

Shropshire Paddlesports Whistle Blowing Policy

The policies and guidelines referenced within this document are those of British Canoeing Union and its home nation associations (BCU)

1. PURPOSE

- To encourage individuals to feel confident in raising concerns about the safety and welfare of children, young people and adults involved in canoeing.
- To provide a method of raising concerns and to receive feedback on any action 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.

2. SCOPE

All those involved in Shropshire paddle sports official activity carried out at under the jurisdiction of BCU.

3. PRINCIPLES

Players, coaches, officials, parents or team followers are often the first to realise that the safety and welfare of a child or adult 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 what may just be a suspicion of poor practice.

Shropshire paddle sports club are committed standards of openness, honesty and accountability. In line with that commitment, individuals are encouraged, if they have serious concerns about any aspect of someone else'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 being disadvantaged.

The policy is intended to encourage and enable individuals to raise serious concerns, rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside of the Club or BCU.

It is in the interest of all concerned that disclosure of potential abuse or concerns are dealt with properly, quickly and discreetly. 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, young person or adult concerned. Shropshire paddle sports 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 alleged poor practice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary procedures that already affect individuals.

At times and depending of the nature of the concern the police may be contacted.

Shropshire paddle sports and BCU will do its best to protect the identity of the whistle blower when they raise a concern and do not want their name to be disclosed. It must be appreciated that the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and a statement by the whistle blower may be required as part of the evidence. They will be given prior notice of this and a chance to discuss the consequences. Support is available from the Chair and the welfare officer

4. 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.

Normal procedure would be for the Directors to consider the following no action or to appoint an investigating officer. The factors to be considered to decide this 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.

5. UNTRUE ALLEGATIONS

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, including being referred to British Canoeing or home nation disciplinary procedure will apply.

6. HOW TO RAISE A CONCERN

Concerns may be made verbally or in writing to either the Chair, the welfare officer or a director depending on the concern.

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 that there are sufficient grounds for their concern.

Individuals should raise their concerns in the first instance to the contacts below

If the concern is not resolved within the club the individual can also consider notifying the BCU

Email: safeguarding@britishcanoeing.org.uk or post (marked 'Private & Confidential).

7. Response once a concern is raised?

The action taken by Shropshire paddle sports will obviously depend on the nature of the concern.

All cases will be referred to the directors appointing an officer to investigate primarily this will be the Welfare officer/unless the concern is around one of the directors in which case the Welfare officer will still carry out an investigation and report but to the Chair or one director only depending on the findings of the investigation if the investigation is around the Welfare officer another Director will be appointed.

Receipt of the individual's concern will be acknowledged immediately and the appointing officer within five working days of the concern being received, they will write to them:

- Indicating how the matter will be dealt with.
- Giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response.
- Tell them whether any initial enquiries have been made.
- Tell them whether further investigations will take place, and if not, why not.

If the concern is needed to be reported to BCU and the whistle blower is required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, British Canoeing will advise them about the procedure and give support.

Shropshire paddle sports 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

outcomes of any investigations, and the action that is to be taken against those whose actions caused them concern.

The nature of Shropshire paddle sports is to always improve and develop so where able any learning will be included for all coaches and volunteers etc in briefing and feedback.

If needed policy/procedures ways of working changes are to be made to minimise the possibility of a similar concern being raised in the future.

1. HOW THE MATTER CAN BE TAKEN FURTHER

This policy is intended to provide individuals with a way in which they can raise concerns to ensure the safety and welfare of All. However, if the individual is not satisfied they have the right to escalate there concerns to the chair or a director or inform BCU.