

#Play it Fair Online

Online abuse in sport Protocols for reporting abuse

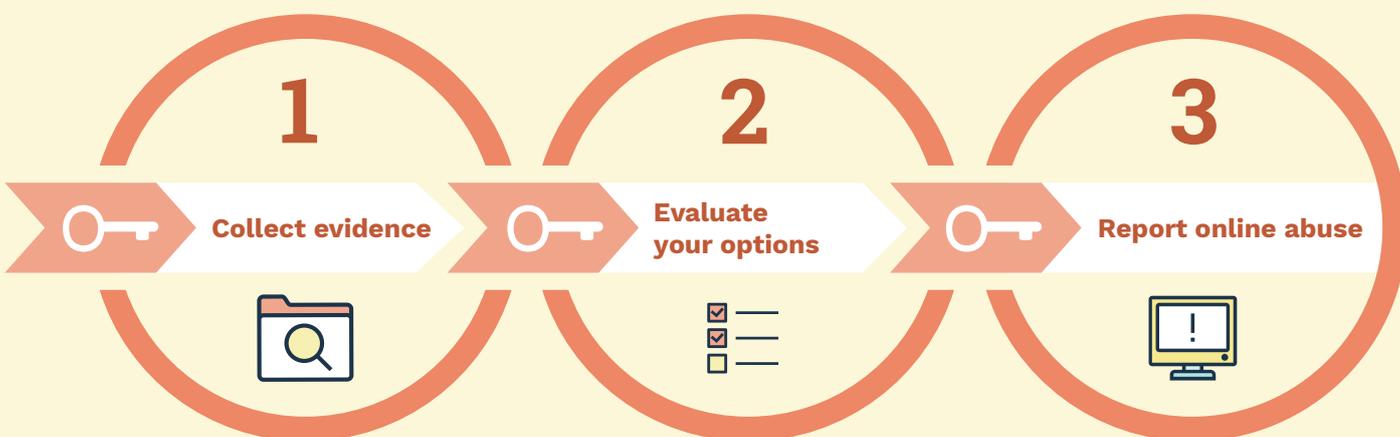
Athletes and staff across all sporting codes are increasingly subjected to high levels of serious and harmful online abuse including threatening, racist, sexist and homophobic comments. This abuse can quickly intensify in scale and nature with devastating impacts on a person's wellbeing and their sense of safety.

In response, it is important that sporting organisations create a safe and secure online work environment by having policies in place to support athletes and staff, giving them clear guidance on how to deal with and report online abuse. Organisations should actively consider how to support athletes and staff to manage their online presences.

eSafety recommends athletes and organisations consider **three key actions** when reporting online abuse.

This advice is applicable for the personal and professional accounts of athletes and for social media managers or other professionals who may manage accounts on behalf of the organisations.

The three key actions





1. Collect evidence

Even though your immediate reaction might be to delete abusive online content, it is important to keep evidence in case you need to report it, particularly if it becomes part of an ongoing pattern of abuse.

The account holder (or delegated account holder) should ensure they save and appropriately document evidence of the online abuse.

Key steps on collecting evidence



1. Refer to eSafety's advice on [collecting evidence](#).
2. Take screenshots or photos of the content and save them securely.
3. Save or record evidence of webpage addresses (URLs) or social media services where the abusive material has been shared.
4. Capture the account name or 'handle' of the abuser/s and any apparent ties to other accounts.
5. Record the time and date you collected the evidence.
6. Tell your employer or player's association about the abuse and seek their assistance.



2. Evaluate your options

It is important to evaluate all the options available. Once you have collected evidence, consider whether you want to block the abuser(s), request the removal of content or pursue other actions, including legal avenues.

We recommend bringing all relevant parties into this conversation, including the athlete involved, the club, organisation or any other parties acting on behalf of the athlete.

If you feel you, other athletes or staff are in immediate physical danger, always report the abuse to the police.

Key steps to evaluate your options



1. Review and implement strategies from [eSafety's resources on adult cyber abuse](#).
2. Discuss the nature of the online abuse with the appropriate person within your workplace and/or players' association. You may have a dedicated social media manager, a safeguarding team, an anti-vilification team or a legal or communications team you can seek advice from.
3. If you decide to report the abuse, see our guide below.
4. If you decide not to report the abuse, we recommend reviewing [The eSafety Guide](#), which has online safety information and advice on blocking accounts for many apps and online services.
5. We also recommend saving the evidence in case you decide to pursue action later.



3. Report online abuse

If you want to report online abuse to eSafety, you must first report the abuse directly to the app or online service on which it occurred.

Popular social media services, games, apps, and websites have information about how to report abusive material. Services or platforms with clear rules, terms of use and reporting processes will also have 'safety agents' or moderators, who can access reports and take action.

Key steps to report online abuse



1. Use [The eSafety Guide](#), which includes general online safety information and direct reporting links.

Report to the app or online service

2. Report online abuse to the safety centre of the service or app where it happened. Depending on the platform, you may also be able to block, hide, ignore or mute the abuse.
3. Take note of the report reference number after you have submitted your request to the app or service.
4. Online services should respond to your complaint or removal request within a timely period (normally 24 hours).

Report to eSafety

1. If the service has not responded to your request within 24 hours, and the abusive content is seriously harmful in nature (refer to eSafety information on [online abuse](#) and forthcoming information on the Online Safety Act 2021), we encourage you to make an [adult cyber abuse](#) report to eSafety.
2. Ask your employer to report the abuse to your sport's governing body.
3. If you feel comfortable, work with your employer and/or players' association to issue a public statement denouncing the online abuse.