



## SAFEGUARDING POLICY

**Version 2.** Finalised December 2020

Prepared by Marie-Claire Gane, Safeguarding Lead.

If any suggested amendments by the board, this will be indicated in this part of the document (ie, which version it is), and that the Board has approved the document, and on what date.

Date this policy comes into force: 23.12.2020

### Section A: Monitoring & Review

1. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. A policy review may also be conducted in response to the following:
  - a. Changes in Legislation or guidance
  - b. Changes in governance of our sport
  - c. Changes in the nature or size of SportCheer England
  - d. Change named Safeguarding Lead for SportCheer England
  - e. A procedural review following a significant case or incident.

### Section B: Background to the Policy

2. In practice, safeguarding is the policies and practices that organisations such as National Governing Bodies (NGBs) employ to keep children safe and promote their wellbeing. This means everything from governance to online safety, and everything in between. Safeguarding is what we “do” to protect individuals such as children and vulnerable adults from harm such as abuse, neglect and sexual exploitation. Child Protection is one aspect of safeguarding. Child protection is a term used to describe the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm. Child protection is the way agencies and organisations respond to harm.
3. SportCheer England is minded of the guidance under “[Working Together](#)” (2018) to ensure child safeguarding in particular. This Government guidance includes the responsibilities of sport organisations:

*“63. There are many sports clubs and organisations including voluntary and private sector providers that deliver a wide range of sporting activities to children. Some of these will be community amateur sports clubs, some will be charities. All should have the arrangements described in this chapter in place and should collaborate to work effectively with the safeguarding partners as required by any local safeguarding arrangements. Paid and volunteer staff need to be aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, how they should respond to child protection concerns and how to make a referral to local authority children’s social care or the police if necessary.”*

4. SportCheer England’s overall goal is to meet the Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport, as set by the Child Protection in Sport Unit with the NSPCC.
5. SportCheer England recognises that cheer and dance should be, and will be, viewed by many athletes as a safe space for them, even for those athletes who are suffering abuse within a familial or institutional setting. However, SportCheer England also recognises that as with all institutions and organisations, there is always a risk of abuse, and it is the purpose of this policy to reduce the risk of abuse within our sport, and to safeguard against risk.
6. The only way in which safeguarding can be effective is for responsible bodies to share information. Information sharing by SportCheer England for the purpose of safeguarding is in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.
7. SportCheer England recognises that the Board, and members of SportCheer England must be well informed and in a position to recognise signs of abuse within a vulnerable athlete or child athlete. Such athletes may very well not be in a position to recognise that they are subject to abuse (regardless of whether such abuse takes place within cheer and dance, or within the home or other institution/organisation). Further, such athletes may not feel able to, or be capable of, sharing concerns of their experiences of abuse. These athletes are therefore reliant upon adults and responsible persons around them to recognise signs of abuse and be alert to the possibility that such an athlete could be the subject of abuse.

## Section C: Terms & Definitions

8. **Child** – A person who has not yet reached their 18 years of age.
9. **Adult at risk** – As per the definition in Care Act 2014:
  - a. Has needs or care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of those needs).
  - b. Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect.

- c. As a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

(NB: this definition is as per the Care Act 2014, and SportCheer England recognises and promotes the choice for persons to use the pronoun “they”).

**10. Safeguarding** – as per the definition by NSPCC Learning online:

- a. The action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding means:
  - i. Protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
  - ii. Preventing harm to children’s health or development
  - iii. Ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
  - iv. Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

**11. Abuse that applies to children (as set out in ‘Working Together’) are as follows:**

- a. Physical, eg extreme training, assault
- b. Psychological/Emotional, eg undue pressure upon athletes to perform, conduct and practice relating to body shape and size.
- c. Sexual, eg inappropriate touching, performing of sexual acts, receiving sexual acts, inappropriate use of sexual language, sexual exploitation
- d. Neglect (including purposeful neglect and omission in care)
- e. Extremism

**12. The Care Act 2014 statutory guidance identifies types of abuse and neglect that are applicable to adults at risk:**

- a. Physical
- b. Domestic abuse (when the adult is at risk)
- c. Sexual Abuse
- d. Psychological/Emotional
- e. Financial or material abuse
- f. Modern slavery
- g. Discriminatory abuse
- h. Organisational abuse
- i. Neglect (including purposeful and omission in care)
- j. Self-neglect.

**13. Examples of such harmful behaviours can include (but not limited to) the following:**

- a. Harassment (including sexual harassment)
- b. Coercive control
- c. Bullying/Hazing
- d. Unsafe practice
- e. Poor/uneducated practice
- f. Discrimination
- g. Victimisation

14. Further reading upon harmful behaviours, particularly in sport, are identified in the [International Olympic Committee Consensus Statement on Harassment and Abuse \(2016\)](#). Further reading of sexual harassment and abuse in sport can be found in the [Consensus Statement on Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Sport](#), produced by the IOC Medical Commission Expert Panel.
15. The IOC Consensus statement identifies 5 forms of harassment and abuse that apply to athletes which may occur on its own or in combination:
  - a. Psychological
  - b. Physical
  - c. Sexual Harassment
  - d. Sexual Abuse
  - e. Neglect
16. Whilst Cheerleading (and Performance Cheer) has only has provisional sport status with the International Olympic Committee, SportCheer England supports the consensus statements of the IOC.
17. **Bullying** – intentional behaviour that hurt another individual or group. Such behaviour is usually repeated over time.
18. **Hazing** – behaviours in groups or teams that act as a way of initiating a new person into the group or team.
19. **Poor Practice** – behaviour of an individual in a position of responsibility that falls below the expected standard in accordance with Standards of Conduct. Poor practice may not be immediately dangerous or intentionally harmful but is likely to set a poor example. Examples of poor practice include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Name calling
  - b. Constant criticism
  - c. Exerting excessive pressure
  - d. Use of inappropriate language
  - e. Engaging in rough or physical games, including horseplay
  - f. A coach taking a child or group of children to a weekend event on their own.
20. **Position of Trust** – a position of trust exists where an adult, because of their role, is in a position of power or influence over another person. The age of consent for sex in England and Wales is 16 years for both men and women and is the same regardless of gender or sexual orientation. When a person is older than 18 and is in a specified “position of trust”, it is an offence for them to have any sexual activity with a person under the age of 18. This even applies if the relationship is consensual. This offence, under the Sexual Offences Act does not currently include sports leaders. For the purpose of this policy, SportCheer England regards coaches, choreographers, safeguarding and welfare officers and event officials (whether employed, self-employed contract work, or volunteers) as being in a position of trust, even where the legal definition does not specifically include that role.

21. **Extremism** – defined by the [Counter Extremism Project](#) as “holding of extreme political or religious view, often advocating illegal, violent or other forms of extreme behaviour”.

## Section D: Policy Objectives

22. All sporting organisations, including SportCheer England, teams and programmes, and individuals including coaches, staff (whether employed, self-employed or volunteers) and other team and programme officials have a duty of care to safeguard children when they are participating in Cheer and Dance activities linked to such organisations and individuals.
23. This policy is to ensure that best practice guidance is maintained, to promote good safeguarding practices, for the benefit of our participating athletes. This includes:
- a. Members understand forms of abuse and harassment
  - b. Members understand proper procedures for reporting if they have any safeguarding or welfare concerns
  - c. Ensuring members have appropriate levels of insurance
  - d. Ensuring members have appropriate training on safeguarding
  - e. Ensure that coaches have appropriate training and instruction standards
  - f. Ensure coaches and choreographers (whether employed, self-employed contractor or volunteer) are subject to recruitment checks, including criminal record checks.
  - g. Ensure there is an appropriate response to incidents of abuse, or alleged incidents of abuse, and that such responses are co-ordinated with relevant agencies that promote safety such as Local Authority Children’s or Adult Services and the police.
  - h. Ensure that there are procedures in place that effectively protect athletes and other individual members of SportCheer England.
  - i. Ensure that there are procedures in place that seek to minimise the likelihood of incidents of harm, abuse and harassment.
24. This policy is to ensure that athletes participating in our sport are safe from abuse as set out in Section A of this document.
25. SportCheer England is committed to this policy, and ensuring it is reviewed and updated to ensure continued best practice in its responsibility to safeguard our athletes from harm and abuse.

## Section E: Scope

26. This policy is mandatory to SportCheer England and its members.
27. This policy also applies to any persons who may not be members of SportCheer England, but form part of the teams under the separate discipline of 'Team England'. Such persons (whether employed, self-employed contracted, or volunteers) include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Managers;
  - b. Coaches;
  - c. Choreographers and other agency staff, such as guest coaches
  - d. Safeguarding staff
  - e. Welfare officers
  - f. Medical staff, including physiotherapy and sports therapy.
28. This policy applies to activities regulated by SportCheer England.
29. This policy applies to registered teams/programmes involved in the delivery of Cheer and Dance (also known as performance cheer under the International Cheer Union). Any individual providing a service to SportCheer England, even on a third-party basis must be able to demonstrate compliance with the standards within this policy.
30. SportCheer England members have a responsibility to report concerns as to whether a child or vulnerable athlete may be experiencing abuse outside of the sport.

## Section F: Policy Statement

31. Everyone who works with children and vulnerable adults has a responsibility for keeping them safe. Children and any adult who may be considered as vulnerable, need to be protected and supported by those persons and organisations working with them. It is integral that organisations across disciplines work together to ensure such protection.
32. SportCheer England takes safeguarding of its members very seriously. The safety and wellbeing of our athlete members is the utmost importance to the work of the Board and its member teams/programmes. Given the majority of our athlete members are under the age of 18, a considerable focus of this safeguarding policy, is to ensure the safety of children in our sport.
33. SportCheer England wishes to build a safeguarding culture where its members know how they are expected to behave, and feel comfortable about sharing concerns.

34. SportCheer England will give equal priority to keeping all children and young people safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
35. SportCheer England will meet the commitment to keeping children and adults at risk safe by
  - a. Listening to children and respecting them
  - b. Appointment of a child protection lead who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding at the highest level in the organisation.
36. Further, SportCheer England and its member clubs/programmes must have effective safeguarding policies and procedures in place that respond to incidents of abuse, harassment, and even poor practice that arise in our sport.
37. SportCheer England and its member clubs/programmes must ensure that abuse or suspected/alleged abuse is reported to Local Authority Children's or Adult Services and/or the police in line with the reporting procedure and reporting procedures within member city, county or borough councils.

## Section G: Roles and Responsibilities of SportCheer England

38. SportCheer England accepts our responsibility for safeguarding children and adults at risk in cheer and dance lies with the Board of SportCheer England. SportCheer England has appointed a Safeguarding Lead who is responsible for the implementation of this policy and work in partnership with member teams/programmes to support the development of robust arrangements for safeguarding and protecting children and others at risk.
39. SportCheer England will implement arrangements and procedures to safeguard and protect our members and will:
  - a. Provide a policy that provides a framework for any team/programme, or individuals, working with children and adult at risk.
  - b. Provide support for members to ensure they understand and fulfil their responsibilities by providing clear guidance and support. Such guidance is to minimise risk to children and adults at risk, avoiding situations where abuse can occur
  - c. Provide provision for learning opportunities for its members and welfare and safeguarding officers.
  - d. Work with others to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk.
  - e. Review and develop evidence based safeguarding practice.
  - f. Work with Local Authority Designated Officers, Children's and Adults services in accordance with 'Working Together' (2018)
  - g. Allegations of abuse, harm or harassment to any child and adults at risk are reported without delay to the relevant statutory authority.

- h. Will comply with GDPR and Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2018 in relation to information sharing. Information can be shared without consent where there are legitimate and lawful reasons for disclosure, such as safeguarding.
- i. Will take action to ensure children and vulnerable adults are protected in the event of abuse, or alleged abuse against a SportCheer England member, employee, volunteer or other person involved in Cheer and Dance.
- j. Will support the prosecution of aforementioned individuals accused of a criminal offence against a child or adults at risk.
- k. Will refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service anyone believed to be, has been or may in the future be engaged in activity regulated by SportCheer England, whose membership has been revoked (or would have if the individual had not voluntarily withdrawn from involvement in the sport) on the grounds that they harmed, or pose a risk of harm to a child or adults at risk, or received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.
- l. Ensure systems are in place to reduce the risk of the involvement of persons who pose a risk to children or adults at risk becoming involved in our sport and support the removal of such unsuitable persons.
- m. Ensure that failure to comply with policy and procedures will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action against the individual concerned.

## Section H: Roles and Responsibilities of Member Teams/Programmes

40. Member Teams/Programmes shall have an absolute minimum standard to apply.

41. Member Teams/Programmes will:

- a. Ensure that overall responsibility for safeguarding lies with the most senior person within the organisation
- b. The most senior person within the organisation ensures that there is at least one suitably trained and competent Safeguarding Officer within the team/programme to deal with safeguarding issues.
- c. Promote the safeguarding and welfare of all participants, in particular children and adults at risk.
- d. Ensure that children and adults at risk are listened to and are involved in decision making
- e. Undertake regular risk assessments and put in place appropriate safeguarding arrangements to minimise risks
- f. Implement safe recruitment and ensure that all coaches and choreographers (whether employed, self-employed contractors or volunteers) are subjected to checks under the Disclosure and Barring Service before engaging in regulated activities.
- g. Ensure that coaches, choreographers and any other staff (employed, self employed contractors or volunteers) receive appropriate training and have appropriate qualifications to undertake their roles.
- h. Deliver appropriate supervision and safeguarding training to coaches, choreographers and staff (employed, self employed contractors or volunteers) to ensure that they are competent in their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk.

- i. Report any suspicions and allegations of abuse, harm or harassment of children or adults at risk by a member (whether individual, team/programme or affiliated organisation) are reported to relevant statutory authorities (such as Local Authority Children's or Adult Services and/or the police) and the SportCheer England Safeguarding Lead.
- j. Report any suspicions and allegations of abuse of position of trust by a member (whether individual, team/programme or affiliated organisation) are reported to relevant statutory authorities (such as Local Authority Children's or Adult Services and/or the police) and the SportCheer England Safeguarding Lead.
- k. Ensure that failure to comply with policy and procedures will be investigated and may lead to disciplinary action against the individual concerned.
- l. Take action to address poor practice within their own organisation.
- m. Ensure that everyone knows what to do if they are concerned about a child or adult at risk's welfare.
- n. Promote a culture where everyone is encouraged to raise concern without fear of negative repercussions.
- o. Ensure, where appropriate, that children and adults at risk are aware of behaviour that is not acceptable, and how they can keep themselves safe (for example, having a code of conduct, and having information of charities and organisations available to children and adults at risk – helpful links below).
- p. Have an appropriate safeguarding procedure.

## Section I: Supporting Documents

42. This document should be read alongside other policies, procedures and guidance:
  - a. SportCheer England Reporting Procedure

## Section J: Contact Details

- SportCheer England Safeguarding Lead (Marie-Claire Gane):  
[scsafeguarding@gmail.com](mailto:scsafeguarding@gmail.com)

Other organisations to assist with safeguarding issues surrounding children and young people

- NSPCC helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Childline: 0800 1111
- Samaritans: 116 123
- [Barnardos](#)
- [The Children's Society](#)
- [Action for Children](#)
- [The Lucy Faithful Foundation](#) (charity dedicated to tackling child sexual abuse)

- [Marie Collins Foundation](#) (for children suffering sexual abuse via the internet or mobile phone technologies)
- [Young Minds](#) (mental health support for children and young people)
- [The Mix](#) (for young people under the age of 25): 0808 808 4994
- [The Disabled Children's Partnership](#)
- [Mermaids](#) (organisation for gender diverse children and young people)
- [Rape Crisis](#): 0808 802 9999
- [The Survivors Trust](#) (National umbrella organisation for specialist rape and sexual abuse support services)
- [Women's Aid](#) (organisation for assistance with domestic abuse)
- [SafeLives](#) (organisation for assistance with domestic abuse)
- [Survivors UK](#) (Male rape and sexual abuse)
- [London Survivors Gateway](#) (the hub for sexual violent support services in London)
- [Acid Survivors Trust International](#)

This policy was last updated on:

By..... Marie-Claire Gane.....

Role.....Safeguarding Lead.....

Signed.....

Date..... 23/12/2020.....

Reviewed by the Board on: 10/10/2020