



ANGLING TRUST

Angling Trust

PD44 Safeguarding Whistleblowing Policy

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Safeguarding Whistleblowing Policy

It is acknowledged that feelings generated by the discovery that a coach, volunteer or other child or young person has abused, or may be abusing, a child will raise concern amongst other coaches or volunteers, particularly in relation to the difficulties inherent in reporting such matters.

It is important, however, that any concerns for the welfare of any child arising from poor practice, abuse or harassment by a coach, volunteer or child / young person should be reported immediately following the reporting process highlighted in appendix 4.

Coaches, officials, team mates or parents may suspect that a young person's safety and welfare are under threat, but they may not express their concerns due to fear of harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may be easier for them to ignore the concern or hope someone else speaks out rather than report what may be a suspicion of poor practice.

The Angling Trust is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. In line with that commitment, individuals are encouraged, if they have serious concerns about any aspect of a young person's safety and welfare, to come forward and voice those concerns. ALL those involved in activity carried out under the jurisdiction of the Angling Trust are covered by this policy.

Purpose

- ✓ To encourage individuals to feel confident and supported in raising concerns about the welfare of young people involved in angling in accordance with the Angling Trust Safeguarding Children and Young People in Angling Policy and Code of Conduct.
- ✓ To provide a method of raising concerns directly to the ATSO 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.

Principles

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** angling rather than overlooking a problem or having to look outside the sport.

It is in the interest of all concerned that disclosure of potential abuse; poor practice or breaches of the Code of Conduct are dealt with appropriately. This is essential to ensure that the welfare of children is prioritised and in the interests of all involved in angling.

The Angling Trust is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of everyone within the angling community. 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 young person concerned.

The Angling Trust will not tolerate any form of harassment or victimisation and will take appropriate action to protect individuals when they raise a concern in good faith.

Confidentiality

The Angling Trust 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 depending the identity of the whistle blower may be apparent or a statement by the whistle blower may be essential as part of the evidence. Any concerns about this should be discussed when the concerns are raised.

Anonymous allegations

This policy encourages the whistle blower to put their name to their allegation, even if they do not wish this to be disclosed to other parties. It may not be possible to seek further information or provide updates if the allegations are anonymous.

Unfounded 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. However, if it is established that they have made malicious or frivolous allegations, or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them.

How to raise a concern

The whistle blowing policy should only be followed if the person raising the concern feels unable to follow the standard reporting procedures as set out in the Angling Trust Safeguarding Children and Young People in Angling Policy.

Individuals should raise the concern in the first instance with the Angling Trust Safeguarding Officer. 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 the 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 be able to explain clearly why they are concerned in order for the Angling Trust Safeguarding Officer to determine whether that there are sufficient grounds for taking further action.

How the Angling Trust will respond

The action taken by the Angling Trust will depend on the nature of the concern. This could include informing the statutory agencies, referral to the Angling Trust Safeguarding Committee or the formation of a Child Protection Case Management Panel.

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 and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information will be sought from the whistle blower as part of the investigation process.

If 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.

The Angling Trust accepts that the whistle blower needs to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Subject to 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. Also, if appropriate, what policy changes are to be made to minimise the possibility of a similar concern being raised in the future.

How the matter can 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 young person involved in any angling activity. The Angling Trust hopes individuals will be satisfied that any safeguarding issue raised has been considered appropriately. If they are not satisfied and if they feel it is right to take the matter outside of angling they should contact:

- ✓ The Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU);
- ✓ Their local Children's Social Care;
- ✓ Their local Police Child Protection Team.

Remember, doing nothing is not an option in the sport of Angling!