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#  Safeguarding Adults: Briefing Note

**Please note:** the downloadable content referred to in this Appendix from Section 10 of the safeguarding content on The FA.com will be available from December 1 2019.

## Introduction

Adult disability football1 should be safe and enjoyable for all who participate.

However, we need to be aware that the abuse of adults does happen and football needs

to play its part in preventing, recognising, reporting, recording, referring and addressing concerns, because safeguarding adults at risk is everybody’s business.

**Who and what are we talking about?** In 2014, the term ‘vulnerable adults’ was replaced in law, by the term ‘adults at risk’.

An adult at risk is someone who is over 18 and:

* has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs); and
* is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
* as a result of care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

Adults with care and support needs include people who have a condition as a result

of physical, mental, sensory, learning or cognitive disabilities or illnesses, substance misuse or brain injury.

Their needs may be met or unmet, visible or invisible, they may live independently, with their partners, family, or in supported housing or care.

Adults with care and support needs may be playing or working anywhere in football; in football our initial focus is to introduce actions to safeguard adults in disability football.

## Are all players in disability football adults at risk?

No. And not necessarily all the time. But by ensuring some simple measures are in place we can reduce the risk of poor practice and abuse and respond quickly and effectively to any allegations, disclosures or concerns.

## Is safeguarding adults in disability football more than responding to abuse?

Yes. Safeguarding adults means developing a culture that listens to, informs and empowers the adult and consults them on all decisions affecting them. It’s also about the value of having welfare officers, carrying out risk assessments, understanding boundaries

and appropriate ratios of helpers to players. It’s about people and organisations working together to prevent and reduce risks.

## Isn’t this the same as safeguarding children?

Not quite. There are differences between safeguarding adults and safeguarding children including:

* the rights of adults;
* types of abuse, signs and indicators;

1 The scope of this relates to grassroots affiliated football and sponsored programmes and activities

* the involvement of the adult in safeguarding plans and actions;
* laws, guidance and football regulations. Adults have a right to self-determination,

to make their own choices and their own mistakes. Adults should be involved in and consulted about anything that concerns them.

**Is this just players in the player pathways?** No. The adult may be coaching, managing, officiating or playing.

## What about under-18s in open-age adult disability football?

An adult is someone over 18 so the safeguarding children policy and procedures must be applied if there are any concerns about the welfare of an under-18, even if that person is playing in open-age adult disability football.

As with all adult football a DBS Check must be sought for those working with, or likely to work with 16/17-year-old players. For more

information about checks in adult football please see **TheFA.com/safeguarding**

## What do we do if we become aware of a safeguarding concern in adult disability football?

Although there are differences between adults and children’s football, referrals should be made via the established routes for example from clubs to the County FA (CFA) DSOs.

The toolkit provided for clubs and leagues can be found at: **TheFA.com/football-rules- governance/safeguarding/section-10-**

**safeguarding-adults**. The toolkit recommends that all clubs with open-age adult disability teams appoint a Club Welfare Officer (Disability) to help create a reporting structure.

Adults may say they don’t want actions to be taken; however, this should not deter staff and volunteers from making referrals. Adults must be reassured that their wishes and views will be taken into account but the concern must still be reported to the CFA DSO.

The CFA DSO can seek help and advice from The FA safeguarding team and referrals can be made directly via **safeguarding@TheFA.com**.

The FA has access to expert internal and external advice and will work in partnership with the adult.

## What if we think an adult is at risk–but they are not in disability football?

Adults with care and support needs may participate anywhere in football and could become an adult at risk.

A toolkit will be available for clubs and leagues in late 2019 at: **TheFA.com/football-rules- governance/safeguarding/section-10- safeguarding-adults**.

## Resources for affiliated football clubs:

CFAs should encourage clubs to use the toolkit.

The toolkit can be found at: **TheFA.com/ football-rules-governance/safeguarding/ section-10-safeguarding-adults**

## Actions for clubs:

* 1. Appoint a Welfare Officer (Adult Disability Teams) and upload their name to Whole Game System;
	2. Adopt a ‘Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures’;
	3. Communicate the policy and procedures;
	4. Encourage volunteers and staff to complete the free, online FA Safeguarding Adults course;
	5. Upload the names of coaches and managers to Whole Game System and identify who is working with under-18s and needs a DBS Check;
	6. Review the best-practice guidance and identify any steps that could be taken to strengthen existing safeguards;
	7. Manage poor practice and report any concerns that an adult is at risk in a swift and effective way.

If there are under-18s playing in adult open- age disability football, clubs should read

the The FA’s Guidance Note 10.7: Under- 18s in Open-Age Adult Disability Football: **TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/ safeguarding/section-10-safeguarding- adults**