

Whistleblowing Procedure:

The aim of this procedure is to provide a clear and transparent way for all members, participating bands and event volunteers to raise genuine concerns about acts of wrongdoing or malpractice within scaba. It also aims to ensure that concerns are dealt with effectively and in a timely fashion.

This procedure provides the scaba committee, and specifically the Chairperson and Safeguarding Lead, with steps to deal with allegations, ensuring that whistle-blowers are not penalised for raising genuine concerns even if those concerns prove unfounded. It also provides the means for taking disciplinary action against anyone who is found to have raised false allegations with malicious intent.

The procedure does not apply to safeguarding concerns or allegations. These must be dealt with using the main body of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

What to do if you wish to raise a concern about malpractice

If you have a concern about malpractice, speak to the Chairperson or Safeguarding Lead. If you feel uncomfortable speaking to these people, speak to any other committee member. The Safeguarding Lead or committee member you have spoken to will arrange to meet with you to discuss your concern. You'll be told at the meeting, or as soon as possible afterwards, what action will be taken to address your concern. You will not be told any confidential information about the third party. If no action is to be taken, you will be told this, and the reasons why this decision has been reached.

If you don't want the third party to know your identity, you must tell the Safeguarding Lead or committee member at the outset. Every effort will be made to respect your wishes, but it cannot be guaranteed that your identity will not be disclosed. If this is the case, you will be informed and any issues you may have about this will be discussed with you.

If you need support in raising your concern, you may bring another person to the meeting with you. They must agree to respect the confidentiality of the concern.

What to do if someone raises a concern with you about malpractice

If someone tells you they have a concern about the actions of another person, you should arrange to meet with them as soon as possible to discuss the matter. If you are not the Chairperson or Safeguarding Lead, you should establish why they have chosen to speak to you. You should offer support to help them discuss the matter with the Chairperson or Safeguarding Lead. You should not however, refuse to hear what they have to say.

Approach the situation sensitively, having due regard for the discomfort the other person may feel. The meeting may take place anywhere, but you must feel safe and protected. If the other person is under 18, you must not be alone. If the other person wants their identity to be kept confidential, you should explain that this will be done if possible, but that it may not be achievable. Make notes of your discussion and check their accuracy with them before the meeting finishes.

Once you have established the nature of the concern, it may be that it is relatively minor and can be resolved informally. If the concern appears more serious, you must consider whether any immediate action is needed to protect individuals. You may need to refer to the scaba Safeguarding Policy and Procedures or consider if the police and/or other statutory agencies need to be involved.

You should refer to the Safeguarding Lead for guidance. If this is not possible, the Chairperson or Secretary should be involved.

The investigation

If an investigation is required, this should be completed as quickly as possible. It should also be demonstrably impartial and thorough. The scope of the investigation will depend on the nature of the concern raised. You may need to speak to witnesses, check records or consult someone with specialist knowledge.

If the concern is upheld and the person at the centre of it has been found culpable or remiss in some way, the report's recommendations should be carried out using a clear plan of action. The recommendations may include, but not be exclusively limited to

- Training
- Coaching
- Counselling
- Implementation of new policies or procedures
- Disciplinary action, including suspension or exclusion from scaba and/or its events.
- Referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority, Police or other Statutory Authority.

If it becomes apparent that a criminal offence may have been committed, the police should be informed immediately. The police will advise you as to whether your own investigation should be suspended, if they decide to become involved.

The person who raised the concern should be informed of the outcome, but not the details of actions taken. It may also be appropriate to offer them support or counselling. If the concern is unfounded and if the person who raised it is found, through the process of investigation, to have acted maliciously or out of a desire for personal gain, it may be appropriate to consider disciplinary action against them, which may include suspension or exclusion from scaba and/or its events.

The investigator must make accurate notes at each stage of the process, including the discussions during meetings, regardless of whether the concern is dealt with formally or informally. Copies of these notes should be given to the person who is the subject of the concern. If it was requested, the notes should not reveal the identity of the person who raised the concern.

The person who raised the concern should be given a copy of the notes relating to their individual discussion only.

Notes made during the investigation, plus the report of the findings and any recommendations made should be kept securely and be compliant with current data protection legislation.

Information and support

Dealing with issues such as this may require external support. Other sources could be

- Brass Bands England
- NSPCC
- Social Services
- Citizens Advice
- Local Safeguarding