



Introduction

North Shields Polytechnic Club (North Shields Poly) is committed to establishing and implementing policies and procedures which ensure a safe athletics environment for all. Our Safeguarding Policy aligns with that of our governing body, UK Athletics (UKA) which states that *'Everyone who takes part in athletics is entitled to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.'* Most adults are able to live their lives safely and free from harm, however, for some, there may be times when, for a variety of reasons, their ability to keep themselves safe and protect their wellbeing and rights is compromised.

North Shields Poly are committed to safeguard adults and to ensure that everyone involved in the organization is aware of

- the legislation, policy and procedures for safeguarding adults
- their role and responsibility for safeguarding adults
- what to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or wellbeing of an adult within the organisation.

1. Policy Statement

North Shields Poly fully accepts our legal and moral obligations to provide a duty of care, to protect all adults at risk and to safeguard their welfare, irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, religion or belief, sex or gender and sexual orientation. We will safeguard adults by ensuring that our activities are delivered in a way which keeps all adults safe.

We will develop a culture of zero tolerance of harm to adults, which necessitates:

- the recognition of adults who may be at risk and the circumstances which may increase risk
- knowing how adult abuse, exploitation or neglect manifests itself
- being willing to report safeguarding concerns.

All suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice will be taken seriously, and responded to swiftly and appropriately. All individuals involved in athletics understand and accept their responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer and organisation. We are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture where people feel able to share concerns without fear of retribution.

North Shields Poly recognises that health, wellbeing, ability, disability and need for care and support can affect a person's resilience. We recognise that some people experience barriers, for example, to communication in raising concerns or seeking help and that these factors can vary at different points in people's lives. We will act in accordance with the relevant safeguarding adult legislation and with local statutory safeguarding procedures, ensuring that any action taken is prompt, proportionate and that it includes and respects the voice of the adult concerned.

North Shields Poly will:

- Provide and enforce procedures to safeguard the wellbeing of all participants and those at risk of harm
- Ensure all adults who take part in athletics are able to participate in a safe and fun environment.
- Ensure any concern that an adult is not safe is taken seriously, responded to promptly, and followed up in line with this policy and associated procedures
- Ensure any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm
- Ensure confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored in line with our Data Protection Policy and Procedures
- Ensure the use of safe recruitment practices and continual assessment of the suitability of volunteers and staff in order to prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals in our organisation and within the athletics community
- Share information with the appropriate bodies about anyone found to be a risk to adults; for example: Disclosure and Barring Service, Police, Local Authority/Social Services
- Include a risk assessment when planning activities and events as to the safety of all adults from abuse, exploitation and neglect
- Respond to any allegations appropriately and implement the appropriate complaints, disciplinary and appeals



procedures.

- Review policies regularly. This will occur minimum annually, and in response to any changes to legislation or safeguarding best practice.

2. Definitions

An adult at risk is an individual aged 18 years and over who:

- (a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the Local Authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- (b) is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and
- (c) as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect. (The Care Act 2014)

3. Abuse

Abuse can take place in any relationship and there are many contexts in which abuse might take place. Within a sporting context this could be a member of staff, a coach, a volunteer, a participant or a fan through:

- harassment of a participant because of their (perceived) disability or other protected characteristics
- not meeting the needs of the participant (e.g. training without a necessary break)
- a coach intentionally striking an athlete
- an official or coach who sends unwanted sexually explicit text messages to a participant with learning disabilities
- a participant who threatens another participant with physical harm and persistently blames them for poor performance.

Often, the perpetrator is known to the adult and may be in a position of trust and/or power.

Under the Care Act 2014 the categories of adult abuse or harm are classified as:

- **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to an adult.
- **Emotional / Psychological abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of an adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects. It may involve conveying that they are worthless, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person or not giving opportunities to express his/her views, deliberately silencing him/her or 'making fun' of what he/she says or how he/she communicates.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing an adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving a person in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** is the persistent failure to meet a persons basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.
- **Self Neglect** applies where an adult has care and support needs and they are at risk of self-neglect and they are unable to protect themselves because of their care and support needs.
- **Financial or Material Abuse** is the mistreatment of someone in terms of their money or assets, such as their property. Financial abuse often occurs alongside other forms of abuse. It can include money being stolen or misused, fraud or putting someone under pressure in regards to their money or material goods.
- **Domestic Abuse (including coercive control)** is an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour, including sexual violence, in the majority of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but also by a family member or carer. It is very common. Domestic abuse can include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Coercive control (a pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence)
 - Psychological and/or emotional abuse



- Physical or sexual abuse.
 - Financial or economic abuse.
 - Harassment and stalking.
 - Online or digital abuse.
- **Organisational / Institutional** is neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.
 - **Modern Slavery** is a crime in which victims are exploited for someone else's gain. It can take many forms including trafficking of people, forced labour and servitude. Victims are often hidden away, may be unable to leave their situation, or may not come forward because of fear or shame.

4. Mental Capacity

UK law assumes that all people over the age of 16 have the ability to make their own decisions, unless it has been proven that they can't. Law states that to make a decision we need to:

- Understand information
- Remember it for long enough
- Think about the information
- Communicate our decision.

A person's ability to do this may be affected by things such as learning disability, dementia, mental health needs, acquired brain injury and physical ill health. Mental capacity refers to the ability to make a decision at the time when a decision is needed. A person's mental capacity can change for example a person with epilepsy may not be able to make a decision following a seizure or a person may not be able to respond as quickly if they have just taken some medication that causes fatigue.

Not being allowed to make decisions one is capable of making is abuse therefore mental capacity must be considered when we believe abuse or neglect might be taking place. It is important to make sure an 'adult at risk' has choices in the actions taken to safeguard them, including whether or not they want other people informed about what has happened. However, in some situations, the adult may not have the mental capacity to understand the choice or to tell you their views.

To ensure this the following principles should be adopted:

- We can only make decisions for other people if they cannot do that for themselves at the time the decision is needed.
- If the decision can wait, then wait – for example, to get help to help the person make their decision or until they can make it themselves.
- If we have to make a decision for someone else then we must make the decision in their best interests (for their benefit) and take into account what we know about their preferences and wishes.
- If the action we are taking to keep people safe will restrict them, then we must think of the way to do it which restricts their freedom and rights as little as possible.

A person needing support to help them make decisions whilst taking part in a sports organisation will ordinarily be accompanied by someone (e.g. a family member or formal carer whose role includes supporting them to make decisions). It is good practice to get as much information about the person as possible. It's also important to have an agreement with the person who has enrolled the adult in the sports activity about how different types of decisions will be made on a day-to-day basis.

If a person who has a lot of difficulty making their own decisions is thought to be being abused or neglected, you will need to refer the situation to the Local Authority, and this should result in health or social care professionals making an assessment of mental capacity and/or getting the person the support they need to make decisions.

5. Safeguarding Procedure



5.1 Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations

Whilst it is not the responsibility of North Shields Poly, our volunteers or members to decide whether an adult has been harmed or abused. It is, however, everyone's responsibility to respond to and report concerns they have. There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. There may be other explanations, but they should not be ignored. The signs and symptoms include but are not limited to:

- unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present
- person has belongings or money going missing
- person is not attending/no longer enjoying their sessions. You may notice that a participant in a team has been missing from practice sessions and is not responding to reminders from team members or coaches
- someone losing or gaining weight/an unkempt appearance. This could be a player whose appearance becomes unkempt, does not wear suitable sports kit and there is a deterioration in hygiene
- a change in the behaviour or confidence of a person. For example, a participant may be quiet and withdrawn when their brother comes to collect them from sessions, in contrast to their personal assistant whom they greet with a smile
- self-harm
- a fear of a particular group of people or individual
- a parent/carer always speaks for the person and doesn't allow them to make their own choices
- they may tell you/another person they are being abused (i.e. a disclosure).

How to respond to a disclosure

Don't:

- Probe for more information than is offered.
- Speculate or make assumptions.
- Give personal opinions or viewpoints
- Show shock or distaste.
- Make comments about the person against whom the allegations have been made.
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets.
- Give a guarantee of confidentiality.

5.2 Recording Concerns

North Shields Poly must comply with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). The purpose of Data Protection legislation is to ensure personal information is only shared appropriately. Data protection legislation allows information sharing within an organisation. In some circumstances information can be shared without the adult's consent where:

- it is not safe to contact the adult to gain their consent – i.e. it might put them or the person making contact at further risk
- you believe they or someone else is at risk, including children
- you believe the adult is being coerced or is under duress
- it is necessary to contact the Police to prevent a crime, or to report that a serious crime has been committed
- the adult does not have mental capacity to consent to information being shared about them
- the person causing harm has care and support needs

Once a disclosure has been made:

- Make a note of what the adult has said using his or her own words as soon as practicable.
- Complete the Adult Safeguarding Report Form (Appendix 2) will assist in the recording of information.
- Ensure you describe the circumstances in which the concern was raised and what action you took.
- It is important to distinguish between things that are fact and things that have been observed or overheard, as this will ensure that information is as accurate as possible.
- If someone else has told you about a concern they have about an adult or have witnessed harm or abuse, use the words the person used. If someone has written to you (including by email or social media), include a copy with the form. If you do not have access to a form, make notes and try to be accurate and



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factual, and write down the following detail:

- The adult's name and date of birth (if known)
- How the disclosure was made (in person, second hand by someone else, observation)
- Where the disclosure took place (date/time/location)
- Use the persons own words – do not try to edit or make it sound polite or less concerning
- What the concern is
- Description of any visible injuries or behaviours (do not examine the adult)
- Details of any witnesses
- What the adult's view is – bear in mind the abuse may be something the adult is not conscious of; it could be normal to them.

5.3 Reporting the Concern

- Immediately inform one of the club's designated welfare officers. For North Shields Poly they are:
Laura Hope – welfare@nspoly.org tel. 07850405101
Graham Lewis-Dale – welfare@nspoly.org tel.07415 393960
In the event of both club welfare officers being unavailable, the contingency point of contact is North Shields Polytechnic Club Chair of trustees: **Patrick Houghton** - patrickhoughton27@hotmail.com tel. 07779000930
- Alternatively, if the concern is about someone not connected to a club, you can send the form to your HCAF Welfare Officer or you can complete and submit the Online Safeguarding Concern Form available on the England Athletics website. welfare@englandathletics.org.

5.4 Dealing with Concerns and Allegations of Abuse

The Role of the Club Welfare Officer

All suspicions and disclosures must be reported to the one of the club's welfare officers or Local Authority Designated Officer (appropriately dependent on the disclosure) following the reporting procedures in section 6. To ensure that appropriate action is taken if there is a disclosure, statutory referral from the police, adult services or suspicions are raised, North Shields Poly has two trained welfare officers (one female and one male)

On receipt of a referral the club welfare officers will:

- Ensure any immediate actions necessary to safeguard anyone at risk have been taken. If the concern or risk is believed to be due to the behaviour of a club member then consider the relevant procedures (e.g. interim suspension from the club) to prevent that person having contact with the adult being harmed.
- Review the Adult Safeguarding Report Form for completeness or if contacted directly by a club member, or a member of the public, ensure that they provide enough information for you to complete the Adult Safeguarding Report Form.
- Reassure, and advise the person making the report. Explain what will happen next. Reinforce the need for confidentiality.
- Decide if there is a need to speak to the adult. Where there are concerns that the parents/carers may be responsible for or have knowledge of the abuse, sharing information with them may place the person at further risk. In such cases, advice must firstly be sought from the Police/Social Services/UKA Safeguarding Team as to who informs the parents/carers.
- In all situations, the Club Welfare Officer should ensure those in the club/organisation who can act (within their remit) to prevent further harm have the information to do so. Depending on the situation this may require information to be passed, and work together with, other organisations such as the Police or the Local Authority Adult Safeguarding Team.
- Refer the case to their Home Country Welfare Officer, or to the UKA Safeguarding Team as soon as possible.

The Role of the HCAF and UK Athletics Safeguarding Team

While our welfare officers have received training, it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. If there is any doubt about whether or not the alleged behaviour constitutes abuse, the concern



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must be shared with professional agencies that will be responsible for subsequent action. Any suspicion that an individual has been abused by a volunteer or employee should be reported to the UKA CPLO who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the individual in question and any other individual who may be at risk.

On receipt of a concern about a person from any source, the UKA Safeguarding Team will:

- Consult with the Home Country Welfare Officer and the Club Welfare Officer to decide what initial actions need to be taken and by whom
- Contact the Police if:
 - a serious crime has been committed
 - a crime has been committed against someone without the mental capacity to contact the Police themselves
 - the adult has asked them to make a report to the Police on their behalf because they are unable to themselves.
- Refer to a Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Team if it is believed they may be an adult at risk and:
 - the adult appears not to have the mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety and wellbeing
 - the risk is from a person employed or volunteering in work with adults with care and support needs (including within the club)
 - there may be other 'adults at risk' (e.g. another family member, another club member or other people using a service)
 - the adult at risk lives in England or Scotland and they have asked you to make a report or have given their informed consent to you making it.

If a child is at risk the team will also make a child safeguarding referral to the Local Authority. This includes all situations where there is domestic abuse within the household where the child lives. If there is uncertainty on whether or not to make a referral/report, then advice will be sought from the Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Team without disclosing the identity of the adult or the person who may be causing harm.

- Use policy and procedures to stop harm within the organization (UKA). If the person who may be causing harm is a person involved in athletics in whatever capacity, the Safeguarding Team will:
 - decide what policy and procedures to follow (e.g. breach of code of conduct, relevant disciplinary procedures, breach of contract)
 - agree what short-term arrangements can be put in place to enable the adult, who may be being harmed, to be able to continue participating in their role or activity.
- Ongoing liaison with statutory agencies, if involved, the UKA Safeguarding Team will ensure the relevant people are assigned to work together with them to coordinate and agree the next steps. The Safeguarding Manager will decide who attends and contributes to any safeguarding adults' strategy or case meetings that are called by the Local Authority. This may be a club or Home Country representative.
- Ongoing liaison with the adult to consult with them, keep them informed, and make sure they are receiving the support they need. This may be a club or Home Country representative.
- When the statutory agencies conclude their investigations or decide to take no further action in relation to a referral, the UK Athletics Safeguarding Team will ensure the matter is investigated at the appropriate level and in line with the Safeguarding Disciplinary Regulations.
- Coordinate and oversee all case-related decisions and actions in line with the Safeguarding Disciplinary Regulations and supported by the Safeguarding Case Management Group

5.5 Poor Practice

If the allegations are against a volunteer and after consideration are clearly about poor practice, the allegation will be dealt with by the relevant home country under their disciplinary procedures as a misconduct issue.

5.6 Disciplinary and Appeal Procedures

UKA has a general disciplinary policy and separate policies relating to coaches and officials. England Athletics have their own policy and procedures the other home countries have adopted the UKA policy and procedures as their own. All the documents are easily available on the UKA website <http://www.uka.org.uk/governance/policies/>.

Records and Confidentiality

Always follow the reporting procedure set out above. Use of the referral form will assist you to collect and collate the required information. Your reports should be factual. Confidentiality should be maintained at all times. Information should be handled and disseminated on a *need to know basis only*. Information will be stored securely by North



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Shields Poly in line with data protection laws.

Support for Victim, Accused and Reporter

North Shields Poly acknowledges the difficulty in reporting concerns and will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith (without malicious intent), reports his or her concern about a colleague's practice or concerns about the welfare of a child. They will take appropriate steps to ensure that the victim (and parents, appropriate adults) are provided with appropriate professional support (e.g. Help lines, support groups). They will also ensure through the appropriate allegation, disciplinary and appeals procedures that the accused is offered appropriate support.

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Reminder of Important numbers:</u></p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Graham Lewis-Dale – welfare@nspoly.org 07415 393960</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Laura Hope – welfare@nspoly.org 07850405101</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">UKA Lead Safeguarding safeguarding@uka.org.uk 07920 532552</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">England Athletics - welfare@englandathletics.org 07967 317341</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">If you think an adult is in immediate danger, call 999</p> |

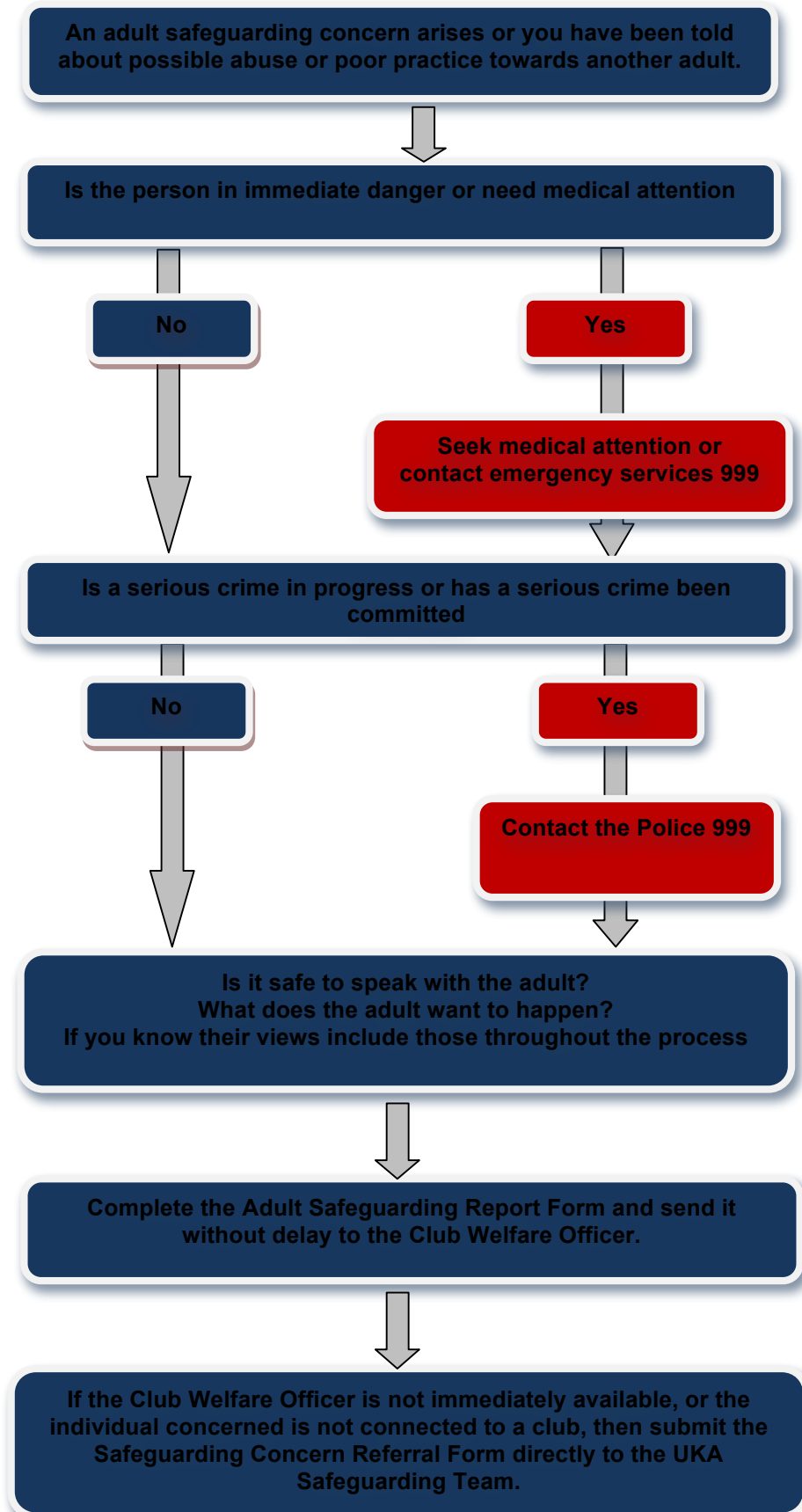
Policy Ratified by: North Shields Polytechnic Club Chair

Date: January 2023

Date for review: January 2024



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REFERRAL FORM

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|---|---|
| Your name and contact details: | Your position: |
| Your knowledge of and relationship to the adult: | |
| Adult's name | Adult's address: |
| Adult's date of birth: | Parent/Guardian Name/s and contact details: |
| Date(s), time(s) and location(s) of incident(s): | |
| Nature of the concern/allegation: | |
| Observations made by you or to you (e.g. description of visible bruising, other injuries, adult's emotional state etc): | |
| Exactly what the adult said and what you said (Remember, do not lead the adult– record actual details. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary): | |
| Actions Taken so far: Police contact Yes No Date and time if contact made Police reference number Advice give Adult social care contacted yes no Date and time of contact Discussion with – Advice given | |
| Local Authority Designated Officer contacted | |



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| |
|----------------------------------|
| UKA Contact Date and Time |
| Other agency contact if required |

Name of person completing form

Signed

Date

Copy sent securely to UK Athletics