



British Athletes  
Commission

## Press Release

(Embargoed until Monday 20 July at 11.00 UK)

### **British Athletes Commission joins forces with NSPCC to launch helpline that will support athletes' concerns of abuse in British Gymnastics**

**Helpline, which launched at 9am UK today, will be available 8am-10pm on weekdays and 9am-6pm on weekends on 0800 056 0566**

The British Athletes Commission (BAC), the independent body that represents and supports the interests of all British athletes, has today partnered with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to launch a helpline that will support athletes' concerns of abuse in British Gymnastics.

The free and confidential helpline follows many current and retired gymnasts bravely speaking out about concerns of bullying and abuse. Staffed by independent, trained NSPCC counsellors, the helpline will offer support and guidance for children and young people or anyone involved with gymnastics who has safeguarding concerns—acting as a single point of contact for individuals to lodge their concerns, regardless of whether they are funded athletes, former funded athletes, community-level athletes or parents. The helpline is also a safe space for any further whistleblowing and will offer athletes the opportunity to input into the recently announced Independent Review at the appropriate time.

The dedicated NSPCC Helpline is the first component of the newly-established Athlete Support Unit being set up by the BAC, following the recent series of allegations. The Unit, which, once fully up and running, will offer full administrative and welfare support to those cases referred to it, will provide end-to-end support to athletes and families affected by the allegations of abuse. The helpline, which launched at 9am in the UK today, will be available 8am-10pm on weekdays and 9am-6pm on weekends on 0800 056 0566. Trained staff will offer support, advice and guidance, and will refer cases on to other agencies as appropriate, including the police.

The BAC's Head of Athlete Support, Sam Little said: "We applaud the bravery and courage of those who have spoken up and shared their experiences. Abuse has absolutely no place in modern-day sport, and that's why, with the launch of the helpline today, we are unveiling what is just the first step in our ambitious package of athlete support measures.

"We want to provide a safe place for athletes and others to come forward and seek support and advice. We recognise how difficult it is to speak out and we know some are fearful to do so. Anyone who has experienced or is experiencing abuse in gymnastics, or who has concerns about the welfare of any gymnast should call this NSPCC helpline – by doing so, you are helping make sport a safer, more welcoming place for the athletes of tomorrow."

The British Athletes Commission is a company limited by guarantee, number 05014388

Registered Address: 122 Feering Hill, Feering, Colchester, Essex, CO5 9PY

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The NSPCC Chief Executive, Peter Wanless said: “The reports emerging from gymnastics in recent weeks have been extremely disturbing – so, with the BAC, we’ve launched this dedicated helpline as it is absolutely vital that anyone who has suffered abuse has the opportunity to speak out and get the help they need.

“We would also urge anyone involved in gymnastics who has safeguarding concerns to contact the helpline in the knowledge that they will be listened to. We are grateful to the BAC for their support and commitment in setting up this important service.”

The BAC will release further details of its Athlete Support Unit at a later date. BAC members can, in the meantime, continue to raise concerns directly with the BAC Athlete Support team via [support@britishathletes.org](mailto:support@britishathletes.org) and a member of the team will make contact.

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors:

#### **British Athletes Commission**

- The BAC was set up in 2004 as an independent membership organisation to represent the interests of high-performance athletes in Great Britain.
- The BAC provides independent, confidential advice to its members in the areas of mediation, health & wellbeing and integrity issues. It also works to ensure the collective athlete voice is listened to and influential in decision making.
- The BAC currently supports 1200 members from across 40 sports

#### **NSPCC**

- The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) are the leading children's charity fighting to end child abuse in the UK and Channel Islands.
- The charity's Child Protection in Sport Unit work with UK Sports Councils, National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Active Partnerships and other organisations to help them minimise the risk of child abuse during sporting activities.

The BAC and NSPCC will have spokespersons available for interviews. Should your enquiry be specifically related to the helpline, please contact the NSPCC.

- END -

For further information, please contact Communications and Media Consultant, Ben Nichols on: [ben.nichols@britishathletes.org](mailto:ben.nichols@britishathletes.org) or +44 (0) 7555 538475

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