

## British Orienteering Child Welfare Support Arrangements (DRAFT)

### British Orienteering Child Welfare Support Officer

This role is currently undertaken by the British Orienteering Executive Officer.

- The Child Welfare Support Officer (CWSO) will provide support to individual/s where an allegation has been made against them.
- The CWSO will not be involved in the investigation into the allegation and will be available to provide procedural information and clear timelines for the individual/s accused.
- The CWSO will not pass judgement on any allegations and will remain objective. Discussions between the CWSO and the individual/s accused will remain procedural.
- The CWSO will be up-to-date with the British Orienteering policy for dealing with allegations. This will be outlined to the individual at all stages of the investigation. All parties can refer to the 'O' Safe Policy for information at all times which is available on the British Orienteering website ([www.britishorienteering.org.uk](http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk)).
- The CWSO will maintain confidentiality wherever possible and in line with British Orienteering's 'O' Safe policy.
- The CWSO will be contactable by telephone for the individual accused and will keep them updated as the investigation progresses.
- The CWSO will be appropriately trained to carry out the role and will be able to refer the individuals accused onto appropriate external agencies for further support if necessary.



### British Orienteering Lead Child Welfare Officer

This role is currently undertaken by the British Orienteering Chief Executive.

- The Lead Child Welfare Officer (LCWO) will provide support to any child, parent, Club Welfare Officer or club members who raise concerns regarding someone's behaviour or actions.
- The LCWO could have been informed of the concerns by the Club Welfare Officer or another concerned party and will be available to provide support and advise of the investigation process.
- The LCWO will record the facts of the case and will decide upon the next course of action in accordance with British Orienteering's 'O' Safe Policy e.g. referral to external agencies where there are concerns about potential abuse.
- The LCWO will refer any serious concerns to the appropriate external agency and the British Orienteering Case Management Group. The LCWO will have no further part in decisions made regarding the concerns raised.
- The LCWO will be up-to-date with the British Orienteering policy for dealing with concerns. All concerned parties can refer to the 'O' Safe policy for information at all times. The 'O' Safe Policy is available on the British Orienteering website ([www.britishorienteering.org.uk](http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk)).
- The LCWO will keep the parents and, through them the child/ren, updated as the investigation progresses.
- The LCWO will be contactable by telephone for all concerned parties.
- The LCWO will be appropriately trained to carry out the role and will be able to refer individuals onto appropriate external agencies for further support if needed.

## **Case/incident support arrangements**

These support arrangements should be read in conjunction with the British Orienteering 'O' Safe Policy, Complaints and Grievance Procedures, Disciplinary Policy and Procedures and the Appeals Policy which provide a detailed outline of the complaints procedure for adults and children and support arrangements involved with reporting and investigating a suspected case of abuse or a disclosure from a child or young person.

This seeks to give a brief outline on the procedures involved in responding to concerns or a complaint made by a parent, child, coach, guardian or young person. It is important that procedures are followed in relation to dealing with a concern and, as far as possible, actions should be taken to ensure the child or young persons' views, rights and well-being are respected.

In all serious instances, the Lead Child Welfare Officer will liaise with the child/young person, parent/guardians and the Club Welfare Officer regarding the process for investigating and dealing with the reported concerns. The LCWO will refer to guidance in the 'O' Safe Policy and will give clear timelines regarding forthcoming actions and processes. The LCWO will give the child/young person, parents/guardians and CWO guidance fact-sheets outlining what is likely to happen moving forward, what support the LCWO will provide and what support can be sought externally. (See fact-sheet 1)

The Child Welfare Support Officer (CWSO) will liaise with the accused regarding the process for investigating and dealing with the reported concerns. The CWSO will refer to guidance in the 'O' Safe Policy and will give clear timelines regarding forthcoming actions and processes. The CWSO will give the accused guidance fact-sheets outlining what is likely to happen moving forward, what support the CWSO will provide and what support can be sought externally. (See fact-sheet 2)

These fact-sheets will give both parties formal notification of what they can expect from the LCWO and CWSO with regard to support during the investigation and similarly what is expected of them during the investigation.

The LCWO and CWSO will liaise with both parties at all stages of the investigation. All parties can refer to the 'O' Safe Policy for information at all times which is available on the British Orienteering website ([www.britishorienteering.org.uk](http://www.britishorienteering.org.uk)).

The Lead Child Welfare Officer, at National level, would deal with the practical implications of providing support to the CWO if a case or incident arose.

## **Club Welfare Officer Support Arrangements-Action Plan**

Currently there are few universal arrangements for supporting club welfare officers at club or regional level.

Some clubs have developed their own networks of support. An example adopted by one of our clubs, HAVOC, is to have a lead and deputy Club Welfare Officer (CWO). Not only does this highlight good practice it also addresses a number of areas:

- One CWO is male and one is female
- If concerns are raised about either CWO, or there is a conflict of interests, there is still an appropriate CWO contact
- It allows them to provide their own support network for each other. Both have received child welfare training and thus have the skills and knowledge to support each other.

As lack of volunteer resource is a serious issue in our sport, it may not always be possible for all clubs to find two volunteers willing to become CWOs. If the lead/deputy CWO support example above is not possible, there is a need to develop a strategy for providing a network of support for CWOs and for those people raising concerns.

- British Orienteering recognises that the first step to developing this strategy is to encourage more clubs to appoint CWOs. This is already a focus area for British Orienteering and there is beginning to be a culture shift in clubs towards recognising the need to appoint someone to the role. This is linked implicitly with Clubmark accreditation.
- Once more CWOs are appointed; we wish to implement a 'buddying-up' system of support. This will involve assigning CWO 'buddies' in other clubs/regions. This will provide a point of contact to discuss informal issues with and provide a 'supportive ear'. In infancy, this 'buddy' will be a trained National Office member of staff who will be on hand to answer questions, induct and generally provide support for the CWO. Throughout, British Orienteering members of staff will be on hand to provide support and assistance as required.

- Long-term we hope to establish detailed regional networks of CWOs. This will take the form of 'cluster' regional groups of CWOs. These will have a senior experienced Welfare Officer as a group leader who facilitates the coming together of CWOs and the sharing of best practice in the region. This experienced CWO will be highlighted by British Orienteering after discussions and assessing of experience. Once the experienced CWO has been highlighted and approached by the British Orienteering Lead Child Welfare Officer, the offer and expectations of the role of Senior CWO, will be made in writing.
- We hope to enable these two initiatives (short and long term) to work simultaneously. In other words a single CWO could have the support provided by their 'cross-regional' buddy, additional support through the development of a network of CWOs within each region, a Senior CWO and also overall 'umbrella' support from the Lead Child Welfare Officer and the National Office
- Similarly, in the case of all of these sources of support, they can be called upon to provide the CWO with a 'supportive ear'. During the aftermath of an accusation it is likely to be the CWO who is providing the victim and the victim's family with immediate direct support. The 'buddy' and regional network can provide the support to the CWO. This is in addition to the overall support available at a national level through the LCWO.

# Child Welfare Officer Support Action Plan

