

Promoting Good Practice with young people

Introduction

Most children and vulnerable adults are well cared for and have happy and trusting relationships with adults. However some less fortunate do suffer from physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as possible neglect. Child abuse, particularly sexual abuse can induce strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgements about the action that should be taken. Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. It is known that some individuals actively seek employment or voluntary work with children and vulnerable adults to harm them.

A Coach, Teacher, Official or volunteer may have regular contact with young people and can be an important link in identifying case where a young person or vulnerable adult needs protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a young person or vulnerable adult enters the membership of a Club having been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play an important role in improving the young person's sense of worth. In such instances the Club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the young person receives the required support.

Good Practice Guidelines

All staff should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect young people and themselves from allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and environment within the sports of weight lifting, power lifting and weight training.

Good Practice means:

- Adoption of British Weight Lifting Safeguarding and Protecting Young People in Lifting Policy and Procedures:
- Promotion of the policy to all Club members and parents to illustrate the Club's commitment to a safe environment;
- Always working in a clear and transparent manner , e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and also encouraging 'no secrets'
- Treating all young people/ vulnerable adults equally with respect and dignity;
- Always putting the welfare and safety of the young person first, before winning or achieving goals
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance from participants (e.g. it is not appropriate to have an intimate relationship with a young person or to share a room with them) and in some case it may be
- a serious breach of the BWL Code of Ethics and Conduct and be unlawful;
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers young people to share in the decision-making process;

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- Ensuring that if any form of manual/ physical support is required for spotting this should be provided openly. Young people and parents should be provided with information regarding coaching practices and physical contact which is required for personal safety or because there is no other suitable coaching method. Consent must be obtained using Template;
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications, and insurance in sport;
- If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents/Coaches/Instructors/Officials work in pairs:
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. (N.B. However same gender abuse can occur);
- Ensuring that at competitions or residential events, adults should not enter young people's rooms or invite young people into their rooms. If an adult is working in supervisory capacity, they should only enter the young people's room when accompanied by another adult.
- Being an excellent role model-this includes not smoking drinking alcohol or using bad language in the company of young people and promoting a healthy diet
- Always promote the positive aspects of the sport and never condone rule violations or the use of prohibited substances
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism;
- Recognising and developing the needs and capacity of young people-avoiding excessive training or competitions and not pushing them against their will;
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and /or other medical treatment
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs along with the details of any treatment given. Where staff witness an injury this must be reported to the parents at the first given opportunity;
- Requesting written parental consent if Club Officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

Coaching ratios

The national guidance states that the level of supervision should take account of

- The age and ability of the young people:
- The activity being undertaken;
- Children's' growing independence
- Children's need for privacy
- The geography of the facility being used

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The Risk Assessment

Participants under the age of 18 must be supervised at all times and cannot be included in staffing ratios.

If there is an accident or an incident involving a young person or member of staff, you should ensure that there are enough people remaining to supervise the group safely.

Instructors/Coaches working with young people should not work in isolation. Good practice suggests that at least one other adult in addition to the Coach should be present at every session. The additional adult does not have to be a qualified Instructor/Coach.

Changing Rooms

Where practical, participants should be supervised at all times in the changing rooms by two members of staff. Adult staff should not change or shower at the same time using the same facility as participants.

If you are involved in a mixed gender team, separate changing facilities must be made available. If a young person is uncomfortable changing or showering in public no pressure should be placed on them to do so. Encourage them to shower and change at home. If your Club has participants with disabilities involve them and their carer's in deciding how they should be assisted and ensure they are able to consent to the assistance that is offered. Any staff, medical or otherwise, for example a male instructor/Coach working with female participants must not be present in the changing rooms whilst participants are getting showered or changed.

No photographic equipment should be allowed in the changing room environment. This includes cameras, video cameras, camera mobile phones etc.

Please see 'Running a Safe Club' for further guidance.

The Treatment of Young People Requiring Medical Assistance

It is recommended that no young person should be treated in any way in a situation where the young person is on his/her own in a treatment room with the door closed;

It is strongly recommended that all treatment procedures should be 'open' i.e. the door remains open, parents are invited to observe treatment procedures. Where strict medical confidentiality is to be observed then the parents of the young person should be invited to attend;

It is recommended that if treating an area of the body which is potentially embarrassing to a young person (i.e. the groin) a suitable consenting adult acting as a chaperone should be present;

It is important to maintain medical confidentiality and patient dignity at all times;

Prior to medical treatment being carried out on a young person, parental consent in written form must be sought where appropriate.

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It is recommended that all treatment procedures are fully explained to the young person and verbal consent is given before they are carried out.

Practice to be avoided.

Never spend excessive amounts of time alone with children / vulnerable adults away from others.

Avoid taking child / children alone on car journeys, no matter how short without first consulting the parents.

If the case arises where these situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge at the Club or the young person's parents. For example, a young person sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to pick up a young person at the end of a session (Reporting procedures regarding allegation- external).

Practice that should never be sanctioned

You should never:

- Invite or allow young people to stay with you at home,
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games: including horseplay:
- Share a room with a young person
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Make sexually suggestive remarks to a child or vulnerable adult, even in fun.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Reduce a young person to tears as a form of control:
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or vulnerable adult they can do for themselves,
- Never depart from the premises until you have supervised the safe dispersal of the children

It may be sometimes necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for young people, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the participants involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible.

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This is particularly so if you are involved in the dressing or undressing of outer clothing, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting young person to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

If any of the following incidents should occur, you should report them immediately to another colleague and make a written note of the event. Parents should be informed of the incident:

- If you should accidentally hurt a child,
- If he/she is distressed in any manner,
- The participant appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or
- If the participant misunderstands, or misinterprets something you have done,

Relationships of Trust

A good coach will develop a strong trusting bond with their athlete and this is essential in a successful coach athlete relationship.

The power and influence that the older member has over someone attending a group or activity cannot be underestimated. If there is an additional competitive aspect to the activity and the older person is responsible for the young person's success or failure to some extent, then the dependency of the younger member upon the older will be increased. It is therefore vital for volunteers to recognise the responsibility that they must exercise in ensuring that they do not abuse their positions of trust.

This guidance is primarily intended to protect young people over the age of sexual consent but under the age of 18 years of age and vulnerable adults where a relationship of trust with an adult exists. Young people of 16 or 17 can legally consent to some types of sexual activity but they may still be relatively immature emotionally and in some provisions of legislation they are classified as children. It is essential that those who may be in a position of responsibility and trust recognise this vulnerability and ensure that it is not exploited.

There is no simple definition of a vulnerable adult but again the position of trust and the vulnerability of adults must not be abused.

The principles and guidance apply irrespective of sexual orientation; neither homosexual nor heterosexual relationships are acceptable in a position of trust.

A Relationship of Trust - can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over another by virtue of their position. A genuine relationship can start between two people within a relationship of trust but the relationship of trust must end before any sexual relationship develops.

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Abuse of Trust, Sexual or other Abuse- Any sexual activity, which is not freely consenting, is criminal. The sexual activity covered by abuse of trust may be ostensibly consensual, but are rendered unacceptable because of the relative positions of the parties concerned.

Code of Conduct - Abuse of Trust.

The Code of Conduct on sexual activity between individuals in a relationship of trust aims to:

- Protect a young person or vulnerable adult from an unequal and potentially damaging relationship.
- Protect the person in a position of trust by preventing him / her from entering into such a relationship deliberately or accidentally by providing clear and enforceable guidance on what behaviour is acceptable.

If you engage in an intimate or inappropriate relationship with a young person it is a breach of BWL's Code of Ethics and Conduct and as such will result in disciplinary action.

In certain circumstances the 'abuse of trust' is a criminal offence.

Bill Of Rights for Young Members

Young people participate in sport for many reasons including to make friends, have fun and to learn new skills. Whilst competing and participating in Weightlifting/power lifting and weight training activities young people have certain rights that should allow them to get the most from their experiences.

BWL believes that every young person has the right:

- To participate in Weightlifting/Disability Powerlifting and weight training
- To be treated with respect by all adults and other participants
- Every young member has the right to report any problems to the club welfare officer
- Every young member has the right to be considered for competition
- Every young member has the right to train and compete as a child
- Every young member has the right to train and compete safely
- and have proper medical treatment if required
- Every young member has the right to be coached by a qualified coach
- Every young member has the right to have a coach who coaches fun, friendship and skills rather than winning
- Every young member has the right to have a coach who takes time to work with each weight lifter and allows each weight lifter to make mistakes

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- Every young member has the right to have fun
- Every young member who is an official has the right to be treated with respect



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