

BSAC Whistleblowing Policy

Why do we need a whistleblowing policy?

A whistleblowing policy will:

- Encourage individuals to feel confident in raising concerns about the safety and welfare of adults involved in a BSAC Club.
- Provide a method by which to raise concerns and to receive feedback.
- Ensure that individuals receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue further if they are not satisfied.
- Reassure individuals that they will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith.

Who is covered by the BSAC Whistleblowing Policy?

All those involved in an activity carried out under the jurisdiction of BSAC are covered by the policy.

Key Principles of the BSAC Whistleblowing Policy

- The policy is complementary to BSAC's Adult Buddyguard: Adult Safeguarding Policy & Procedures, as well as Buddyguard.
- BSAC's CEO has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy.
- If a matter raised results in any disciplinary action, BSAC's disciplinary procedures will apply.

Potential bars to whistleblowing

Club officers, instructors, volunteers, members or carers are often the first to realise that an adult or child is at risk of being harmed, or is being harmed and/or their welfare is being compromised. They may feel unable to disclose their concerns because:

- They may fear the consequences and the difficulty of handling them.
- They may fear harassment or victimisation.

- They may know and respect the person concerned and cannot believe what they have seen or heard, and may minimise or excuse their fears for this person.

However:

- BSAC is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. All those who interact directly with adults and children in the Club and have concerns about any aspect of their safety and welfare are to come forward and voice their concerns.
- BSAC expects all members to consider the welfare of those in their care above the relationship with the individual concerned.
- BSAC is committed to enabling everyone to raise matters of concern without fear of victimisation, discrimination or disadvantage.

Dealing with allegations made by whistleblowers

- BSAC is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of everyone within BSAC Clubs.
- BSAC recognises that disclosing concerns may be uncomfortable but, when facing a real threat to the safety of an individual, members should not fear. They will, after all, be acting in the best interest of the individual concerned.
- BSAC will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect individuals when they raise a concern in good faith.
- Any investigation into alleged poor practice will neither influence nor be influenced by any disciplinary procedures that already affect individuals.
- Confidentiality will be maintained in line with BSAC policy (see Adult Buddyguard policy).

Anonymous allegations

This policy encourages the whistleblower to put their name to their allegations. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful, but they must always be considered in line with BSAC policy guidance.

False allegations

It is not a false allegation if an individual raises a concern in good faith which is not confirmed by investigation, and in such circumstances no action will be taken against the whistleblower.

If, however, it is established that the allegation was malicious or for personal gain, the club must consider if disciplinary action should be taken against the referrer. In such cases, the BSAC's disciplinary procedure will apply.

All actions taken to address any concerns raised by a whistleblower must follow the guidance in Section 3 of the Adult Buddyguard.

Advice from external agencies

Protect, formerly Public Concern at Work, has a free and confidential advice line with regards to whistleblowing protection. You can also submit your concerns through their online form.

- **Protect**
020 3117 2520 | protect-advice.org.uk