



GUIDANCE NOTES NO:

10.4

RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO ADULT SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

FOR OPEN-AGE ADULT CLUBS & LEAGUES

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FOR ALL

RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO ADULT SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding adults can be complex. Adults have the right to make their own decisions about their lives including decisions that other people might consider unwise. This self-determination needs to be balanced against risks, such as the need to keep others safe.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Having a Welfare Officer in place ensures there is someone who actively champions safeguarding in the club or league.

Each club or league has at least one Welfare Officer (CWO/LWO). There are C/LWOs who focus on different areas of the game:

- Club/League Welfare Officer (Youth);
- Club/League Welfare Officer (Adult Disability Teams);
- Club/League Welfare Officer (Adult Teams).

In smaller clubs/leagues the same person may oversee all these functions. In large clubs there will be a team of CWOs and deputies. League Welfare Officers are sometimes also known as Competition Welfare Officers.

It's important to know who your C/LWOs are. You can seek advice from them about any welfare or safeguarding concerns. The C/LWO has access to support and guidance from the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer (CFA DSO) who has had extra safeguarding adults training and is in touch with The FA's Safeguarding Teams.

THE '5 Rs' OF SAFEGUARDING



RECOGNISING ADULT SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

- Everyone who works or volunteers in open age adult disability football should complete The FA's free *Safeguarding Adults* online course.
Those involved in other open age adult football should complete The FA's free *Player Welfare in Open Age Football* online course.
Best practice is for anyone involved in open age football to complete both courses. Together they provide valuable knowledge and practical skills to help you recognise and respond to adult safeguarding and welfare concerns in all open age settings.
- See appendix 2 below to learn more about adult welfare and safeguarding categories and indicators of adult abuse.
- Stay aware of changes in an individual's appearance, behaviour and communication which may indicate something's not right.

RESPONDING TO ADULT SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

You might be concerned about an adult because of something you've seen, something you've been told by another person, or something someone tells you themselves (a disclosure).

Dealing with disclosures:

DO:

- Find a quiet place to talk;
- Be patient, listen carefully and stay calm;
- Allow enough time for the person to communicate fully;
- Be clear with them that they have a right to be safe;
- Ask the adult what they would like to happen and reassure them that their views and wishes will be taken into account;
- Explain the information must be passed on to the C/LWO (or the CFA DSO if the C/LWO is implicated).

RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO ADULT SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

DON'T:

- Promise confidentiality;
- Ask lots of questions or start investigating or handling any evidence; (this could impact a police investigation if one is necessary);
- Delete any messages or pictures;
- Confront an alleged perpetrator;
- Put yourself or anyone else at risk by the actions you take.

Feeling concerned?

Remember: 'nothing about me without me' is a good reminder to include adults in conversations about their own safety and wellbeing as well as respecting their views and wishes.

If you are worried about an adult, don't keep your concerns to yourself. Talk to the C/LWO.

Non-recent abuse:

If an adult tells you about abuse that happened a long time ago, you should encourage the adult to go to the police and still share this concern with the C/LWO – other people could still be at risk of harm.

REPORTING ADULT SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

What to do in an emergency. An emergency situation may mean:

- An adult, other adults or children are at immediate risk of harm;
- A crime may be committed;
- A serious crime has been committed;
- The adult is at risk but is being coerced into not taking action;
- The person posing the risk of harm is an adult at risk of harm themselves.

In an emergency, contact the emergency services such as police, ambulance or the social work team. Let the C/LWO and the CFA DSO know as soon as possible (and in any event within no more than 24 hours) if you have called the emergency services to a situation.

If the situation is not an emergency, contact your C/LWO as soon as possible. If they are implicated, go direct to the CFA DSO.

Even if an adult asks for no action to be taken, the concern must still be shared with the C/LWO. This ensures the C/LWO has enough information to understand any risk and to speak with and support the adult. Not

sharing information could allow harm to continue or escalate.

Breaches of a position of trust or relationship of trust should be discussed by the C/LWO with the CFA DSO.¹

See the flow chart in appendix 1 for more information on reporting adult safeguarding concerns.

¹See guidance note 10.5 for more information about positions and relationships of trust.



RECOGNISING AND RESPONDING TO ADULT SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

RECORDING ADULT SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

You can use the safeguarding referral form as a template for recording adult safeguarding concerns ([Guidance Note 2.2](#)).

Make a written record of the concerns noting who was involved, what is said to have happened, and where and when it is said to have happened. Use the person's own words even if you find them difficult to repeat or upsetting and include the adult's views if known. Sign and date it before sharing with the C/LWO.

Ensure all records are kept securely and confidentially.

REVIEWING ADULT SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Lower-level concerns may be managed at club level in line with club policies and procedures with support from the CFA DSO as necessary.

Where there are recurring lower-level concerns, patterns of poor practice, failure to address concerns appropriately, or any indication that a matter may meet a higher safeguarding threshold, the CFA DSO may refer the incidents to The FA Safeguarding Case Management Team, and/or advise on appropriate action to prevent escalation.

The FA may take safeguarding and/or regulatory action where a matter meets the relevant threshold, including where concerns escalate, indicate risk of harm and/or involve abuse. safeguarding directions issued by The FA or a County FA.

The C/LWO should be involved, where appropriate, in reviewing outcomes with the CFA DSO to ensure that learning is embedded into club practice.

WHISTLEBLOWING

If you feel a safeguarding concern hasn't been responded to appropriately, you can escalate it internally by emailing Safeguarding@TheFA.com, or you can seek advice externally from:

- The police or local children's or adults' services;
- The [NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line](#) if your concern relates to someone under-18;
- The [Protect Advice Line](#) if your concern relates to an adult.

Remember: Safeguarding is *everyone's* responsibility – you are not alone. Support is always available.

USEFUL RESOURCES

[Managing Lower-Level Concerns Within Clubs and Leagues.](#)

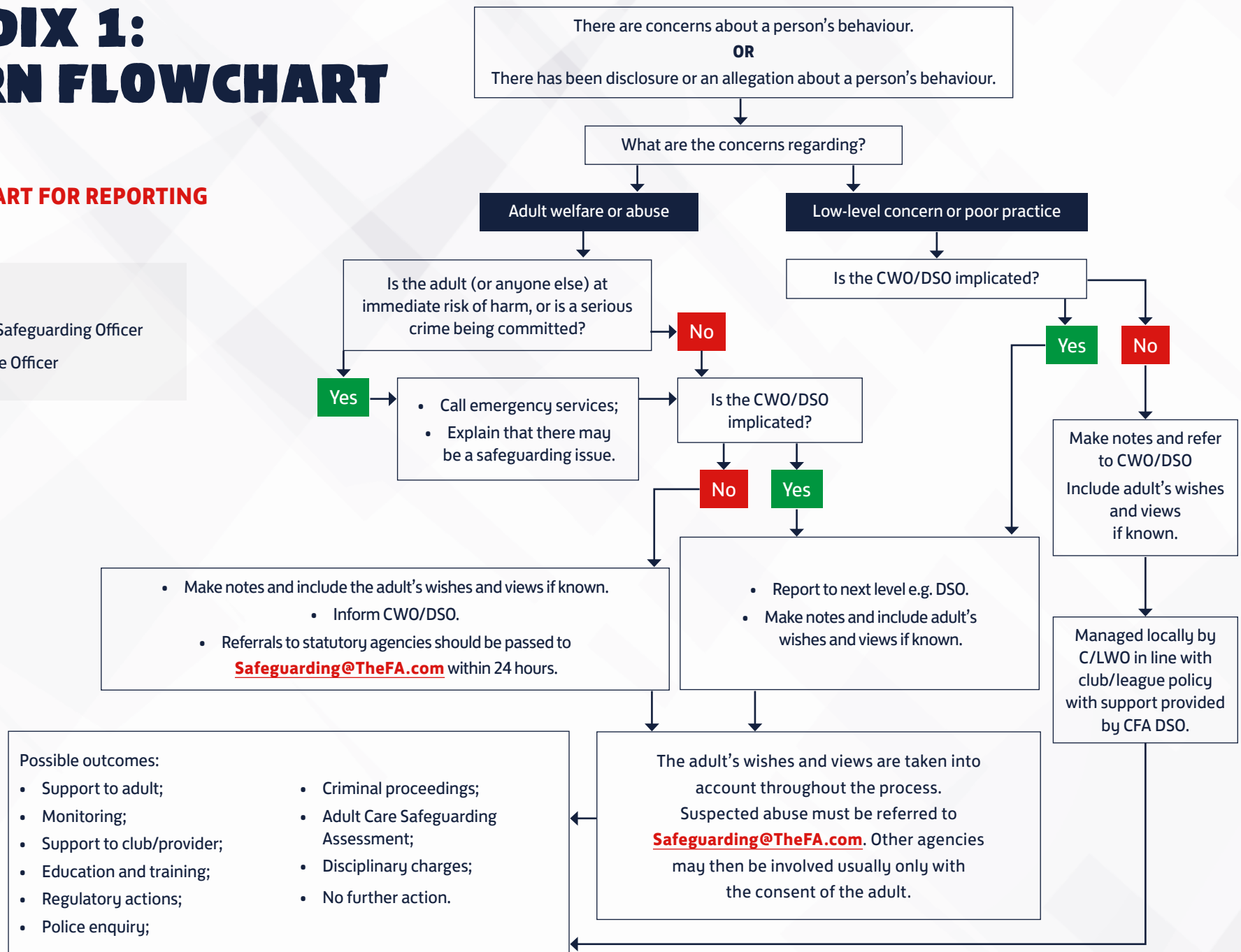


APPENDIX 1: CONCERN FLOWCHART

GENERIC FLOWCHART FOR REPORTING

Key:

- DSO = Designated Safeguarding Officer
- CWO = Club Welfare Officer



APPENDIX 2: DEFINITIONS, SIGN AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE

The Care Act recognises 10 types of abuse (below) that may be experienced by adults
(The FA also recognises bullying as a form of abuse for children and adults).

Type of abuse	What you might see in football
Physical abuse – includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions. This might happen in football or elsewhere.	Regular over-training, refusing breaks or intentionally hitting/kicking or punishing a player. Bruising to arms or face may be visible, and repeated injuries, fearfulness or anxiety. A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person. This may be a sign of any type of abuse.
Sexual abuse – adults with care and support needs can consent to sexual activity but can still be abused. This includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure.	A coach or manager demands sexually-explicit pictures from an adult with learning disabilities that they are training. A player may comment on behaviours they don't like from other adults or young people. Their behaviour may become disturbed or overly sexual. Adults can be sexually exploited as well as children, so be aware of strangers collecting people, alcohol abuse and fearfulness.
Emotional or psychological abuse – this could include threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.	Threatening a player with physical harm or persistently blaming them for poor performance or sending harassing messages after a game. Players should report that this is happening to them. A parent/carer always speaks for the person and doesn't allow them to make their own choices. Person is not attending/no longer enjoying their sessions. You may notice that a participant in a team has been missing from practice sessions and is not responding to reminders from team members or coaches.
Domestic abuse including coercive control – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. It also includes so called 'honour-based' violence. This happens away from football but we might see signs in football.	A person who is withdrawn, fearful or anxious when a carer or partner or family member comes to collect them, bruising, grip marks or other signs of stress or physical harm.
Financial or material abuse – including theft, fraud, internet scamming or coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements.	A club member demanding a player buys them a ticket for a game or insisting they buy everyone rounds of drinks and takeaways they can't afford and don't want. A player might not be able to afford match fees/subs or new kit, appear to be hungry or report being unable to pay rent.
Neglect – including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services, the withholding medication, food or heating.	A player whose medical conditions are untreated or who needs glasses or hearing aids, who is always hungry or complains that their home is always cold or they can't have a shower at home after football.

APPENDIX 2: DEFINITIONS, SIGN AND INDICATORS OF ABUSE

Type of abuse	What you might see in football
Organisational abuse – (sometimes called Institutional abuse) – includes neglect and/or poor practice within an organisation such as care homes or health settings, but also includes sport organisations such as football.	A closed or unsafe culture, perpetuated by lack of or ineffective policies and procedures or structures in the sport club or organisation. A club or team persistently fail to meet players' needs. For example, allowing players to be injured or ill due to lack of care. A player from sheltered accommodation may report rigid rules and lack of choices in their home – for example, having to go to bed at a certain time.
Discriminatory abuse – difference or perceived difference, particularly with respect to race, gender or disability or any of the other protected characteristics of the Equality Act. This might happen in football.	Behaviours such as harassing of a club member because they are or are perceived to be transgender or jokes about a player's disability or use of discriminatory language, online or offline. A player might report this happening to them elsewhere.
Self-neglect – not looking after own personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviours such as hoarding. This happens away from football, but we might see signs in football.	Players or others may be hungry, dressed in old clothes and lacking in money despite being in work. Poor personal hygiene, need for dental care or glasses. Dirty playing kit.
Modern slavery – slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.	Players or others may be hungry, dressed in old clothes and lacking in money despite being in work.

IN FOOTBALL WE MIGHT ALSO SEE:

Bullying – bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace and comes in many different forms.

Cyber-bullying – using technology to bully and humiliate people.

Forced marriage – The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry. The adult may report gifts of gold, planned trips abroad or disclose anxiety about an event.

Mate crime – when people who may be vulnerable are befriended by members of the community who go on to exploit and take advantage of them. It may not be an illegal act but still has a negative effect on the individual.

Radicalisation – the aim of radicalisation is to attract people to their reasoning, inspire new recruits and embed their extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals of the legitimacy of their cause. This may be direct through a relationship, or through social media.

Forced Home Invasion (also known as Home Takeover or Cuckooing) – when criminal gangs use violence and abuse to target the homes of people who are vulnerable, to use them as a base for crime, often drug dealing. This is a form of exploitation.

The above is not an exhaustive list. There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused or neglected. There may be other explanations, but they should not be ignored.



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