

Report on the Formulation of Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy among National Sports Association in Hong Kong 2020



平等機會委員會
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

Equal Opportunities Commission

January 2021

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Background

Sexual harassment in sports sector

Participation in sports often contributes to the positive development of young athletes physically, socially and psychologically.¹ Having said that, research reports and recent cases tell us that sexual harassment occurs in every sector of society, and the sports sector is no exception. In this regard, a safe, healthy and sexual harassment free environment is crucial in allowing sports to nurture positive values and attitudes in sports players.

2. Sexual harassment and sexual abuse may occur in all sports and at all levels, regardless of gender and age of the athletes.² Some studies found that some athletes are more prone to sexual harassment, such as sexual minorities, ethnic minorities, disabled athletes and younger age athletes, in particular those young athletes at the elite level, and some organization culture or relationship may be a risk factor, such as power relationship and lack of preventive measures in sports institutions.^{3,4}

3. In 2007, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) issued a Consensus Statement on Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Sport which advocates the development of effective preventive measures, and raises the awareness of people in the sports sector on sexual harassment and abuse so as to enhance the protection of athletes from sexual harassment and abuse.

¹ Merkel D. Youth sport: positive and negative impact on young athletes. Open Access J Sports Med. 2013;4:151-160 <https://doi.org/10.2147/OAJSM.S33556>

² Fasting, K., Brackenridge, C. and Sundgot-Borgen, J. (2004). Prevalence of sexual harassment among Norwegian female elite athletes in relation to sport type. International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 39(4): 373-386.

³ Ingunn Bjørnseth & Attila Szabo (2018) Sexual Violence Against Children in Sports and Exercise: A Systematic Literature Review, Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 27:4, 365-385, DOI: 10.1080/10538712.2018.1477222

⁴ Brackenridge, C. and Kirby, S. (1997). Playing safe: Assessing the risk of sexual abuse to elite child athletes. International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 3(4): 407-418.

One of the recommendations of the Consensus Statement is to develop a sexual harassment policy. In 2016, the IOC extended the "Consensus Statement on Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Sports 2007 ". The updated consensus statement stressed that the well-being and health of athletes would be adversely affected by sexual harassment.

4. Sexual harassment connotes a form of sex discrimination that any person makes unwanted sexual advances, or unwelcome request for sexual favors against another person that involve in verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviours, or engages in a conduct of a sexual nature which can create a sexually hostile or intimidating environment for another person. Sometimes, power dynamics and power relationship may involve in sexual harassment incidents in sport setting, for example, in the selection of athletes to competition or in a coach-athlete relationship.

5. One of the most notorious cases in recent years was former USA Gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar who has molested more than 100 female athletes during the past 30 years when he worked with USA Gymnastics. After the Nassar scandal, USA Gymnastics has adopted a new "safe sport policy". In 2017, the U.S. Center for SafeSport was established by the United States Olympic Committee and designated by the United States Congress as the independent national safe sport organization to safeguard athletes from emotional, physical and sexual abuse and misconduct.⁵ The Centre set up the SafeSport Helpline to provide crisis intervention, referrals, and emotional support for athletes, staff, and sports participants who are affected by sexual violence and abuse. The Center also provides education and outreach, training, oversight practices, policies and procedures to prevent the abovementioned various types of misconduct.⁶

⁵ The U.S. Congress passed the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (S.534) which designated the U.S. Center for SafeSport with the authority to respond to reports of sexual misconduct within the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Movement. The Centre is also authorised to serve as the independent national safe sport organization, with the additional responsibility to develop national policies and procedures to prevent the emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of amateur athletes. It also allows the Center to have discretionary jurisdiction on a case-by-case basis over any other forms of misconduct, including bullying, harassment, and physical and emotional abuse.

⁶ The U.S. Center for SafeSport <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/>

6. Other countries, such as Australia, has stepped up the efforts on preventing abuse and misconduct in sports, especially to protect children and young athletes from sexual abuse. In 2018, the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) has implemented a specific “Responding to Sexual Misconduct Policy”. ASC has also established a confidential telephone helpline to assist those who are impacted by sexual misconduct and abuse when participating in sports.⁷ In July 2020, in a commitment to athlete safety and wellbeing, Gymnastics Australia has engaged the Australian Human Rights Commission to conduct an independent review of the sport of gymnastics in Australia.⁸ The review attempts to build an understanding of the sport’s culture, athlete experience and barriers on reporting misconduct and abuse, and then provide solutions for a better practice to ensure the athletes’ wellbeing and safety in future.

EOC’s Anti-Sexual Harassment Campaign in sports sector

7. In Hong Kong, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) have been working closely with the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC) and other stakeholders to promote a healthy, safe and sexual harassment free environment in the sports sector. The EOC has organised two rounds of Anti-Sexual Harassment Campaign with seminars, training workshops and questionnaire survey for National Sports Associations (NSAs) in 2014/15 and in 2018 respectively. A policy framework and an easy guide on “Formulating Policy on Sexual Harassment in Sports Organisations” for NSAs are also prepared, with a view to facilitating NSAs to develop an effective Anti-Sexual Harassment policy (“Anti-SH Policy”).

⁷ Australian Sports Commission (ASC) publishes policy for responding to sexual misconduct https://www.sportaus.gov.au/media-centre/news/asc_publishes_policy_for_responding_to_sexual_misconduct

⁸ Independent Review of Gymnastics in Australia 2020 [Independent review of Gymnastics in Australia | Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

8. In Hong Kong, NSAs are local governing sports organisations in the respective sports disciplines in which responsible for coordinating local sports organisations and promoting interests in sports in Hong Kong. As members of the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC), they select athletes to represent Hong Kong in international competitions of the respective sports. The public and the athletes expect the NSAs and all other sports organisations to carry out reasonable practicable steps to safeguard athletes from sexual harassment and abuse.

9. In order to understand how far the NSAs in Hong Kong have adopted measures to prevent sexual harassment, the EOC carried out a baseline questionnaire survey on “Sexual Harassment – Questionnaire Survey for Sports Sector in Hong Kong” in 2014 to examine whether NSAs have adopted an Anti-SH Policy and other measures. In 2018, a follow-up study on was conducted to understand the progress on formulating an Anti-SH Policy. It is encouraging to note that the number of responding NSAs with an Anti-SH Policy has increased from 7 NSAs in 2014 to 22 in 2018. For those responding NSAs without an Anti-SH Policy in the 2018, 85% of them reported that they would formulate one by the end of 2019.

10. Following the receipt of the EOC survey report, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has further liaised and worked with the SF&OC and NSAs to promote the adoption of a policy on anti-sexual harassment. As a result, appropriate measures have been in place to address the recommendations of the EOC survey report. LCSD has promulgated a revised Handbook for National Sports Associations of the Sports Subvention Scheme in April 2019 which requires NSAs which reached a subvention agreement with LCSD to develop an Anti-SH Policy and post the policy on NSA website. Also, in the mid-year assessment of the implementation of the subvention agreement, LCSD will examine whether the NSAs have developed an Anti-SH Policy and have it posted on the NSA website. In

other words, these two criteria have become part of the Key Performance Areas as a condition for application for NSA's funding in the following year.

11. In this connection, the LCSO also organized an online seminar in September 2020 on "Corporate Governance in National Sports Associations: Forum on Developing Policy of National Sports Association – Making Policy on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Sports Sector", which included a "Workshop on Drafting Sexual Harassment Policy, Guideline and Code of Conduct" for NSAs and other sports organisations.

12. In October 2020, the EOC has conducted a desktop research to find out whether NSAs has formulated an Anti-SH Policy and posted the policy on their website for public viewing. This is the third in a series of EOC surveys conducted for the sports sector since 2014. The desktop research has also examined the comprehensiveness of the written policy if NSAs have posted it on their website for public viewing.

Research Method

13. The research was conducted by EOC in-house researcher between early May and end of October 2020. The website of all 79 NSAs of Hong Kong were visited to check whether an Anti-SH Policy and/or Code of Conduct on Anti-Sexual Harassment for Coaches or Instructors (Code of Conduct) have been posted for public viewing. In addition, a checklist with the 11 essential elements for an effective policy has been used to examine whether those written Policies and/or Codes of Conduct are comprehensive. If there was no written Anti-SH Policy or Code of Conduct on the NSA's website, the notice or on the Code of Ethics for coaches' columns of the NSAs' websites were examined to check whether NSAs have mentioned about preventing sexual harassment or preventing sexual abuse. All NSAs were informed by e-mail about this research and reminded to upload their Anti-SH Policy or related Code of Conduct on their website, if they have one,

in early October 2020 before the EOC researcher conducted a final round of check on their websites.

Key findings

14. A total of 79 NSAs are under the SF&OC by October 2020. Out of the 79 NSAs, 60 NSAs (76%) are subvented by public funding through the Sports Subvention Scheme managed by the LCSD in the financial year of 2020/2021. The remaining 19 NSAs (24%) are self-financed and do not receive subvention from LCSD.

15. The findings indicated a significant improvement on the formulation of Anti-SH Policy among NSAs, compared to the previous similar studies conducted by the EOC in 2014 and 2018. Among the 79 NSAs, 90% (71 NSAs) have an Anti-SH Policy and/or a Code of Conduct in October 2020 (see Chart 1), 7 NSAs have neither a Policy nor a Code of Conduct and 1 NSA does not have a website. According to the previous studies, only 20 and 28 responding NSAs in 2014 and 2018 respectively reported in the EOC surveys that they had formulated an Anti-SH Policy or Code of Conduct (see Table 1). It is encouraging to note a substantial increase of NSAs have taken action to formulate and implement Anti-SH Policy in their organisations in the past two years.

Chart 1: Percentage of NSAs with Anti-SH Policy and/or Code of Conduct in the 2020 Study

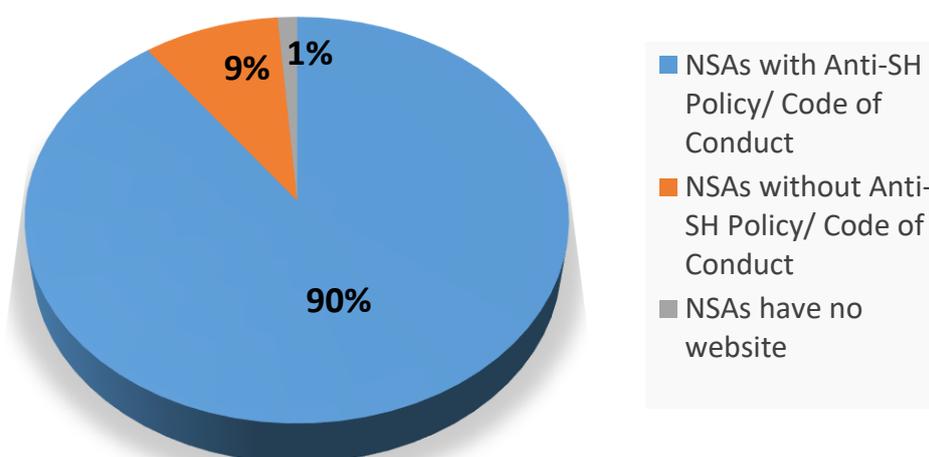


Table 1: Comparison of the findings of 2020 Study, 2014 Survey and 2018 Survey on whether NSAs developed a written anti-sexual harassment policy

	2020	2018	2014
NSAs with Anti-SH Policy and/or Code of conduct	71 (90%)	28 (35%)	20 (27%)
NSAs do not have Anti-SH Policy/ Code of conduct[^]	7 (9%)	11 (14%)	26 (35%)
Unknown/ Don't know	1 (1%)*	40 (51%) [#]	29 (38%) [#]
Total	79 (100%)	79 (100%)	75 (100%)

[^] Anti-SH Policy/ Code of Conduct was not found on the NSA's website by October 2020

*The NSAs does not have a website. [#]The NSAs did not respond to the survey.

16. Among those 71 NSAs with an Anti-SH Policy and/or a Code of Conduct in the current study, 38% (27 NSAs) have formulated both an Anti-SH Policy and a Code of conduct, 48% (34 NSAs) have an Anti-SH Policy alone, and 14% (10 NSAs) have adopted a Code of Conduct without a Policy. Compared to the figures in 2018, 43 more NSAs have taken action to adopt some written Policy and/or Code of Conduct (see Table 2).

Table 2: Number of NSAs by formulation of Anti-SH Policy and/or Code of Conduct in 2020 and 2018

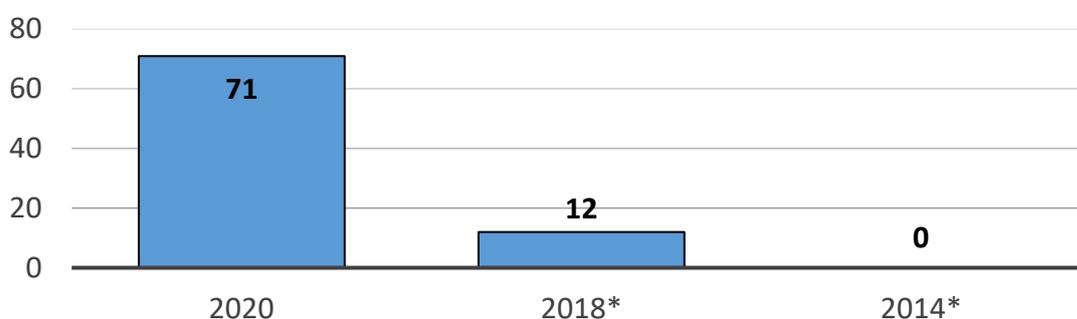
	2020	2018	Difference
NSAs with both Anti-SH Policy and Code of Conduct	27 (38%)	16 (57%)	+11
NSAs with Anti-SH Policy only	34 (48%)	3 (11%)	+31
NSAs with Code of Conduct only	10 (14%)	9 (32%)	+1
Total	71 (100%)	28 (100%)	+43

17. Transparency of and easy access to NSAs' Anti-SH information has been greatly improved. The 2020 Study found that 71 NSAs (90%) have posted the Anti-SH Policy and/or Code of Conduct on their website for public access. There were 7 NSAs (9%) did not have such Policy or Code of Conduct on their website. One NSAs (1%) does not have an official website⁹

⁹ There is a Facebook page of this NSA. Researcher visited the Facebook page of the NSA on Oct 16, 2020 but it did not show any information about Anti-SH Policy or Code of Conduct.

(see Chart 1). That NSA operates a Facebook page but no Anti-SH Policy or Code of Conduct can be found. In the 2018 Survey, only 12 NSAs out of 42 responding NSAs replied that they posted the Anti-SH Policy on their website in the 2018 Survey, and the findings in the 2014 Survey showed that none of the responding NSAs replied that their Anti-SH Policy was available on their website (see Chart 2).

Chart 2: Comparison of the number of NSAs with Anti-SH Policy or Code of Conduct uploaded on their website for public access in the 2014 & 2018 Surveys, and the 2020 Study



*The 2014 and 2018 survey were a self-administered questionnaires survey with 57 NSAs and 42 NSAs responded respectively

18. Categorising the NSAs by financing model, 60 out of 79 NSAs are subvented by the Government (76%) in the financial year of 2020/2021. All the 60 subvented NSAs (100%) have formulated an Anti-SH Policy and/or Code of Conduct, but there are still 6 subvented NSAs with a Code of Conduct only on their websites. Among the 19 self-financed NSAs, 11 (58%) have formulated an Anti-SH Policy and/or Code of Conduct, while 7 self-financed NSAs (37%) have not yet done so (see Table 3). In other words, subvented NSAs are more likely to formulate Anti-SH Policy to achieve good governance.

Table 3: NSAs (subvented/ self-financed) — by formulation of an Anti-SH Policy and/or a Code of Conduct in 2020

	Subvented NSAs (N = 60)	Self-financed NSAs (N = 19)
NSAs <u>with</u> Anti-SH Policy/ Code of Conduct	60 (100%)	11 (58%)
NSAs <u>without</u> Anti-SH Policy/ Code of Conduct[^]	0 (0%)	7 (37%)
Unknown	0 (0%)	1 (1%)*
Total	60 (100%)	19 (100%)
NSAs with Anti-SH Policy and/or Code of Conduct	Subvented NSAs (N = 60)	Self-financed NSAs (N = 11)
• NSAs with both Anti-SH Policy and Code of Conduct	25 (42%)	2 (18%)
• NSAs with Anti-SH Policy only	29 (48%)	5 (46%)
• NSAs with Code of Conduct only	6 (10%)	4 (36%)
Total	60 (100%)	11 (100%)

[^] Anti-SH Policy/ Code of Conduct was not found on the NSA’s website by October 2020

* The NSA does not have an official website and no Policy/Code of Conduct can be found on its Facebook page by end of October 2020.

19. In this Study, the NSAs’ policies have been checked against 11 essential elements identified for an effective anti-sexual harassment policy. Among the 61 NSAs with Anti-SH Policy, 27 NSAs (44%) included all 11 items in their policy. The most common items included in the policy statement on anti-sexual harassment were: “A clear statement that sexual harassment will not be tolerated” (100%); “Policy applies to all levels of staff” (97%); “Definition and examples of sexual harassment” (95%); and “Procedure for dealing with sexual harassment complaints” (95%).

20. The median number of items adopted by NSAs in their policy was 10. While the results indicated that the contents of the Anti-SH Policy are quite comprehensive, two elements are ignored by a number of NSAs which

may make the anti-SH efforts of these NSAs less effective. Fewer NSAs have included a note assuring that “No one will be penalized for complaining in good faith” (67%), and “Measures to prevent sexual harassment” (70%) (see Table 4).

21. In addition, 16 NSAs have not included the contacts of designated persons for handling sexual harassment complaints in their Policy. That means it is difficult for their athletes or staff of these NSAs to know whom to contact when they need to file a sexual harassment complaint.

Table 4: Number of essential elements for an effective anti-sexual harassment policy in NSAs’ Anti-SH Policy (N = 61)

Essential elements for an effective Anti-SH Policy	No. of NSAs with the element	Percentage
1. A clear statement that sexual harassment will not be tolerated	61	100%
2. Definition and examples of sexual harassment	58	95%
3. Policy applies to all levels of staff	59	97%
4. Policy applies to members, service users and volunteers	57	93%
5. Principles of handling sexual harassment complaints	55	90%
6. Procedure for dealing with sexual harassment complaints	58	95%
7. No one will be penalized for complaining in good faith	41	67%
8. Protection for complainant and witnesses from victimization	50	82%
9. A note about disciplinary action	56	92%
10. Name & Contact of designated persons for handling complaints	45	74%
11. Measures to prevent sexual harassment	43	70%

22. Some NSAs have formulated a comprehensive equal opportunities policy that not only covered issues related to sexual harassment, but also prohibited other forms of harassment and discrimination, such as racial harassment, disability harassment, and gender & sexual orientation harassment in their policy. Some NSAs have formulated an additional Child and Vulnerable Persons Protection Policy on top of the Anti-SH Policy to better protect young athletes from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

23. Although 10 NSAs adopted a Code of Conduct on Anti-Sexual Harassment for Coaches and Instructors alone without a Policy, some of the above essential elements have been included in the Code of Conduct (see Table 5). For example, all 10 of those NSAs have a clear statement in the Code of Conduct stipulating that sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Some Codes of Conduct stated the responsibility of coaches and instructors with the definition and examples of sexual harassment, advising coaches and instructors to avoid such behaviours and the use of foul language. On top of the essential elements, some NSAs' Codes of Conduct have required their coaches and instructors to familiarise themselves with SF&OC's policy on sexual harassment, as these NSAs will follow SF&OC's mechanism for handling sexual harassment complaints. As a Code of Conduct itself does not include any contact information of designated persons for handling complaints, it may be difficult for the athletes to seek advice and help at once if they do not know the contact information when they encountered sexual harassment.

Table 5: Number of essential elements adopted into NSAs' Code of Conduct (N = 10)

Essential elements for an effective Anti-SH Policy	No. of NSAs with the element	Percentage
1. A clear statement that sexual harassment will not be tolerated	10	100%
2. Definition and examples of sexual harassment	7	70%
3. Policy applies to all levels of staff	5	50%
4. Policy applies to members, service users and volunteers	2	20%
5. Principles of handling sexual harassment complaints	1	10%
6. Procedure for dealing with sexual harassment complaints	3	30%
7. No one will be penalized for complaining in good faith	1	10%
8. Protection for complainant and witnesses from victimization	1	10%
9. A note about disciplinary action	6	60%
10. Name & Contact of designated persons for handling complaints	0	0%
11. Measures to prevent sexual harassment	0	0%

24. It is worth mentioning that an increasing number of NSAs require their prospective employees and coaches who will engage in work with underage to undergo the Sexual Conviction Record Check (SCRC). The SCRC is to verify whether the prospective employees do not have criminal conviction records against a specified list of sexual offences. In 2020, 45 NSAs (57%) have required their prospective employees to apply for the SCRC, compared to only 15 responding NSAs in the 2014 Survey and 25 responding NSAs in the 2018 Survey having this requirement.

Conclusion and Recommendation

25. In the Report on Sexual Harassment Questionnaire Survey for Sports Sector in 2018, the EOC proposed 5 areas on developing policy and preventive measures on anti-sexual harassment for the Government, SF&OC and NSAs to consider. A brief summary of the recommendations are as follows:

- i. All NSAs should formulate an Anti-SH Policy and/or Code of Ethics against sexual harassment, and encourage their affiliated clubs to adopt the policy and/or Code of Ethics;
- ii. The SF&OC should strengthen its liaison role to help NSAs in sharing their experience and exchange views to develop an effective Anti-SH Policy and relevant preventive measures;
- iii. The SF&OC may consider providing reference materials in Chinese to facilitate their members associations in developing the Anti-SH Policy and safeguarding procedures;
- iv. The Government should consider making the formulation of a written Anti-SH Policy and the establishment of a transparent mechanism for handling sexual harassment complaints, as part of the funding principles of the Sports Subvention Scheme.
- v. The Government should consider extending the coverage of the current sports funding scheme so that sports organisations can apply funding for training on equal opportunities and anti-sexual harassment.

26. After the EOC released the Report in 2018, it is encouraging to note that LCSD, SF&OC and NSAs have responded positively to the recommendations. Based on the findings of this Study, all the subvented NSAs and more than half of the self-financed NSAs have formulated an Anti-SH Policy and/or Code of Conduct. The transparency of NSAs' Anti-SH information has been greatly improved. Most of the NSAs have uploaded the Anti-SH Policy and the complaint handling procedure on their website. We also found that the Anti-SH Policy of NSAs are more comprehensive if compared to the findings in previous surveys. An increasing number of NSAs now require their prospective employees and coaches to undergo the SCRC as part of the safeguarding measures to protect young athletes from sexual harassment and sexual abuse.

27. The SF&OC has enhanced its liaison role and rendered support to NSAs in the development of Anti-SH Policy, as well as the preventive measures against sexual harassment. SF&OC has provided reference materials, policy and guidelines in Chinese to help the managements of NSA, athletes and coaches to better understand the issues of sexual harassment. Furthermore, SF&OC has worked in collaboration with professional bodies to arrange seminars and training to enhance NSAs' awareness, knowledge and skills in preventing sexual harassment. For example, LCSD, SF&OC and Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) organised an online seminar in September 2020 on "Corporate Governance in National Sports Associations: Forum on Developing Policy of National Sports Association – Making Policy on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Sports Sector", which included a "Workshop on Drafting Sexual Harassment Policy, Guideline and Code of Conduct" for NSAs and other sports organisations.

28. In response to the EOC's recommendations, LCSD has amended the Handbook for National Sports Associations of the Sports Subvention Scheme in April 2019. It requires NSAs to develop of an Anti-SH Policy and post it on their website for public access as part of the subvention requirement. In 2019/20, a comprehensive review of the Sports Subvention Scheme (SSS) has been conducted to review the Funding Principles and Mechanism, and the Corporate Governance and Monitoring System for NSAs and sports organisations. After the review, NSAs and sports organisations have to provide a Code of Conduct or an Anti-SH Policy as part of the corporate governance record for the funding application requirement. The above findings suggested that NSAs, SF&OC and LCSD have taken a proactive approach to eliminate sexual harassment at the elite level of sports.

Recommendations and proposed way forward

Implementation of Anti-SH Policy in NSAs and their Affiliates

29. The results from this Study found that there are still a small number of NSAs only have a Code of Conduct on their website for public viewing. The Codes of Conduct mostly include a zero tolerant statement, definition and examples of sexual harassment, and a note of disciplinary action. However, information of the complaint handling person, principles and procedure of complaint handling are less likely to be mentioned. Furthermore, only 41 NSAs have a note on assuring that “No one will be penalized for complaining in good faith” in their Policy. Some studies on the #MeToo movement suggested that the reasons of a growing number of victims using social media as an unofficial channel for reporting sexual misconduct may be related to the obstacles of official complaint mechanism and the experience of retaliation against complainants.¹⁰ NSAs should have a comprehensive Anti-SH Policy including all 11 essentials elements, especially listing out the information of the complaint handling mechanism, and the protection for complainant and witnesses, in order to reduce barriers for victims or witnesses for filing a complaint. NSAs should inform all members about the implementation of Anti-SH Policy and encourage their affiliated clubs to adopt the Policy and preventive measures.

Assign a designated person as Gender Focal Point in NSAs

30. According to this Study, a large number of NSAs do not list out the contacts of designated persons for handling sexual harassment complaints in their Anti-SH Policy. Athletes or staff of these NSAs may not know where to seek help or file a complaint if an incident happened. Therefore, NSAs may consider having a designated person as the Gender Focal Point (GFP) who serves as a resource person to provide support in sexual harassment cases, and make sure the Anti-SH Policy can be properly implemented. GFP

¹⁰ Tuerkheimer, Deborah (2019) "Unofficial Reporting in the #MeToo Era," University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 2019, Article 10. Available at: <https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol2019/iss1/10>

should also assist in raising awareness of anti-sexual harassment and gender equality by providing training and refresher training to all staff in regular basis. Staff who are responsible for handling sexual harassment complaint should also receive formal and comprehensive training.

Establish Gender Focal Point Network in Sports Sector

31. Since 2003, the Government has established a government-wide network of Gender Focal Points, and each bureau and department has designated a GFP. In 2016, the Government has set up a Gender Focal Point Network in Social Welfare Sector and suggested each non-governmental organisation (NGO) appointing a managerial staff as the GFP to join the Network. Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and LCSD may consider establishing a Gender Focal Point Network in sports sector to promote anti-sexual harassment and gender equality, and encourage self-financed NSAs and sports organisations to adopt preventive measure on sexual harassment. Based on the findings of this Study, only 58% of self-financed NSAs have formulated an Anti-SH Policy and/or Code of conduct. Previous study conducted by the EOC in 2018 found that lack of manpower and limited resources are the key factors that NSAs did not formulate an Anti-SH Policy. Some smaller or self-financed sports organisations may need more support in order to formulate and implement an Anti-SH Policy.

32. In addition, it is important to engage the sports organisations at the district level in the prevention of sexual harassment in sports sector. It is recommended that District Sports Associations (DSAs) should be included in the Gender Focal Point Network in Sports Sector. This will encourage all DSAs to appoint a GFP, and adopt a safeguarding policy and procedure to protect young athletes. Most of the young athletes begin their pathway to elite sports by taking part in school sports or district sports activities. DSAs organise district-based training programmes and competitions to identify athletes with potential to undergo systematic training to have a chance of becoming elite athletes. In other words, DSAs are the foundation for the

development of elite sports. They should play an important role in promoting anti-sexual harassment in sports sector as well.

EOC joins hands with the sports sector to promote anti-sexual harassment

33. The conclusions of this research shows that there is a substantial increase of NSAs with Anti-SH Policy compared to previous EOC surveys. All the subvented NSAs have formulated Anti-SH Policy and/or Code of Conduct. Nevertheless, continues training and education for athletes and coaches is needed for changing attitude and raising awareness on the prevention sexual harassment in sports sector.

34. The EOC will further liaise with SF&OC, Hong Kong Sports Institute, NSAs and DSAs to raise awareness of sexual harassment in the sports sector, in particular about the latest amendment of Sex Discrimination Ordinance with an extended scope of protection on sexual harassment. The EOC recognises that training and education work on anti-sexual harassment should be further extended from the NSAs level to the district sports level. The EOC continue to join hands with stakeholders to strengthen the anti-sexual harassment effort to make sports as a safe, healthy and sexual harassment free environment for all.

Equal Opportunities Commission
January 2021