



# Whistle Blowing Policy

SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTING CHILDREN  
BRITISH WEIGHT LIFTING

## Purpose

To encourage individuals to feel confident and supported in raising concerns about the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in weight lifting and disability power lifting in accordance with British Weight Lifting's Safeguarding Child Protection Policy and Procedures and Code of Ethics and Conduct.

To provide a method of raising concerns directly with the lead child protection officer and to receive feedback on any action that may be taken.

To ensure that individuals receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied.

To reassure individuals that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistle blowing in good faith.

## Scope

ALL those involved in activities carried out under the jurisdiction of British Weight Lifting are covered by this policy.

## Key Principles

The following important principles are contained within this policy:

The code is complementary to British Weight Lifting's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and its Code of Ethics and Conduct;

The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy;

If a matter raised results in any disciplinary action, the British Weight Lifting disciplinary procedures will apply.

## General Principles

Lifters, coaches, officials, parents or team followers are often the first to realise that a child's safety and/or welfare are under threat. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be too difficult to handle. It may also be that they fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may be easier for them to ignore the concern rather than report concerns that they have about poor practice.

British Weight Lifting is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. In line with that commitment, individuals are encouraged, if they have worries or concerns about any aspect of a child's safety and welfare, to come forward and voice those concerns.

This policy makes it clear that individuals can raise a matter of concern without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. The policy is intended to encourage and enable individuals to raise serious concerns within the British Weight Lifting rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside the sport.

It is in the interest of all concerned that disclosure of potential abuse, poor practice or breaches of the sport's Code of Ethics and Conduct are dealt with appropriately. This is essential to ensure that the welfare of children is prioritised and in the interests of all involved in Weight lifting and Power lifting (the BWL itself, its employees, all persons registered as members of BWL and any persons who are the subject of any complaint, as well as the person making the complaint).

If there is a concern with regard to the behaviour of an adult towards a young person, it is important that you share your concerns with the BWL Lead Child Welfare Officer. All information received and discussed will be treated in confidence and only shared with those individuals within the BWL who will be able to manage and resolve the situation. On occasion it may be necessary to seek advice, or inform the statutory agencies e.g. Social Services or the Police. All concerns will be taken seriously and managed according to the BWL Safeguarding Young People Policies and Procedures.

## Safeguards

BWL is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of everyone

within the Lifting Community. BWL recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisal from those responsible for the alleged poor practice. If an individual believes what they are saying to be true, they should have nothing to fear, because in reporting their concern they will be doing their duty to the child or young person concerned.

BWL will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect individuals when they raise a concern in good faith.

Any investigation into allegations of poor practice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary procedures that already affect individuals unless there may be a pattern of poor practice/abuse which requires the cases to be linked /dealt with together.

### Anonymous allegations

This policy encourages the whistle-blower to put their name to their allegation. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, but they will be considered (at the discretion of the BWL Case Management Group).

In exercising the discretion, the factors to be taken into account would include:

-  The seriousness of the issues raised
-  The credibility of the concern
-  The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources or factual records.

If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against them. If, however, it is established that they have made malicious or frivolous allegations, or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them. In such cases, the BWL's disciplinary procedure will apply.

## Use of the Whistleblowing Policy

The Whistleblowing Policy should only be followed if the person raising the concern feels unable to follow the standard reporting procedures as set out in BWL's Safeguarding and Protecting Young

People in Lifting Policy and Procedures.

### How to raise a concern

Individuals should raise the concern in the first instance with the BWL Lead Child Protection Officer on 0113 224 9402 mobile: 07834 520747 or by post to the Lead Child Protection Officer, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Office Suite, St Anns Mill, Commercial Road, Leeds, LS5 3AE (you should make the envelope 'private & confidential) or

e-mail: [sue.ward@britishweightlifting.org](mailto:sue.ward@britishweightlifting.org)

The individual should set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible and the reason why they are particularly concerned about the situation. The earlier the individual expresses concern, the easier it is for someone to take action.

Although the whistle-blower is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the BWL Lead Child Protection Officer that there are sufficient grounds for their concern.

If you do not want, or feel unable, to report the matter to the BWL, a number of external agencies are also available for reporting purposes.

### How will the BWL respond?

The action taken by the BWL will depend on the nature of the concern. In all cases the matter will be referred to the BWL Case Management Group. In order to protect individuals it is likely that the BWL Lead Child Welfare Officer will conduct initial enquiries so that the Case Management Group can decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take. The amount of contact between the people considering the issues and the whistle-blower will depend on the nature of the matters raised; the potential difficulties involved the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from the whistle-blower as part of the investigation process.

When any meeting is arranged, the whistle-blower has the right, if they so wish, to be accompanied by a friend or a person of their choice who is not involved in the matter to which the concern relates. The BWL will take steps to minimise any difficulties which individuals may experience as a

result of raising a concern. For instance, if the whistle-blower is required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the BWL will advise them about the procedure.

The BWL accepts that the whistle-blower needs to be assured that the matter has been properly

addressed. Subject to legal constraints, they will receive information about the outcome of any investigation, and the action that is to be taken against those whose actions caused them concern. Also, if appropriate, what policy changes are to be made to minimise the possibility of a similar concern being raised in the future.

### How can the matter be taken further?

This policy is intended to provide individuals with a way in which they can raise concerns about the safety and welfare of any young person involved in any lifting activity under the jurisdiction of the BWL. The BWL hopes individuals will be satisfied that any child protection matter they raise has been considered properly. If they are not satisfied, and if they feel it is right to take the matter outside the BWL, they should contact:

-  The Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) 0116 234 7278
-  Their local area Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB)
-  Their local Children's Social Care Dept. (Social Services)
-  Their local police

If they do take the matter outside the BWL, they will need to ensure that they do not disclose prohibited confidential information. They must check this before they make contact.