

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE

Please see below British Fencing's procedures for disclosures of abuse they receive

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE ABUSE OUTSIDE SPORT

British Fencings' primary responsibility is to ensure that concerns and any relevant information are passed on to the police or social services without delay. These organisations have the statutory responsibility to make enquiries to establish if a child is at risk of harm.

It is vital that individuals within the club are aware of British Fencings' guidance and pass any concerns to the designated person with the responsibility for Child Protection within the club or the person in charge. If neither person is available, the information should be passed directly to Social Services or the Police. The British Fencings' Child Protection incident form should be completed and together with any other written information, should be sent to the relevant statutory organisation and British Fencing within 24 hours.

If you have reasonable grounds for being concerned about a particular case involving a coach or official or another club member, it is not your responsibility or to decide if abuse is taking place nor to investigate it but, **it is your responsibility to act on those concerns and do something about it.**

Suspected abuse

If there is any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a fencing club staff member or volunteer, the club Welfare Officer should immediately be informed so that they can either refer the incident to Social Services (or if necessary go directly to the Police). British Fencing should also be informed without delay and an incident report completed.

If a disclosure concerns possible abuse within the home, family or community then the club Welfare Officer should immediately be informed so that the information can be passed on to the relevant statutory organisation.

If the allegation concerns the Welfare Officer, the incident should be referred to Social Services (or if necessary to the Police). British Fencing should also be informed without delay and an incident report completed.

If the Club Welfare Officer is unavailable, British Fencings Child Protection Officer (or if out-of-hours) the Police or Social Services, must be contacted. Any delay may place a child at risk.

If you are unsure of what action to take, you can contact the Social Services, British Fencing or the NSPCC 24 hour Child Protection Helpline for advice. British Fencing **MUST** be kept fully informed of any allegations as it is essential that an early decision is made about whether to temporarily suspend any accused individual, pending further Social Services or Police enquiries. British Fencing Child Protection Panel will be consulted on the appropriate course of action and will make recommendation to the General Secretary.

Further details on the disciplinary proceedings can be found in British Fencings' website or by contacting Head Quarters.

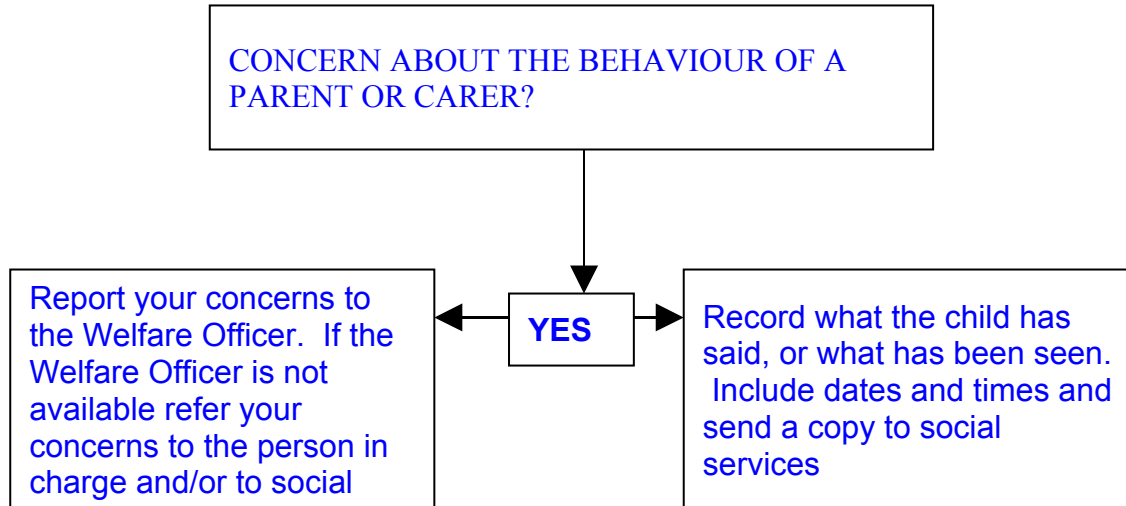
Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services or Police enquiries, British Fencing will assess all individual cases to decide whether a recommendation should be made to reinstate a member or to move towards disciplinary proceedings. British Fencing will hold a disciplinary hearing for anyone investigated, or charged by the authorities with abuse (accept when an individual has been convicted). This may be a difficult decision, particularly when there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police.

British Fencing disciplinary panels will comply with the principles of natural justice. The applicable standard of proof shall be the civil standard, of the balance of probability; whether it was more likely than not for the allegations to have

occurred. All efforts will be made to obtain as much evidence to advise the panel and there is a right to appeal against the decision. British Fencing will make recommendation for inclusion on the Protection of Children Act (POCA) List in any instance where a decision is reached to exclude a member from the Governing Body for reasons of their unsuitability to work with young people. Throughout these processes the welfare of children will remain paramount and British Fencing will endeavour to provide appropriate support to children, parents, coaches and volunteers who are affected by an abuse situation including, where appropriate, the alleged perpetrator.

Appendix A A Quick Guide to Procedures

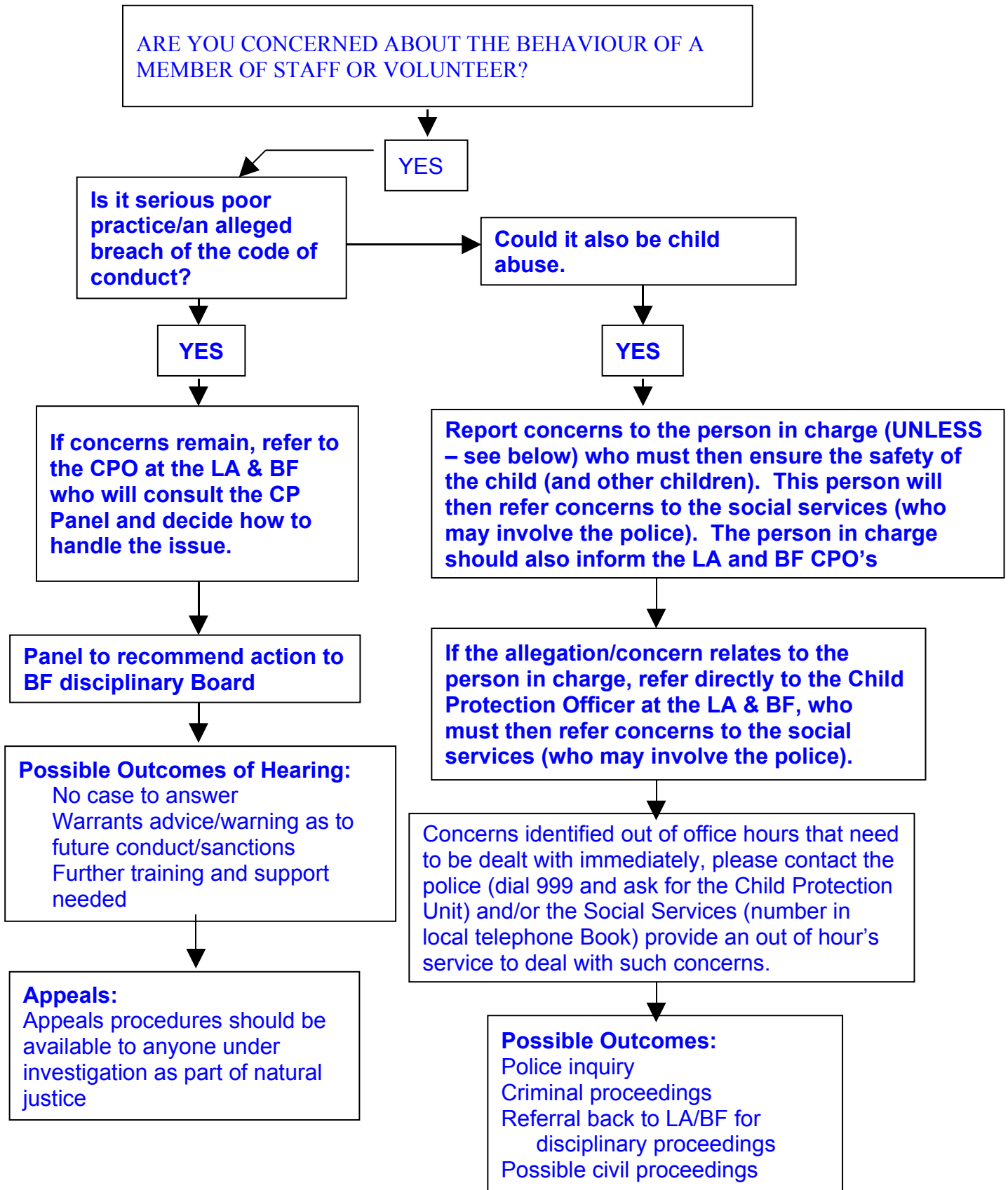
This guide is designed to inform the most appropriate action in relation to concerns about either a parent or carer (eg outside the immediate fencing environment) when reported from authorities outside British Fencing.



Remember:

- Maintain confidentiality on a *need to know* basis only
- Ensure the person in charge follows up with social services.
- **If the concerns are about someone who also plays a role within fencing,** then the person in charge should inform the relevant BF Child Protection Officer (CPO).

This guide is designed to inform the most appropriate action in relation to concerns about a member of staff or volunteer within fencing.



If you do not know who to turn to for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns with a senior colleague, you should contact your local social services, the out of hours number will be available telephone book..... or Police by dialing 999 and asking for the Child Protection Unit (or the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111).