

Lancaster Tennis Club

Policy Statement and Guidelines on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Version March 2018

This version replaces any copy dated previously.

Acknowledgement

This document has been adapted from the policy published by the Huntingdon & Peterborough Tennis League which was originally derived from the Policy Statement and Guidelines published by the English Sports Association for People with a Learning Difficulties (ESAPLD), which was based upon the procedures and guidelines published by the ASA Child Protection Working Group in conjunction with the NSPCC and Disability Sport England. Further guidance has been taken from Sport England, the CPSU and CRB.

Policy Statement on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Children Act 1989 indicates that anyone who has the responsibility for the care of a child should "do what is reasonable in all circumstances for the purpose of safeguarding or promoting the child's welfare". It is equally important that adults with a learning disability can expect similar safeguards

- The policy should be read in conjunction with the Lancaster Tennis Club's Code of Conduct.
- Lancaster Tennis Club is committed to ensuring that the activities it provides are conducted safely, and that the welfare of players and volunteers is foremost at all times. Lancaster Tennis Club has a responsibility to ensure that players and volunteers are protected from possible abuse, and the Committee have therefore adopted the procedures detailed in the policy, and are committed to their implementation.
- Lancaster Tennis Club will take all allegations seriously. It will deal promptly and sensitively in all cases and ensure that appropriate action is taken where an allegation is found to have good grounding.
- Committee members, volunteers, coaches, parents, paid staff and the players themselves, all bear a responsibility to implement the policy, and each has a right to be protected by it.
- Lancaster Tennis Club is also committed to supporting anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concerns that they, or a colleague, is at risk of, or may actually be, being abused.
- All persons, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief or sexual identity, have a right to be protected from abuse.

Personal information will be treated in strict confidence, within the limits of the law, which requires that the police or social services be informed where there is a serious risk of harm to a child or adult, or information about a serious crime is discovered.

Guidelines on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

In recent years, sports clubs and activities have been highlighted as a potential area in which children and vulnerable adults are at risk from abuse. It is a sad, but very real fact that there are some people who will seek to work with children/vulnerable adults simply in order to abuse them. Because of the nature of the organisation, and the activities it provides, it could be at risk from such people, hence it is important that the organisation adopts and adheres to a policy that seeks to minimise the risk, and deal with any incidents that may occur.

However, to have an effective policy in place, it is important that everyone within the organisation is aware of it and knows how to apply it. These guidelines have been adopted by the club to assist this process. The policy will be discussed with players, parents and coaches regularly. This will become the responsibility of the Welfare Officer.

The guidelines comprise three areas, addressing:

- 1 What is abuse, recognising the signs, and general good practice procedures
- 2 Implementation and Monitoring of the Policy - i.e. how the policy will be managed, implemented and maintained on an ongoing basis. Details of how allegations will be dealt with are also included in this section.
- 3 Communication, Education and Support - i.e. how the staff, volunteers and players will be informed and kept up to date with policy and procedures, and how the club will communicate with outside agencies, where appropriate.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Database Information

1 WHAT IS ABUSE?

This section provides information on:

1. How, why and types of abuse that can occur
2. How to recognise the signs that abuse is occurring
3. Good practice procedures

1.1 How does abuse occur?

It is important to understand exactly what is meant by abuse. There is sometimes a fine line between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and it is important that anyone connected with the club, and particularly the players, understands this boundary. It is also important that the signs of abuse are understood, as the victims of abuse often feel unable to tell anyone.

Whilst these procedures are designed to ensure that incidents are brought to light, and dealt with properly, it is equally important to try to ensure that such incidents do not occur in the first place. There are a number of 'good practice' rules that help avoid potential situations occurring.

The Children's Act (1989) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (1999) state that there are four main types of abuse - **Physical, Sexual, Emotional and Neglect**, though it is important to also consider **Financial abuse**. In general terms, abuse may be the action or inaction by, for example, a coach, volunteer or paid helper, family member or another young player.

Physical Abuse is just what the term implies - hurting or injuring a person, for example, by hitting them. In a sporting context it might also occur if a person is forced to train beyond his/her capabilities, or the intensity of training disregards a disabled person's impairment. Physical abuse may also occur through encouraging the inappropriate use of substances to stimulate performance.

Sexual Abuse occurs when a person knowingly or unknowingly takes part in something that meets the sexual needs of the other person or persons involved - it could range from sexually suggestive comments to actual sexual contact. In a sporting context it could involve inappropriate photography or videoing, for the gratification of the viewer.

Emotional Abuse occurs when a person is not given help and encouragement and is constantly derided or ridiculed or ignored. Conversely, it can also occur if a person is over-protected. In a sporting context this is present in the unrealistic expectations of parents and coaches over what a player can achieve, or the undermining of a player through ridicule. Bullying is likely to come into this category. Racially and sexually abusive remarks constitute emotional abuse and it can be a feature of bullying. In the case of learning disability, emotional abuse can occur through failing to communicate important information accurately or appropriately, providing misleading statements or failing to ensure a person understands the information given.

Neglect usually means failing to meet a person's basic needs such as food, warmth, adequate clothing, medical attention etc. It could also mean failing to ensure they are safe or exposing them to harm. In a sporting context it may be when a player's personal or intimate requirements are ignored, particularly if they

are disabled, or where a player is not cared for in a way appropriate or according to their needs.

Financial abuse means failing to act in a person's best interests, when managing money issues. This might include inappropriate payments, or mismanagement of funds held or managed on behalf of players.

1.2 Recognising the signs of Abuse

Recognising abuse is not always easy. The examples listed below are not a complete list and are only indicators - not confirmation:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, bites or burns, particularly situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- the person says that he or she is being abused, or another person says they believe (or actually know) that abuse is occurring
- the child has an injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent or which has not been adequately treated
- the child's behaviour changes, either over time or quite suddenly, and he or she becomes quiet and withdrawn, or alternatively becomes aggressive
- refusal to remove clothing for normal activities or keeping covered up in warm weather
- the child appears not to trust adults, e.g. a parent or coach with whom he or she would be expected to have, or once had, a close relationship, and does not seem to be able to make friends
- he or she becomes increasingly neglected-looking in appearance, or loses or puts on weight for no apparent reason
- pain or itching, bruising or bleeding in or near the genital area
- the child shows inappropriate sexual awareness for his or her age and sometimes behaves in a sexually explicit way

Bear in mind that children and adults with learning disability are particularly vulnerable to abuse and may have added difficulties in communicating what is happening to them. Dependency on others for primary needs such as feeding, clothing and intimate care may make a young person feel powerless to report abusive treatment.

A fear of retribution for "telling" can be a powerful "silencer". Difficulty in identifying abusive situations or behaviour may allow it to continue.

1.3 Good Practice which can help to prevent abuse

- Lancaster Tennis Club will appoint a committee member to be the designated Welfare Officer of the club and will ensure appropriate cover is available in their absence. In 2016 the Committee member appointed to the role of Welfare Officer was Annabel Orr.

Note: It is recommended that each Welfare Officer be offered an opportunity to attend a 3 hour Protection of Children and Adults in Sport course, delivered by Sport Coach UK.

- Avoid situations where coaches and other volunteers and player are alone. Lancaster Tennis Club acknowledges that occasionally there may be no alternative - for example, a player may fall ill and have to be taken home.
- Ascertain the player's and the parent's views about support needs for players who need this kind of help. If it is necessary to do things of a personal nature for children or young adults, make sure you have another adult accompanying you. Get the person's consent if at all possible and certainly get consent from the parent. Let the player know what you are going to do and why.
- Ensure that mixed squads are always accompanied by male and female coaches and/or volunteers
- Don't allow any physically rough or sexually provocative games, or inappropriate talking or touching by anyone, in any group for which you have responsibility.
- In competitions or at squad training events, look out for people who do not appear to be relatives or friends of children who are competing but, nevertheless, seem to spend a lot of time videoing or photographing them. Report these incidents to the team manager, coach or the club's Welfare Officer.
- If you are organising an event, ensure an appropriate accreditation system is in place for parents/relatives and bona fide press photographers.
- Ensure squads adhere to the club's Codes of Conduct, and that all coaches, volunteers and helpers are registered with the club. See Appendix 6.
- Publicise the club policy amongst colleagues, players and parents and ensure that it is a standing agenda item at sub-committee meetings.

If the procedures and guidance contained here are implemented properly, they can offer safeguards to everyone involved in the club and in doing so help to maintain its credibility. Most of all, though, they can help to prevent children being abused.

2 Implementation and Monitoring

This section addresses the following areas:

- The recruitment of volunteers and paid staff.
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- Policy on photographic equipment and filming equipment.
- How to make a complaint
- How Lancaster Tennis Club will respond to allegations, including investigating the complaint, supporting the individuals concerned, disciplinary procedures and appeals procedure.
- A list of the external agencies Lancaster Tennis Club may take/act upon advice from, or provides information to.
- Flowchart showing investigation and reporting procedure.

2.1 Recruitment of new staff and volunteers

Lancaster Tennis Club relies upon its volunteer base to both manage the organisation and deliver the activities it provides. Without a dedicated volunteer resource the organisation could not survive, nor would the sport of tennis have progressed as quickly or as far as it has.

Nevertheless, the recruitment and selection of volunteers is the most critical time when child and vulnerable adult protection issues must be addressed. It is important therefore that appropriate checks become 'procedure' - an accepted and welcomed practice - rather than an invasive, bureaucratic process that questions the integrity or motive of even the most willing of volunteers.

Job Descriptions: All volunteers who are recruited to positions will be provided with a job description and an evaluation of the duties they will be expected to undertake. The responsibility for supplying such details will be the Club Committee.

The job description should carry a statement detailing the degree of contact with children and/or vulnerable adults, and the need for appropriate checks to be undertaken prior to commencing the role.

The wording can be adapted as necessary but should read along the lines of:

The position described above may involve some access to children [and vulnerable adults]. As an organisation committed to the welfare and protection of its members, it is club policy to request individuals to complete a self- declaration form, giving two referees whom we may contact. In addition a police check may be undertaken. Though details will remain confidential, should we be given any reason at all to be concerned about the applicant, we reserve the right to retract the offer of joining [Club's] volunteer base, and may undertake to contact the police, local authority or other organisations with whom the individual is associated. A copy of the policy may be requested at any time, and may be discussed in private with the club's Welfare Officer.

Application and Self Declaration forms: In future, any staff/volunteers joining Lancaster Tennis Club should be given an application form and self-declaration form to complete. A copy of each form appears in Appendices 1 and 2, along with guidance notes. Though a position may be offered to an individual subject to receiving the signed form, the applicant must not commence the role, nor act as a representative of the club, until satisfactory references have been obtained.

The form will request information regarding an applicant's qualifications and experience for the post.

Requesting references: References should be requested from people who have known the applicant in a capacity pertinent to the role for which they are applying. They should have known the individual for at least two years.

A copy of the 'Reference Request Form' duly headed with the name of the applicant and the position should be sent, along with a pre-addressed envelope, to each referee. A copy of the job description may also be sent. A copy of the form appears in Appendix 3

Upon receipt, an assessment should be made on the responses given by the Welfare Officer.

Police checks: Lancaster Tennis Club may request the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) to check an individual against information held by the police. Appropriate requests may be made to the CRB whenever a volunteer is to be appointed and appropriate official DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks made. The club's Welfare Officer will assess the information received.

Where a reference/police check gives cause for concern it will be the responsibility of the club's Welfare Officer to undertake follow up procedures to clarify the nature and extent of these concerns, and make recommendations to the club Committee to address them.

Exclusions: It is obvious that the procedures described above cannot be implemented where a volunteer is recruited for a one-off occasion (e.g. a specific event). Where such recruitments are necessary (for example when club members/parents/students are recruited to help at events), Lancaster Tennis Club will only approach known individuals, or those people for whom a club official or teacher can provide suitable verbal reference or recommendation.

Induction: Volunteers joining the club, whether in a sport, or general capacity, can expect to receive information regarding-

- Roles and responsibilities of the post
- The person to whom they are accountable, and for whom they are accountable
- Grievance procedures
- Familiarisation with key policies, including the Child/Vulnerable Adult protection guidelines

Existing volunteers: Though many of the club's volunteers may have worked with, and supported, the organisation for a number of years, the club Committee, upon adopting the procedures, also undertakes to lead by example, and will be conducting new checks on all

existing volunteers. This should not be seen as interrogative or a breach of trust, but an undertaking to ensure that all volunteers, new and existing, have provided an identical set of information against a clear policy.

Registered volunteers: Upon satisfactory submission of the application forms, and appropriate background checks have been completed, all volunteers and paid officers will receive confirmation from the club of their acceptance.

This will be valid for two years and will be renewed only if the volunteer is still active within the program of the club. It is suggested that volunteers carry a copy of this letter at all times, when representing or undertaking work for the club, and should be expected to present it on-demand.

2.2 Club Procedures for the use of Photography and Filming Equipment

Lancaster Tennis Club] recognise that abuse can extend beyond acts of a physical or mental nature. The club will therefore only permit the use of photography or filming equipment at organised events by properly accredited users.

The following people must register their intentions by completing the 'Use of Photography Equipment form" (see Appendix 4), with the club Committee. It is the responsibility of the Committee to ensure that forms are readily available.

- **Professional photographers/ filming / video operators** - Where possible, professional photographers etc should register at least 36 hours before the event, providing some form of professional identification together with the self declaration form
- **Students or amateur photographers / film / video operators** - should submit a self declaration form together with their student or club registration card and a letter from their club / educational establishment outlining their motive for attending the event
- **Spectators (including parents or relatives)** - spectators wishing to use photographic / film / video equipment with a telescopic or zoom lens should register their intent with the promoter of the event by completing a self declaration form (standard cameras without zoom facilities are exempt if used from the spectator area).

If considered necessary, club event advertising will carry a statement highlighting the need to register photography equipment with the organisers, prior to its use. Where appropriate, similar statements will also appear in pre- event information or entry forms. The statement can be amended according to the specific activity, but should read along the lines of:

Lancaster Tennis Club Protection of children and vulnerable adults - Use of Video and close-range photography

Lancaster Tennis Club requires any person wishing to use photographic or filming equipment to register themselves with the club Committee prior to using the equipment.

This applies to all professional and amateur photographers and spectators with zoom or close range photographic equipment. Spectators using standard equipment from the spectator area, or professionals hired by the club for the specific purpose of recording the event, are exempt. Details and declaration forms are available from the club Committee.

The Committee reserve the right to decline permission to any person who fails to meet these conditions or fails to give satisfactory motive for recording the event. Where necessary the police may also be informed.

If you are concerned about photography at a Lancaster Tennis Club event, contact the appointed event organiser or a club Committee member.

Signs will also be placed at the entrance to events giving the same details and via announcements (where appropriate) at the start of each event.

Responsibility for implementing and monitoring the procedures will be undertaken by the appointed event organiser or a member of the club

Committee. Where possible, organisers should issue accreditation badges to eligible photographers, to avoid confusion or possible embarrassment. Regular photographers need only register once.

There is no intention to prevent coaches using videoing as a legitimate coaching aid. However, where this is intended, the players and their parents should be aware that this is part of the coaching programme and care should be taken in the storing of such video.

Where a photographer fails to register, or where there is sufficient reason for the organiser to doubt the motive of a photographer, Lancaster Tennis Club reserve the right to prevent access to the event by that person.

Should this fail, the club maintains the right to contact the venue management (if club facilities are not being used) and, where necessary, the police.

2.3 How to make a complaint and/or report abuse

Being a victim of abuse can be devastating. For some children and young people it can take years of counselling to recover and, in some cases, the effects are life-long. The sooner action is taken to prevent further abuse the better.

The decision to react to allegations of, or suspicions about, abuse can be a very difficult one.

Remember - a sports coach, Committee Officer or volunteer is not responsible for determining whether or not abuse has taken place but is responsible for protecting the child. Referral to appropriate agencies is vital so that they can make enquiries and take the necessary action.

Reporting such matters should never be delayed. All information about your concerns must be made aware immediately and directly to the Welfare Officer or any of the following:

- Local Social Services Department: 01524 66246
- The Lancaster Police: 01524 63333
- Child Line UK: 0800 1111 (24 hour FREEPHONE)
- NSPCC: 0800 800 500 (24 hour FREEPHONE)

ALL INFORMATION SHOULD BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY

Complaints may occur in a number of ways - a disclosure to a fellow player, a coach or a parent. It is important, however, to be able to address the complaint effectively and that the content and nature of the complaint is recorded on paper as quickly as possible.

It is also important to understand the type of complaint being made. Lancaster Tennis Club has a Complaints Policy, which should be followed for incidents of a general nature, and an Accident Report Form when a player, volunteer or staff member is injured and treated whilst working for, or in the care of the club or its agents.

The Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection complaints procedure should be used to record allegations of a more serious nature, and those which fall under the broad headings and definitions given in section 1.

Official complaints should be submitted on the "Incident Record Form" (see Appendix 5), and posted to the Welfare Officer labelled "Addressee Only - Private and Confidential".

It is likely that young and vulnerable players will need support and guidance in completing these forms; hence it is important, if a player makes a disclosure to you that the following guidelines are adhered to:

- React calmly so as not to frighten or deter the person
- Reassure them that you are glad that they told you
- Do not promise to keep it to yourself
- Explain that you need to make sure that they will be safe and may have to pass on the information to someone trusted to deal with it appropriately
- Listen to what the person says and take it seriously

- Only ask questions if you need to clarify what the person is telling you - don't ask about explicit details
- Don't ask leading questions - a leading question is one that pre-supposes the answer e.g. "Did Jim hit you?"
- Make a detailed note of what the person has told you and, pass on this information without delay
- It is not your responsibility to decide whether a person is being abused. Lancaster Tennis Club are requesting you to act on your concerns by making a detailed note of what you've seen or heard. This information should be transferred to the 'incident record form' provided (see Appendix 5), copies of which are available from the club Committee or Welfare Officer
- It is important that you report any concerns as quickly as possible to the Club's Welfare Officer. It is in the interests of all person's involved that the information you give is accurate and detailed
- If you suspect the Welfare Officer of being involved, you should tell the Chairman/Vice Chairman of the club
- If you need urgent advice you could may contact the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (0808 800 5000) or, in an emergency, the Police.

It is never easy to respond to a young person who tells you that they are being abused and you may feel upset and worried yourself. Make sure that you are offered adequate support and an opportunity for de-briefing, bearing confidentiality in mind.

2.4 How Lancaster Tennis Club will respond to incidents, reports and disclosures.

Should an incident be reported, Lancaster Tennis Club is committed to responding to it quickly, efficiently and fairly. In the first instance, and upon receipt of the details, the Welfare Officer will be responsible for assessing the information given in the report and collecting any additional evidence as necessary from the person submitting the incident form.

Minor incidents: It may be deemed on the information given that a situation has occurred through a lack of awareness, lack of training, poor planning or lack of volunteer support. Minor incidents can be addressed easily, and appropriate action should be taken to tackle the problem. This may involve reporting the problem to the chairperson of the club or may be addressed by speaking to the individuals concerned. Such actions and follow-up must be clearly communicated to the parties involved and must be felt to be satisfactory to all.

A full report will then be given to the Welfare Officer.

Major incidents: If the report concerns a more serious allegation a clear grievance/disciplinary procedure must be initiated. In the first instance, the Welfare Officer should contact the club Chairperson giving full details of the allegation. The Chairperson will instigate a full investigation and will inform the club Committee with

the results.

This will include collecting information on the exact nature and extent of the incident from the persons involved.

Where a player or volunteer is to be interviewed or questioned about an incident, each will be allowed one representative to accompany them to the meeting. The person should be allowed to aid communication issues, but should not lead the individual or answer on their behalf.

If necessary, and in accordance with the code of conduct, persons involved may be temporarily suspended from duty whilst the investigation is undertaken. This will be done in writing giving details of the reasons the action is necessary, and must be authorised by the club Committee at the request of the Welfare Officer.

Following investigation, the Chairperson will produce a full report, detailing their findings and making recommendations regarding:

- Appropriate disciplinary action to be taken
- Criteria for re-instatement
- Recommendations to avoid a similar incident re-occurring

This will be presented to the club Committee who will make an appropriate judgment and take any disciplinary action necessary. Where the allegation is found to have merit, and is of a significant nature, the Police and Social Services may also be informed of the incident.

Supporting individuals: It is important that throughout the investigation, all individuals are given adequate support and guidance. It is equally important that they understand the process, and the actions that will be taken.

Where an investigation is to take place, a player's parents should be informed. The Welfare Officer will be responsible for communication with the individuals concerned.

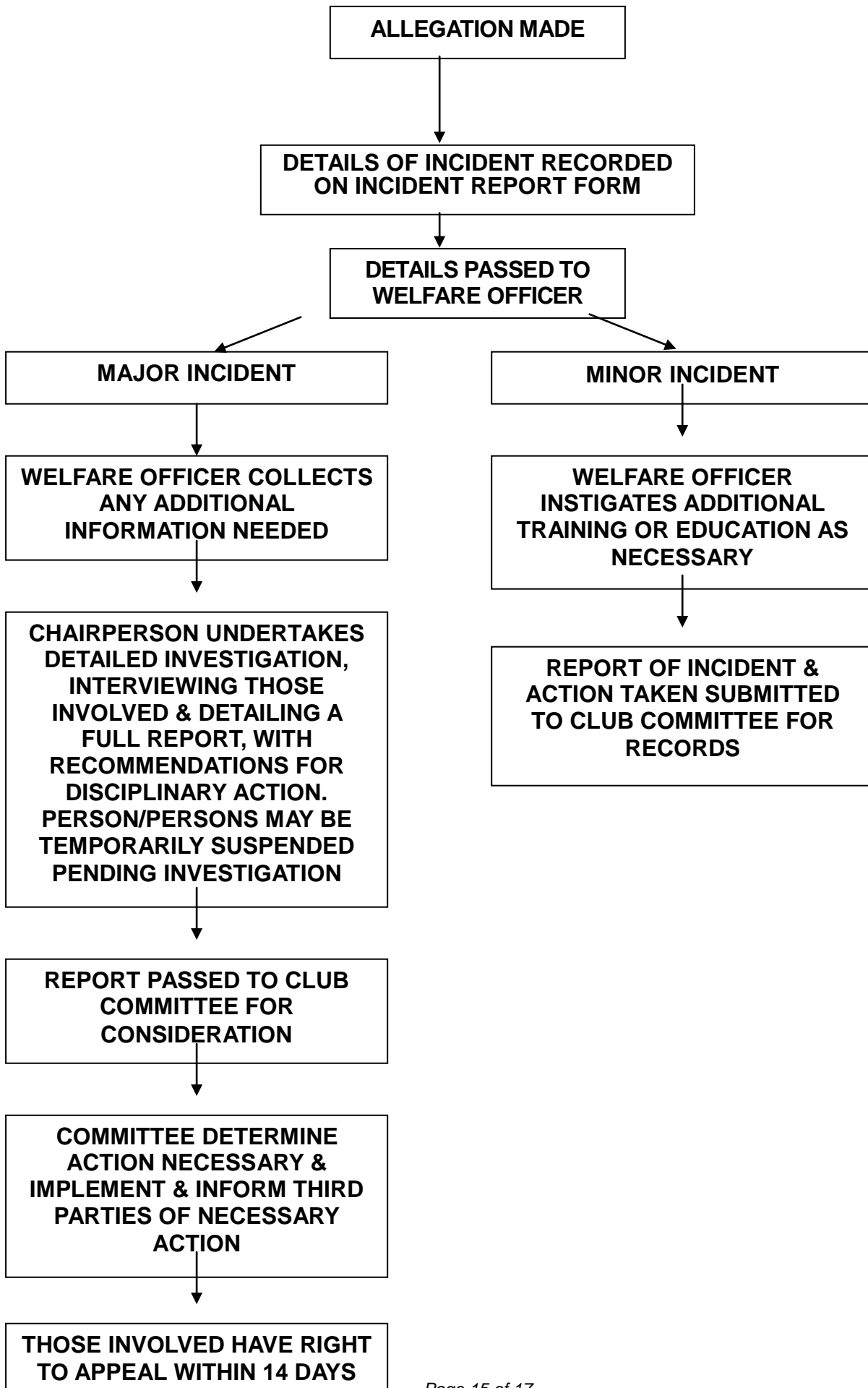
Appeals: On conclusion of the investigation, the individuals concerned maintain the right to appeal against the decision and the club Committee's findings. This should be done in writing to the Chairperson, within 14 days, stating clearly the objection, and reasons. Should an appeal be made, the club will appoint an independent appeal panel of no less than 3 persons to assess the decision. This appeal panel will comprise of suitably qualified person's and will exclude any person involved in the original decision. The appeal panel will report its findings within 14 days to the Chairperson. The decision will then be deemed to be final.

2.5 A list of the external agencies with whom Lancaster Tennis Club may share advice and information

Lancaster Tennis Club reserves the right to share information regarding individuals where it has reason to believe that the person may not be suitable for work with children or vulnerable adults. These organisations include:

- The Lawn Tennis Association and regional office
- Other local Tennis Clubs (where appropriate)

- Local Authorities
- Social Services
- The Police Authority
- Governing Bodies of Sport
- The UK Sports Council
- Child Protection in Sport Unit
- Local clubs or sports organisations



3 Communication, Education and Support

This section includes information on the following areas:

1. How details of the guidelines will be communicated to members
2. Who will be responsible for the policy's implementation

3.1 Communication Strategy

To be effective, the policy must be accessible to, and understood by, anyone within the organisation. This includes the management, volunteers, paid staff, parents and the players.

More importantly, however, to be effective, the policy needs to be one that people can use without fear of retribution or embarrassment. It is important that the procedures detailed in this document are communicated in a sympathetic, non-intimidating way. After all, the biggest hurdle facing a player who is being abused is actually telling someone.

A player with a learning disability or a minor will require additional support and assistance, in order that they understand the reasons they are making a claim, how it will be conducted, and the possible outcomes. Similarly, it is important that the parents and advocates of players understand the procedure, and remain fully informed if an incident occurs.

To ensure that these issues are addressed, Lancaster Tennis Club are committed to implementing the following communication strategy:

- The policy document will be available on request to anyone connected to the club
- An information leaflet will be distributed periodically and made available to all players, parents, coaches and volunteers. The leaflet will give details of why the policy is in place, how to report an incident and where to go for advice and assistance.
- The leaflet will include numbers to call for outside agencies, for example the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000.
- The policy will be discussed with players, parents and coaches periodically. This will be the responsibility of the Welfare Officer
- The policy will appear on the club website

3.2 Implementation strategy

Responsibility for implementing this policy is clearly structured. The Welfare Officer will be responsible for implementing the policy and for monitoring it on an ongoing basis.

Database information held by Lancaster Tennis Club

Lancaster Tennis Club holds information about individuals working with the Club that is pertinent to the job undertaken and the responsibilities it carries. The information will not be shared with a third party without consent, unless necessitated by procedures detailed within these guidelines or if an emergency situation occurs.

The information held will may include, but is not limited to:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Contact details
- Qualifications
- Medical history
- Previous/current employment details
- DBS/Social Services/Police check reports