



GUIDANCE NOTES NO:

1.10

BARCLAYS WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE AND BARCLAYS WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY AND PROCEDURES



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FOREWORD

PUTTING SAFEGUARDING AT THE HEART OF THE GROWTH OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

As we continue on this remarkable journey of women's football and witness its incredible growth, it is with great pride and utmost responsibility that we endorse the importance of a culture with safeguarding and player welfare at its heart.

As leaders and custodians of the game, we recognise the profound impact women's football has on the lives of its participants, fans, and communities alike. It is a platform that empowers, inspires, and unites individuals so it is imperative to create an environment that fosters trust, protection, and respect for every individual involved.

At a time where women's football strives to be player-centric, value-driven, collaborative, and future-focused, ensuring the safety and well-being of our athletes remains at the very core of our strategic objectives.

Safeguarding in women's football is a defining aspect of our commitment to excellence. By prioritising the safety and welfare of our players, we will instil confidence and trust in our sport and also highlight our collective efforts in nurturing talent, fostering inclusivity and elevating the standard of the game.

With our players at the heart of our vision, we pledge to remain diligent in our pursuit of safeguarding excellence and encourage our partners and communities to share this commitment and adopt and embed safeguarding policies and processes in line with this safeguarding policy.

Having a collective ownership of safeguarding will enable us to continue to build the foundations of the women's and girls' game, which places safety and wellbeing at the centre of this journey.



Sue Hough

Chair of The Women's Football Board



Dawn Airey

Chair of The Barclays Women's Super League and Barclays Women's Championship Board

INTRODUCTION

 **BARCLAYS
WOMEN'S
SUPER LEAGUE**



The Barclays Women's Super League (BWSL) and Barclays Women's Championship (BWC) are the top two leagues of women's football in England. The BWSL is the first fully professional women's football league in Europe. Most of the clubs in the BWSL & BWC have a Pro-Game Academy (PGA), and many stars of the future will start their journey as a young person in a PGA.

Players under the age of 18 years old are legally defined as children and The Football Association (The FA), the BWSL and BWC take their safeguarding responsibility very seriously.

To support the journey through the player pathway to the BWSL and BWC, it is essential there is a framework in place – as well as policies and processes – to support inclusive and safe environments to enable children and young people to have an enjoyable and positive experience.

As part of this framework each club must meet the safeguarding requirements in their licence to operate and all PGAs must adhere to a set of performance regulations relating to the environment, facilities and staffing.

This Safeguarding Policy outlines the importance of safeguarding and the commitment to work with all stakeholders to safeguard children who train and play within the BWSL and BWC.

 **BARCLAYS
WOMEN'S
CHAMPIONSHIP**



POLICY STATEMENT

THE PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

To safeguard all participants under the age of 18 years, this policy must be complied with by all adults associated with the BWSL and BWC and its member clubs, whether paid staff, volunteers or third-party providers/contractors.

It sits alongside, and is in addition to:

- The FA's Safeguarding Children Regulations; and
- The FA's Affiliated Football's Safeguarding Children Policy.

You can access both the above [here](#).

It is underpinned by Club and Partner organisations' safeguarding policies, procedures and action plans wherever children are, or might be, involved in the women's and girls' game.

This policy outlines the importance of safeguarding and the commitment to work with partners to safeguard children in the BWSL and BWC and is supported by The FA.

The collective safeguarding responsibility also extends to adults, which is governed by different legislation and guidance. The FA's Safeguarding Framework for children and adults can be found [here](#).

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Regardless of the role and position held within an organisation, everyone has a part to play to create and maintain environments where children can thrive. The BWSL and BWC will give equal priority to keeping all children and young people safe regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. It is recognised that some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of discrimination, previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues.

The BWSL and BWC will safeguard children and young people by ensuring that all relevant policies and procedures are followed by those who advise, supervise, coach, train, teach, instruct, manage, tutor, mentor, assess, develop, guide, treat or provide therapy to the children and young people involved in the league.

LEGISLATION PERTINENT TO THIS POLICY

The Department for Education (DfE) is responsible for child protection in England. It sets out policy, legislation and statutory guidance on how the child protection system should work.

Local Safeguarding Partnerships are responsible for child protection policy, procedure and guidance at a local level.

The local safeguarding arrangements are led by three statutory safeguarding partners:

1. The Local Authority (LA).
2. The Integrated Care Board (ICB, previously clinical commissioning group or 'CCG').
3. The police.

The BWSL and BWC will work together with other relevant agencies, when necessary, in order to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of their work to protect and promote the welfare of children, including making arrangements to identify and support children at risk of harm.

All practitioners are required to follow the principles of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 that state that the welfare of children is paramount.

[Appendix 1](#) provides details of legislation and statutory guidance relevant to this policy.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Safeguarding¹ is defined as:

- » Protecting children from maltreatment.
- » Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- » Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- » Taking action to enable all children and young people have the best outcomes.

Welfare and Wellbeing

Welfare describes a child's health, happiness, safety, prosperity, and general wellbeing.

Mental wellbeing² describes the wider set of feelings and thoughts that influence emotions and day-to-day behaviour. Having good mental wellbeing can strengthen a child's resilience to developing a mental health problem or help a child cope better with an existing mental health problem.

A child's mental wellbeing can change, from day-to-day, month-to-month or year-to-year. They may:

- Feel relatively confident in themselves, they value and accept themselves and judge themselves on realistic and reasonable standards.
- Feel and express a range of emotions.
- Feel engaged with the world around them, they can build and maintain positive relationships with other people and feel they can contribute to your community.
- Live and work productively.
- Cope with the stresses of daily life and manage times of change and uncertainty.

Abuse of children is a violation of a child's human or civil rights by any other person or persons and, for the purposes of safeguarding, shall include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, bullying and hazing. Abuse may be single act or omission or series of acts or omissions.

Club is any football club holding a licence from (or is otherwise authorised by) The FA to participate in the BWSL, BWC or associated Professional Game Academies (PGA).

Contextual Safeguarding³ is an approach to understanding, and responding to, the risk of, or incidents of harm, to which children can experience, beyond their families. Children form relationships in different places and spaces (contexts) where they live and participate in activities, which can include football. Parents/Carers may have little influence over these contexts and the risk of harm that children can be exposed to.

Harm is ill treatment and forms of ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical) and the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in physical or mental health and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. 'Harm' may be caused by acts of commission and acts of omission.

¹ HM Government; *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)*, which you can download/read [here](#).

² Adapted from work undertaken by MIND.

³ Contextual Safeguarding Network, which you can download/read [here](#).

KEY DEFINITIONS (CONTINUED)

Low-level concern is a behaviour which falls below the standard required by a club as set out in their codes of conduct. Whilst the behaviour may not be immediately dangerous or intentionally harmful it does set a poor example and if it were to continue, it might lead to harm or put a child at risk of harm. A low-level concern may also relate to a concern about the wellbeing or welfare of an individual e.g. a player.

Partner is any organisation contracted or funded by The BWSL and BWC to provide a service to support the development of the women's and girls' game. This term is also inclusive of Clubs operating within the BWSL and BWC.

Position of Trust relates to an adult (over the age of 18 years) who is in a position of authority or responsibility over a person under 18. As of 28 June 2022, the law stated that those in a position of trust in sports organisations, such as a coach, cannot legally have a sexual relationship with Under-18s they coach.

Staff means any person employed full-time or part-time operating within, including those in a volunteer or consultant capacity, who support the development of the BWSL and BWC.

Women's and girls' game is an inclusive term for the professional, semi-professional and pathway leagues and competitions.

Further definitions of abuse and indicators can be found in **Appendix 2**.



SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK IN FOOTBALL

The FA

As the National Governing Body, The FA, in line with legislation, statutory guidance and industry best practice, sets out the safeguarding rules, regulations, policies, standards and requirements that must be met at every level of the game to safeguard children. The FA's regulatory framework means that it has the power to investigate safeguarding concerns and act against any individual who breaches its safeguarding policy and/or regulations. More information on The FA's safeguarding framework can be found [here](#).

The Barclays Women's Super League and Barclays Women's Championship

The BWSL and BWC are governed by The Barclays Women's Super League and Women's Championship Board. This Board is supported by The FA.

Clubs within the BWSL and BWC operate under a licence from The FA, in accordance with criteria and/or rules as set out by The FA and approved by the BWSL and BWC Board. Safeguarding requirements are embedded within the licence and clubs are supported by The FA to fulfil all requirements set out in the relevant licence criteria and rules.

The FA's safeguarding team provides support, advice and guidance to the BWSL, BWC and its member clubs. The BWSL, BWC and its member clubs have a duty to report any safeguarding concerns to The FA via Safeguarding@TheFA.com.



SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK IN FOOTBALL (CONTINUED)

Clubs

Clubs are required to implement and embed their own safeguarding policies and procedures in line with The FA's safeguarding rules, regulations, policies, standards and procedures. All BWSL and BWC clubs are required to have a Designated Safeguarding and Player Welfare Officer to lead and manage the application of safeguarding in their environments.

Note: the name of this role may change over time; but essentially whatever name the post holder is assigned they are the designated safeguarding lead and the role has the same principles. The FA audits clubs in line with the licence criteria.

Premier League and English Football League

Where a BWSL or BWC club has an association or relationship with a Partner men's professional club, it may also benefit from having policies and procedures which are subject to Premier League ("PL") and English Football League ("EFL") assessment processes. The PL and EFL have specific safeguarding rule-based requirements for their clubs, which they are responsible for overseeing and supporting. These requirements are in addition to and complement the work to safeguard the women's and girls' game. The BWSL, BWC and The FA work collaboratively with the relevant PL and EFL clubs in this regard.



BWSL AND BWC SAFEGUARDING COMMITMENT

The BWSL and BWC is committed to working collaboratively with partners, commissioned services and statutory agencies to:

- » Promote the welfare, wellbeing and safety of children and young people.
- » Recognise that children and young people's rights, as set out by the **United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child, UNCRC (1989)**, must be respected and promoted throughout the game of football.
- » Ensure all activity is inclusive and uphold that every child has a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation, religion or belief, race, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership.
- » Implement preventative safeguarding measures, supported by regulations and/or rules, policies, procedures, standards, safer recruitment checks, guidance and training.
- » Make the reporting of concerns as easy as possible and ensure it is understood and embedded within club culture.
- » Ensure safeguarding and child protection concerns are investigated swiftly and effectively in conjunction with statutory agencies – and with demonstrable outcomes.
- » Review and continuously develop safeguarding practice.

This commitment and way of working is to be shared with all partners.



SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND CULTURE

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Regardless of the role and position held within an organisation, everyone has a part to play to create and maintain environments where children and young people can thrive. The BWSL, BWC and partners are expected to have in place:

- I. Safeguarding Champions at a senior level to keep safeguarding embedded within the work and decisions of the Board; and
- II. A Designated Safeguarding and Player Welfare Officer to drive the implementation of safeguards across activity to manage and refer safeguarding and child protection.

SAFER WORKING PRACTICE

Safer working practice supports the creation of safer environments to prevent opportunities where low level concerns and abuse could occur. This section outlines standards of behaviour to support staff and partners in creating safer, inclusive and child centred environments.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

Staff and partners are expected to have in place safer recruitment practices, in line with their own organisational policy and procedure. These must include:

- Ensuring DBS checks are undertaken and renewed in line with the Disclosure and Barring Service; and
- Creating a culture of ongoing vigilance, including:
 - a. Taking up references and checking qualifications/professional registrations and ensuring Clubs, contractors and commissioned service providers operate safer recruitment practices.
 - b. The use of inductions which incorporate safeguarding.

- c. Ensuring safeguarding responsibilities are embedded in staff and volunteer role profiles and are reviewed as part of regular reviews of objectives with line managers,
- d. Safeguards and safer working practices must be applied and embedded in the procurement process and service level agreements with the appropriate due diligence carried out on these contracts.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Staff and partners attend regular safeguarding training as outlined in their organisations policy and procedures. This will include a safeguarding induction and training appropriate to the level and requirements of their role.

The FA regularly delivers continuous professional development (CPD) workshops to club staff, Board members and partners to support the development of the women's and girls' game. Safeguarding principles are embedded in these as appropriate. In addition safeguarding briefings are delivered to partners to continue to raise awareness of safeguarding processes.

Club staff are also encouraged to access safeguarding CPD opportunities via external expert third parties, to ensure they stay up to date with best safeguarding practice.

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND CULTURE (CONTINUED)

EVENT PLANNING AND DELIVERY

The health, safety and wellbeing needs of children must remain the highest priority and at the centre when planning and delivering activity.

Staff and partners are expected to:

- Work collaboratively with host venues and key partners to put in place appropriate safeguarding arrangements.
- Ensure that the Designated Safeguarding and Player Welfare Officer for the organisation is aware of the activity so safeguarding can be embedded in the early stages of event planning.
- Risk assess all activity they deliver to ensure all safeguarding risks are identified and mitigated appropriately. This may include but is not limited to match day/tournament arrangements, use of photography/videos, social media, travel to and from venues, access to facilities, overnight stays, other children supporting the event, etc.
- Have a Designated Safeguarding Lead at the event to respond to and manage any concerns.
- Review practice and procedure to support continuous improvement of event delivery.

SUPERVISION AND RATIOS

The level of supervision and applicable ratios will vary depending on several factors. These include:

- a. The age of the children involved.
- b. The type of activity and duration of this.
- c. The location of the activity.
- d. The level of risk that the activity, location and/or venue presents.
- e. Whether there are additional supervision or support needs for some or all of the participants.
- f. The experience and qualification of staff.

Staff and partners are expected to liaise with the Designated Safeguarding and Player Welfare Officer in their organisation to ensure appropriate consideration is given to the activity delivered. Opportunities to take part in activities in addition to football should be supported by appropriate risk assessments. Parental/carers consent should be gained beforehand.

CLUB ENVIRONMENT

It is important to consider the environment that players train and play in. The facilities will differ between clubs and some sites may be accessible to members of the public or community groups. Where facilities are limited, processes must be in place to ensure that children and adults, along with mixed genders, do not use changing and showering facilities at the same time. Although 16/17-year-olds may not require any supervision, consideration should also be given to having an appropriately recruited adult within the vicinity of the changing facilities. The use of mobile phones, tablets or any device that has the ability to take photos or videos must not be allowed where under-18s are changing and showering.

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND CULTURE (CONTINUED)

TRANSPORT

Staff and partners who are required to transport children or young people during their working hours will have this clearly defined in their role profile or job description. Outside of this formal responsibility, staff must not transport children or young people in their own vehicles unless in emergency situations where not transporting a child would cause greater harm. In any situations where this is required it must be recorded and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead identified for the activity that is taking place.

Staff and partners are expected to:

- Report any situations where transportation is required and formally record the reasons for it.
- Seek parental/carers consent where possible.
- Ensure that the driver is fit to drive, not under any influence of alcohol, drugs or medication that may impact their ability to drive or impair their judgement.
- Ensure that the vehicle has a valid MOT and adequately insured which includes for the purpose of work.

SAFER ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Creating safe environments includes engagement with participants in the online space. There are a number of risks involved in online activity.

Staff and partners are expected to:

- Have a clear purpose for the nature of the communication.
- Seek signed parental/carers consent before communicating directly with children or young people via email, mobile phone communication or video conferencing platforms.
- Ensure video conferencing does not take place for either person in a private room, for example, a bedroom.
- Engage in a professional way online that does not fall below codes of conduct. Language that is directly (or could be misinterpreted as being) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone in any communication will not be tolerated.
- Ensure that there is a professional dress code.
- If it is online and a formal meeting, seek consent and record the session.
- Ensure the name of staff communicating, and the purpose of the communication is always made clear and parents/carers and other staff should also be copied into the communication.

SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND CULTURE (CONTINUED)

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOURS AND POSITIONS OF TRUST

Although young people aged 16 and 17 have reached the age of consent for sexual activity according to English law, they could be vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation in certain situations. This includes sexual activity and manipulation by adults who are in a position of trust to them.

As of 28 June 2022, the law was amended so that adults (i.e., persons who are 18 or older) cannot legally engage in any form of sexual activity with 16- or 17-year-olds where they are in a 'position of trust' to them in the context of sport.

In summary, an adult will be in a position of trust in relation to a 16- or 17-year-old where they coach, teach, train, supervise and/or instruct them on a regular basis in a sport.

This change in the law follows multiple examples of abuse in sport that have come to light in recent years, including in football. Adults must always maintain clear and appropriate boundaries, be supportive, positive and focused on improving a young person's skills, development and progress.

You can find more information on preventing abuse in positions of trust [here](#).

To assess whether an adult is in a position of trust, the following requirements must be met:

- **Setting** – in a sport (which includes football).
- **Activity** – the adult must be involved in coaching, teaching, training, supervising or instructing a young person.
- **Regularity** – the activity must be carried out on a regular basis in relation to the young person.
- **Knowledge requirement** – the person must be aware that they carry out a certain activity on a regular basis in relation to the young person



SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND CULTURE (CONTINUED)

An adult does not need to hold a particular qualification or licence in order to be in a position of trust and they can, for example, be an employee or volunteer.

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of the types of roles in football that may be held to be in a position of trust (and in any event this analysis will need to be conducted by reference to the specific circumstances of each case). An adult will be in a position of trust in relation to a 16-or 17-year-old where they coach, teach, train, supervise and/or instruct them on a regular basis in a sport.

The position of trust applies to both online (digital) and face-to-face activity where the criteria described above are fulfilled. Working online brings additional vulnerabilities and risks for young people. Being mindful of those risks, selecting appropriate platforms and following applicable codes of conduct and digital guidance is essential.

The BWSL and BWC expect staff and partners to:

- Maintain positive relationships with children that are built on mutual trust and respect, with the principle aim that children's wellbeing is put first in supporting their development.
- Ensure codes of conduct are in place and shared with all in the club environment so the expected standards of behaviour, including online, are made clear.
- Ensure the club Safeguarding Lead is made aware of any behaviour that indicates that a young person is attempting to engage in an inappropriate relations with an adult member of staff, including contacting them on social media.
- Report any concerns where an abuse of position of trust has occurred, is occurring, or may occur by informing your Safeguarding Lead and/or contacting Safeguarding@TheFA.com. For more information on responding to concerns please click [here](#).



SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES AND CULTURE (CONTINUED)

ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITY AND CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING

The more challenges a child faces, the greater their vulnerability to abusive behaviour, grooming, exploitation and/or radicalisation. Factors such as, but not limited to, disability, poverty, discrimination, family circumstance and substance misuse can contribute towards vulnerability.

It is important to recognise that, in line with contextual safeguarding principles, for children participating in the BWSL and BWC there are a number of factors that may have an impact on their wellbeing. These might include:

- Living in accommodation away from parents/carers e.g., with a host family or in club accommodation.
- Being a dual-career female athlete and the pressure to perform both in football and in work or education.
- Pressure to perform and remain in an elite environment.
- Pressure from peers to engage in behaviours to 'fit in'.
- Increased travel to and from training and matches, with or without overnight stays.
- The impact that hormones and menstruation may have on development and performance.

Therefore, it is important that when responding to any safeguarding concern that consideration is given to all available information in order to ensure that effective support can be put in place with relevant partners, external agencies and parents/carers.



RECOGNISING, RESPONDING TO, AND DEALING WITH CONCERNS, WHISTLEBLOWING, AND COMPLAINTS



RECOGNISING CONCERNS

Although it can be difficult to determine if a child is being abused, no single person can have a full picture of a child's circumstances. Staff do not need evidence to report a concern but must ensure they do so in good faith and are familiar with how to report any concerns, including the appropriate person to report concerns to. A child may be at increased risk of harm if there is a failure to report concerns.

Staff and partners may also notice some concerning behaviour from adults who are in positions of trust which causes concern for a child/children's safety and wellbeing.

Staff and partners should never think that their concerns are not significant enough to act on and they should always discuss their concerns with the Club Designated Safeguarding and Player Welfare Officer, The FA Women's Game Safeguarding Manager or The FA Safeguarding Case Management Team, to gain advice or guidance. If they suspect a person is breaching their Position of Trust, they should report the matter to the police and inform their club Designated Safeguarding and Player Welfare Officer.

Signs and indicators of abuse and low-level concerns can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

RECOGNISING, RESPONDING TO, AND DEALING WITH CONCERNS, WHISTLEBLOWING, AND COMPLAINTS (CONTINUED)

RECEIVING A DISCLOSURE

It can be very difficult for a child or young person to speak out about abuse or any concerns they have. Often, they will not tell anyone for a number of reasons but there are other indicators that may suggest something is wrong. Whether a child or young person verbally tells you or if you have observed any behaviour or signs that may suggest they are being abused, it is really important that concerns are taken seriously and acted upon as soon as possible.

You can do this by:

- **Helping them to open up by showing that you care.** Give them your full attention and keep your body language open and encouraging. Be compassionate and understanding and reassure them that their feelings are important.
- **Taking your time.** Respect pauses and do not interrupt and allow them to go at their own pace. Recognise and respond to their body language and keep in mind that it may take several conversations for them to share what has happened to them.
- **Reassure them** that they have done the right thing in telling you and ensure they know that abuse is never their fault.
- **Showing understanding.** Make it clear that you are interested in what they are telling you. Repeat back what they have said to check your understanding and use their language to show it is their experience.
- **Let them know what action you will take** and keep them updated so they know what is happening and what to expect.

- **Always make written notes** of the disclosure as soon as possible.
- **Never approach the alleged perpetrator** about the child's disclosure but report the disclosure through the appropriate channels.



RECOGNISING, RESPONDING TO, AND DEALING WITH CONCERNS, WHISTLEBLOWING, AND COMPLAINTS

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

It is essential that all disclosures, concerns, suspicions or allegations about a child or an adult's behaviour towards a child are reported appropriately to the relevant authority.

Clubs and partners are expected to report any concerns in line with their organisation's safeguarding policy and procedure.

Concerns that a child is at risk of immediate harm must be reported either to the police, the local authority Children's Services or the NSPCC Helpline: **0808 800 5000**.

Safeguarding concerns that involve individuals who hold a role within Football can be referred to The FA's Safeguarding Case Management team via Safeguarding@TheFA.com.

Please note: that this is not a 24-hour service, but all matters will be triaged during working hours Monday-Friday, between 9-5pm. Some concerns may be passed to the relevant statutory agency, League, or club as appropriate.

For concerns unrelated to football, staff and partners must refer these to the club of which the child is a part of, for the club's Designated Safeguarding and Player Welfare Officer to take action. Staff and partners may be required to provide additional information.

Staff and partners are expected to:

- Provide clear, concise and relevant information.
- Record information in an objective and professional manner.
- Record factual information rather than assumption of what you have witnessed or been told.
- Record actual words and language. Don't rephrase what you have been told or leave things like insults or intimate vocabulary out.
- Record observations, for example, a description of visible bruising or injuries. Never ask someone to remove or adjust their clothing to observe any bruises, marks or injuries.

Failure of any staff to report a concern about the conduct of anyone in a position of trust in football towards a child will result in The FA taking action under its Rules and Regulations. Namely as stated in Regulation 1.6 any failure by a participant to immediately report to The FA, any alleged incident, facts or matters regarding potential abuse or harm against a child, or any sexual offence against anyone (whether an adult or child), may amount to Misconduct under Rule E14

Concern flow charts can be found in [Appendix 3](#).

A referral form can be found in [Appendix 4](#).

RECOGNISING, RESPONDING TO, AND DEALING WITH CONCERNS, WHISTLEBLOWING, AND COMPLAINTS (CONTINUED)

WHISTLEBLOWING

Whistleblowing can be used as an early warning system or when it's recognised that appropriate actions have not been taken. It is about revealing and raising concerns over misconduct or malpractice within an organisation's or within an independent structure associated with it.

Serious safeguarding whistleblowing concerns in football should be referred to The FA's Safeguarding Case Management Team via Safeguarding@TheFA.com, who will review the concerns and offer advice.

Alternatively, you can go direct to the police or Children's Social Care and report your concerns there, or to the Child Protection in Sport Unit via cpsu@nspcc.org.uk or the NSPCC Helpline via **0808 800 5000** or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk

The UEFA Integrity Platform allows for concerns to be raised (including anonymous reporting). Written complaints can also be sent to childsafeguarding@uefa.ch, or a person of trust within UEFA can be spoken to directly in order to report a concern.

SAFEGUARDING COMPLAINTS

Safeguarding concerns about a child's welfare must be shared without delay with the Club's Designated Safeguarding and Player Welfare Officer.

Complaints about the way in which a safeguarding concern has been managed, must in the first instance be directed to the organisation responsible for the activity the child is involved in. A Club's complaints process must always be followed before a complaint can be escalated to a League or The FA.

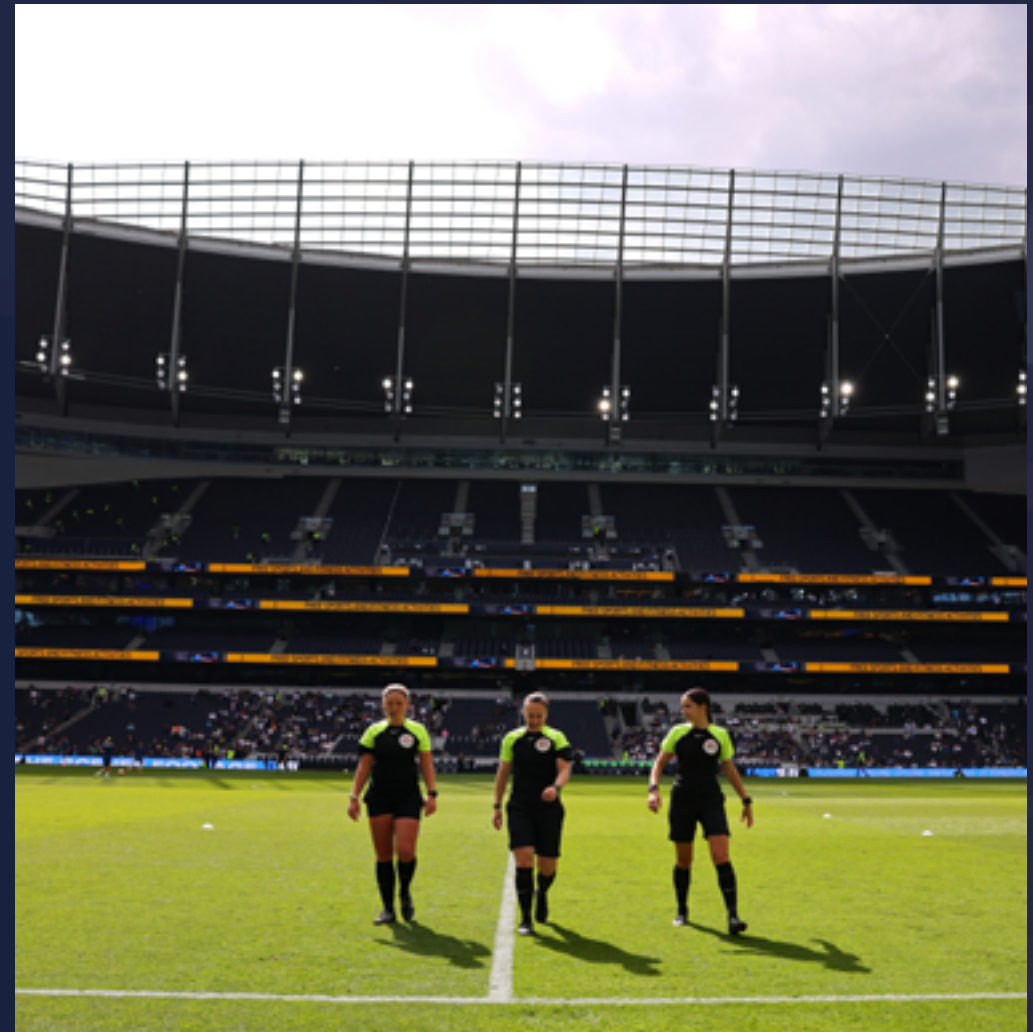
Once a Club's complaints procedure has been exhausted, safeguarding complaints can be escalated to The FA's Safeguarding Case Management Team by emailing Safeguarding@TheFA.com.

RECOGNISING, RESPONDING TO, AND DEALING WITH CONCERNS, WHISTLEBLOWING, AND COMPLAINTS (CONTINUED)

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION-SHARING

We are all committed to ensuring that the confidentiality of all disclosures, safeguarding incidents and/or allegations, and wellbeing concerns is maintained for all concerned.

Information should be handled and disseminated on a 'need to know' basis only, including with relevant partners, in order to ensure children are kept safe. It can be difficult to make a judgement whether information should be shared. However, if there are any concerns about a player's wellbeing or the behaviour of an adult or child's behaviour then an initial discussion should take place with the club Designated Safeguarding and Player Welfare Officer, The FA's Women's Game Safeguarding Manager or The FA's Safeguarding Case Management Team. Information will be stored securely and handled in accordance with applicable data protection legislation⁶ and each relevant football authority's data protection and safeguarding privacy policies.



⁶ For example, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (2016), Data Protection Act (2018)

USEFUL CONTACTS

The FA: Safeguarding@TheFA.com

NSPCC:

- 24-hour safeguarding children advice helpline: 0808 800 5000 (24 hours, but triaged Monday to Friday: 7.30am-9pm. Weekends: 7.30am-6pm).
- The FA Sexual Abuse in Football Helpline: 0800 023 2642 (Monday to Friday 8am-8pm. Weekends: 9am-6pm)

NSPCC

Police: 101 or 999 in an emergency

The Professional Footballers' Association (PFA):
Mental health and wellbeing support for BWSL players:

- 24/7 helpline: 07500 000777
- Email: wellbeing@thepfa.com



Sporting Chance:
Mental health and wellbeing support for BWC players:

- 24/7 helpline: 07500 000777
- Email: support@sportingchance.com



POLICY REVIEW AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

POLICY REVIEW

This policy is published in **November 2023** and will be updated every two years, unless there is a significant organisational change, safeguarding incident, or legislative or statutory guidance changes justifying an earlier review.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This policy has been developed based on

- HM Government Guidance;
- NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit guidance; and
- MIND.



APPENDIX 1: LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY GUIDANCE

This safeguarding policy is underpinned by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- UN Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC), 1989
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The NSPCC/Sport England Child Protection in Sport Standards (2005 revised 2018)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Equality Act 2010
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Care Act 2014
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022



APPENDIX 2: DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE

CATEGORY OF ABUSE	ABUSE IN A FOOTBALL SETTING ⁷	SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE ⁸
<p>Low-level concerns</p> <p>Are a behaviour which falls below the standard required by a club as set out in their codes of conduct. Whilst the behaviour may not be immediately dangerous or intentionally harmful it does set a poor example and if it were to continue, it might lead to harm or put a child in danger.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When insufficient care is taken to avoid injuries (e.g. by excessive training or inappropriate training for the age, maturity, experience and ability of players). • Allowing abusive or concerning practices to go unreported (e.g. a coach who ridicules and criticises players who make a mistake during a match). • Allowing hazing practices to go unreported. • Placing children or young people in potentially compromising and uncomfortable situations with adults (e.g. unprofessional use by a coach on social media with young players). • Unprofessional use of their own or the Professional Club's social media accounts. • Ignoring health and safety guidelines (e.g. not wearing seat belts in club transport). • Using foul and abusive language to children or other adults (e.g. abusive language towards match officials). • Giving continued and unnecessary preferential treatment to certain individuals on a regular basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seem unconfident or lack self-assurance. • Being frightened of some people, places or situations. • Changes in mood or character e.g. being upset or withdrawn.

⁷ Adapted from <https://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/introduction-to-safeguarding/child-abuse-in-a-sports-setting/>.

⁸ Adapted from <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse>.

CATEGORY OF ABUSE	ABUSE IN A FOOTBALL SETTING ⁷	SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE ⁸
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to provide safe and appropriate coaching sessions whilst taking into consideration the ages of the players (e.g. overtraining and exerting undue influence over players). • Putting performance over the safety of players. • Lack of respect for other individuals, such as match officials, opposition coaches, players, managers and spectators. • Allowing rough and dangerous play, bullying, the use of bad language or inappropriate behaviour by players. • Using punishments that humiliate or harm children. • Providing one to one coaching without any supervision or the presence of other club officials. • Allowing children to discriminate on the grounds of religion, race, gender, social class, or lack of footballing ability. • Failure to encourage children to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour. • Failure to challenge low-level concerns in other Club Officials. • Allowing allegations of abuse to go unchallenged or unrecorded and failing to report these concerns (e.g. bystanders of abuse). 	

CATEGORY OF ABUSE	ABUSE IN A FOOTBALL SETTING ⁷	SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE ⁸
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to record incidents or accidents. • Failing to address the additional needs of disabled players or other vulnerable groups. • Allowing confidential information to be shared inappropriately. • Failure to respect and listen to the opinions of children and consider the rights and responsibilities of children. • Smoking and consuming alcohol during coaching sessions. • Consuming alcohol whilst named on duty on an official club trip. • Taking children to their own home. • Not adhering to guidance when transporting children including travel abroad. 	
<p>Physical Abuse⁹</p> <p>Is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature and intensity of training or competition exceeds the capacity of the child's immature growing body. • Coaches encourage the use of drugs or harmful substances to enhance performance or delay puberty. • Athletes are required to participate when injured. • Sanctions used by coaches involve inflicting pain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruises. • Broken or fractured bones. • Burns or scalds. • Bite marks.

CATEGORY OF ABUSE	ABUSE IN A FOOTBALL SETTING ⁷	SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE ⁸
<p>Emotional Abuse¹⁰</p> <p>Is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are subjected to repeated criticism, sarcasm, name-calling or racism. • A child is ignored or excluded. • Children feel pressure to perform to unrealistically high expectations. • Children are made to feel like their value or worth is dependent on their sporting success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seem unconfident or lack self-assurance. • Struggle to control their emotions. • Have difficulty making or maintaining relationships act in a way that's inappropriate for their age.

⁹ HM Government; *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2022), which you can download/read [here](#).

¹⁰ HM Government; *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2022), which you can download/read [here](#).

CATEGORY OF ABUSE	ABUSE IN A FOOTBALL SETTING ⁷	SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE ⁸
<p>Sexual Abuse</p> <p>Is perpetrated by both men and women. Children can also abuse other children (see Child-on-Child Abuse). Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff e.g. coaching, medical, physiotherapists coaching techniques which involve physical contact with children can create situations where sexual abuse can be disguised. An abusive situation can also develop if a person in a position of authority, such as a coach, was to misuse their power or medical staff using physical contact as a guise for sexual abuse. • Contacts made within football and pursued through other routes, such as social media, have been used to groom children for abuse. Sexual abusers can also groom protective adults, including parents/ carers, and organisations in order to create opportunities for abuse to take place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour and language or an understanding of sex that's not appropriate for their age. • Being frightened of some people, places or situations. • Being secretive about how they're spending their time, including when online. • Sharp changes in mood or character e.g. being upset, withdrawn or distressed. • Having money or new things like clothes, trainers, mobile phones that things they can't or won't explain. • Alcohol or drug misuse/underage drinking or drug-taking. • Sexually transmitted infections. • Pregnancy. • Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend. • Spending more or less time online or on their devices. • Spending more time away from home or going missing for periods of time.

CATEGORY OF ABUSE	ABUSE IN A FOOTBALL SETTING ⁷	SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE ⁸
<p>Grooming¹¹</p> <p>Very commonly plays a key part in the sexual abuse of children. It refers to a process by which an individual manipulates those around them – typically (but not only) the child – to provide opportunities to abuse. It can involve communication with a child where this is an intention to commit a sex offence in person and/or online.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing particular interest in individuals and showing favouritism to them or being hard on them. • Regular and unnecessary contact with Child's family. • Persistently not following codes of conducts or rules in place to keep environments safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being very secretive about how they're spending their time, including when online. • Spending more time online or on their devices. • Sexualised behaviour and language use that is not appropriate to use in child or professional environments. <p>For signs and indicators of sexual abuse in children please see the 'sexual abuse' above</p>
<p>Child Sexual Exploitation¹²</p> <p>(CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children spending excessive time in and around the club environment outside of training and match days with no purpose or missing session with no reason or explanation. • Children being dropped off or collected by older friends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend. • Staying out late or overnight. • Having a new group of friends. • Missing from home or care or stop attending sessions and or education. • Hanging out with older people, other vulnerable people or in antisocial groups. • Involved in a gang. • Involved in criminal activities like selling drugs or shoplifting.

¹¹ NSPCC, which you can download/read [here](#).

¹² HM Government; Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022), which you can download/read [here](#).

CATEGORY OF ABUSE	ABUSE IN A FOOTBALL SETTING ⁷	SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE ⁸
<p>Neglect¹³</p> <p>Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: a. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers) d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.</p>	<p>Staff repeatedly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failing to ensure children (including 16- and 17-year-olds) are safe. • Exposing children to undue cold, heat or extreme weather conditions without ensuring adequate clothing or hydration. • Exposing children to unnecessary risk of injury by ignoring safe practice guidelines. • Failing to ensure the use of safety equipment. • Requiring young people to participate when injured or unwell. • Not having the correct ratio of staff to players. 	<p>Poor appearance and hygiene:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being smelly or dirty, hungry or not given money for food • Having unwashed kit/clothes or inappropriate clothing, such as no warm kit/clothes in winter. <p>Health and development problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor language or social skills. • Regular illness or infections. • Skin issues, such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm. • Thin or swollen tummy. • Tiredness. • Untreated injuries. • Weight or growth issues. <p>Housing and family issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in an unsuitable home environment. • Taking on the role of carer for other family members. <p>Change in behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming clingy. • Becoming aggressive. • Being withdrawn, depressed or anxious. • Changes in eating habits. • Displaying obsessive behaviour. • Finding it hard to concentrate or take part in activities. • Showing signs of self-harm. • Using drugs or alcohol.

¹³ HM Government; Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022), which you can download/read [here](#).

CATEGORY OF ABUSE	ABUSE IN A FOOTBALL SETTING ⁷	SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE ⁸
<p>Bullying</p> <p>Is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person this may be by an adult towards a child or child-on-child abuse. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically) sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures). • Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence. • Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments. • Discriminatory comments, jokes about or targeted abuse aimed towards disabled children, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, gendered, racist or faith-based comments. • Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying can occur based on a young person's football or sporting ability, body size or shape. It might include name-calling, offensive hand gestures, physical assault or exclusion from team activities. • Offensive comments being made across social media platforms and private messaging. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belongings getting 'lost' or damaged. • Physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises. • Being afraid to go to places. • Change in performance and not achieving their usual standards. • Giving their possessions or money to whoever's bullying them. • Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn. • Problems with eating or sleeping. • Bullying others.
<p>Cyberbullying</p> <p>Is when a person uses technology i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger, tweets), to deliberately upset someone. This could take the form of posting derogatory abusive comments, videos or images on social media. Bullies often feel anonymous and 'distanced' from the incident when it takes place online and 'bystanders' can easily become bullies themselves by forwarding the information on.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending more time online or on their devices. • Change in performance and not achieving their usual standards. • Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn.

CATEGORY OF ABUSE	ABUSE IN A FOOTBALL SETTING ⁷	SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE ⁸
<p>Child-on-Child Abuse¹⁴</p> <p>Children can abuse other children. This is often referred to as Child-on-Child Abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bullying (including cyberbullying). • Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm. • Sexual violence, such as rape and sexual assault. • Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse. • ‘Upskirting’ or ‘down blousing’, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their breast, genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. • Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and • Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see Bullying and Cyberbullying sections on page 32. 	<p>Please see bullying and cyber bullying section.</p> <p>It is important to remember that children can be both perpetrators and victims in this abuse. The behaviour is harmful to children perpetrating the abuse as well as those who are victims of the abuse.</p>

¹⁴ HM Government; Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022), which you can download/read [here](#).

CATEGORY OF ABUSE	ABUSE IN A FOOTBALL SETTING ⁷	SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE ⁸
<p>Child Criminal Exploitation¹⁵ (as set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office), is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see Grooming and Child Sexual Exploitation sections on page 30. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently absent from activities and education provision. • Going missing from home, staying out late and travelling for unexplained reasons. • In a relationship or hanging out with someone older than them. • Being angry, aggressive or violent. • Being isolated or withdrawn. • Having unexplained money and buying new things. • Wearing clothes or accessories in gang colours or getting tattoos. • Using new slang words. • Self-harming and feeling emotionally unwell. • Taking drugs and abusing alcohol. • Committing petty crimes like shop lifting or vandalism. • Unexplained injuries and refusing to seek medical help. • Carrying weapons. • Spending more time on social media and being secretive about time online. • Making more calls or sending more texts, possibly on a new phone or phones

¹⁵ HM Government; Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022), which you can download/read [here](#).

CATEGORY OF ABUSE	ABUSE IN A FOOTBALL SETTING ⁷	SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE ⁸
<p>Extremism¹⁶</p> <p>Goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Calls for the death of members of our armed forces is classed as extremist.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see Grooming and Child Sexual Exploitation sections on page 30. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scripted speech. • Possessing and/ or distributing illegal literature, out of character changes in behaviour, dress and peers, isolating selves from family/friends. • Disrespectful attitude towards people who are different to them, inability to discuss views or unable to explain opinions, change in ideology, over-secretive internet use or movements. • Talking excessively about injustice. • Showing sympathy for extremist causes, glorifying and advocating violence. • Signs and symbols linked to groups that are considered to be committing or participating in acts of terrorism. These are often referred to by the UK Governments as ‘proscribed’ groups.
<p>County Lines¹⁷</p> <p>Is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of ‘deal line’. They are likely to exploit children (disabled children are particularly vulnerable) to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see Grooming and Child Sexual Exploitation sections on page 30. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in behaviour. • Signs of assault and/or malnutrition. • Access to numerous phones. • Use of unusual terms e.g. going country. • Associating with gangs. • Unexplained bus or train tickets. • School truancy or going missing. • Unexplained gifts (clothes, trainers) and cash.

¹⁶ HM Government; Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022), which you can download/read [here](#).

¹⁷ HM Government; Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022), which you can download/read [here](#).

CATEGORY OF ABUSE	ABUSE IN A FOOTBALL SETTING ⁷	SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE ⁸
<p>Honour-Based Abuse (HBA)¹⁸</p> <p>Encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving “honour” often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. All forms of HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.</p> <p>FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see Emotional Abuse section on page 28. 	<p>Signs FGM might happen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A relative or someone known as a 'cutter' visiting from abroad. • A special occasion or ceremony takes place where a girl 'becomes a woman' or is 'prepared for marriage'. • A female relative, like a mother, sister or aunt has undergone FGM. • A family arranges a long holiday overseas or visits a family abroad during the summer holidays. • A girl has an unexpected or long absence from activities or school. <p>Signs FGM might have taken place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having difficulty walking, standing or sitting. • Spending longer in the bathroom or toilet. • Appearing quiet, anxious or depressed. • Acting differently after an absence from school or college. • Reluctance to go to the doctors or have routine medical examinations.

¹⁸ HM Government; Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022), which you can download/read [here](#).

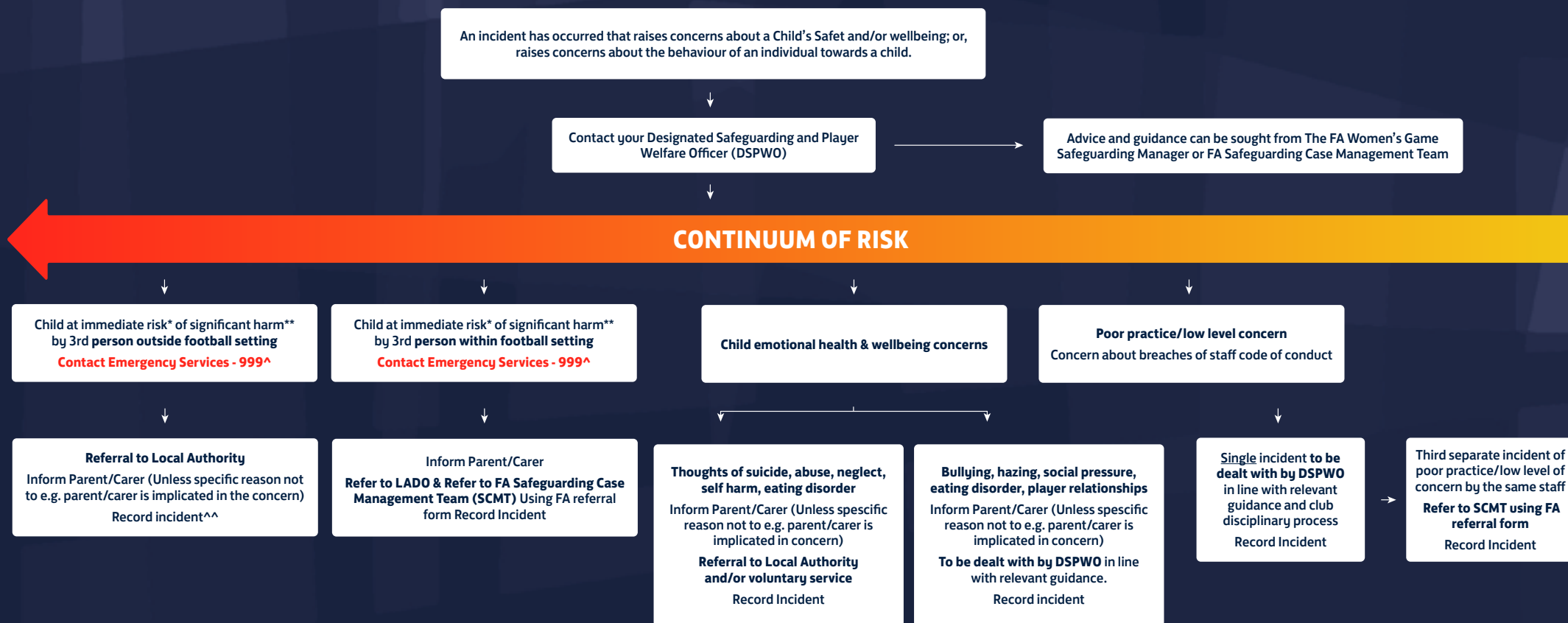
CATEGORY OF ABUSE	ABUSE IN A FOOTBALL SETTING ⁷	SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE ⁸
		<p>HBA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal from education or activities. • Experiencing violence or threats of violence, coercion, physical, sexual or emotional abuse, intimidation. • Unreasonable restrictions of freedom, monitored by family or wider community. • Hiding mobile phones, being secretive about social media interactions, having secret friends or relationships. • Limited aspirations, self-harm. • Requests for extended leave, failing to return from visits abroad.
<p>Forced Marriage¹⁹ involves forcing someone into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause someone to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where no consent is given consent or where consent cannot be given (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see Emotional Abuse section on page 28. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive parental restriction and control of movements including unreasonable restrictions such as being kept at home by their parents ('house arrest') or being unable to complete their education. • History of siblings leaving education early to marry. • A child talking about an upcoming family holiday that they are worried about. • Fears that they will be taken out of activities and education to stay abroad. • Evidence of self-harm, treatment for depression, attempted suicide, social isolation, eating disorders or substance abuse. • Always being accompanied when away from home.

¹⁹ HM Government; Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022), which you can download/read [here](#).

CATEGORY OF ABUSE	ABUSE IN A FOOTBALL SETTING ⁷	SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE ⁸
<p>Domestic Abuse²⁰</p> <p>Is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It can seriously harm children and witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse. It's important to remember domestic abuse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can happen inside and outside the home. • Can happen over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites. • Can happen in any relationship (e.g. between players/peers, heterosexual or same sex, within family units) and can continue even after the relationship has ended. • Both men and women can be abused or abusers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see Emotional Abuse section on page 28. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggression or bullying. • Anti-social behaviour, like vandalism. • Anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts. • Attention-seeking. • Bed-wetting, nightmares or insomnia. • Constant or regular sickness, like colds, headaches and mouth ulcers. • Drug or alcohol use. • Eating disorders. • Tantrums. • Withdrawal. • Problems in school or trouble learning

²⁰ <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/domestic-abuse/>

APPENDIX 3: FLOWCHART FOR RESPONDING TO A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN WITHIN THE BWSL AND BWC



* Immediate risk refers to something that is about to happen that will put a child in danger. If the risk is not immediate avoid 999 – this is for emergencies. Police can be contacted on 101 for crime prevention advice or to report a crime that does not need an emergency response

** Significant harm is a result of an incident, or series of incidents, that a child experiences that is likely to have a serious and detrimental effect on their health and development.

^ If emergency services are contacted, follow up referrals must be made to the indicated services. If police have been contacted make a note of the crime reference number along with the name and number of the officer you reported the concern to. When referring to the local authority they may advise you to refer to a specific universal service.

^^ All concerns must be documented and recorded in the club/team system – access must be limited to essential staff. Records should be accurate and reflect all actions taken to support in managing the concern.

APPENDIX 4: REFERRAL FORM

Date of Referral: _____

PARTICIPANT'S DETAILS (THIS IS THE PERSON YOU ARE REFERRING TO THE FA)

Participant name:		Relationship to victim/s:	
Address:		Tel number:	
		Email:	
		Role in football: (is the post paid?)	
		Club or organisation:	
Postcode:			
Date of Birth:		FAN: (FA Number)	
Gender:		Ethnicity:	

REFERRER'S DETAILS (PLEASE ENTER YOUR DETAILS)

Name of referrer:		FAN: (FA Number)	
Address:		Role/Organisation:	
		Tel number:	
		Email:	
Postcode:		Relationship to participant:	

DETAILS OF CHILD/CHILDREN OR ADULT(S) AT RISK

Details of alleged victim/s (age): e.g. Joe Bloggs (12 years), Wembley FC under-13 girls' team (Please include name, age, club, parents/carers' details and any other relevant info)	FAN: (FA Number) – if relevant	
	Gender:	
	Ethnicity:	
	Parent/carer name:	
	Contact details: (telephone number, email, etc.)	
	County FA:	

PROFESSIONAL NETWORK (PLEASE PROVIDE NAME, CONTACT NUMBER AND EMAIL. KINDLY PROVIDE THE ADVICE RECEIVED AND CONTACT DATE WITH AGENCY)

LADO: (Name, telephone number and email address)	
Social Services:	
Police:	
Other : (e.g. NSPCC, Club Designated Safeguarding Officer, etc.)	

DETAILS OF CONCERNS

Type of abuse: (please tick as appropriate)	Sexual abuse Bullying	Emotional abuse Other (Please specify):	Physical abuse	Neglect
Incident/s details: Please summarise the incident, including details of any other relevant parties. Clearly identify a list of your safeguarding concern/s				
Do you think this referral relates to: (please tick as appropriate)	High-level poor practice	Possible or actual risk of harm to children	For information only	Not sure
Action taken: Please specify if you referred to a statutory agency, the County FA, the Club Designated Safeguarding Officer or any other action taken related to your concerns (including action taken by the Club).				

OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

Further information:

Please include any information that you think is relevant to our investigation.

Please include any past concerns the club, league or County FA may have had.

Can The FA contact the victim or their parents/carers directly?

Once completed please email this referral form to Safeguarding@TheFA.com.

FOR FA USE ONLY

Date received by The FA: _____ Case accepted? (tick as applicable) Yes No



The Football Association
Wembley Stadium
London HA9 0WS
T: +44 (0)800 169 1863
F: +44 (0)800 169 1864
W: TheFA.com