

Advice for the development of NSA Safeguarding ‘Snow Safe’ Policies; prevention of harassment and abuse

If your NSA/nation already has policies and procedures in place:

If your NSA has already developed policies and procedures to safeguard athletes from harassment and abuse, or if your government’s Sports Organisation (or National Olympic Committee) provides cover for the investigation and management of any cases of non-accidental violence that occur in your NSA, you may not need to develop your own specific policies. The advice below (for NSAs new to this) will therefore not be relevant to you.

If you believe this is the case, and that your NSA is fully covered within your nation, please

1. Confirm in writing that your organisation understands and accepts the FIS Snow Safe Policy.
2. Confirm in writing that your NSA is fully confident that any allegations of harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) that may arise in your NSA, or any complaints about members of your NSA that arise from elsewhere, will be dealt with by the policies and procedures in place in your NSA/nation.

Advice for NSAs new to this:

The following advice is designed help all NSAs needing to set up policies and procedures from scratch.

1. There is no need to reinvent the wheel
2. Model your policy on the FIS Snow Safe Policy, or the attached Template; edit and refer directly to your NSA
3. Check national legal framework
4. Retain (but edit) In-Competition Policy section
5. Codes of conduct are important, but FIS doesn’t yet have models for these, except for FIS staff – but see Template (draft Code of Conduct within)
6. Remove sections on advice to NSAs, but include specific details of Codes of Conduct, taking athletes away, use of mobile equipment and social media, etc
7. Check against IOC Toolkit and FIS Snow Safe Policy
8. Involve the athletes

Ensure that you have actually set up:

1. Secure data storage
2. Confidentiality policy and understanding by all involved
3. Disciplinary Policy
4. Codes of Conduct, best practice guidance for staff, volunteers, coaches, managers, parents and athletes; the policy itself will be a guide to best practice in safeguarding.
5. Guidance for taking athletes away on trips, tours or competitions (see GBR policy)
6. Advice on use of mobile equipment, IT and social media
7. Clearly defined steps to be taken when a concern is raised

Appoint a Lead Welfare Officer

1. Assess suitability of all individuals who have contact with athletes through recruitment checks, references, self-declarations.
2. Ideally have a Case Management Panel in place in case it is needed at short notice.

Remember – a policy is a great deal more than a piece of paper. Implementation will require

1. a genuine commitment to the welfare of all athletes and participants
2. an understanding of the possible signs of abuse
3. an understanding that all concerns must be reported, and all must be heard
4. a genuine desire and commitment to setting in place all the required personnel and frameworks for reporting and dealing with concerns

Please also ensure that your policy emphasises that harassment and abuse can be based on any grounds including race, religion, colour, creed, ethnic origin, physical attributes, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, socio-economic status and athletic ability, and may be in person or online.

Template for Action - if you have to deal with a case

1. Take all messages regarding concerns seriously, and regard them all as URGENT.
2. Taking no action is NOT an option.
3. The Lead Welfare Officer of the NSA should be contacted directly when a concern is raised.
4. If the allegation relates to serious abuse of an adult, the adult should be encouraged to contact the police.
5. In the case of a minor, parents/guardians should be contacted, and in consultation with them, the police should be informed.
6. Ensure the immediate safety of the person who has been abused.
7. Do not immediately contact the alleged abuser.
8. Assess the danger to others, and ensure that they too are kept safe.
9. Remember that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, especially when others may be at risk. On the other hand, information should be restricted only to those who need to know as part of the investigation.
10. All matters must be followed up, whether or not the police are involved.
11. The NSA must create and maintain safe records of all complaints and concerns.
12. Remember that these cases may generate a lot of media interest, so NSAs should prepare a media plan.
13. The FIS Lead Welfare Officer will provide support and advice as required.

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