



NATIONAL PRINCIPLE 6

Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused





CONTENTS

- > [Fact Sheet 6.1](#)
- > [Fact Sheet 6.2](#)
- > [Fact Sheet 6.3](#)
- > [Fact Sheet 6.4](#)
 - > [Template 6.4](#)
- > [Fact Sheet 6.5](#)

[Click here](#) to view other True Sport Child Safeguarding resources.

If you need support:

- > [Mental health community links](#)
- > [Reporting flowchart](#)

[Click here](#) for the full disclaimer relating to True Sport Child Safeguarding documents.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Child Safeguarding

Child Safeguarding relates to the actions taken by organisations to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in it's care, to protect them from harm.

Children and young people

Those involved in your SSA who are under the age of 18 or fit into a youth category.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

A document that provides guidelines for everyone involved in organisations (including staff and volunteers and children and young people) to understand their expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.

Cultural safety

Refers to an environment in which the inherent rights, cultures and traditions of a particular culture are recognised, protected and advanced.

National Principles

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles) reflect the ten child safe standards

(standards) recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and were endorsed by all Commonwealth, state and territory governments. The National Principles are the vehicle for giving effect to recommendations relating to the standards. The National Principles aim to provide a nationally consistent approach to creating organisational cultures that foster safety and wellbeing.

SSA

State Sport Association.

Staff and volunteers

All people undertaking paid or unpaid work within your SSA.

True Sport

True Sport provides a framework for a long-term sustainable approach to safeguarding, support and equip the sports industry from now and into the future. Its all about creating the environment for sport in WA that allows the industry to thrive and prosper for generations to come.



KEY ACTION AREA 6.1:

The SSA has an accessible, child-focused complaint handling policy, which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers; approaches to dealing with different types of complaints; breaches of relevant policies or the Child Safety Code of Conduct; and obligations to act and report.

OVERVIEW

It is important for your SSA to have an accessible, child-focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers. This may be a standalone policy or part of a larger policy document (such as a child safety and wellbeing policy). It should also outline approaches to dealing with different types of complaints and breaches of relevant policies or the [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#), as well as obligations to act and report.

It is important that your complaint handling policy is easy to comprehend, so that everyone within your SSA can understand what is required and follow the policy. Your SSA may consider developing a condensed version of your complaint handling policy into an 'easy read' format. Children and young people must also be aware of this information, and your SSA should consider (in consultation with children and young people) the best method(s) of doing this. For example, you may develop posters which include information about how children and young people can make a complaint and what to expect if they do so ([see Fact Sheet 2.1](#)).

Your SSA needs to provide multiple pathways for staff, volunteers, children and young people, and parents/carers to provide feedback, raise concerns or make complaints ([see National Principle 2](#) and [National Principle 3 resources](#)).

Leadership within your SSA should prioritise child safety and promote the child focused complaints process. This will assist in raising awareness of the child-focused complaints process and encourage children and young people to provide feedback or make a complaint.

True Sport Child Safeguarding will create opportunities for SSAs to come together to share experiences and examples of good practice as part of [True Sport Child Safeguarding Champions](#).

It is important for your SSA to have information that is relevant and respectful of cultural and gender diversity and people of all abilities ([see National Principle 4 documents](#)).

Your SSA also needs to have visible posters/flyers/flowcharts that raise awareness of your child-focused complaint handling policy. Similarly, this information must be available and accessible on your website.



<p>EXAMPLE SSA ACTIONS TO WORK TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING KEY ACTION AREA 6.1</p>	<p>The SSA has a child-focused complaints handling policy which outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers when dealing with complaints from or about children and young people.</p>
	<p>Information in the child-focused complaints handling policy is accessible and appropriate.</p>
	<p>Information in the child-focused complaints handling policy is relevant to, and respectful of, cultural and gender diversity, and people of all abilities.</p>
	<p>The SSA has its child-focused complaints handling policy available on its website.</p>
	<p>The SSA has visible posters/flyers/flowcharts that raise awareness of its child-focused complaint handling policy.</p>

The information in this document is general in nature and does not constitute legal or professional advice (including advice relating to child safeguarding). SportWest is not liable to users for any loss resulting from the use of this document and accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information or your reliance on it. SportWest recommends users seek independent advice as necessary. [Click here](#) for the full disclaimer relating to SportWest child safeguarding documents.

If you need support:

- > [Mental health community links](#)
- > [Reporting flowchart](#)



KEY ACTION AREA 6.2:

Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.

OVERVIEW

It is important for your SSA to have effective complaint handling processes that are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe. This can be achieved by the following:

- Identifying any barriers in your SSA that may prevent staff, volunteers, families, children and young people from providing feedback, raising concerns or making a formal complaint, and then try to address these ([see National Principle 3 resources](#)).
- Review the cultural appropriateness of your processes ([see National Principle 4 resources](#)).
- Ensuring there are ways for people who have accessibility needs, including communication difficulties, to raise concerns so they have the same opportunities as everyone else. If your SSA is unsure how to do this, it is also important to seek guidance
- Accepting complaints from an advocate or someone speaking on behalf of children and young people to enable all children and young people to access your complaint handling system
- Promoting the complaint handling process to children and young people.



EXAMPLE SSA ACTIONS TO WORK TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING KEY ACTION AREA 6.2	Identify and address barriers that may prevent staff, volunteers, families, children and young people from providing feedback, raising concerns or making a formal complaint.
	Review the cultural appropriateness of the SSA's complaint handling processes.
	Ensure there are multiple pathways to make complaints and raise concerns, including accessible options for people of diverse abilities.
	Accept complaints from an advocate or someone speaking on behalf of children or young people.
	Provide information on complaint handling processes to children and young people, and families and communities, to increase awareness and encourage feedback and complaints.
	Provide information and training to staff and volunteers on the complaint handling processes.

The information in this document is general in nature and does not constitute legal or professional advice (including advice relating to child safeguarding). SportWest is not liable to users for any loss resulting from the use of this document and accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information or your reliance on it. SportWest recommends users seek independent advice as necessary. [Click here](#) for the full disclaimer relating to SportWest child safeguarding documents.

If you need support:

- > [Mental health community links](#)
- > [Reporting flowchart](#)



KEY ACTION AREA 6.3:

Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

OVERVIEW

It is important that all complaints are taken seriously by your SSA and responded to promptly and thoroughly. Examples of how this can be achieved include:

- Ensuring your SSA complaint processes include approaches to dealing with situations whereby children and young people may cause harm to another child or young person ([see Fact Sheet 8.1](#)), as well as having several pathways to escalate concerns
- Effectively communicating with complainants, by keeping them informed about progress and outcomes
- Learning from feedback and complaints in order to improve outcomes for children and young people within your SSA.



EXAMPLE SSA ACTIONS TO WORK TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING KEY ACTION AREA 6.3	Ensure staff and volunteers understand different ways children and young people may express concerns or disclose harm and approaches to dealing with situations in which a child or young person may cause harm to another child or young person.
	Ensure staff and volunteers are aware of pathways to escalate concerns.
	Complainants are kept informed of the progress and outcome of complaints.
	Feedback and complaints lead to improvements for children and young people.
	Ensure complaints from or about a child or young person are acknowledged and responded to as soon as possible.
	Ensure complainants are treated respectfully and sensitively and receive fair and reasonable process.
	Children, young people and families are aware of alternate ways to complain if they have concerns about the complaints process.

The information in this document is general in nature and does not constitute legal or professional advice (including advice relating to child safeguarding). SportWest is not liable to users for any loss resulting from the use of this document and accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information or your reliance on it. SportWest recommends users seek independent advice as necessary. [Click here](#) for the full disclaimer relating to SportWest child safeguarding documents.

If you need support:
> [Mental health community links](#)
> [Reporting flowchart](#)



KEY ACTION AREA 6.4:

The SSA has policies and procedures in place for reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities – irrespective of whether such reporting is required by law – and co-operates with law enforcement.

OVERVIEW

It is important that your SSA has policies and procedures for reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities – irrespective of whether such reporting is required by law – and co-operates with law enforcement.

It is also important for staff and volunteers to be informed about applying these policies and procedures in practice.

Information should also be available about where people can report concerns that a child or young person is at risk of harm, including information and contact details about the Department of Communities and the WA Police ([see Template 6.4](#)).

Your SSA should have processes to ensure [data is kept](#) to ensure reporting and monitoring of complaints involving children and young people, and the actions taken by staff and volunteers to respond.

↓ [View Template 6.4](#)



EXAMPLE SSA ACTIONS TO WORK TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING KEY ACTION AREA 6.4	<p>The SSA's complaints process includes information about where and how to report concerns that a child or young person is, or has been, at risk, or if a child or young person has disclosed harm.</p>
	<p>Staff and volunteers are aware of pathways to escalate complaints and concerns.</p>
	<p>Staff and volunteers understand reporting and monitoring requirements.</p>
	<p>The SSA ensures data is kept to enable reporting and monitoring of complaints involving children and young people, and the actions taken to respond.</p>

The information in this document is general in nature and does not constitute legal or professional advice (including advice relating to child safeguarding). SportWest is not liable to users for any loss resulting from the use of this document and accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information or your reliance on it. SportWest recommends users seek independent advice as necessary. [Click here](#) for the full disclaimer relating to SportWest child safeguarding documents.

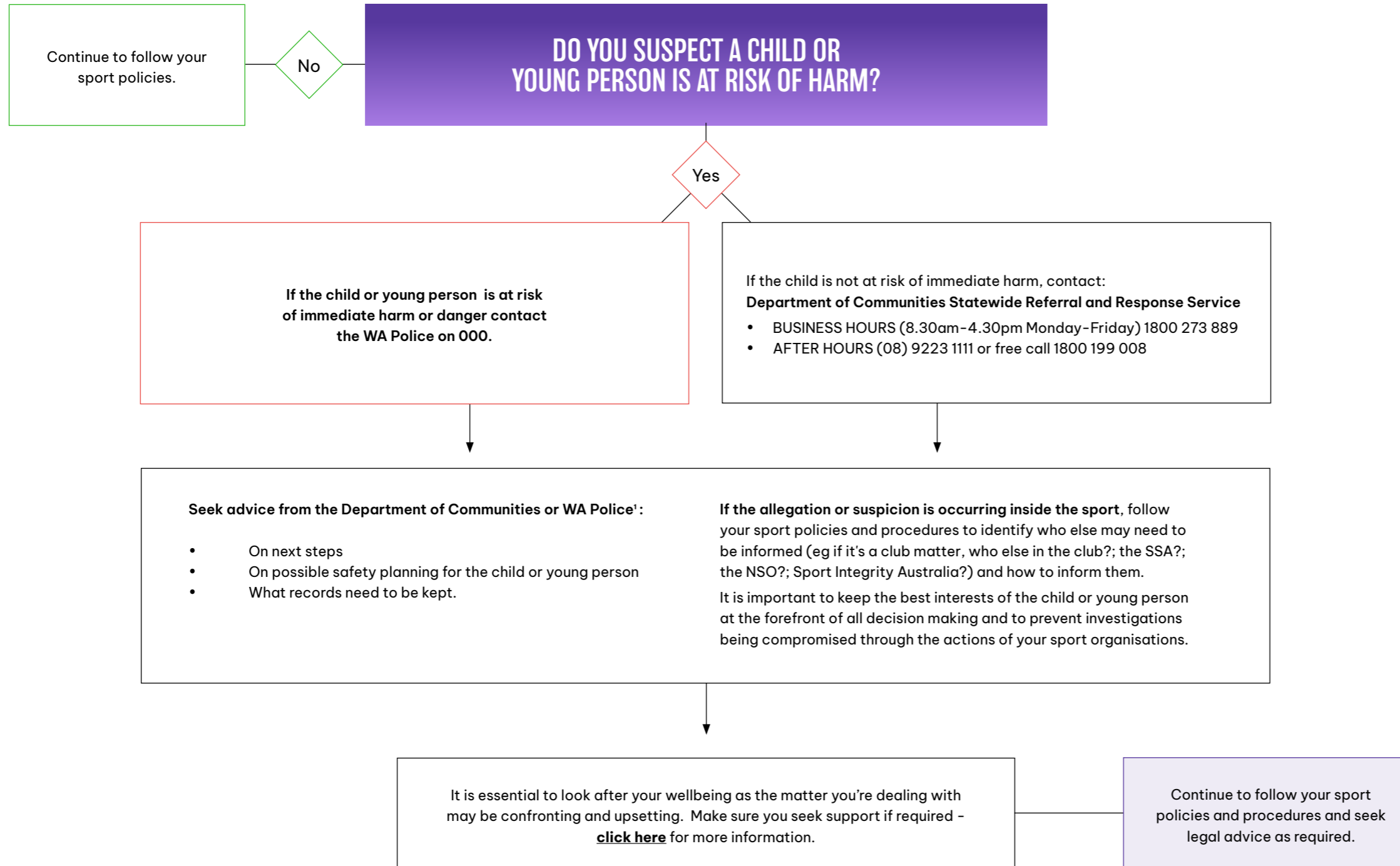
If you need support:

- > [Mental health community links](#)
- > [Reporting flowchart](#)



REPORTING FLOW CHART

Responding to concerns or disclosures regarding a child or young person being at risk of harm.



TIPS

- 1 If you're not sure which agency to contact, don't worry. Your role is to report any concerns you may have about a child or young person, as soon as possible. Government agencies share information and work closely together and will ensure the report is addressed by the relevant agency, determined on a case-by-case basis.
- 2 It's important that the safety of the child or young person remains the priority. If for any reason you are not comfortable with the response you get from the Department of Communities or the WA Police, and are still concerned about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, call back and ask to speak to a different person or a team leader.



KEY ACTION AREA 6.4:

The SSA has policies and procedures in place for reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities – irrespective of whether such reporting is required by law – and co-operates with law enforcement.

**PROTECTING CHILDREN
IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS.
CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE RELY ON
RESPONSIBLE ADULTS
INVOLVED IN SPORT TO
HELP KEEP THEM SAFE.**

It is important to remember that your role is **not to investigate**, but to gain enough information to provide onto the WA Police or Department of Communities.

If a child or young person talks to you about worries or feeling unsafe or discloses they are experiencing or have experienced abuse:

- Believe them
- Listen to the child without interrupting
- Let the child know that
 - It's not their fault
 - Telling you is the right thing to do
 - You will need to report to someone who can help them
- Focus on the best interests of the child or young person
- Write down what the child said, using their words
- You can use the **TED** acronym to guide your conversation if you are unsure about what you have heard or need to clarify information, to find out if they need immediate protection:
 - **T**ell me more about that?
 - **E**xplain to me what happened?
 - **D**escribe to me what happened?
- Do not make promises to the child that you may not be able to keep
- Follow the **True Sport Child Safeguarding Reporting Flow Chart**
- Only discuss the child's situation with people dealing with the matter.



There is legal protection for people who provide information to the Department of Communities and/or WA Police in 'good faith.'

If you suspect a child or young person is at risk of harm or abuse, ask yourself:

- Is the child displaying behaviours or saying things that suggest they are at risk?
- Has new information increased your concerns about the child?
- Do you continue to worry after the child has been in your care/been at training?
- Do you feel you need to 'do something' to help the child?
- Follow the **True Sport Child Safeguarding Reporting Flow Chart**.

What will the Department of Communities and/or WA Police ask you about if you call to discuss your concerns?

- The child or young person's details
- Why you believe the child has been abused or neglected, or is at risk
- The child's immediate risk
- The person suspected of causing the harm
- Your ongoing contact with the child.

The Department of Communities and/or the WA Police will then make decisions about the kind of action that needs to be taken.

Further details and background about abuse and neglect:

Below is some information provided by the Department of Communities that you can consider to understand how a child might experience abuse and neglect.

Physical abuse:

When a child has been hurt or injured. This can be from excessive physical punishment, beating, shaking babies, giving alcohol and drugs, strangling, scalding/ burning, punching, leaving a child alone in a car.

Sexual abuse:

When a child has been touched or involved in sexual activities not appropriate to the child's age and development. This can be from sexual penetration, inappropriate touching, seeing sexual acts or being exposed to pornographic materials.

Neglect:

When a child has not been provided enough care or supervision which has resulted in the child being injured or their development affected. This can be from lack of food, shelter or affection, a lack of adult supervision, untreated medical problems and abandonment.

Emotional abuse:

When a child has been repeatedly treated in ways that damage their ability to feel and express a range of emotions and/or being repeatedly treated in ways that damage their self-esteem, personal development, and intellectual development. This can be from verbal abuse rejection, threatening words or behaviours, bullying and teasing. This can also be from belittling, being made to feel worthless, unloved, 'dumb' etc.

The term 'emotional abuse' includes psychological abuse (the sustained, repetitive, inappropriate, ill-treatment of a child or young person through



behaviours including threatening, isolating, neglecting, discrediting, misleading, disregarding, ignoring and inappropriate encouragement). It also includes exposure to family and domestic violence, which causes serious emotional, psychological and physical harm to children, as well as placing them at increased likelihood of abuse and neglect.

For further information about the types of abuse, visit [Recognising Child Abuse](#).

Online safety:

The eSafety Commissioner helps Australians prevent and deal with harm caused by serious online abuse or illegal and restricted online content. For child safeguarding:

Cyberbullying:

- [Advice on cyberbullying of children](#)
- [Report cyberbullying to eSafety Commissioner](#)

Image-based abuse

- [Advice on image-based abuse](#)
- [Report image-based abuse to eSafety Commissioner](#)

Illegal and restricted content

- [Advice on illegal and restricted content](#)
- [Reporting illegal and restricted content](#)

SUPPORT CONTACTS

Kids Helpline
1800 55 1800

Family Helpline
(08) 9223 1100 free call 1800 643 000

Ngala Parenting Line
(08) 9368 9368 or free call 1800 111 546

Lifeline
13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service
1300 659 467

[eSafety Commissioner](#)

True Sport [Mental Health and Wellbeing Community Links page](#) for additional services

Mandatory reporting:

If you are a Mandatory Reporter for Child Sexual Abuse in your professional role and require consultation about your concerns, you can contact the Mandatory Reporting Service on 1800 708 704 or obtain more information about your responsibilities [here](#).



KEY ACTION AREA 6.5:

Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

OVERVIEW

It is important that your SSA's reporting, [privacy and employment law obligations](#) are met. Examples of how this can be achieved include:

- Complaints processes and disciplinary proceedings that are clear and facilitate procedural fairness and natural justice for all parties involved
- Where possible, enabling access if needed to translation services and staff from diverse backgrounds with knowledge of child safeguarding to support reporting and complaint handling.



EXAMPLE SSA ACTIONS TO WORK TOWARDS IMPLEMENTING KEY ACTION AREA 6.5	SSA complaints processes and disciplinary proceedings are clear and facilitate procedural fairness and natural justice for all parties involved.
	The SSA provides information on translation services when required.
	The SSA provides information and resources to staff and volunteers to build knowledge of child abuse issues to support reporting and complaint handling.

The information in this document is general in nature and does not constitute legal or professional advice (including advice relating to child safeguarding). SportWest is not liable to users for any loss resulting from the use of this document and accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information or your reliance on it. SportWest recommends users seek independent advice as necessary. [Click here](#) for the full disclaimer relating to SportWest child safeguarding documents.

If you need support:

- > [Mental health community links](#)
- > [Reporting flowchart](#)

