

Responding to reports of non-recent historic abuse in sport – CPSU guidance

Why it's important for sports organisations to be aware

All organisations who work with children are required to do everything they can to recognise and report abuse quickly and appropriately in order to keep children and young people safe. In relation to non-recent historic abuse, there are a number of ongoing investigations and inquiries – criminal and otherwise – at institutions across the UK. For example, Operation Hydrant¹ and the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.²

It's therefore important for your staff and volunteers to be aware of what to do if they encounter a disclosure of non-recent historic abuse.

What is non-recent historic abuse?

A number of terms are used to describe this kind of abuse – such as historic abuse and non-recent child abuse – and these are sometimes used interchangeably. All such related terms should be dealt with in the same way.

These terms are commonly used to refer to disclosures of sexual abuse that were perpetrated in the past.

It can also be about a disclosure of neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse from someone who is now 18 years or over, relating to an incident that took place when the alleged victim was under 18 years old.

Allegations can be:

- an adult making an allegation of abuse when they were under 18 years of age, that occurred at least one year before it was reported
- a child³ making an allegation of abuse that occurred at least one year before it was reported
- an individual who reports an allegation, on behalf of another child or adult, that occurred at least one year before it was reported

Children who have been [abused or neglected](#) may experience physical or emotional harm. The effects can be short term but sometimes they last into adulthood. If someone has been abused as a child, it is more likely that they will suffer abuse again. This is known as revictimisation.

¹ Operation Hydrant is the national policing operation established to manage and coordinate the increasing demand placed on police forces to respond to, investigate and manage non-recent historic abuse in institutional settings, or abuse alleged to have been perpetrated by persons of public prominence.

² The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) will investigate whether public bodies and other non-state institutions have taken seriously their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse in England and Wales.

³ Child: This guidance is in respect of all children. A child includes babies, children and young people from pre-birth up to 18 years. In Scotland, a child is someone up to the age of 16 unless the child is subject to a supervision requirement by a Children's Hearing, in which case they are considered a child until the age of 18 years.

A non-recent abuse procedure must be followed in the following circumstances:

- allegations of child abuse involving people in positions of influence due to being in the public eye or people in a position of trust
- allegations of child abuse offences that took place historically where there may have been a failure within an organisation to protect children
- allegations of child abuse involving people who are likely to be active where other children may be at risk of harm.

Related policies and procedures

It is important to cross-reference your procedures on responding to non-recent concerns with other procedures within your organisation. These will include:

- safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures to respond to all concerns about a child
- whistleblowing procedures
- complaints procedures

Why having a policy is important

In recent years, there have been increasing reports of child sexual abuse in a number of institutions (for example, in BBC premises, the NHS, in children's homes and in schools). Allegations of sexual offending involving children have been made against people in prominent positions in public life, such as those in the media and in Parliament.

The '[Giving Victims a Voice report](#)' into allegations of sexual abuse stated that the earliest reported incident was in 1954 in Manchester and the final reported offence was in 2009.

An allegation of this nature can be received by any individual working in a sports organisation. Non-recent historic abuse allegations could be made against relatives, friends, carers, people in the public eye or a position of trust, or any other person who currently has, or previously had, contact with children, young people or adults at risk.

Disclosures normally, but don't always, take place when the victim is no longer in circumstances where they consider themselves at risk from the perpetrator.

Reporting can be delayed due to:

- fear of reprisals
- the degree of control exercised by the abuser
- shame or fear that the allegation may not be believed
- lack of confidence before becoming aware that the abuser is being investigated for a similar matter
- feelings of needing closure in order to move on

Action must be taken in these instances because:

- the alleged abuse may not have been an isolated incident; it might be ongoing and being perpetrated by the same person or someone else
- it may come to light that the non-recent historic abuse is part of a wider setting of institutional or organised abuse
- there is a probable likelihood that a person who abused a child in the past may still be doing so
- the perpetrator may still be working with or caring for children
- criminal prosecutions may still be taking place despite the fact that the allegations are historic in nature and in some instances may have taken place many years ago

Putting procedures in place

All allegations of non-recent abuse should be reported to the statutory authorities. In some circumstances, a referral may have already been made to children's social care and further allegations made.

It's important that, in all cases, the new information needs to be shared with those involved and recorded. The rationale for decision-making will need to be recorded as part of your case-management processes. If in doubt, discuss this with the Local Authority, LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) or equivalent.

As with any disclosure, it's important to reassure victims that they will be believed and to inform them of the support available from agencies such as [NAPAC](#), whose details are listed at the bottom of this guidance.

When receiving information about non-recent historic abuse, staff or volunteers should seek to obtain where possible the following:

- name and contact details of the person making the allegation, taking into account if the individual wishes to remain anonymous
- name of the individual who the allegation is about and any other identifying information, including location
- name of any children or other victims involved
- date and time of when the abuse occurred
- key information about the nature of the non-recent historic abuse allegation
- establish, where possible, if the alleged perpetrator is still working with or caring for children
- establish whether or not other agencies are involved

How to report non-recent historic abuse

For professionals and sports organisations:

- [Gov.UK's guidance for reporting child abuse and links to your local council](#)

For individuals:

- report abuse to the police by calling their number for non-urgent crimes on 101
- report abuse through the [NSPCC helpline](#) on 0800 800 500
- if you need support, speak to [NAPAC](#) – the National Association for People Abused in Childhood – on 0808 801 0331