



## Whistle Blowing Policy

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is 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 Weightlifting and para powerlifting in accordance with British Weight Lifting's Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Codes of Conduct:

- To provide a method of raising concerns directly with the Lead Safeguarding 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 BWL are covered by this policy.

### Key Principles

The following important principles are contained within this policy:

- The code is complementary to BWL Safeguarding Policy and its Codes of 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, BWL disciplinary procedures will apply.

### General Principles

Lifters, coaches, officials, parents or volunteers 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.

BWL 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 BWL 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 Codes of Conduct are dealt with appropriately. This is essential to ensure that the welfare

of children and vulnerable adults are prioritised and in the interests of all involved in the sport (BWL, 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 regarding behaviour of an adult towards a young person or adult at risk, it is important that you share your concerns with the BWL Lead Safeguarding 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 eg Social Services or the Police. All concerns will be taken seriously and managed according to the BWL Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

### **Safeguards**

BWL is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of everyone involved within the sport. 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 vulnerable adult 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.

The following factors will be taken into account:

- 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, BWLs disciplinary procedure will apply.

### **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 BWL).

## **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 Procedures

## **How to raise a concern**

Individuals should raise the concern in the first instance with the BWL Lead Safeguarding Officer, the details are:

Name: Sue Ward

Email: [sue.ward@britishweightlifting.org](mailto:sue.ward@britishweightlifting.org)

Office number: 0113 224 9402

Mobile: 07834 520747

Post: FAO Lead Safeguarding Officer, 1st Floor Office Suite, St Ann's Mill, Commercial Road, Leeds, LS5 3AE (you should make the envelope 'private & confidential')

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 Safeguarding 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 BWL respond?**

The action taken by BWL will depend on the nature of the concern. In all cases the matter will be referred to the BWL Safeguarding Case Management Group. In order to protect individuals, it is likely that the BWL Lead Safeguarding Officer will conduct initial enquiries so that the Safeguarding 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. 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, BWL will advise them about the procedure.

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 lifting activity under the jurisdiction of BWL. 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) tel: 0116 234 7278
- The local area Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB)
- The local Children's Social Care Dept (Social Services)
- The 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.

*Updated: 2021*