

Issue 18 Autumn 2011

relay



Child Protection in
Sport Unit Newsletter



Play sport, stay safe, enjoy and achieve

NSPCC 
Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.

Safeguarding children in sport

Welcome to the 18th issue of *Relay*, the Child Protection in Sport Unit newsletter. In this edition you will find:

- the CPSU 10 year anniversary dinner and conference
- CPSU's launch of Safeguarding Stars
- the launch of CPSU's research into the experiences of children participating in organised sport in the UK
- challenges for disabled young athletes
- young people leading the way
- the future of safeguarding research in sport
- disclosure of sexual abuse in sport organisations.

CPSU 10 year anniversary dinner and conference

In October we celebrated 10 years of the Child Protection in Sport Unit in England as a partnership with Sport England.



The sports sector has achieved more than could possibly have been imagined over the past decade in creating safe and enjoyable environments for children and young people to participate in sporting activity. A gala dinner at Edgbaston Cricket Ground on 5 October celebrated these achievements.

Jonathon Agnew, sports commentator and former international and county cricketer, chaired the event, which featured the inaugural CPSU Safeguarding Stars awards. Representatives of the England Volleyball Youth Panel introduced these and key speaker John Amaechi OBE presented them. The evening was an opportunity to thank those key organisations and individuals which have contributed to safeguarding over the past 10 years.

The next day, 140 people came to our 10-year anniversary conference, also at Edgbaston. Attendees came from across the UK sports sector, the statutory sector and relevant supporting bodies such as insurers and law firms.

The day was chaired by Jonathan Agnew and covered three themes: reflections on where we were 10 years ago, where we are now and priorities for the future. Each part of the day had input from young people, policy makers, sports practitioners and researchers. It is difficult to single out individual presentations but the contribution of young people,

both in person and on video, was particularly powerful, as was the challenging presentation by John Amaechi and a video contribution from Brian Moore, a survivor of childhood sexual abuse.

We also launched the Centre for Learning in Child Protection's research on children's experiences of sport. This long awaited study validated the need for setting up the Unit and shines a spotlight on areas for further work – particularly the need for us all to focus on the emotional climate in which sport takes place and on the bullying between young people.

Participants were asked to write a commitment card about what action they will take as a result of the conference. This will be sent back to them as a reminder and for feedback on progress.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the events including sponsors, speakers and all of our NSPCC colleagues. We have come a long way but there is still a great deal to be done to ensure that all children can enjoy sport in a safe environment. What is clear is that we have to work together to achieve this and that involving children and young people in how we implement this is essential.

Detailed information on conference content can be found on our website www.nspcc.org.uk/cpsu10

CPSU launches Safeguarding Stars



As part of CPSU's 10th anniversary celebrations, we launched a biannual Safeguarding Stars award to recognise individuals across sport who have gone the extra mile to safeguard children and young people. 24 Safeguarding Stars were nominated and young people from the Volleyball England Youth Panel helped select six nominees from the group to attend the conference's gala dinner. Here, we take a closer look at how these Safeguarding Stars have championed child protection in sport:

Justine Caroll, Regional Welfare Officer, British Gymnastics

The youth panel were particularly impressed by the extent to which Justine's unpaid efforts have made a difference for children. Justine has supported Blackpool Local Authority in setting up generic sports safeguarding policies; acted as a sports coach UK tutor and assessor, training across the country; attended strategy meetings; liaised with police and children's services; and has been involved with gymnastics clubs across her region.

Nicky Clark, Club Welfare Officer, Jarvis Brook Juniors Football Club

Nicky has raised the bar on children's welfare, driving participation in the FA's Respect campaign and embedding codes of conduct for children and parents in the club's fabric. Her drive, thoroughness and vision helped her club decide to seek FA Development Status, and have lifted safeguarding to the top of the club's agenda.

Rachael McKiernan-Doyle, Sport/Physical Activity Manager, Dudley Local Authority

Rachael has worked hard to safeguard sport in her local area. Her role on the Safeguarding Children Board, and her

involvement in local sports organisations, has led to her working closely with police and children's social care in response to any sports-related cases. She also provides safeguarding expertise for the Black Country Sports Partnership and played a significant role in supporting the CSP to achieve the Sports Standards success.

Sally Echlin, Regional Chair, British Gymnastics

The panel were particularly impressed by how long Sally has been volunteering for gymnastics, the amount of free time she has given to her volunteer duties and how she has made a difference for children at club, regional and national level of the sport.

Janet Inman, Lead Child Protection Officer, Volleyball England

Janet holds a unique record of having successfully guided two organisations – Volleyball England and Lincolnshire County Sports Partnership – through all three levels of the CPSU Sports Safeguarding Standards. In undertaking a huge range of voluntary safeguarding duties, such as policy writing, training, recruitment and management of cases, Janet has certainly gone the extra mile for children and young people in her sport.

Steve Leonard, Service Area Coordinator, St Helens RFL Club

The panel particularly liked how Steve has adopted a very practical approach to supporting clubs, for example with his email footer that reads: "Thanks for all your support in keeping St Helens a safe and enjoyable place for our children to play Rugby League".

Further information on the awards is available on the CPSU website – www.thecpsu.org.uk

The future of safeguarding research in sport

Dr Daniel Rhind, Brunel University

The importance of safeguarding research, alongside policy and practice, was clearly evident at the recent conference to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Child Protection in Sport Unit.

Research can help us learn from the past, understand the present and inform the future. With an eye on the past, Professor Celia Brackenridge from Brunel University outlined the history of research on safeguarding and illustrated how this was fundamental to the development of the CPSU.

Dr Anne Stafford from Edinburgh University reported a very interesting study of the experiences of over 6,000 young people. While findings highlighted sport as a positive experience for many, they also identified incidences of more negative experiences. It is time for research to look at attitudes and

behaviours relevant to safeguarding in sport, to inform the future development and evaluation of policy and practice.

In his keynote speech, John Ameachi concluded that "Science will lead the way". This can be achieved through research. For this to happen in the most effective way, researchers, policy makers and practitioners all need to work together for a unified outcome.

We should see research as an additional resource for key stakeholders, rather than a drain on resources, and a way of highlighting best practice rather than seeking out poor practice. Clearly great strides have been made over the past 10 years. Looking forward to the next decade, I feel that research can play a significant part in us all making a big difference.

Challenges for disabled young athletes

As part of the CPSU's 10 year anniversary conference Tyler, a young national level wheelchair table tennis athlete, was invited to speak and share his experiences of being involved in sport. He gives an insight into his involvement on the day:

"The experience of attending the CPSU conference at Edgbaston Cricket Ground was fantastic. I was asked to present a short film which I had appeared in with Ade Adapitan, (former Great Britain Wheelchair Basketball player), and other young disabled athletes. The focus of the film was to find out, from the disabled athletes' point of view, the barriers of participation in sport and potential solutions to these.

"I also put my questions to the audience (on what they are going to commit to do to engage and include disabled young people in sport, within their sports organisations) and contributed my own views to their answers.

"This experience was daunting but amazing and has boosted my confidence significantly for future potential events. I hope my opinions have provided more opportunities for other young people with disabilities to participate and succeed within sport."



Young people leading the way

The England Netball Youth Advisory Group (YAG) was established in 2009, to provide younger affiliates with a voice that many felt was going unheard. 28 per cent of members are under the age of 18, so England Netball deemed it necessary to see what they could do to fulfil young netballers' expectations and needs. The group covers all aspects of netball that affect young people, including leadership, volunteering and playing.

Youth Advisers

The aim of the Youth Advisers initiative was to recruit young people, aged 9-25, to email their opinions on various youth-related issues. There are currently over 200 Youth Advisers who have been asked to provide feedback on many areas of the netballing world, such as helping to develop a new youth affiliation package and reviewing the website. The Youth Adviser pilot has enabled the youth population to voice their opinions on the sport and to feel that England Netball is listening and valuing people on and off court.

Pass on your passion

YAG's primary involvement with the **Pass on Your Passion** scheme was to increase the numbers within the programme. Since April 2010 the programme has continually grown.

Members of the scheme were sent log books to record their volunteering hours. The Youth Advisory Group were heavily involved in the design of the log book, using its own ideas and comparing similar sporting recognition schemes, setting targets for members and deciding on rewards for achieving these goals. The group's members have reported that they really enjoyed their involvement in **Pass on Your Passion**.

"I love volunteering in netball. The **Pass on your Passion** programme makes me realise that England Netball really cares about the stuff I'm doing. It feels good to know that all my hard work isn't going unnoticed," said Jess, a **Pass on your Passion** member.

Each YAG member has actively promoted the scheme by marketing the idea to schools, committees, clubs and county netball development officers. At present over 800 volunteers have signed up to the scheme, with 34 logging over 200 hours and four with over 400 hours.

Safeguarding

The department the YAG works most closely and strategically with at England Netball is Safeguarding. Safeguarding is an important issue and plays a role within all sports. It primarily affects young people, yet they rarely have any say in the guidelines that impact upon them. However, through its involvement, the YAG has a chance to contribute netball's safeguarding policy and resources.



The YAG helped to design the Be Safe cards, which provide young people within netball guidance on safeguarding issues and what to do if they have a problem. Cards have been distributed to youth members of England Netball, 28,000 through the magazine, via post and their netball clubs. YAG has consulted on the issue of bullying, and further anti-bullying resources can be found on the England Netball website.

Emma Gibson, safeguarding and equality manager, has discussed codes of practice with the group, which have impacted on the England Netball Good Practice Guide, and our input is contributing to a new anti-bullying policy for clubs.

Lois, a member of the YAG, said: "I feel that it is really important that we're involved in the safeguarding functional area, as young people need to know we are passionate about this and take their safety very seriously."

Chair of the England Netball Youth Advisory Group, Jessica Slater, concludes: "Only positive things can result from consulting young people." From YAG's success so far, this appears to be true.

UK research launched on children's experience in sport

10 years ago, sport was failing to make child safety and well-being a priority, with very few governing bodies having child protection policies in place. This is a headline finding from new research published by the NSPCC and the University of Edinburgh Centre for UK-wide Learning in Child Protection.

The research found that

- Overall, participating in **organised sport is a positive experience** for most children and young people. However a **negative sporting culture existed** and was accepted as “the norm” and perpetuated by peers, coaches and other adults.
- Young people in the study reported **widespread emotionally harmful treatment** (75 per cent) and **unacceptable levels of sexual harassment** (29 per cent of all respondents). Clothing and body image are key issues within sport contexts that warrant further attention, particularly around puberty. Self-harm was reported equally by boys and girls (10 per cent). Reports of sexual harm featured at 3 per cent.
- **Peers** were the **most common perpetrators** of all forms of harm reported in the research. **Coaches sometimes condoned this or failed to challenge it effectively. Coaches were the second most common perpetrators** of harm with this role increasing as young athletes advanced through the competitive ranks.

Of those who reported being physically harmed, 55 per cent said they had been forced or coerced to train despite injury or exhaustion, and 17 per cent had experienced violent treatment such as being hit, punched or grabbed around the neck.

“I really think at that age there should not have been that much pressure. I should have been a child,” reflects one young female research participant on her experience in district gymnastics and local level equestrian sports.

The research, commissioned and funded by the NSPCC, was conducted between 2007 and 2010. The findings are the result of questionnaires and interviews with over 6,000 students, aged 18-22, in colleges across the UK. They were asked about their experience of taking part in a wide variety of sport as children aged up to 16.

Anne Tiivas, director of the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit, said: “At the time these young people were experiencing youth sport, the industry was failing to put the safety and well-being of children first. Today the picture is very different, thanks to the huge progress made by sports organisations in partnership with the Child Protection in Sport Unit and Sports Councils throughout the UK.

“However, we cannot afford to be complacent. Incidents of bullying or sexual harassment still occur and everyone in sport – children and adults – must feel able to report incidents of maltreatment. Children and young people need to know they have a right to take part in sport safely and who to turn to for help if they need it.

“Listening to them is vital, particularly if they are deaf or disabled. We need sport to be far more inclusive and to encourage all children to get involved. The more they are placed at the heart of sport, the better it will be for future generations.”

Sport Northern Ireland chief executive Eamonn McCartan said: “Sport Northern Ireland recognises the huge strides that have been made by the NSPCC Sports Unit over the last 10 years in the area of child protection in sport. Undoubtedly the findings indicate that there is still work to be done and Sport Northern Ireland is committed to assisting in whatever way it can.”

For more information on the research visit the CPSU website – link http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/findings/experiences_children_sport_wda85008.html

Disclosure of sexual abuse in sport organisations – a report

Lavel University in Canada has produced the results of an analysis of sport organisation policies and interviews with 27 Canadian sport stakeholders looking at the disclosure of sexual abuse.

The interviews focus on stakeholders' views both of real cases of sexual abuse within sports organisations, and their thoughts on how the disclosure process would unfold if a case of sexual abuse were to happen in their organisation.

The full article is available to view on Taylor & Francis Online – www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10538712.2011.573459





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