



## **Oxford and Witney Artistic Swimming Club – Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy.**

### **Policy Statement**

Oxford and Witney Artistic Swimming Club (OWASC) is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment to safeguard any Adults at Risk involved in our sport.

Whilst our Child Protection Policy covers all persons under the age of 18 our policy for safeguarding Adults at Risk applies equally to everyone at all levels across the club. Anyone involved in the administration of club duties and activities must be committed to the principles and practice of safeguarding Adults at Risk.

An Adult at Risk is a person aged 18 or over who is in need of care and support regardless of whether they are receiving them, and because of those needs are unable to protect themselves against abuse or neglect.

In recent years there has been a marked shift away from using the term 'vulnerable' to describe adults potentially at risk from harm or abuse.

**Abuse** is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. See later section for signs and indicators.

**Capacity** refers to the ability to make a decision at a particular time, for example when under considerable stress. The starting assumption must always be that a person has the capacity to make a decision unless it can be established that they lack capacity (MCA 2005).

### **Policy Principles**

The guidance given in this policy is based on the following principles:

- All Adults at Risk, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status have the right to be protected from abuse and poor practice and to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- As a club we will seek to ensure that our sport is inclusive and make reasonable adjustments for any ability, disability, or impairment, we will also commit to continuous development, monitoring and review.
- The rights, dignity and worth of all Adults at Risk will always be respected.
- We recognise that ability and disability can change over time, such that some Adults at Risk may be additionally vulnerable to abuse, for example those who have a dependency on others or have different communication needs.
- We recognise that a disabled adult may or may not identify themselves or be identified as an Adult at Risk.
- We all have a shared responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of all Adults at Risk and will act appropriately and report concerns whether these concerns arise within swimming (e.g. inappropriate behaviour of a coach), or outside (e.g. in the wider community).
- All allegations will be taken seriously and responded to quickly in line with the Swim England Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and Procedures listed in Wavepower.

### **Types of Abuse**

The following list is not intended to be an exhaustive but an illustrative guide as to the sort of issue which could give rise to a safeguarding concern.



**Discrimination** – centres on a difference or perceived difference particularly with respect to race, gender or disability or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act.

**Physical Abuse** – includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

**Sexual Abuse** – including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the Adult at Risk has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

**Emotional or Psychological Abuse** – treatment which may diminish a sense of identity, self-worth or dignity including threats of harm, humiliation, blaming, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services.

**Financial or Material Abuse** – including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

**Neglect** – including ignoring medical\* or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating.

\* As for children at the club any medical and/or physical needs which the club need to be aware of must be recorded to ensure coaches and/or the requisite volunteers are fully aware and can act accordingly.

### **Signs and Indicators of Abuse**

An adult member may confide to a member of staff, coach, volunteer or another Member that they are experiencing abuse inside or outside of the aquatics sport. Similarly, others may suspect that this is the case.

There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. There may be other explanations, but they should not be ignored.

#### **The signs and symptoms include but are not limited to:**

Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present.

A Member has belongings or money going missing.

A Member is not attending / no longer enjoying their sessions.

A Member losing or gaining weight / has an unkempt appearance.

A change in the behaviour or confidence of a member

They may self-harm.

They may have a fear of a particular group or individual.

Another person always speaks for the Member and doesn't allow them to make their own choices.

They may tell you / another person they are being abused – i.e. a disclosure.

#### **What to do if you have a concern or someone raises a concern with you.**

As a club OWASC would encourage all our members to report any concerns they do have to the club welfare officer however coaches, officials and volunteers at the club may also be approached or may become aware of/suspect abuse in their capacity as representatives of the club.



If you become aware that abuse or poor practice is taking place, suspect abuse or poor practice may be occurring or be told about something that may be abuse or poor practice you must report this immediately to the club welfare officer to take forward as appropriate. You must not keep Safeguarding concerns to yourself.

If you are concerned about harm being caused to someone else, please be aware that:

- it is not your responsibility to prove or decide whether an adult Member has been harmed or abused.
- it is not your responsibility to make an assessment on whether an adult is classed as an 'Adult at risk';
- it is, however, everyone's responsibility to respond to and report concerns using the Swim England safeguarding referral form.
- if someone has a need for immediate medical attention you must always call an ambulance on 999.
- if you are concerned someone is in immediate danger or a serious crime is being committed, you must contact the Police on 999 straight away.
- remember to be person-centred and to make safeguarding personal by discussing your concerns with the adult Member and seeking to understand what they would like to happen where it is safe for you to do so. Inform them that you must pass on your concerns to the club Welfare Officer and Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team.
- you must not contact the adult Member before talking to the OWASC Welfare Officer or the Swim England Safeguarding and Welfare Team if the person allegedly causing the harm is likely to find out as a result; and
- you must not confront the person thought to be causing the harm.

**It is important when considering your concern that you also consider the needs and wishes of the Adult at Risk, considering the nature of the issue or concern.**

It is important that you explain you will have to seek guidance from the club welfare officer, who may need to take the matter further, however, provide assurances around support and confidentiality.

If the OWASC welfare officer is not available or the club feels more immediate support is required, you can report the concern to Swim England Safeguarding and welfare team for advice on 01509 640700 (Option 1 for Swim England then Option 3 for Safeguarding) or at [safeguarding@swimming.org](mailto:safeguarding@swimming.org) The Safeguarding and Welfare team will be able to provide advice even if you are not making a referral or are unsure whether to do so.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other Policies and Regulations that Swim England has in place, including, but not limited to:

The Swim England Handbook (including Swim England judicial and safeguarding regulations)  
<https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/swim-england-handbook/>

and

The Swim England Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan can be found on the Inclusion Hub  
<https://www.swimming.org/swimengland/inclusion/>



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