



Joint Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for Baseball and Softball

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1 Introduction

Sport can and does have a powerful and positive influence on its participants, especially young people. Not only can it provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement, it can also develop valuable qualities such as self-esteem, leadership and teamwork. These positive effects can only take place if sport is in the right hands – in the hands of those who place the welfare of all participants first and adopt practices that support, protect and empower them.

The reality, however, is that abuse does sometimes take place in sport and in some cases coaches and other trusted adults in sport have been convicted of criminal offences and/or disciplined by the National Governing Body (NGB) of the sport.

The British Baseball Federation (BBF), the British Softball Federation (BSF) and BaseballSoftballUK (BSUK) are committed to working together and in partnership with all relevant agencies to ensure that we fulfil our legal and moral obligations to safeguard and promote the welfare of all participants, and specifically young people.

This Joint Safeguarding Policy is mandatory for all BBF, BSF, BSUK officials, staff and members, and for members of all affiliated organisations when engaged in baseball and softball activities with young people. You are expected to adopt, implement and actively promote all aspects of the Safeguarding Policy.

The Joint Safeguarding Procedures have been produced to offer guidance to everyone involved with baseball and softball (employed staff, volunteers, administrators, coaches, officials, parents and players) to help implement safeguarding best practice in such areas as recruitment of staff and volunteers, anti-bullying, use of social media and planning events and competitions.

Policy Statement/Aims

The BBF, the BSF and BSUK accept that we have a duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children involved in our sports. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

However, it is important to note that **safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**

Definitions, terms and acronyms used in the Joint Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

BBF	British Baseball Federation
BSF	British Softball Federation
BSUK	BaseballSoftballUK
Child or young person	Defined as a child that has not yet reached their 18 th birthday (The Children Act 1989).
Child protection	Part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. Refers to the process for protecting specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.
Code of Conduct	A clearly-stated expectation of the standard of behavior required by the individuals to whom it refers.
BSUK SO	BSUK (National) Safeguarding Officer, based at BSUK
NGB	National Governing Body (of Sport)
Parents	A generic term to represent a person or people with legal parental responsibility for a child or young person.
Poor practice	Defined for the purposes of this Policy as behavior which contravenes BBF, BSF and BSUK policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct and may directly or indirectly harm the health or development of children. Such behavior may be intentional or accidental.
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children	The process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, thus preventing impairment of their health and development.
CSO	Club Safeguarding Officer

Policy aims

The aim of the Joint Safeguarding Policy is to promote best practice:

- Providing children and young people with appropriate safety and protection whilst engaged in activities run under the auspices of the BBF, the BSF, BSUK and affiliated or member organisations.
- Allowing all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific safeguarding issues.

General principles

The Safeguarding Policy and Procedure is based on the following principles:

- The safety and welfare of the child is paramount.
- The rights, dignity and worth of young people will be respected.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff (paid/unpaid) and volunteers working within baseball and softball have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate person.
- The Executive Boards of the BBF, the BSF and BSUK accept responsibility for the welfare of young people involved in baseball and softball, and for the approval and implementation of these policies and procedures.
- Young people and parents must be informed of these policies and procedures and supported in raising complaints and concerns.
- We are committed to safe recruitment, selection and vetting, and to training and supervising our employees and volunteers to adopt and promote best practice to safeguard and protect children from abuse.
- These policies and procedures will be reviewed and updated to a planned timetable, and when necessary to respond to changes in legislation and best practice.
- Confidentiality will be upheld in line with current legislation.

Roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and effective implementation of safeguarding requires all those delivering baseball and softball to work in close partnership. Key roles and responsibilities in this regard are listed below.

The role of BaseballSoftballUK is to:

- Act as lead organisation in all matters relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Highlight that the BSUK Board has a responsibility for upholding the Joint Safeguarding Policy and for responding to any suspected breaches of it.
- Appoint one or more members of staff as BSUK Safeguarding Officers (BSUK SOs).
- Provide training, support and guidance relating to safeguarding to clubs and other affiliated and member organisations.
- Maintain and update regularly a national record of all suspended and disqualified persons.
- Liaise closely with the BBF, the BSF and affiliated and member organisations over disciplinary matters related to safeguarding and misconduct, and over the identification of training needs in this area.
- Handle all media enquiries about suspected or reported abuse or poor practice.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the Joint Safeguarding Policy through BSUK Board review.

The role of the BBF and BSF is each to:

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- Accept that the Executive Board has a responsibility for upholding the Joint Safeguarding Policy and for responding to any suspected breaches of it.
 - Appoint from their Executive Board a named person with responsibility for Safeguarding matters, including liaison with BSUK.
 - Carry out disciplinary investigations when appropriate.
 - Respond appropriately and in a timely manner to recommendations made by the BSUK Safeguarding Officer.

The role of each club (or other affiliated or member organisation) is to:

- Promote safeguarding as everyone's responsibility.
- Using a robust recruitment process, appoint at least one Safeguarding Officer and preferably two (one male and one female) and notify BSUK of their names and contact details.
- Accept that all officers and Committee members have responsibility for upholding the Joint Safeguarding Policy, including responding to and reporting any suspected breaches of it.
- Implement recommendations from BSUK relating to safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Through the Safeguarding Officer, inform children's social care if a concern is identified. If the Safeguarding Officer is not available, or the concern is about them, then the person with concerns or the person being informed of them should immediately contact children's social care or the police (and ensure that the BSUK Safeguarding Officer is notified).
- Ensure that contact details for children's social care, the police and NSPCC are made available to all club organisers, coaches and officials.
- Ensure that any concern raised or complaints made in relation to the welfare of a child is handled in accordance with the Joint Safeguarding Complaints Procedure.
- Maintain, as far as possible, the confidentiality of those disclosing, those accused of misconduct and any alleged victims.
- Carry out or contribute to disciplinary investigations when appropriate.

The role of the Club Safeguarding Officer is to:

- Promote robust recruitment practices to identify club helpers/officials/coaches and ensure that each person completes a volunteer reference form.
- Ensure that any concern raised or complaint made in relation to the welfare of a child is handled in accordance with the Joint Safeguarding Complaints Procedure.
- Receive and advise on reports or disclosures from club members.
- Initiate action, ensuring that all appropriate persons have been contacted.
- Inform the BSUK Safeguarding Officer of any cases of misconduct that involve suspected child abuse.
- Maintain up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues with support from BSUK.
- Refer all media enquiries about suspected or reported abuse or poor practice to BSUK.

The role of the BSUK Safeguarding Officer is to:

- Advise and deal with cases of suspected poor practice and/or child abuse.
- Support Club Safeguarding Officers where there is an ongoing case in their club.
- Ensure that all parties are informed of current actions.
- Advise the BBF, the BSF and BSUK (following the completion of a case) of recommendations for change to any BSUK policies or procedures.
- Minimise the risk to children and young people of any repeated or ongoing concerns.

JOINT SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

Promoting best safeguarding practice

All staff and volunteers are expected to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are best practice examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Best safeguarding practice means:

- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication).
- Treating all children with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each child before winning.
- Building a balanced and professional relationship based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the BSUK Coach Education programme.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same-gender abuse can also occur.
- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not share the rooms of children or invite children into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model -- this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children -- avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act *in loco parentis* and, if the need arises, to administer 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.
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

Coach/Activator licensing

The BSUK Coach Licence Scheme sets best practice standards of coaching by:

- Establishing minimum operating standards.
- Considering coaching environment factors.
- Defining coaching roles and responsibilities within baseball and softball.

The Coach/Activator licence lets clubs, schools and other organisations know that an individual is qualified to coach in that situation. Becoming licenced requires some additional steps to undertaking a BSUK coaching qualification. Depending on the type of licence, coaches may need an annual DBS check and to possess valid first aid and safeguarding qualifications.

BSUK strongly recommends that all coaches working with children and young people become licensed. More details are available at <http://www.baseballsoftballuk.com/coach/licence>.

Practices to be avoided

The practices below should be avoided except in emergencies:

- Spending time alone with children away from others.
- Taking or dropping off a child to an event or activity.

If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of someone in the club and the child's parents -- for example, if a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a session.

Practices never to be sanctioned

You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child.
- Invite or allow children to stay with you at your home unsupervised.

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of a parent and the player involved. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur, you should report this immediately to the appropriate officer and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a player.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have said or done.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is the maltreatment of a child. This maltreatment could be someone neglecting the child or inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse is often inflicted by people the child knows and trusts.

Child abuse can occur within many situations, including the home, school and sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document and the Joint Safeguarding Complaints Procedure.

When a child enters club activity having been subjected to child abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child's self-esteem. In such instances the relevant club officer(s) must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child receives the required support.

There are four main types of child abuse: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect.

PHYSICAL ABUSE may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm or deliberate ill health to a child or vulnerable adult. It might also occur if a player is forced to train beyond his/her capabilities.

SEXUAL ABUSE involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. It may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material; or encouraging

children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. More recently it has been highlighted that children are being sexually exploited in return for gifts, money or sometimes just attention.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child or vulnerable adult that adversely affects their development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, and inadequate, or putting inappropriate expectations on them. In a sporting context this may include severe parental or coaching pressure to succeed. Racially and sexually abusive remarks constitute emotional abuse and can also be a feature of bullying.

NEGLECT is the persistent failure to meet a person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, such as failing to provide shelter, food or clothing, or being unresponsiveness to a child's or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. In a sporting context it could also mean exposing them to harm or failing to ensure they are safe.

BULLYING is not technically a type of child abuse, but it does have traits that may overlap the types of child abuse identified. Bullying is anything that involves intentionally hurting, intimidating, frightening or upsetting another person. Bullying can include emotional, physical, racist, sexual, homophobic, verbal or cyber elements. It is important to remember that bullying will not always involve face-to-face contact.

Some vulnerable children and young people have been identified as being at risk of radicalisation from some individuals due to problems at home/school/in the club.

If you have any concerns about a child or a vulnerable adult in your club, follow the guidance in Section 7.1: *Actions if there are concerns*.

Use of photographic/filming equipment at sporting events

There is a great benefit to creating and using positive images of young people playing baseball and softball. However, there is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate images of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All clubs should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer.

Here is some guidance to support best safeguarding practice:

- Request some form of identification when people are registering to take photographs or video images.
- All photography equipment will have the audible 'click' sound turned on.
- All photographs and images will reflect a positive impression of the sport and the participants, will feature appropriate sports kit and will be taken in a way that reduces the opportunities for their misinterpretation or abuse.

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- If possible, encourage a focus on the activity rather than the child.

The following will NOT be permitted:

- Unsupervised access to any young person or one-to-one photo sessions.
- Unsupervised photo sessions outside of the sports' competitions.
- Photography in the changing rooms.

Videoring as a coaching aid

There is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, players and their parents should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and their consent obtained, and such films should be stored safely.

Recruitment, Employment and Deployment of Staff and Volunteers

The BBF, the BSF and BSUK recognise that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way, but all reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children.

The same procedures should be adopted whether those doing the work are paid or unpaid, full or part-time, or volunteers.

Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record.
- The form should also state that failure to disclose information or subsequent failure to conform to relevant Codes of Conduct may result in disciplinary action and possible exclusion from the sport.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- Two confidential references should be obtained, including one regarding previous work with children and/or vulnerable adults as appropriate. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).

Interview and induction

All employees (and volunteers) will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive an induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- Safeguarding procedures are explained and training needs are identified.
- They should sign up to the Joint Code of Conduct and Joint Safeguarding Policy.

Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established best practice, and ensure their practice is not likely to result in allegations being made.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child, a parent or another adult.
- Work safely and effectively with children.

It is recommended that all staff and volunteers working with children should undertake:

- Basic safeguarding awareness training (e.g. the scUK workshop Safeguarding and Protecting Children: A Guide for Sportspeople or the Educare for Sport online training programme).
- First Aid (e.g. St John or St Andrew's Ambulance First Aid qualifications).
- Training in how to work effectively with children (e.g. scUK workshops on Positive Behaviour Management and/or How to Deliver Engaging Sessions for Young People).
- The CPSU's Time to Listen workshop, adapted specifically for BaseballSoftballUK. Whilst the content is aimed at the role of the Club Safeguarding Officer, this workshop would benefit everyone involved in baseball and softball.

Monitoring and appraisal

At regular intervals (or following a programme), all staff or volunteers should be given the opportunity to receive formal (e.g. through an appraisal) or informal feedback to identify training needs and set new goals. Managers should be sensitive to any concerns about poor practice or abuse and act on them at an early stage. They should also offer appropriate support to those who report concerns/complaints.

Complaints procedures

The Joint Complaints Policy (and where appropriate the Joint Safeguarding Complaints Procedure) should be used to deal with any concerns or complaints. The BBF, the BSF and BSUK should ensure that all clubs/leagues are aware of the existence of these policies and procedures. Clubs/leagues should ensure that parents and young people are also aware of them.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in baseball or softball to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or is taking place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

The BBF, the BSF and BSUK will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who, in good faith, reports any concerns they may have about a child or an adult's behavior towards a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff (or a volunteer), there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation
- A child protection investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

The results of the police and child protection investigation may well influence and inform the disciplinary investigation, but all available information will be used to reach a decision.

Action if there are concerns

Concerns about poor practice

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the Club Safeguarding Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

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- If the allegation is about poor practice by the Club Safeguarding Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the BSUK Safeguarding Officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

Concerns about suspected abuse

- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to a statutory agency and/or the BSUK Safeguarding Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The parents of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the BSUK Safeguarding Officer or the statutory agency.
- The BSUK Safeguarding Officer will deal with any media enquiries.
- If the BSUK Safeguarding Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the BSUK Chief Executive Officer who will refer the allegation to the appropriate statutory agency.

Confidentiality

Every effort must be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need-to-know basis only, which would normally include only the following people:

- The Club Safeguarding Officer.
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused.
- The person making the allegation.
- Children's social care and/or the police.
- The BSUK Safeguarding Officer.

Information should be stored in a secure place with access limited to designated people, in line with data protection laws, which require that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure.

Internal enquiries and suspension

- The BSUK Safeguarding Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and children's social care inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of children's social care or police inquiries, the relevant person or body will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the relevant person or body must reach a decision based upon the available information, which could suggest that, on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse

- Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff may need - for example, signposting to helplines, support groups and open meetings. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, Email: bac@bacp.co.uk, Internet: www.bacp.co.uk.
- Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children).

Where such an allegation is made, the club should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to children's social care or the police. This is because other children, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person.

Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to allegations or suspicions' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to share their concerns (it is believed that up to 12 children each year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to keep this a secret.
- Keep records of what is said (what was done, by whom, when, where).
- Report any concerns to the Club Safeguarding Officer or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

Action towards the bully(ies)

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully(ies)'s parents.
- Provide support for the victim's coach.

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- Impose sanctions as necessary.
 - Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
 - Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
 - Inform all organisation members of any action taken.
 - Keep a written record of action taken.
 - Most 'low level' incidents will be dealt with at the time by coaches and volunteers. However, if the bullying is severe (e.g. a serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents should be referred to the designated Club Safeguarding Officer as in 'Responding to allegations or suspicions' above.

Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment (e.g. a parent)

- Report your concerns to the Club Safeguarding Officer, who should contact the relevant statutory agency or the police as soon as possible (see below for the information children's social care or the police will need).
- If the Club Safeguarding Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact children's social care or the police immediately.
- The relevant statutory agency and the Club Safeguarding Officer will decide how to involve the parents.
- The Club Safeguarding Officer should also report the incident to the BSUK Safeguarding Officer as soon as practicable.
- Maintain confidentiality on a need-to-know basis only.

Information for children's social care or the police about suspected abuse

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child's name, age, date of birth and ethnicity.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries, and also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has anyone spoken to the child? If so, what was said?
- Has anything been alleged to the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible, referral to the police or children's social care should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact children's social care or the police, the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111.

To report a concern please click here: <https://bsuk.wufoo.com/forms/p1aore7i1e06r7i/>.

