



Angling Trust

PD85 – AT Safeguarding Children Policy

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1. POLICY STATEMENT AND SCOPE

Children have the right to take part in sport in a safe and enjoyable environment. As the National Governing Body, the Angling Trust (AT) acknowledges its statutory, ethical, and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people, involved in AT activities, member clubs, fisheries, and events in England. We are committed to ensuring their safety, respecting their rights, and prioritising the welfare of everyone involved in angling.

AT's safeguarding processes operate within a multi-agency framework, engaging with a broader network of professionals to effectively protect children and young people in angling.

This policy applies to all AT staff, volunteers, contractors, sponsors, suppliers, members, coaches, participants, event organisers, fisheries, and anglers associated with AT and its partners. Non-compliance may lead to disciplinary actions, referrals to safeguarding agencies, or legal action.

Those outside AT or its partner organisations may use AT policies as best practice guidance but are not eligible for AT safeguarding training.

2. DEFINITION OF CHILD

A child is anyone that is under the age of 18 years old. Even if they are living independently or supporting themselves independently, they are entitled to the same levels of protection (Department of Education 2023). This policy and other guidance may also use the term 'young people' or 'young person' and for the purpose of this and all other Angling Trust policies, this also means anyone under the age of 18 years old. Please see <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/children-the-law> for more information.

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The following is a list of general principles that AT will apply in its work to safeguard and protect children and young people. The expectation is that these will be shared by all those involved with the Angling Trust.

- All children have the right to be safe, heard, respected, and supported.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Everyone regardless of their age, culture, disability, sex, gender reassignment, language, race, nationality, religious belief, sexual identity, sexual orientation have the right to protection from abuse and harm.
- Children who display harmful or concerning behaviour remain children and may themselves be vulnerable or at risk.
- Responses must be proportionate, age-appropriate, and child-centred.
- No child will be labelled, stigmatised, or treated as an offender without appropriate statutory intervention and oversight.
- Safeguarding children is paramount.

4. WORKING WITH CHILDREN WHO MAY BE VICTIMS

When a child discloses or presents as a potential victim of abuse or harm:

- The child must be **listened to carefully**, taken seriously, and treated with sensitivity and empathy.
- Staff, volunteers, and others in scope of this policy must remain **calm, neutral, and non-judgemental**.
- The child should be reassured that they have done the right thing by speaking up and that the concern will be handled appropriately.
- Do not promise to maintain confidentiality and explain to the child that information may need to be shared to seek support to keep them safe.
- Concerns must be reported **without delay** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Individuals must not investigate concerns, ask leading questions, or attempt to resolve safeguarding matters independently.

5. WORKING WITH CHILDREN WHO HAVE CAUSED HARM

Where a child may have caused harm, demonstrated inappropriate behaviour, or breached expected boundaries:

- The response will focus on **understanding, managing risk, safeguarding all children, and supporting positive change**.
- The behaviour will be addressed, **not the child's character or identity**.
- Expectations, boundaries, and acceptable behaviour must be communicated clearly and calmly.
- Appropriate supervision, guidance, and support measures may be implemented to reduce risk.
- The matter must be referred to the DSL to determine whether further action, support, or referral to statutory agencies is required.

Children who have caused harm may also require safeguarding support in their own right and must be treated with fairness, dignity, and care.

6. INVESTIGATION/ MANAGING CONCERN

6.1 Angling Trust

As a Sport England-recognised National Governing Body, the Angling Trust promotes its safeguarding policies as a best-practice guide for member clubs, fisheries, and associated organisations. The Angling Trust owns this policy and oversees its dissemination and implementation across England. The Angling Trust provides training and education on safeguarding member clubs and fisheries working with children, ensuring roles and

responsibilities are clear. Dedicated staff offer advice and guidance on safeguarding concerns for members and the wider angling community.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for maintaining high safeguarding standards across member organisations. They ensure concerns are addressed appropriately, efficiently, and in line with statutory requirements. Please note the AT safeguarding team do not provide an emergency response. **Please phone 999, 111 or Children’s Services in your area for an urgent response.**

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6.2 Reporting Concerns

Any safeguarding or welfare concern, which may include but is not limited to, allegations or suspicions of abuse, poor practice or bullying must be reported to the Angling Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead (or in their absence the member of staff covering this role). The Angling Trust using reasonable discretion, may investigate any such concerns or complaints in accordance with Angling Trust Safeguarding Procedures.

6.3 Investigation/ managing concerns

The Angling Trust will conduct or coordinate an investigation where deemed necessary. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will oversee the investigation and ensure that all enquiries necessary to establish facts and circumstances, are relevant and proportionate. This will commence promptly and be regularly reviewed. Updates to the person of concern, and to those the Angling Trust deem need to be updated, will be provided on a regular basis throughout the investigation.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will notify the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Social Care or the Police where necessary for their involvement. In addition, the Angling Trust may inform the relevant Club Welfare Officer, where appropriate.

Where an investigation reveals a criminal or possible criminal act, The Angling Trust will refer the case to the police and / or social care and seek their advice on next steps.

During the investigation, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may reasonably request, any of the following actions to assist the investigation.

- The person of concern or others to submit evidence or other documentation.
- A new criminal records check.
- A referral to a statutory agency.
- Interviews and statements with the person of concern, witnesses or the complainant.

The person of concern will be notified in writing of the nature of the investigation, unless this prejudices another investigation such as a police matter or places another individual at risk.

The person of concern being investigated is obliged to cooperate with The Angling Trust under their safeguarding procedures. The person of concern shall not approach or intimidate witnesses. This will be seen as a breach of The Angling Trust's safeguarding procedures and may be dealt with as an additional concern.

The individual may be interviewed on more than one occasion to put further information or evidence to them. The individual, at their own expense can have a legal representative or other representative present.

However, while Designated Safeguarding Lead will fulfil the Angling Trusts role as an national governing body (NGB) by following up these concerns and potentially referring them onto to statutory agencies, the Angling Trust's jurisdiction ends if these concerns are not deemed to meet the threshold for police, social care or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) involvement and/ or if the person is not an individual member of the Angling Trust. It would then fall to the club, fishery or federation to follow their own Code of Conduct and Disciplinary and Appeals process.

6.4 Temporary Suspension

The Angling Trust can request for an individual to be temporarily suspended from their role and/or participation during an investigation. The DSL and Deputy DSL can authorise a temporary suspension. A temporary suspension is a neutral act and not be viewed as punishment or a sanction.

The need for the temporary suspension to remain in place shall be regularly reviewed by the CMG.

A temporary suspension will be put in place for the following reasons.

- For the safety and welfare of the child or adult involved or those the individual has contact with.
- To protect the individual in question.
- Due to a failure to comply with The Angling Trust's safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance
- There is a risk to internal or external investigations.

A temporary suspension could apply to all or be specific of the person of concern. A letter/ email will be sent to the person of concern detailing the terms of the temporary suspension. For example, not to coach or attend any club training sessions with children.

If the individual breaches the conditions of the temporary suspension disciplinary action will be taken where deemed appropriate.

A statutory agency may instruct the Angling Trust to temporarily suspend an individual.

Statutory agencies include the police and adult social care. AT are committed to following statutory procedures relating to safeguarding and referring to the individual agencies' expertise

on safeguarding matters. AT acknowledges that different local authority statutory agencies may differ in guidance and will provide as best as is reasonably practicable a consistent approach with this in mind. Whilst it does not have statutory powers, the Ann Craft Trust are a leading authority on safeguarding adults in the UK and AT may seek their guidance on safeguarding matters affecting adults.

6.5 Case Management Group (CMG)

The CMG are an independent group appointed to advise and support the investigation as requested by the Angling Trust. They meet every 6 weeks. The CMG includes the DSL, Head of Delivery, Safeguarding Board Member, an external safeguarding professional, and a department head if required. Meetings require at least one external professional, the DSL, and either the Welfare and Safety Lead Director or an AT staff member to proceed.

A minimum of 3 members of the group are required to support and will be the investigation panel.

The role of the CMG is to assess the risk or potential risk the individual is to children and / or adults. They work to the threshold of a balance of probability and recommend appropriate actions to manage the risk. The investigation panel may consider the following considerations in their decision making.

- Are any matters revealed in the investigation relevant to the role of the individual
- Seriousness of the concern/ complaint raised
- Length of time since the incident occurred
- Is there a pattern of behaviour or other relevant concerns
- Circumstances surrounding the concern, or the explanation provided
- Any mitigating or aggravating circumstances

6.6 Conclusion of Investigation

At the conclusion of the investigation the investigation panel will decide if the case will recommend actions or sanctions which include:

- Case dismissed
- No further action
- Request a more detailed investigation
- Referral to a statutory agency
- Impose or extend a temporary suspension whilst a risk assessment is completed
- Conditional written warning explaining areas for improvement
- Require the individual to undergo further training
- Require the individual to be supervised permanently or for a specific time
- Extend the temporary suspension to allow supervision for a set time.
- Extend the temporary suspension to allow a managed agreement to be put in place to manage the risks.
- A fixed term ban with a review date
- Referral to DBS (vetting England)

- Reach any other decision appropriate to the circumstances of the case.

The DSL will inform the individual of the sanction or action within 7 days of the panel's decision. The individual can appeal the decision or sanction. Please see PD34a Disciplinary and Appeals Process.

6.7 REFERRAL TO INDEPENDENT BODY

The Angling Trust reserve the right at any point to refer any safeguarding concern to the Sport Resolutions National Safeguarding Panel for independent consideration under their procedures. A referral may include.

- Initial advice – guidance in the initial stages and how to respond to the safeguarding concern.
- Investigations - to appoint an independent investigator to undertake an investigation in relation to any Safeguarding Concern or allegation requiring investigation.
- Hearings and / or appeal hearings – to refer any Safeguarding Concern for final and binding arbitration, and / or an appeal via a tribunal to be dealt with by Sport Resolutions. The decision of Sport Resolutions regarding any appeal shall be final and binding on all concerned.

7. MEMBERS/ CLUBS/FISHERIES/ COACHES AND ASSOCIATIONS

As the National Governing Body, all individuals and organisations involved with the Angling Trust—such as members, clubs, fisheries, coaches, and event organisers—must adhere to the Angling Trust safeguarding policies, procedures, and guidance. These policies may also be adopted as their own using the Policy Statement available on our website. Clubs, fisheries, and organisations should note that while the Angling Trust Safeguarding Team is available for guidance, our jurisdiction is limited for non-members, leaving responsibility with the respective club, fishery, or organisation.

Non-member clubs, fisheries, coaches, and event organisers must still fulfil statutory safeguarding responsibilities. The Angling Trust DSL can offer guidance on meeting minimum standards.

Member clubs and fisheries must appoint a Welfare Officer (WO) known to their members and the Angling Trust even if all members are adults. This officer ensures compliance with safeguarding policies, handles concerns, and works with the AT DSL for guidance/support.

Welfare Officers are not expected to handle investigations independently. WO's must be DBS-checked through the Angling Trust, complete Safe Clubs Training, and disseminate updates with members. They will also receive ongoing training for their role.

8. CODE OF CONDUCT

The Angling Trust has a Code of Conduct that applies unequivocally to all those in scope of this policy. It is an expectation those in scope of this policy are familiar with this document and act in accordance with the policy at all times. Failure to comply with this policy and other AT related policies and procedures could result in a disciplinary/grievance process being followed, referrals to external safeguarding partner agencies or legal action.

9. POSITION OF TRUST

A **position of trust** exists when an adult has responsibility for, authority over, or influence on a child or young person within Angling Trust activities.

All adults working with or on behalf of the Angling Trust — whether paid or unpaid — must act professionally at all times and maintain clear, appropriate boundaries. The responsibility for safe and appropriate behaviour **always lies with the adult**, not the child.

Adults in positions of trust must:

- Put the **welfare of the child or young person first**.
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times, including online.
- Avoid situations that could be misinterpreted or place themselves alone with a child unnecessarily.

Adults **must not**:

- Form romantic or sexual relationships with children or young people.
- Use their role to exert pressure, control, or undue influence.
- Communicate in secretive or inappropriate ways.

A position of trust continues **outside normal sessions**, including competitions, travel, trips, and online contact.

Any concerns must be **reported immediately** in line with Angling Trust safeguarding procedures. Failing to uphold these standards may result in disciplinary action and/or referral to statutory agencies.

10. LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO)

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) has statutory responsibility for the oversight and management of allegations and concerns about adults in **positions of trust** who work with children. The LADO provides advice and guidance to the Angling Trust, determines whether concerns meet the threshold for formal allegations management, liaises with statutory agencies such as the police and children's social care where required, and monitors cases to ensure they are managed **promptly, fairly, and proportionately**. The LADO does not investigate allegations but ensures that appropriate processes are followed to protect children while also safeguarding the rights of adults against unfounded or poorly managed allegations.

11. SAFER RECRUITMENT

The Angling Trust operates in line with statutory guidance to ensure that appropriate procedures are implemented in the recruitment of staff and volunteers to assess their eligibility to work with individuals outlined in the Vulnerable groups Act 2006. This process is utilised to highlight and reject individuals who are unsuitable for roles working with adults or adults at risk (paid or volunteer). It is an expectation all those in scope of this policy utilise Safer Recruitment practices in vetting individuals before allowing them to work or volunteer with any adults.

Due to different eligibility criteria for Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for working with adults in Sport compared to children, AT may choose to use basic checks to undergo some level of criminal record screening. AT will use other safer recruitment practices to ensure appropriate vetting of individuals and reserve the right to not hire individuals based on the outcomes of the Safer Recruitment Process.

12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Angling Trust are committed to ongoing evaluation of safeguarding practices to ensure the highest standard of protection. Practices will be routinely reviewed as a dynamic measure and as a response to concerns. The DSL will report to the Angling Trust board on a quarterly basis and liaise regularly with Ann Craft Trust. The Angling Trust will be committed to stay abreast of ongoing developments of safeguarding in sport and the Angling Trust wishes to develop a listening culture therefore welcoming collaborative learning from all AT members and associates in order to improve.

13. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

Please see the safeguarding policies and guidance area of our website for more information.

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8. Appendix 1. Flowchart - managing a concern.

