not feel that awareness of these potentially serious issues detracts from developing positive relationships with young people which is key to working with children and young people. Both incidents of abuse and allegations against staff are rare. People should feel confident in the knowledge that they know the correct procedure and how BHS will support them if they are involved in a Safeguarding issue.

14. Monitoring, review and governance

The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner in response to legislative, organisational changes and case reviews. It will be available on the BHS website.

15. Support and Additional policies and procedures

Affiliated organisations and individuals should be aware of and maybe required to have other policies and procedures in place. BHS and BEF have a wide range of guidance and policy documents regarding safeguarding. We endeavour to raise awareness through training, resources and BHS events.

Full list of other documents to be read in conjunction with this document;

Name of document	Notes and location
Safeguarding Procedures for Children and Young People	BHS Safeguarding Policy Website Page
Safeguarding policy additions for BHS Assessments	BHS Safeguarding Policy Website Page
Safeguarding policy additions for Changing Lives Through Horses Centres	BHS Safeguarding Policy Website Page
Safeguarding Guidance Types of abuse and Harm – Children and Young People	BHS Safeguarding Policy Website Page
UK Safeguarding Legislation and Guidance – Children and Young People	BHS Safeguarding Policy Website Page
Safeguarding Reporting Form	BHS Safeguarding Policy Website Page
Safeguarding Guidance – Types of Abuse and Harm	BHS Safeguarding Policy Website Page

Further information and helpful organisations

BHS Safeguarding Team

Ellie Vajčovec and Karen Ryder

02476 840746

safeguarding@bhs.org.uk

Confidential email: cpleadofficer@bhs.org.uk

Find your local authority to report child abuse <https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>

Police - 101 or in an emergency 999

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Childline 24-hour free and confidential helpline for children Tel: 0800 1111

Victim Support Provides emotional support, information and practical help for victims and witnesses Tel: 0845 3030 900

Samaritans Tel: 116 123

Mind Tel: 0300 123 3393

NSPCC in Sport formally Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) Tel: 0116 234 7278

Children First – Scotland - Tel: 0131 446 2300

Kidscape – www.kidscape.org.uk Advice about bullying and cyber bullying.

Young minds parents line - Advice and help with any mental health issues relating to young people Tel: 0808 802 5544

Family Lives For parents who need help or someone to talk to Tel: 0808 800 2222

NAPAC (National Association for Children Abused in Childhood) An organisation that support the recovery from childhood abuse www.napac.org.uk support@napac.org.uk 0808 801 0331

The Hub of Hope <https://hubofhope.co.uk/> The Hub of Hope is the UK's leading mental health support database. Put in your postcode and select what you need support with.

Barnardo's and Sexual Assault Referral Centre's (SARCs) – offer support and counselling to victims of sexual abuse. Full list available at www.rapecrisis.org.uk/Referralcentres2.php

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) Tel: 0870 000 3344

Domestic Abuse Hotline Tel: 0808 2000 247

TAC Access – connecting mental health commissioners, young people and therapists - <https://www.tacaccess.com/>

ACT Early Prevent radicalisation and extremism by Acting Early www.actearly.uk

Appendix 1 - Glossary of terms

Children and young people – used interchangeably to refer to any person under the age of 18 (the Children Act 1989).

Safeguarding - “The action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means: protecting children from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to children's health or development, ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care.”

Safeguarding concern - A safeguarding concern is something that has been raised or brought to your attention regarding a young person or adult at risk being harmed or it might relate to their well-being or health of a young person or adult at risk. It may also be a concern regarding a member of staff or volunteer and their behaviour around young people or adults at risk.

Incident – a specific event has child protection implications.

Advice only – BHS Safeguarding Team offer advice and support. They may signpost to other organisations that can support and send information and guidance documents.

Internal Investigation – this will occur either within the club/centre or investigation by the BHS – gathering information and drawing conclusions, then offering support and guidance.

Refer to Statutory agencies – concern serious enough to report to police, social services and possibly the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Gateway Team - Gateway is a Social Work service for children and families in Northern Ireland. They are the first point of contact for children or young persons in need of assistance or support.

Disciplinary – concern reaches a level where the club/centre or the BHS complete a disciplinary hearing.

BEF Advisory Group – a group set up to advise and support Member Body safeguarding concerns who can also offer independent investigations.

Threshold – the boundaries between more serious and lower-level concerns

Low Level – level 1 (possibly level 2) on the BHS threshold document. A **low-level concern** is any minor worry, nagging doubt, or uneasy feeling that someone's behaviour does not meet expected codes of conduct.

High Level – level 2 and above on the BHS threshold document.

Globocol – the online platform for sharing safeguarding concerns with the BEF.

Removal from BHS – a centre, club or coach is removed from the BHS, either their approval, affiliation or registration.

Remain with actions – after an investigation actions are required for the club/centre or coach to continue its affiliation to the BHS.

No further action – insufficient evidence (on the balance of probability) to prove the concern or no evidence found to support the concern.

Extremism - “Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of

members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.” (HM Government Prevent Strategy).

Radicalisation - Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups. Radicalisation can lead to someone being willing to commit violence based on a set of ideas or ideals.

Appendix 2 – Sharing information process

In order to protect children, young people BHS at times will need to disclose to carefully chosen third parties details regarding a safeguarding concern. This document shows where and when information will be disclosed.

More advice is available [http://www.bhs.org.uk /safeguardingchildren](http://www.bhs.org.uk/safeguardingchildren)

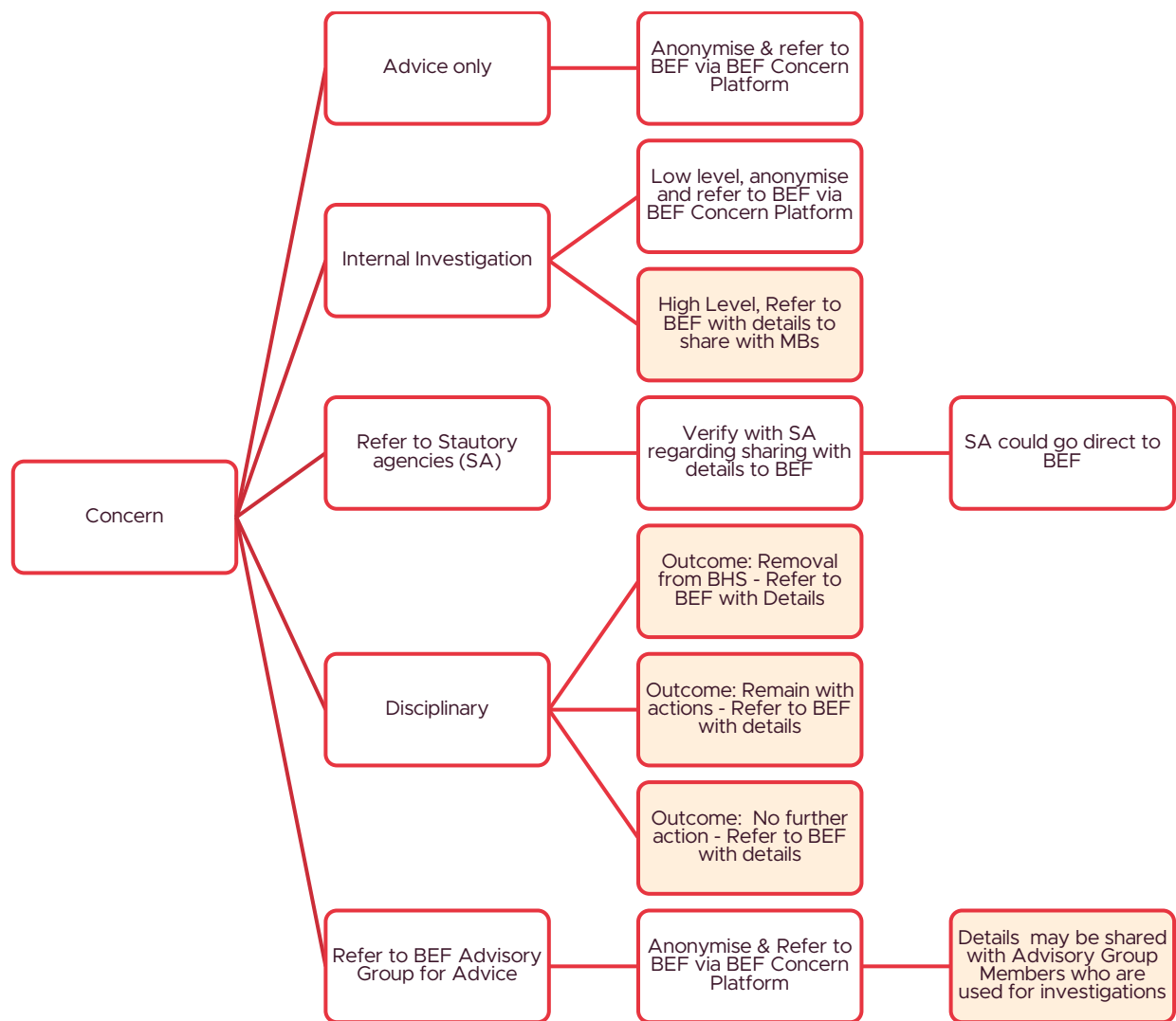
Sharing Safeguarding Information

In order to comply with legislation and the BEF Safeguarding Policy the BHS at times will share information with statutory agencies such as the police, social services and local authority or the British Equestrian Federation (BEF) and its Member Bodies (MB).

At all times the BHS will adhere to the Seven Golden Rules of information sharing set out in the government guidance, Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners:

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing.
2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
4. Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information.
5. Consider safety and well-being.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure.
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not.

The following flow chart shows the 5 possible ways a safeguarding concern is shared and at what point information will be shared. The BHS will endeavour to anonymise information unless there is a justified reason i.e the safety of a child is at risk.



Appendix 3 – Safeguarding concerns – When to make a referral

Where a safeguarding concern has been raised or brought to your attention, you need to consider whether it can be dealt with at your centre/club or whether it should be referred to the BHS Safeguarding Team, to the BEF, or to the Police and/or your local authority.

If there is an emergency or if you believe that someone is in immediate danger, contact the police by telephoning 999 as soon as possible.

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 makes it a mandatory requirement to report sexual abuse. Reporting should be done without delay to the police and local authority.

If the matter is not an emergency, but you are concerned that a child, young person or adult at risk is at risk of harm, contact the police by telephoning 101 without delay. You can also contact your local authority social care team.

If you contact the police or your local authority in relation to a safeguarding concern which relates to BHS, you must inform the BHS Safeguarding Team without delay.

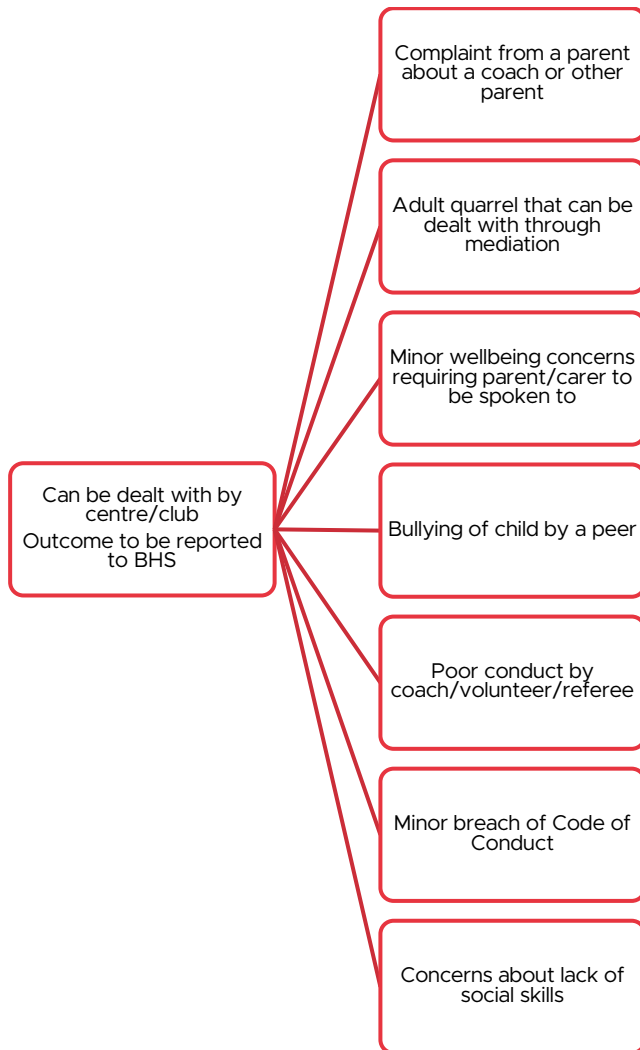
The flowcharts below have been designed to help illustrate the threshold for making a referral. They are intended as examples only. Each matter will be case-specific and you should take into account a range of factors, including the age and vulnerability of those involved, the risk posed to children and young people and the possible worst-case scenario.

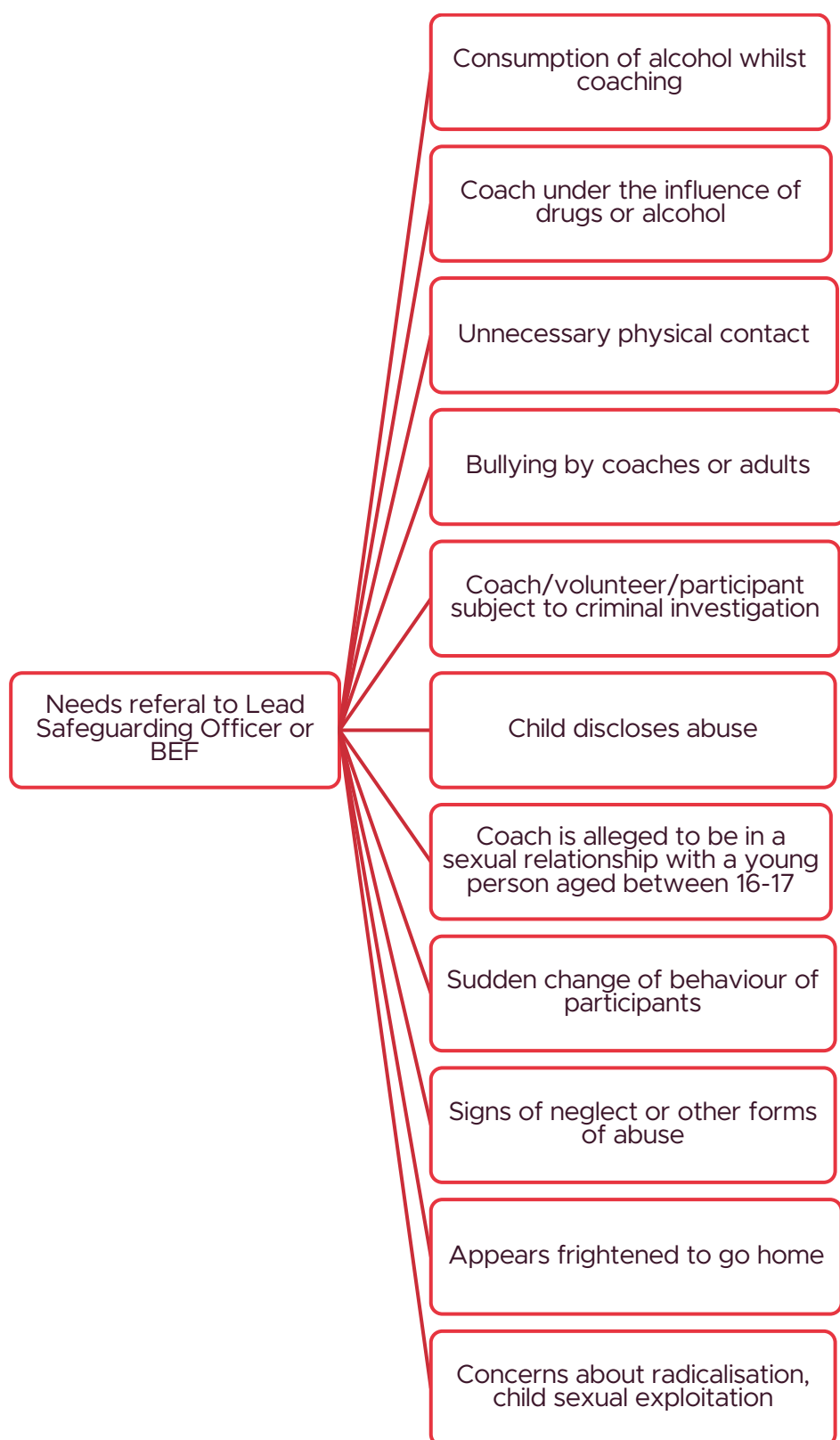
You should not ignore or disregard low-level concerns, as they may reveal a more serious pattern of behaviour. If you have any doubt, speak with your club/centre safeguarding officer or contact the BHS Safeguarding Team.

If you are unsure what to do, contact the BHS Safeguarding Team for advice.

Please see our [Safeguarding Procedures for children and young people](#) for more guidance.

Level 1





Level 2