

REPORTING DISCRIMINATION & ABUSE

THE MATCHDAY PROTOCOL

Football should be a fun and inclusive environment for all where players can play without prejudice. However this is not always the case. There is a protocol in place designed to protect your safety and the integrity of the game which we call upon everyone to support the Match Official in implementing in the event that they need to address any alleged use of discriminatory language at games.

1 IDENTIFICATION & AWARENESS

If you hear any abusive language that may be discriminatory, identify the offender at the earliest opportunity and make the Referee aware at the next break in play so that they can proceed to enact this protocol.



2 INTERVENTION & MONITORING

If the Referee also heard it, they should send off the offender whether they be a player or non-player and make their Club Official aware as to why this is happening. If they did not, the Referee should make the relevant Club Official aware so that they (the Club Official) can address it with the alleged offender and monitor the situation going forward as the match continues.



3 PERSISTENCE AND THE FUTURE OF THE MATCH

If the abuse continues, the Referee (and the Referee only) may take players off the pitch and speak with both coaches and captains before deciding the fate of the game. The referee (and the Referee only) may suspend or abandon the game entirely. The Referee should take notes throughout and should reassure all parties that they will write a comprehensive report after the game as well as advising parties of this protocol throughout.



4 REPORTING FOR INVESTIGATION

After the game, the Referee should alert the County FA and write an extraordinary report via the Whole Game System which should include info such as the time of game they were first made aware of any abuse (and who alerted them), what specific language was alleged to have been used and by whom, and what action was taken in line with this protocol.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Upon receipt of any allegation of discriminatory language used at a game, the County FA will conduct a full and thorough investigation which will include statement gathering from both Clubs and all Match Officials. The County FA will review all evidence alongside The FA and, if there is sufficient evidence, may issue formal charges of Misconduct against any Participant who has allegedly committed Improper Conduct for the use of language aggravated by a Protected Characteristic (a breach of FA Rules E3.1 and E3.2) or against a Club where its personnel or spectators have not behaved in an orderly fashion (a breach of FA Rules E20 and E21). Any charge would be adjudicated upon by an independent FA Discipline Commission at a Misconduct hearing.

ANYONE CAN REPORT



**FOR
ALL**



The **County FA** can be made aware You can complete **The FA's** online of incidents at matches via email to report@northumberlandfa.com or via the online form found at <https://www.thefa.com/inclusion-and-anti-discrimination/reporting-discrimination>

Kick It Out can be alerted via email to report@kickitout.org or through their app.

SUPPORT

If you have been a victim of, or have witnessed, discriminatory language in football and require formal support, The FA's affiliated charity **Sporting Chance** have services for all Participants in grassroots football which can be accessed at support@sportingchanceclinic.com or through calling 07780 008877 between 9 AM and 5 PM Monday - Friday. You can also contact your County FA for any guidance and support.