



# Barriers to Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

England Netball recognises that there are extra barriers that some young people may face when they report abuse. It is important that all those working in netball understand that all young people are different and some may also be at more risk of abuse in the first place.

## Disabled children

Disabled children have the same rights to protection as any other child in sport. They are particularly vulnerable and at greater risk of all forms of abuse, 3 or 4 times more likely to be abused, and the presence of multiple disabilities increases the risk of both abuse and neglect.

Some of the common factors that can lead to increased vulnerability are learning disabilities and different methods of communication, eg BSL, Makaton etc, a lack of understanding of social boundaries and perhaps a need for assistance with personal care. The latter often leads to a young disabled person becoming more dependant and compliant than a non-disabled person. In addition, the fact that they are perceived as different may make them a target for bullying and abuse.

Anyone working with young disabled people must be especially alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse and have strategies in place to ensure all children are able to raise concerns.

For more reading on the issues relating to disabled children and the identifying and reporting of abuse please see this information from the NSPCC: [www.nspcc.org.uk/.../disabled-children-hub\\_wdh87136.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/.../disabled-children-hub_wdh87136.html)

## Gender and Cultural Barriers

There are also cultural and gender differences that may mean that some young people find it harder to talk about an abusive situation.

*For example* boys may be more reluctant than girls to seek help, they often have less supportive networks around them and are less likely to talk to friends than their female counterparts are. A study of calls to Childline confirmed that boys are less likely to talk about a concern than girls and so often wait longer before admitting they have a problem.

Children who are more isolated in their support networks may also be less likely to talk to someone so a young person with fewer friends may find it more difficult to find the right person to talk to.

For more information on barriers to reporting and relevant studies click here:

[http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/questions/barriers\\_to\\_seeking\\_help\\_wda70246.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/questions/barriers_to_seeking_help_wda70246.html)

Young lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people may also have additional difficulties in disclosing.

## What should netball clubs do?

Netball Clubs and organisations should make sure that an inclusive environment is created where all young people are valued for their individuality and the contribution they make to the club, and where they can feel confident that their concerns will be listened to.

For more information on valuing young people in your club [click here](#)

The following has been adapted from information taken from the NSPCC website (*NFP Synergy Report*) and is useful guidance for clubs to encourage young people to seek help and support:

- Never forget what it's like to need help and support - make it easier for young people to take up the offer of help
- Help to tackle the myths about those who seek help - seeking help is not a sign of weakness; encourage parents to promote this message.
- Help to tackle the myths about young people - be positive about young people.
- Listen to your young netballers - improve your club using their feedback
- Shout about safeguarding in netball - lack of awareness is a significant barrier to young people seeking help
- See the whole person - engage with young people both in terms of their strengths and their weaknesses
- Build trust - treat young people with respect
- Empower young people to find their own solutions