

Whistleblowing Policy

Scope

This policy outlines the process by which any person involved at any level of sport in County Durham can raise concerns with County Durham Sport for investigation.

Definition

‘Whistle-blower’ is a term commonly used to describe a person who alerts an authority to acts of wrongdoing, usually by someone within the authority’s jurisdiction. Whistle-blowers are witnesses to a malpractice and must not be penalised for any disclosure of information, in fact certain categories of whistle-blowers are protected by the law’.

County Durham Sport is committed to encouraging a culture of openness: to uphold the reputation of the organisation, maintain sport’s and the public’s confidence, and to protect our participants & workforce (i.e. participants, staff, coaches, officials, volunteers etc.).

It is in the interests of sport that individuals with genuine concerns are able to raise them in a confidential and effective way. This policy outlines the mechanism by which serious concerns can be lodged with County Durham Sport and addressed appropriately. Anyone approaching County Durham Sport, in good faith, with information regarding matters of wrongdoing, such as fraud, misappropriation, bad practice in child & adults at risk protection or safety, discrimination or breach of codes of conduct, by staff (including contractors) or volunteers working for County Durham Sport. will have the matter dealt with in an appropriate manner with a duty of care to all those involved.

Process

If you discover any wrongdoing, including bad practice or abuse you should report it to the County Durham Sport Lead Safeguarding Officer (“Safeguarding Lead”) using any of the following methods:

- Via post to: Lead Safeguarding Officer, County Durham Sport, The Sjovoll Centre, Front Street, Pity Me, Durham, DH1 5BZ
- Via email to: hello@countydurhamsport.com
- Via telephone (secure, recorded voicemail service) by calling: 0191 3077117

You will receive a written receipt, usually within 48 hours (if received during business hours), which will outline the proposed next steps and timeline. Should you raise your concerns via telephone message service, our Safeguarding Lead will call you back to discuss the complaint in person, usually with 48 hours of receipt.

Your concerns will normally then be considered by the Safeguarding Lead in the first instance and referred for investigation to the County Durham Sport Board (“the Board”) if the nature of the complaint warrants it.

The Safeguarding Lead (or the Board) will investigate the matter and take any remedial action to rectify the situation or, where any such action is not in the power of that staff member, they will then make recommendations to the Board to take appropriate further steps. Any investigation will not, at any stage, be carried out by any person against whom allegations are made, and details will only be shared with those individuals who are considered vital to the effective functioning of any investigation.

Enquiries will be undertaken promptly, although more complex matters may require a longer and more thorough investigation. The Safeguarding Lead will advise you of the outcome of any enquiry and any remedial action taken. If the issue is not resolved in a satisfactory manner by the Safeguarding Lead, or if the concern relates to that person, you may raise the matter directly with the any member of the Board – including specifically the CEO, Chair or HR Committee Chairperson, via post to:

- Chief Executive, County Durham Sport, The Sjovoll Centre, Front Street, Pity Me, Durham, DH1 5BZ.

The Board will make enquiries and, if appropriate, investigate the matter and take any remedial action to rectify the situation (which may include passing to an independent investigatory body such as Sports Resolutions UK). Investigations will not be carried out by any person previously involved in the matter and at no stage will they involve any person against whom allegations are made. Again, any investigation will be done promptly, although more complex matters may require a longer and more thorough investigation. The Board will advise you of the outcome of any enquiry and any remedial action taken. In some instances, particularly those involving child & adult safety, it may be necessary to refer the matter to an external authority, for example the police. If this is the case both the complainant and the person against whom the complaint has been made will be notified of this, unless County Durham Sport is prohibited from doing so by law or at the direction of the external authority.

Any person approaching County Durham Sport with genuine concerns will not be disadvantaged or discriminated against in any way because of the disclosure. However, County Durham Sport will take a serious view and act accordingly, including taking disciplinary action against appropriate parties, should it be found that the allegations have been intentionally portrayed as untrue or have been raised maliciously. Individuals are therefore encouraged to put their name to any disclosure.

Allegations raised anonymously may be investigated depending on the seriousness of the issues raised, the credibility of the concern, and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

Where possible confidentiality will be maintained, although it must be stressed that in serious cases of fraud and in cases of child/adult protection it will be not always be possible to maintain strict confidentiality if the concerns reach the investigation stage.

NB

Please note that grievances or disputes with County Durham Sport should be raised in the normal way under our Grievance policy & procedures outlined on our website (<https://www.countydurhamsport.com/>) rather than under this procedure.

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Date: 19th August 2019

Date to be reviewed: 19th August 2020

By: Becks Lippe (Safeguarding Lead Officer)