

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy



This document is the British Horse Society's policy for safeguarding children and young people. It includes BHS Qualifications known as BHSQ.

This document is supported by the *BHS Safeguarding Response Policy* and should be read in conjunction with the *BHS Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy*. For a glossary of terms please see the end of this document

Date for review: May 2025

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Monitoring and review

This document and its content will be reviewed on a three year cycle, or earlier should it be needed to ensure it remains fit for purpose, aligns with government guidance, legislation and industry guidance.

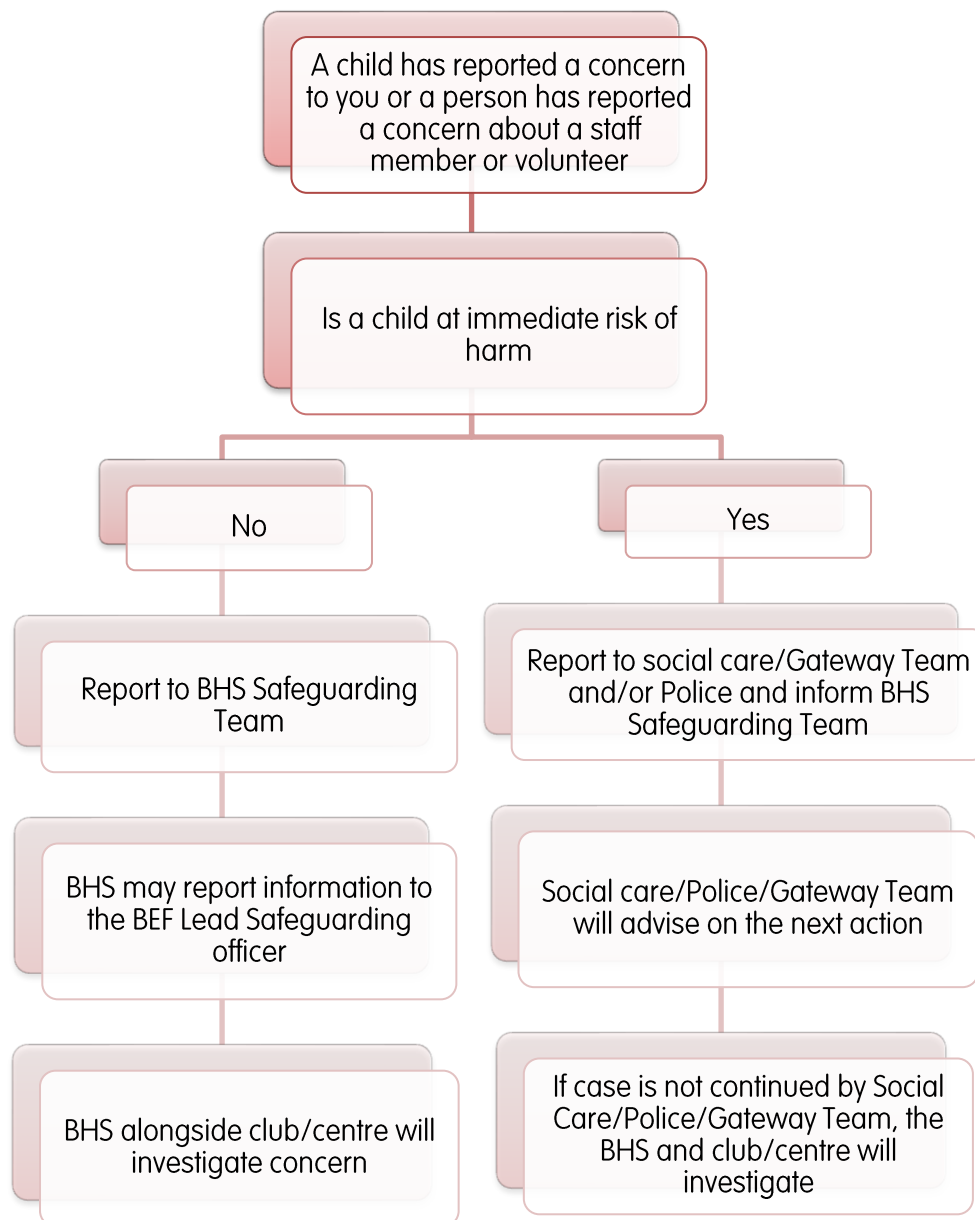
Document history

Version	Revision date	Reason
1	31/5/2022	Update from legislation and government guidance

Please note: This document is uncontrolled once printed. Please check with the BHS Safeguarding Team for the most up to date version.

1. Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

Please use the flow chart below if you are concerned about a child, young person or an adult who works or volunteers with children.



Contact Information

BHS Safeguarding Team
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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.

2. Introduction

The 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, irrespective of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation and socio-economic background.

The Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) document published by the Department of Education states that:

- Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action and;
- In order that organisations, agencies and practitioners collaborate effectively, it is vital that everyone working with children and families, including those who work with parents/carers, understands the role they should play and the role of other practitioners.

The BHS fully adopts the BEF Safeguarding Policy (Children and Young People), the full policy can be downloaded from the BEF website <https://www.britishequestrian.org.uk/getInvolved/safeguarding/what-is-safeguarding>

*Nation specific safeguarding legislation and guidance is also adhered to – please see our document 'Legislation and Guidance 2022' on www.bhs.org.uk/safeguardingchildren

3. Aims

The aims of The BHS Safeguarding Policy are:

- To ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation to provide children and young people with appropriate safety and protection, allowing them to participate in a fun, safe environment and in an atmosphere of fair play.
- To take all reasonable, practical steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and respect their rights, wishes and feelings.
- To ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and are provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people.
- Through education, awareness and support, the BHS aims to establish a culture where concerns are identified early and reported in accordance with this policy.
- To ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse and support the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern. All concerns or allegations of poor practice or abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Those involved in safeguarding at the BHS should take a victim-centred approach, empowering them to be engaged participants in the process and placing their needs at the forefront of any response.
- To ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.
- To maintain high standards of behaviours and good practice through compliance with BHS codes of conduct produced for instructors, coaches, parents/guardians, junior members, volunteers and BHS Employees.

The policy and procedures are mandatory for everyone involved with The BHS (and BHSQ). Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed without delay and may ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from the BHS.

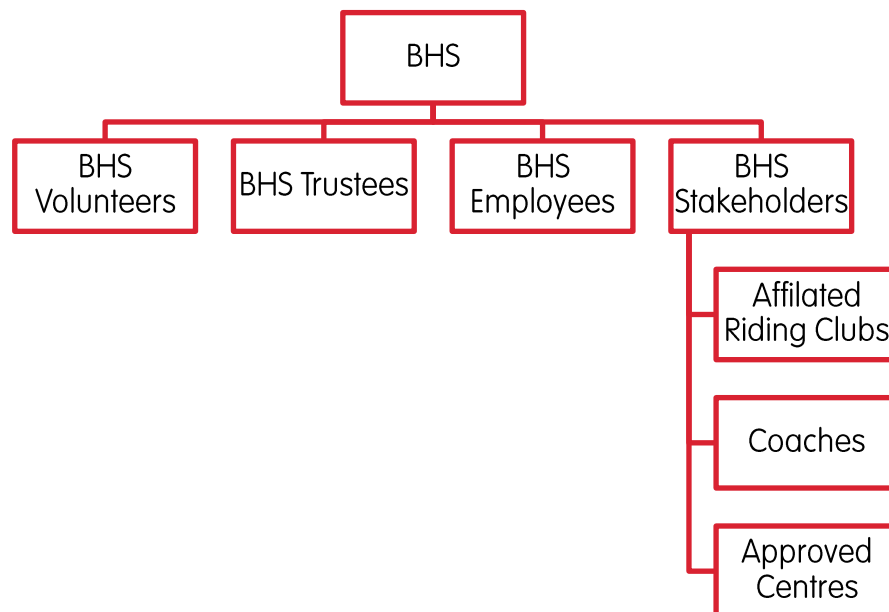
The policy will be reviewed every year, or in the following circumstances:

- Changes in legislation and/or government guidance.
- As required by the Local Safeguarding Children Board, UK Sport and the BEF.
- As a result of any other significant change or event.

4. 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; and
- All members of the BHS.



5. Responsibility

a. The BHS

- The BHS's Board of Trustees and Chief Executive have overall accountability for this Policy, Safeguarding Response Policy and accompanying guidance.
- The BHS Board of Trustees will nominate a Safeguarding Champion who will be responsible for raising awareness of safeguarding matters at board meetings.
- The Chief Operating Officer has overall responsibility for its implementation.
- The BHS EDI & Safeguarding Manager also known as the BHS Lead Safeguarding Officer (LSO) is responsible for updating this Policy, Safeguarding Response Policy and accompanying guidance in line with legislative and organisational developments. The role of the LSO is covered in more details below.

- All staff, consultants, coaches, officials and volunteers are responsible for raising safeguarding concerns/disclosures with the BHS Safeguarding Team as outlined in the Safeguarding Response Process.

b. Affiliated Organisations/Individuals

Each Approved Centre, Accredited Coach, Affiliated Riding Club and Equine Access Group has direct safeguarding responsibility for:

- Staff, consultants, coaches and officials they employ;
- Volunteers of the affiliated organisation;
- Venues they own;
- Events and programmes they run; and
- Ensuring all accreditation requirements are met by accredited coaches, employees, officials and venues.

Each of these affiliated organisations should make recommendations and support the development of good safeguarding practices within their organisation. They should:

- Implement a Safeguarding Policy that upholds the principles of the BHS Policy. *Where there is any conflict arising between the BHS and affiliated organisations policies, decision-making should be based on the core values set out above, with the safety and welfare of children, young people as the overriding principle.*
- Centres will have due regard and processes in place for safer recruiting.
- Nominate a Safeguarding Officer; Club or Centre Safeguarding Officer (CSO) who will:
 - Work with others in the centre or club to ensure a positive child-centred environment.
 - Respond to any allegations or complaints made from within your club/centre and make sure staff and volunteers are sensitive to signs that may indicate possible safeguarding concerns.
 - Communicate with centre or club management and The BHS Safeguarding team regarding concerns
 - Maintain contact details for local children's social care and the police.
 - Ensure that their club or centre is aware of The BHS Safeguarding Policy, procedures and guidelines
 - Ensure new policies and procedures and training opportunities are circulated to staff, members, participants and volunteers regularly.
 - Ensure parents/children are aware of the policy and procedures.
 - Receive queries and offer support regarding safeguarding concerns.
 - Undertake training as necessary.
 - Promote training to club and centre support staff, members and volunteers of the affiliated organisation.
 - Assist the club or centre to ensure that codes of conduct are in place for club staff, volunteers of the affiliated organisation, coaches, young people and parents.
 - Ensure confidentiality is maintained and information is only shared on a "need to know" basis.

c. Participants, parents and carers

Participants, parents and carers are responsible for upholding the Code of conduct that relates to them and reporting a concern through the necessary process (see above).

d. BHS Lead Safeguarding Officer

The BHS will appoint a Lead Safeguarding Officer (LSO). This is currently within the role of the BHS Safeguarding Manager.

The role of the LSO is:

- To ensure that the clubs, centres, volunteers of the BHS and members within the BHS are aware of BEF and BHS policies, procedures and guidelines and adopt and adapt them as appropriate.

- To implement and manage appropriate Safeguarding procedures in relation to child protection and safeguarding ensuring that the BEF is informed when necessary (level 2 threshold and above).
- To respond to any allegations or complaints made from within the BHS. Operationally, to deal with the complaint/allegation to conclusion in line with agreed protocols including reporting to statutory agencies where necessary.
- To represent the BHS on the BEF Safeguarding Action Team (SAT).
- To ensure the effective protection and safeguarding of children and young people by encouraging and supporting each club/riding school events holder or competition to appoint a nominated safeguarding officer.
- To encourage and support each club/riding school, event holders or competition to adopt and promote BHS policies and procedures.
- To provide and promote education and training in safeguarding in partnership with the BEF to support staff, officials, members and BHS volunteers.
- To manage and monitor the implementation of the policy and procedures and feed back to the BEF on an annual basis.
- To support the relevant BHS departments to ensure that BHS procedures for recruitment of staff and volunteers are followed and all appropriate existing staff or volunteers have up to date criminal record checks where required.
- To ensure confidentiality is maintained and information is only shared on a “need to know” basis.

e. The BHS and Horsescotland

Horsescotland is the umbrella body for all equestrian activity in Scotland and was founded in 1998. It represents 20 member bodies and other individual and club members, providing support, funding, training and coaching. All member bodies work together to keep everybody safe. BHS Scotland is a member body of Horsescotland.

Horsescotland is a partner of SportScotland (the national sports agency) and seeks to enable equestrian sport and the equestrian sector in Scotland to develop and excel through the highest levels of participation in the sport and the highest levels of growth for the country's equestrian industry.

Each member body has their own Lead Safeguarding Officer and all member bodies work together to have similar policies, training and resources available.

Horsescotland is a member body of BEF (along with the BHS).

6. Reporting a concern

What is a Safeguarding Concern?

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 or adults at risk. 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 your Safeguarding Lead Officer, the BEF or your Local Authority.

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 Response Policy* will be utilised.

7. Record keeping and confidentiality

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.

Please note: Where possible you should include the relevant dates, times, situation, people present and factual information, including the dates, times and designation of the report writer. The record must then be signed with the name and designation clearly printed beneath. This record should be shared with the appropriate Member Body 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 Lead. 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.

For guidance on how long to keep records please see *Guidance on Retention and Storage of Child Protection Records* which can be found in the BEF Toolkit and on the BEF website.

8. Information Sharing

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. Staff 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, young people and adults at risk the BHS at times will need to disclose to appropriate agencies, such as the Police and other relevant third parties details regarding a safeguarding concern. Please see the *Sharing Information Processes Document* below.

9. Reporting to charity regulatory bodies

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.

10. Provision of support for victims/witnesses

The 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.

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

Should a member of staff 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 staff or approach the child. Staff 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. Staff should feel confident in the knowledge that they know the correct procedure and how the BHS will support them if they are involved in a Safeguarding issue.

12. Communication

The BHS will make available its Safeguarding Policy and Procedures to all staff, volunteers, junior members and their parents/guardians and it will appear in full on the BHS website.

The BHS will circulate to all members the name and number of the BHS Lead Safeguarding Officer.

13. Training

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

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

The BHS Safeguarding Manager will be responsible for training BHS employees whose role requires safeguarding training.

The BHS recommends that all Instructors/coaches and staff and volunteers working with children should undertake the BEF approved safeguarding training (or recognised equivalent) course within the last 3 years. Refresher training should be completed every three years via either the BEF approved online training portal or a further face to face course.

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

14. Position of Trust and Abuse of trust in the Equestrian Industry

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.

Abuse of Trust

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). Coaches and other officials should ensure they maintain healthy, positive and professional relationships with all participants. Coaches and others in positions of authority and trust in relation to athletes aged under 18 must not engage in sexual relationships with them while that unequal power relationship exists. In England and Wales any suspicions of abuse of trust must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

15. Criminal Record checks and safer recruiting

The BHS recommends that all instructors/coaches, staff and volunteers working with children (if they meet the legal criteria) hold a current certificate through the Disclosure and Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland or Access NI as appropriate.

Where required certificates must be renewed every three years unless an individual is signed up to the relevant scheme or updates service in their nation.

Organisations should have a safe recruitment process that is followed with both employees and volunteers.

16. Support and additional policies and procedures

Organisations and individuals should be aware of and maybe required to have other policies and procedures in place. The 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 current and significant subjects such as:

Reporting concerns	How to report a concern www.bhs.org.uk/safeguardingchildren
Position of trust and abuse of position of trust	Position of Trust Guidance www.bhs.org.uk/safeguardingchildren
Safety online	Online safety guidance www.bhs.org.uk/safeguardingchildren
Bullying & cyberbullying	Bullying advice and template anti-bullying policy www.bhs.org.uk/safeguardingchildren and https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying
Parents in sport	Child Protection in Sport Unit https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/?topic=2811
Child Sexual Exploitation	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-exploitation/
Harmful Sexual Behaviour	Child Protection in Sport Unit

	https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/best-practice/harmful-sexual-behaviour-by-young-people-in-sport/
Domestic Abuse	https://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/introduction-to-safeguarding/child-abuse-in-a-sports-setting#domestic-abuse
Child Trafficking	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-trafficking/
Female Genital Mutilation	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/
Radicalisation	www.bhs.org.uk/safeguardingchildren
Gang violence/Youth violence	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/gangs-criminal-exploitation/
County Lines/ Cuckooing	https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines
Modern Slavery	https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/modern-slavery-and-human-trafficking
Child on child abuse	
Forced marriage	

Further information and links

BHS Safeguarding Team
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 02476 840746
safeguarding@bhs.org.uk
 Confidential email: cpleadofficer@bhs.org.uk

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

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

Children First – Scotland - Tel: 0131 446 2300

Ann Craft Trust – supporting adults at risk Tel: 0115 951 5400

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

Barnardo's and Sexual Assault Referral Centres (SARCS) Support and counselling to victims of sexual abuse

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

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

Domestic Abuse Hotline Tel: 0808 2000 247

Age UK Tel: 0800 169 6565

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

Documents

Associated Documents

BHS Safeguarding Response Policy

Sharing Information Processes Document

Safeguarding Threshold Document

Safeguarding Policy Templates for Centre, Clubs and coaches

Please see BHS website for useful templates and documents

www.bhs.org.uk/safeguardingchildren

Criminal record check information

England and Wales

www.bhs.org.uk/record-checks

Northern Ireland

Please contact Susan Spratt, BHS Manager for Northern Ireland & Republic of Ireland, +44(0)7808141079

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/apply-online-enhanced-check-through-registered-body>

Scotland

<http://www.bhs.org.uk/our-charity/corporate-information/working-with-the-law/criminal-record-checks/scotland>

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. 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 or adults at risk. For example, a coach has been reportedly swearing and emotionally abusing young people in their lesson.

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.

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

My Concern – 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.

Appendix 2

Sharing information processes document

In order to protect children, young people and adults 'at risk' the 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>

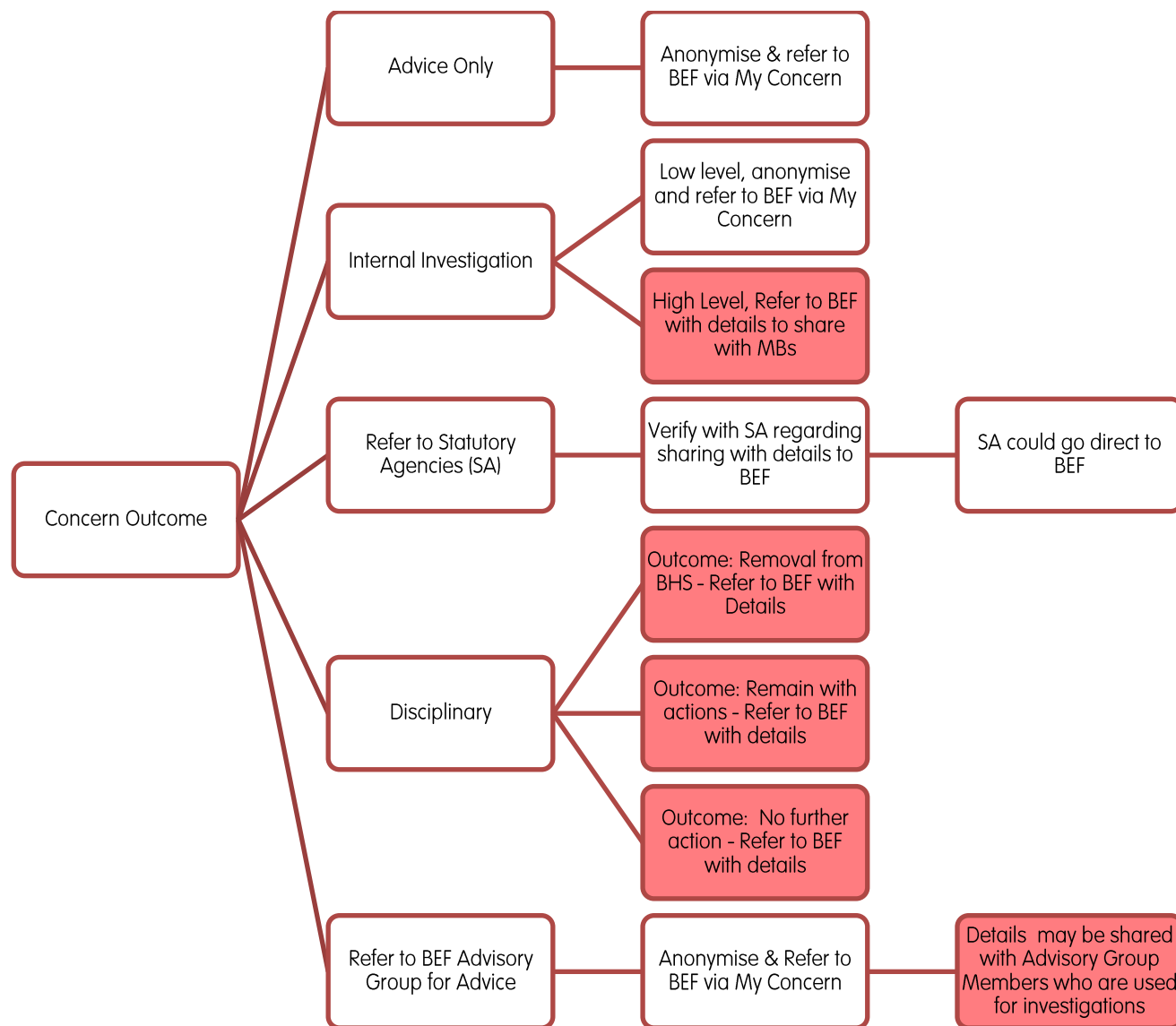
Sharing Safeguarding Information

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 outcomes of a safeguarding concern 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 or adult 'at risk' is at risk.



Appendix 3

Changing Lives Through Horses – Additional Information

Context

The British Horse Society Changing Lives Through Horses is an alternative education programme where children and young people can learn in a safe and nurturing environment alongside highly trained coaches at British Horse Society Approved Riding Centres.

Our coaches receive training and support to run the programme from across the BHS, Britain's largest equine charity.

The programme is aimed at children and young people aged 5-25 years who have become, or are at risk of becoming, disengaged or excluded from mainstream education or training. Participants who have benefitted from the programme include those with additional special educational needs, poor emotional health and well-being and those who may have experienced trauma.

Operationally, our approved Changing Lives Through Horses centres determine when and how often the programme is offered during the week. In most cases the young people attending the programme will be on the roll of a school or have their place commissioned by a local authority. Some young people are electively home educated and attend the programme as a private arrangement. Post 16 young people may have a maintained EHCP or be at risk of becoming NEET.

We have a robust referral process where our centres and coaches will work in partnership with parents, schools and referral agencies to ensure that the programme is suitable and that there is due regard to safeguarding, risk assessments and expected outcomes.

Changing Lives Through Horses fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and young people and requires all staff to act in the best interest of the participants at all times.

Purpose

The purpose of the BHS Safeguarding policy and CLTH appendix is to safeguard and promote participants' welfare, safety and health by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. The participants' welfare is of paramount importance. It is the intention of the procedures within our policy to ensure that the appropriate action is taken immediately where it is believed a participant may be at risk of significant harm or it is alleged that a participant is suspected of being abused. The prime concern at all times must be the interests and safety of the participant (s). Ultimately, effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of the system, and by every individual and agency playing their full part, working together to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children, in line with 'Working Together To Safeguard Children' 2018 and each Nation's education safeguarding guidance.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this document as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

CLTH centres will maintain a single central database for all staff detailing their safeguarding training dates and Criminal Record checks with the date of issue clearly identified.

All staff need to read the education safeguarding guidance for their appropriate Nation* and sign the register to confirm this has been complete.

This database should be made available during any quality assurance or safeguarding checks by partner agencies or local authorities.

*England - Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 (KCSiE) All staff should read part 1.

*Wales – Keeping Learners Safe

*Scotland – Child Protection and Safeguarding

*Northern Ireland – Safeguarding and Child Protection in schools: A guide for schools

As part of the CLTH referral process, centres should ask for a copy of the school or agency safeguarding policy or arrangements.

Vulnerable groups

Safeguarding should be contextualised and personalised for vulnerable groups. Some children and young people may be particularly vulnerable to abuse and harm. This includes for example privately fostered children, children with a disability, children with communication needs or other diagnosed SEND. Certain forms of behaviour can also increase the vulnerability of a young person such as drug or alcohol misuse.

- **Care Experienced Children**

Supporting children in care and children who have been in care is a key priority. We recognise that the needs of this group of children can only be effectively met when all agencies work together.

- **Private Fostering**

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins. Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence. Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or be involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery. There is a mandatory duty to report to the local authority where centres are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement.

- **Electively Home Educated (EHE)**

EHE is when a parent or carer informs a school that they are removing their child from the role of the school to educate them at home

EHE requires parents to take full responsibility for their child's education, including all costs

Schools are not required to provide any support to parents that have withdrawn their child for EHE

LA's should offer to meet and provide advice and support but parents do not have to take this up

School has no obligation to keep the child's place open should they wish to return

If an LA determines that the education provided is unsuitable, or if children's social care identifies safeguarding risks, a school attendance order may be issued and the family are told to apply for a school place

EHE young people can be less visible to services than their school educated peers and as such may be subject to additional vulnerabilities.

- **Mental Health**

All staff should also be aware that mental health issues can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health issue. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing poor mental health or be at risk. Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following the safeguarding policy and speaking to the CSO or school DSL.

- **SEND**

Participants with additional SEN could be at higher risk of abuse. Centres should ensure that due regard is given to individualised needs around safeguarding at the point of referral.

Attendance reporting

Attendance recording and monitoring can be a key factor in ensuring children are safe and processes should be agreed with the referring school or agency prior to commencing the programme as set out in the service level agreement.

For electively home educated pupils, or those not on a school role, procedures should be clearly agreed with the parent, carer or referring agency for reporting absence.

Centres should ensure that emergency contact numbers for school and home are provided on the CLTH referral form. It is good practice to hold TWO emergency contact numbers for parents / carers.

Health and safety

A participant risk assessment will be completed as part of the referral process. Activity and venue risk assessments should be available at the centre. Health and Safety Regulations such as 'Procedures in the event of a fire' will be explained to the participant on the first visit.

Drugs and substance misuse

Any situation where a young person is thought to be in possession of or under the influence of drugs will be reported to the referring school and / or parent / carer immediately and appropriate action taken to safeguard the young person. Participants found in possession of illegal substances will have them confiscated and it is likely that the illegal substances will be destroyed; staff ensuring that either photographic evidence of the disposal is captured or witnesses present. It is probable that the police will be informed. It is particularly important to be aware of 'County Lines' and accordingly be vigilant whilst working with young people. The UK Government defines county lines as: a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. Those involved in county lines are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Medication

Where a participant requires the administration of medication during a CLTH session, written parental consent will be sought in advance of the programme commencing. Where a learner remains on the roll of a school, written permission to administer medication, will also be sought from the Head teacher. All medication kept on site must be locked securely away. In the event of a medical emergency first aid will be given by a qualified first aider and if necessary an ambulance will be called and parents/carers/school informed immediately.

E-safety

Centres should have a clear policy on the use of mobile phones and smart technology whilst young people are on site, which could be included in a code of conduct. Centres should share any social media and phone policy with the referring school, young person and parents / carers prior to the programme commencing and this should be agreed by all parties.

Staff need to be alert to any inappropriate material viewed by a young person on any mobile device.

Staff must not liaise/communicate with any young person on the programme via social media.

Additionally, the safe use of 'multi media' in its widest sense, and the linkage of on line and off line worlds, particularly internet use, must be promoted by staff and vigilantly monitored.

Covid

All staff are expected to remain up to date with government guidelines about managing the on-going effects of the pandemic, this includes:

- An awareness of hygiene requirements – eg. frequent hand washing, sanitising
- An awareness of PPE requirements – eg. The use of masks/visors
- An awareness of symptoms and the necessary steps required in dealing with symptoms: high temp, new, continuous cough, loss or change to your sense of smell or taste.