

The Football Association's Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

'The FA is committed to football being inclusive and providing a safe and positive experience for everyone involved in the game.'

Whilst it is hoped that the law, the Respect programme, The FA's Equality Policy and positive approaches to training and education are sufficient to safeguard all adults in football, The FA recognises that it has a responsibility to safeguard Vulnerable Adults from abuse and harm and to respond where abuse and harm are perceived to have occurred.

This Policy will seek to provide guidance as to how to prevent harm, give clarity on how to report harm, to ensure investigation into harm and to respond to the outcome of such investigations in such a way as to reduce the risk of further harm to the individual Vulnerable Adult and to other Vulnerable Adults who may be affected in the future.

The FA recognises that the terms 'Vulnerable Adult', 'abuse' and 'harm' are open to interpretation and challenge but for the purpose of this Vulnerable Adult Policy in the season 2009-2010 they will be defined as follows:

Vulnerable Adult shall be defined as:

'A person aged 18 or over who is or who may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness : and who is or who may be unable to take care of himself or herself, or unable to protect himself or herself against significant harm or exploitation'. (1)

Abuse shall be defined as:

'Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons'. (2)

Harm shall be defined as:

'Ill treatment and forms of ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical) and also the impairment of, or an avoidable deterioration in physical or mental health and the impairment of physical, intellectual ,emotional, social or behavioral development'. (3)

'Harm' may be caused by acts of commission and acts of omission.

The responsibility taken by this Policy is to:

- Safeguard the welfare of Vulnerable Adults in football by protecting them from any significant physical, sexual and emotional harm and from neglect, bullying and financial harm within the game. This may include training and codes of practice amongst other strategies for reducing risk.
- Safeguard the welfare of Vulnerable Adults in football by making use of such vetting as is available to The Football Association when seeking to establish suitability for a new or pre existing role with Vulnerable Adults in football.
- Report to the appropriate authorities any concerns about abuse or harm to Vulnerable Adults whether this occurs within the game or elsewhere and whether this be a criminal offence or other concern. The appropriate authorities may be internal or external to the game. This will include identifying reporting frameworks and developing guidelines for reporting.
- Ensure appropriate investigations and responses to concerns about abuse or harm within the game including football sanctions as appropriate. This will include work in partnership with the Police and other statutory agencies charged with investigating and responding and with the Vulnerable Adult who is believed to be at risk or believed to have been harmed.

- Following such investigations, act to put appropriate safeguards in place to safeguard the Vulnerable Adult in the future and to reduce the risk of harm to other Vulnerable Adults in the game.
- Report when appropriate to the Independent Safeguarding Authority anybody in the game who is believed by The Football Association to be a risk of harm to Vulnerable Adults.
- Seek to develop internal skills and knowledge based on research, Government guidance and learning from experience.
- Review the policy from time to time.

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