



What is poor practice?

Poor practice is behaviour which does not meet the standards set out by England Hockey, such behaviour could be intentional or accidental.

This includes behaviour which contravenes;

- England Hockey Code of Ethics and Behaviour
- England Hockey Equality Policy
- England Hockey Safeguarding and Protecting Young People in Hockey Policy, Procedures and Good Practice Guidance.

All members of the Hockey Family have a responsibility to identify and address behaviour that contravenes the above guidance and policy. England Hockey offer advice and support in dealing with these matters.

Ignored or repetitive poor practice, if unchallenged, can have a negative impact on young people and should not be underestimated.

Behaviour and culture

Child abuse:

Child abuse can and does occur inside and outside the family environment. It is not always easy, even for experts, to determine where abuse has occurred. Staff and volunteers in hockey are not experts in recognition, however all adults working within hockey have a duty of care to be vigilant and respond appropriately to suspicions of poor practice, abuse or bullying. This does not mean that it is your responsibility to decide if a situation is poor practice, abuse or bullying **but it is your responsibility to report your concerns.**

What is abuse?

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

There are four recognised forms of child abuse (Definitions taken from Working Together 2018):

1. Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

In a hockey situation, emotional abuse may occur when coaches, officials, volunteers or parents:

- Provide repeated negative feedback
- Repeatedly ignore a young player's efforts to progress
- Repeatedly demand performance levels above the young player's capability
- Over emphasise "a win at all costs" ethic.

2. Abuse by neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- a. Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter

(including exclusion from home or abandonment)

- b. Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- c. Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- d. Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

In a hockey situation neglect may occur when:

- Young players are left alone without proper supervision
- A young player is exposed to unnecessary heat or cold
- A young player is not provided with necessary fluids for re-hydration
- A young player is exposed to an unacceptable risk of injury.

3. Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. It also occurs when young people are given alcohol, or inappropriate drugs, or there is a failure to supervise their access to these substances.

In a hockey situation physical abuse may also occur when:

- Young players are exposed to exercise/training which disregards the capacity of the player's immature and growing body
- Young players are exposed to overplaying, overtraining or fatigue
- Any person exposes young players to alcohol and gives them the opportunity to drink alcohol below the legal age or fail to supervise access to alcohol
- Young players are provided with or encouraged to take prohibited substances including performance enhancing or recreational drugs.



4. Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In a hockey situation sexual abuse may occur when:

- An adult uses the context of a training session to touch young people in an inappropriate sexual way
- Coaches, managers or volunteers use their position of power and authority or abuse their position of trust to coerce young players into a sexual relationship
- Coaches or managers imply better progression of the player in return for sexual favours.
- Technology or social media is used inappropriately to groom a young person, e.g. sexting

5. Bullying

Bullying is not included in Government guidance as a type of child abuse, however it may be a significant factor in other types of child abuse and does have equally detrimental consequences for a child. Bullying is anything that is done with the intention of hurting or intimidating, frightening or upsetting another person and is generally peer to peer. Bullying is not always physical but it results in distress to the victim. Instances of bullying can occur not only between young people but also from adult to young person.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** - persistently being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening gestures
- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist** - racial taunts or language, graffiti,

gestures

- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic** - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- **Verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, banter
- **Cyber** - all areas of the internet (including social networking sites), email and text messaging, misuse of technology i.e. manipulation of digital images

It should be noted that bullying may not only occur through face to face contact.

Bullying, if performed by adults towards a child, will be deemed abuse.

Any illegal acts of bullying should be reported through England Hockey's reporting procedures and will be referred to external agencies for consideration.

England Hockey offer anti bullying guidance, available [online](#).

Signs and indicators of abuse:

There are a number of indicators that can be cause for concern, so it is important to recognise potential signs and pass on your concerns. Ignoring potential signs and indicators might prevent people from diagnosing abuse or ignoring poor practice concerns.

Some young people may have additional vulnerability due to their disability, language, culture, sexual orientation or due to the fact that they perform in an elite environment. This vulnerability may make it more difficult to them to express concerns or be heard. For more information about additional vulnerability, please see guidance [here](#).

There are signs and indicators which could alert you to the fact that there are concerns about a child or young person, and these include:

- Unexplained bruising or injury particularly in unusual places
- An injury for which the explanation seems to be inconsistent
- Unexplained sudden changes in behaviour (i.e. withdrawing, very quiet, sudden outbursts of temper or emotion)
- Inappropriate sexual awareness or language or engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- Is prevented from socialising with other

young people or has difficulty making friends

- Is distrustful of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected (i.e. parents, coach, family friend)
- Displays variations in eating patterns (i.e. over eating or loss of appetite)
- Loss of weight for no apparent reason (the child may be trying to make himself/herself less sexually attractive)
- The young person becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt
- Something another young person has said which suggests a young person is being abused
- The young person describes an act or behaviour that appears to be abusive
- Doesn't want to attend training or club activities
- Changes their usual routine
- Begins being disruptive during sessions
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Has possessions "go missing"
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is hungry (money/lunch has been stolen)
- Is bullying other young people or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong.

This list is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these symptoms is not proof that abuse has taken place, but it should raise concerns.

Changes in behaviour can be caused by changes at home or school, for example bereavement. Parents need to inform coaches and welfare officer / trusted club officials if this is the case as a child's behaviour may be affected.

If in doubt, seek advice from your Welfare Officer or EH Ethics and Welfare Team.

It is NOT your responsibility to decide if a situation is poor practice, abuse or bullying, but it IS your responsibility to share your concerns with a designated person i.e. Welfare Officer.

It is important to create a safe environment for all young people where they can be heard, and their concerns will be taken seriously.

See England Hockey's [Reporting Procedures](#) for more information.

