

# HOW TO DEAL WITH CONCERNS AND ALLEGATIONS

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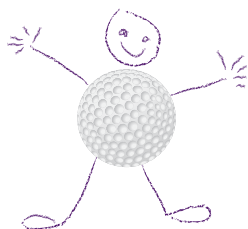
### Flowchart 1 (Outside Golf)

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children in golf



# HOW TO DEAL WITH CONCERNS AND ALLEGATIONS

## 1 INTRODUCTION

**It is not the responsibility of those working in Golf to make judgements as to whether or not child abuse is occurring. However, it is their responsibility to act on any concerns.**

Adults within golf have a duty of care to respond to inappropriate behaviour, abuse or bullying.

All information received and discussed must be treated in confidence and only shared with those individuals within the organisation who will be able to manage and resolve the situation. On occasion it may be necessary to seek advice, or inform the statutory agencies e.g. Child Social Care (CSC) or the Police.

## 2 DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS

Any allegations involving inappropriate behaviour towards a child must be taken seriously, investigated and treated confidentially.

If an allegation is made against an individual the result of this may be:

- they will be asked to stop working with children in golf immediately whilst a full investigation is carried out. This is to protect all parties involved.
- on completion of the investigation, the Golf NGB will help assess whether it is appropriate for the person to return to work with children in golf, and how this will be managed.
- the Golf NGB will assess on a case-by-case basis any support needed for the person about whom the allegations have been made.
- they may choose to appoint an independent person to provide this support.

When an allegation or concern has been made, it is important that the correct reaction and procedure about how to report that concern is followed.

The points below will assist:

### 2.1 Responding to Allegations and Concerns

There are appropriate procedures to manage reported concerns or allegations, which have been compiled in accordance with Government guidelines and legislation (See CiG Strategy Group Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy). To retain golf's integrity it is important that all organisations apply the same procedures.

### 2.2 Reporting and Managing Concerns

#### 2.2.1 Outside of Golf

There may be occasions when a concern is raised regarding alleged abuse outside golf.

If the referral relates to an incident outside golf:

- the GWO should be notified.
- GWO may notify CSC or the Police.
- no further action will be taken under golf procedures.
- in partnership with the appropriate agencies, golf may need to provide support for the child and person making the referral.

Working in a school – you must inform the designated teacher, who will follow the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB) procedures.

Working on a local authority programme – you must inform the Sports Development Officer or nominated person, who will follow the LSCB procedures.

*(See Flowchart 1, Page 41)*

## 2.2.2 Inside Golf

There may be occasions when a concern is raised regarding alleged abuse inside golf.

If the referral relates to incidents of possible child abuse within golf:

- the GWO should be notified.
- the GWO must notify either the local CSC and/or the Police and the NGB CPO.
- the NGB CPO will notify the CiG Case Management Group (CMG), as required.
- advice from CSC and/or Police should be taken into account when determining the timing of any investigation, which may be being considered under the NGB Disciplinary Procedures.

**If the Club or County Welfare Officer or NGB CPO is not available, delay must be avoided and advice sought from the local CSC, the Police, the LSCB or the NSPCC. As soon as possible, inform the NGB CPO and explain action taken to date.**

In all instances if an incident is reported, ensure that the NGB CPO is made aware. It is essential that any concerns or allegations are dealt with centrally, rather than just within the organisation. The concern or allegation may be one part of a much wider picture concerning that child or adult.

To protect a child from any further potential risk and also to protect the person against whom the allegation is made, it is essential that any concerns or allegations are dealt with confidentially. Until such time as the allegations are substantiated, only those who can assist with the handling of the case should be informed. Even if the allegation is after investigation unfounded, the rules of confidentiality are to be adhered to.

In line with data protection principles, all records kept by the Golf NGB must be kept securely, with limited access to authorised people.

*(See Flowchart 2, Page 42)*

## 3 CHILDREN IN GOLF CASE MANAGEMENT GROUP (CiG CMG)

Where a concern is reported relating to the welfare and protection of children, the CiG CMG will inform referring organisations of the approach they should take. Principally this will relate to the 'route' a case should take within golf and/or via external referral to statutory agencies. For example, minor poor practice would be referred back to a club complaints/disciplinary procedures with advice, whilst suspected abuse of a child would be dealt with at national level through disciplinary procedures and via statutory agencies.

One of the functions of the CiG CMG is to complement and co-ordinate within golf any action that is being taken by the statutory agencies investigating concerns about the welfare of a child.

The CiG CMG includes people who have relevant knowledge and experience to enable the group to fulfil its role. The group thereby has experience, understanding and awareness of child welfare/protection issues, decision-making processes, criminal justice, and best practice in golf. At least one member of the group is external to the CiG Strategy Group and has current professional child protection knowledge and experience, such as a child protection social work manager or child protection team officer.

The CiG CMG ensures that, in dealing with cases, the decision making process is consistent and fair across golf, and is separated from the process of investigation.

## 4 WHISTLE-BLOWING

Staff, volunteers, PGA Professionals, coaches, referees, members, parents and other juniors may be the first to have concerns about a child's safety and welfare. However, they may be reluctant to express their concerns as speaking up may be difficult. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may seem easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of poor practice. When individuals feel unable to follow the normal reporting procedures (Flowchart 2) or have already followed the procedure and consider that the issues have not been adequately addressed, they are encouraged to contact the NGB CPO.

This process, known as "whistle-blowing", enables individuals to share their concerns, in confidence with the NGB CPO, without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. All concerns will be taken seriously and managed accordingly within the CiG Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The NGB will fully support and protect those, who, in good faith, report their concerns that someone has demonstrated poor practice or has abused, or may be, abusing a child. The NGB 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. However, depending on the seriousness of the allegation, particularly when it may be necessary to seek advice or inform the Police or Childrens Social Care, it may not be possible to keep the source of the information hidden. The individual will be given prior notice of this and a chance to discuss the consequences. The NGB will ensure that support is available both during and following an incident or allegation.

In cases where you are required to take immediate steps regarding a serious incident of abuse, or you do not feel able to disclose your concerns to the NGB CPO, you must contact the Police, Children's Social Care or the NSPCC.

## 5 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

The suspicion that a child may be being abused will raise feelings and concerns among staff, PGA Professionals, volunteers, members, parents or even other juniors and it can be inherently difficult to report such matters. However, it is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child arising from abuse or harassment should be reported immediately.

All staff, PGA Professionals, volunteers, members, parents and children should be assured that their NGB will fully support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a child may be exposed to some form of abuse.

An allegation of abuse may give rise to a child protection investigation by the CSC department and/or a criminal investigation involving the police. In addition, if the abuse is alleged to have been committed in the course of a person's employment, he or she will be subject to whatever disciplinary procedures and sanctions apply within their organisation.

However, for volunteers, staff and PGA members, if the abuse is alleged to have occurred within the context of golf, it may also require separate disciplinary action by the organisation and/or the Governing Body. The GWO or other person in charge of the organisation should therefore inform the NGB CPO of the circumstances.

The NGB CPO, in consultation with the officers of the CiG CMG, will make a decision as to whether any immediate action is required. If the Police and/or CSC are investigating the matter, the NGB may decide to await the outcome of these investigations, which may influence a disciplinary investigation, although not necessarily so.

The organisation should consider whether to suspend the individual concerned while an investigation is taking place. This is not intended to prejudge the outcome of the investigation, but simply to remove the individual from contact with children until the investigation is concluded. The EGU and EWGA have drafted guidance (*Appendix 5A*) in handling suspensions in Child Protection matters for counties and clubs. For other organisations please contact the NGB CPO.

Your NGB may have guidelines for individuals who are the subject of a suspension for a child protection-related matter and for clubs or counties, which wish to suspend a coach, volunteer or member of staff. Details of organizations that can support those against whom allegations have been made, children, their parents, and others involved in a child protection case can be found in *Appendix 5B*. Contact your NGB CPO for further advice.

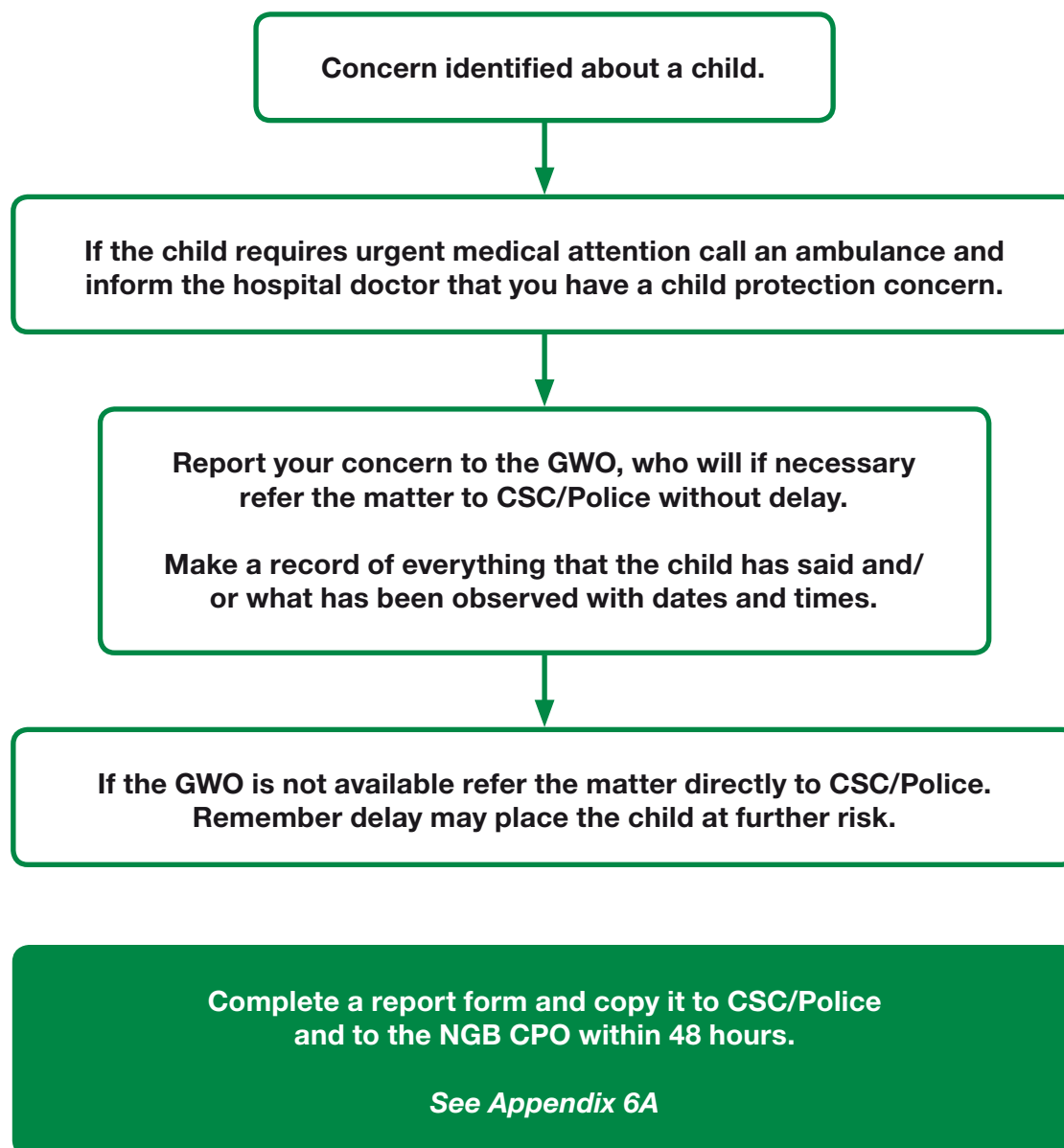
Irrespective of the findings of the CSC or police inquiries, the NGB will recommend to the organisation that they assess all individual cases under the appropriate disciplinary procedure.

It should be noted that the NGB CPO is able to provide support, even if there is not a serious disciplinary outcome to an allegation. Ill feeling and other potential long-term misunderstandings or recriminations can be avoided if the NGB CPO deals with issues and concerns in a timely, professional manner.

*See Flowcharts 1 & 2 (pages 41 & 42)*

## FLOWCHART 1 (OUTSIDE GOLF)

What to do if you are worried that a child is being abused outside the golf environment (but the concern is identified through the child's involvement in golf).



## FLOWCHART 2 (INSIDE GOLF)

What to do if you are worried about the behaviour of any member, volunteer, staff, PGA Professional, coach or official in golf or affiliated organisations.

The golf NGB CPO should seek advice and guidance from the local CSC officer and/or the Police with respect to consulting with parents.

