

VULNERABLE PERSONS PROTECTION POLICY

(Compiled by Sophie Morris, Safeguarding Officer)

The Mounted Games Association Great Britain (MGAGB) has a statutory and moral duty to ensure that the Association functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all Members, riding or non-riding, of the association.

Throughout this policy reference will be made to “Children and young people”. This term is used to mean “those under the age of 25”. The Committee recognise that some adults are also vulnerable to abuse, accordingly, the procedures may be applied (with appropriate adaptations) to allegations of abuse and the protection of vulnerable adults.

The MGAGB Committee is committed to ensuring that the Association:

- i. Provides a safe environment for children and young people to compete in.
- ii. Is able to offer support and confidentiality to children and young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm,
- iii. Takes appropriate action to see that such children and young adults are kept safe, whilst attending internal and external shows.

In pursuit of these aims, the General Committee will approve and annually review policies and procedures with the aim of:

- iv. Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people and the promotion of a safe environment for the children and young people to compete in.
- v. Aiding the identification of children and young people at risk of significant harm, and providing procedures and reporting concerns.
- vi. Establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against officials of MGAGB.
- vii. The appointment of Safeguarding Officers in each region of the Association.

In developing the policies and procedures, the Safeguarding Officer of the MGAGB has taken guidance and consulted with the relevant Authorities.

This designated Officer will lead responsibility for vulnerable person protection; a review will be conducted on all issues during the season that relate to vulnerable person protection annually. The General Committee will refer concerns that a child or young person might be at significant harm to social services and the police.

The MGAGB has designated Sophie Morris as Safeguarding Officer. Sophie is a qualified and registered Social Worker, with specialisms in Child Services. She has undertaken appropriate training and will continually update herself on current policies and procedures.

SECTION A – Definitions of Abuse

The General Committee recognises the following definitions of abuse

A1.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. It may be done deliberately or recklessly, or be the result of a deliberate failure to prevent injury occurring. Physical harm

may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child, vulnerable adult, they are looking after.

A1.2 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent or severe failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs. It will result in serious impairment of their health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

A1.3 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves a child or young person being forced or coerced into participating in or watching a sexual activity. It is not necessary for the child to be aware that the activity is sexual and apparent consent of the child is irrelevant. This may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or in watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

A1.4 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse occurs where there is persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection. It causes severe and adverse effects on the child's or young person's behaviour and emotional development, resulting in self-worth. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse, though it may occur alone.

SECTION B – Reporting And Recording

If a Member tells a Committee Member or Trainer about possible abuse they should be listened to very carefully, whatever form their attempts to communicate their worries might be. The following points give guidance on how to deal with a Member who makes an allegation.

- i. The Committee Member/Trainer receiving the disclosure must remain calm.
- ii. The Member should be listened to very carefully, but not interviewed or asked to repeat the account. Avoid leading questions, or applying any pressure, however be clear that you understand what the Member is telling you.
- iii. The Member should not be interrupted when recalling significant events.
- iv. All information should be noted carefully, including details such as timing, setting, who was present and what was said, in the Member's words. The account should be obtained verbatim or as near as possible. The **MGAGB Confidential Incident Report Form** should be used. These are available from any show organiser at an event where the Safeguarding Officer is not present.
- v. Care should be taken not to make assumptions about what the Member is saying or to suggest alternative explanations for their worries. Words should not be put in the reporter's mouth.
- vi. Words should not be offered to the Member in describing an experience.
- vii. Do not interview the Member, but question normally and without pressure, in order to be sure that you understand what the Member is telling you.
- viii. Reassure the Member that by telling you, they have done the right thing.
- ix. Inform the Member that you must pass the information on, but that only to those that need to be told. Inform them of to whom you will report this matter.
- x. Both the Member and the Committee/Trainer should sign the account.
- xi. The Committee/Trainer should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves, but should report them to the Safeguarding Officer.
- xiv. The Safeguarding Officer should make an initial assessment of the allegation and making a Common Assessment Record (CAR) consulting with the Committee and the governing body, the British Equestrian Federation. In extreme circumstances the Social Services/Police in the county that the Member lives may be contacted.

Section C - Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Trainers, Committee Members or anyone associated with MGAGB.

In rare instances Committee Members/Trainers of MGAGB may come face to face with allegations of abuse. Owing to their frequent contact with children and young adults in a variety of situations, including the wider caring role, Trainer / Rider relationships may lead to allegations against them being made by parents or other riders. The MGAGB recognises that an allegation of child abuse made against a Trainer/Committee Member may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. The MGAGB therefore needs policies and procedures on the management of situations where there are allegations of abuse.

The procedures that follow have been drawn up in consultation with the British Equestrian Federation (BEF). They outline the steps to be followed and considerations to be made for the reporting and subsequent management of an allegation of abuse. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind and that those investigations are thorough and not subject to delay. The Committee recognises that the Children Act 1989 states that the welfare of the child is the paramount concern. It is also recognised that the hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with a Member of the Committee/Trainer can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence and career. Therefore, those dealing with allegations within the MGAGB will do so with sensitivity and will act in a careful, measured way.

Section D - Safeguarding Officer Procedures: Receiving an Allegation

A Member who receives an allegation about another Member, or from a child, should follow the guidelines in Section B for dealing with disclosures and liaise with the Safeguarding Officer for confidential advice and guidance.

Immediately after an allegation is made the Safeguarding Officer should receive:

- i. details of the allegation, signed and dated from the person who received the allegation. The written details will be countersigned and dated by the Safeguarding Officer.
- ii. Written information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses.

The Safeguarding Officer will make an initial assessment of the allegation, completing the Common Assessment Record (CAR), consulting with the General Committee, BEF and wider authorities as appropriate.

Section E – Further Enquires and Investigations

Child protection enquires by Social Services or the Police are not to be confused with internal disciplinary enquiries by MGAGB. The MGAGB may wish to use the outcome of external agency enquiries as part of its own procedures. The vulnerable adult protection agencies, including the police, have no power to direct the MGAGB to act in any particular way: however, the MGAGB should assist the agencies in their enquiries. Social Services and the Police would be likely to convene a meeting with the General Committee and the Safeguarding Officer will be expected to attend.

The MGAGB shall hold its own internal enquiries while the formal Police or Social Services investigation proceeds: to do otherwise may prejudice the investigation. Any internal enquiries shall conform to the existing disciplinary procedures.

If there is an investigation by an external agency, for example the Police, the Safeguarding Officer would normally be involved, they will then communicate with chairperson of MGAGB.

MISUSE OF SUBSTANCES POLICY

(Compiled by Sophie Morris, Safeguarding Officer)

The Mounted Games Association of Great Britain (MGAGB) is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that Members can participate in all activities organised by MGAGB in a safe and secure environment.

This includes all organisers committing to do what is reasonably practicable to ensure the health, safety and welfare of Members and volunteers at MGAGB activities. All adults need to be physically and mentally fit to undertake their responsibilities in this area.

The use of alcohol and tobacco is discouraged within MGAGB as using their consumption is incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity.

There is zero tolerance of any underage drinking of alcohol while on an MGA event site. See General Rule 19.

Overage Members, riding and non-riding, must not be under the influence of alcohol while in the ring. This includes unmounted duties. See General Rule 19. MGAGB coaches, officials and volunteers must not consume alcohol when they are directly responsible for young people, who are not their own children

There is zero tolerance of any illegal substances being present, taken, distributed or sold on any MGA site, Internal or External. The term `substance` covers alcohol, solvents, psychoactive substances, and illegal drugs, including prescription drugs not prescribed for the user.

Where a Member is already receiving help with a problem of misuse, that information is on a `need to know` confidential, basis. In most cases this will be the Safeguarding Officer and a Member of the General Committee along with the parent, carer or an appropriate person. This only refers to the Members` individual problem and confidentiality will not be extended to include taking, or handling, illegal substances at MGA Internal/External shows.

In the event of an incident involving drug misuse:

- Any Member, riding or non-riding, found in possession of illegal substances shall be removed from the event site immediately and have their Membership suspended pending formal investigation. Authorities will be notified immediately.
- Any Member of MGAGB suspecting use or possession of drugs at an MGA event should immediately inform the Safeguarding Officer or a Show official who will pass the information onto the Safeguarding Officer. They will be required to give a statement and contact details using the **Confidential Incident Report Form**. These may be passed on to relevant authorities. If there is an immediate risk to the health, safety or welfare of one or more Members, then the Police must be informed as soon as possible. The person reporting their concerns should not influence any police investigation by hasty actions.
- Any Member, riding or non-riding, reported to be under the influence, or in possession, of any illegal substances will be asked for a full statement by the Safeguarding Officer, or the Event Organiser in their absence. The allegation will then be conducted under Safeguarding Officer's discretion, supported by MGAGB's governing body the British Equestrian Federation.

This will include –

- Informing the Members' parents / guardians
 - Informing the Police;
 - Suspending the Member concerned while investigations are completed;
 - Awaiting the completion of Police investigations and actions.
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- While there is no legal requirement to inform police under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, the MGAGB policy is that the police will be contacted by the Safeguarding Officer should any Member receive a second allegation, or if there is sufficient evidence at a first allegation.
 - Any drugs found shall be placed in a secure place by an Official, in the presence of the Safeguarding Officer or witnesses, before being passed on the Authorities.

***N.B.** This is written on the understand that all persons on MGA Event Sites are Members of MGAGB. Should this not be the case for whatever reason these rules will still apply to any persons on site during an event.*