

Safeguarding and Protecting Young People and Adults at Risk Policy

Sporting Communities

This policy applies to all individuals working for or on behalf of Sporting Communities, including directors, senior managers, employees, sessional workers, agency workers, volunteers, students, consultants, contractors, subcontractors and partner personnel delivering activities on our behalf. It applies to all Sporting Communities activities, whether delivered in person, online, at Sporting Communities premises, in community venues, in educational settings, during transport or away from the usual delivery location.

Purpose of the Policy

- To protect children, young people, and adults at risk who receive services from Sporting Communities.
- To provide a framework for guiding the behaviour of workers and volunteers, ensuring the safety and protection of children, young people, and adults at risk.

Commitment

Sporting Communities believes that no child, young person, or vulnerable adult should experience abuse of any kind. We are committed to safeguarding their welfare and creating an environment where they feel safe and empowered to participate in our activities. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all those involved and to follow best practices in doing so.

Definitions

- **Child:** Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The term “children” includes babies, children and young people.
- **Adult at risk:** A person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support, is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and, because of those needs, is unable to protect themselves from the abuse, neglect or associated risk.
- **Safeguarding:** The action taken to promote welfare, prevent harm and respond effectively to abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Policy Principles

Sporting Communities is dedicated to:

- Ensuring the welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk is paramount.
- Respecting the rights, wishes, and feelings of all participants, regardless of their characteristics.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children, young people, and adults at risk from harm.
- Ensuring that all workers understand their responsibilities under this policy, with non-compliance potentially leading to disciplinary action.
- Investigating allegations of poor practice and taking appropriate action.
- Recruiting safely, with all employees undergoing appropriate checks, including DBS where relevant, and being provided with safeguarding training.
- Working in partnership with parents, carers, and local services to ensure comprehensive safeguarding.

Legal and Legislative Context

This policy is informed by current legislation and statutory guidance, as applicable to Sporting Communities' activities, including:

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the relevant Exceptions Order
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and current Prevent guidance, where applicable
- UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, current edition, where Sporting Communities is delivering in schools, colleges or commissioned alternative provision
- Current procedures of the relevant local safeguarding children partnership and safeguarding adults board.

Types of Abuse, Neglect and Safeguarding Concern

Safeguarding concerns may include, but are not limited to:

Children: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, bullying and child-on-child abuse, online abuse, grooming, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, county lines, trafficking, modern slavery, radicalisation, discriminatory abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, missing episodes and risks arising outside the family home.

Adults at risk: physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological or emotional abuse, financial or material abuse, discriminatory abuse, domestic abuse, organisational abuse, modern slavery, neglect, acts of omission and self-neglect.

Abuse may be a single incident or a pattern of behaviour and may be perpetrated by an adult, another participant, a family member, a professional, a volunteer or another person.

The adult categories reflect the Care Act safeguarding framework. Adult safeguarding should also be person-led and outcome-focused, taking account of the adult's wishes, consent, mental capacity and desired outcomes.

Good Practice Guidelines

All the workforce and volunteers at Sporting Communities must adhere to the following good practices:

- Working in open, observable and accountable environments wherever practicable, with any necessary one-to-one work planned, risk assessed and known to another authorised worker.
- Equal treatment of all participants with respect and dignity.
- Fairness in all actions, confronting bullying, and putting the welfare of participants first.
- Avoiding unnecessary physical contact. Where physical contact is necessary (e.g. first aid, supporting participation), it must be appropriate, proportionate, and recorded if relevant.
- Maintaining boundaries and avoiding situations that could be misconstrued as inappropriate or intimate.
- Leading by example, with no smoking, drinking, or inappropriate behaviour in front of participants.
- Children may only be transported under approved arrangements, with appropriate parental or carer consent, suitable insurance, seatbelts, risk assess-

ment and journey records. Transporting a child alone should be avoided except where specifically authorised, risk assessed or necessary in an emergency.

- Adults at risk should provide their own informed consent wherever they have capacity to do so. Where an adult lacks capacity to make the relevant decision, any action must comply with the Mental Capacity Act 2005, be in their best interests and be properly documented.

Poor Practice

The workforce and volunteers must avoid:

- Spending excessive time alone with a child, young person, or vulnerable adult.
- Initiating or participating in inappropriate rough play, sexually suggestive behaviour, physical punishment, or contact that is unnecessary, disproportionate or unrelated to the safe delivery of the activity.
- Unnecessary physical contact, or making inappropriate comments.
- Transporting participants alone without appropriate permissions or working outside of the Lone Worker Policy.
- Failing to act on concerns or allegations made by participants.

If any concerns arise, they must be reported immediately, following the outlined safeguarding procedures.

Online Safety and Electronic Communication

Workers must use only Sporting Communities-approved accounts, platforms and communication methods when contacting participants. Personal social-media accounts, disappearing-message functions and private or secret online contact with children must not be used.

One-to-one electronic communication must be necessary, authorised, transparent and capable of being reviewed. Parents or carers, or an additional authorised worker, should be included where appropriate.

Images, recordings and personal information must not be created, stored or shared without the appropriate consent and lawful basis. Online safeguarding concerns must be reported and recorded in the same way as concerns arising during face-to-face activity.

Responding to a Disclosure or Safeguarding Concern

When a child or adult at risk discloses abuse, neglect, exploitation or another safeguarding concern, workers must:

- take immediate action to secure the person's safety and call 999 where there is an immediate danger, serious injury or crime in progress
- listen carefully, remain calm and take the disclosure seriously
- not promise confidentiality or secrecy, but explain that information will only be shared with people who need to help
- not ask leading or unnecessary questions, investigate the allegation or confront the person alleged to have caused harm
- record the person's exact words wherever possible, together with the date, time, location, factual observations and any immediate action taken
- sign, date and submit the record securely to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay
- preserve any relevant evidence, including electronic communications, without attempting to examine or circulate it unnecessarily.

The worker must report the concern to the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately. If neither is available and waiting could increase the risk of harm, the worker must make a direct referral to children's social care, adult safeguarding services or the police and inform the DSL as soon as possible afterwards.

Workers must not assume that someone else has reported the concern.

Reporting and Incident Management

Concerns should be reported to the designated Safeguarding Lead or another responsible person immediately. Incident reports should include all relevant information and be thorough, avoiding personal opinions.

In cases where urgent action is needed (e.g., if medical attention is required), call emergency services immediately.

Allegations and Concerns About People Working for Sporting Communities

Any allegation or concern that an employee, worker, volunteer, contractor, student or other person working on behalf of Sporting Communities has:

- harmed or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or relating to a child
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm

- behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

must be reported immediately to the appropriate senior manager and DSL. The relevant Local Authority Designated Officer, commonly known as the LADO, must be informed within one working day where the allegation meets or may meet the relevant threshold.

Sporting Communities will take any immediate action required to protect participants but will not begin a substantive internal investigation before obtaining advice from the LADO, police or relevant safeguarding authority.

Concerns about a person working with adults with care and support needs will be managed under the relevant local Safeguarding Adults Board's People in Positions of Trust procedures.

Sporting Communities will consider its legal duty to refer a person to the Disclosure and Barring Service where that person is removed from regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not resigned or otherwise left, because they harmed or posed a risk of harm to a child or adult at risk.

All workers must also report lower-level boundary or conduct concerns that are inconsistent with Sporting Communities' Code of Conduct, even where the behaviour does not appear to meet the LADO threshold. No person will be disadvantaged for raising a genuine concern in good faith.

Recruitment and Training

Sporting Communities will apply proportionate safer-recruitment arrangements to employees, volunteers, sessional workers, contractors, students and other relevant personnel. These will include, as appropriate:

- a structured application and suitability assessment
- verification of identity, right to work, relevant qualifications and employment history
- exploration of unexplained employment or volunteering gaps
- at least two satisfactory references, including a recent employer or organisation and, where relevant, a reference relating to previous work with children or adults at risk
- the highest level of DBS check legally permitted for the role, with a barred-list check obtained where the role involves legally defined regulated activity
- consideration of criminal-record information only where it is lawful, relevant and proportionate
- safeguarding induction before unsupervised contact with participants

- appropriate supervision, probation, ongoing suitability monitoring and re-fresher training.

All personnel will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their responsibilities and regular updates on changes to procedures and emerging risks. The DSL and Deputy DSL will undertake role-specific safeguarding training and maintain their professional knowledge.

Confidentiality

Safeguarding information will be handled sensitively and shared only with people or agencies that need it to protect a child or adult at risk. Consent will be sought where appropriate and safe to do so; however, a lack of consent will not prevent information being shared where this is necessary to safeguard the person or another individual, comply with a legal duty or prevent or detect a crime.

Information shared must be relevant, necessary, proportionate, accurate, timely and secure. The reason for sharing, or for deciding not to share, must be recorded.

Safeguarding records will be stored separately from general participant records, with access restricted to authorised people. Records will be retained and destroyed in accordance with Sporting Communities' safeguarding record-retention schedule and data-protection requirements.

Any concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). In their absence, the Deputy DSL will take responsibility.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: [Ross Podyma, Strategic Director, 07809 536703, ross@sportingcommunities.co.uk]

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: [Ben Rigby, Managing Director, 07966984147, ben@sportingcommunities.co.uk]

Concerns about the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be reported to the Deputy DSL. Where a concern relates to the most senior person in the organisation, or where it would be inappropriate to report internally, the concern must be reported directly to the relevant local authority safeguarding service, Local Authority Designated Officer or police.

Other Contacts

If there is an immediate concern, Sporting Communities workers should contact the relevant local safeguarding team:

- **Emergency:** Police/ambulance 999; police non-emergency 101.
- **Cheshire West and Chester – children:** iART 0300 123 7047; out of hours 01244 977277.
Adults: Community Access Team 0300 123 7034; out of hours 01244 977277.
- **Cheshire East – children:** ChECS 0300 123 5012, option 3; out of hours 0300 123 5022.
Adults: 0300 123 5010; out of hours 0300 123 5022.
- **Derby City – children:** 01332 641172; out of hours 01332 956606.
Adults: 01332 642855; out of hours 01332 956606. The policy's current Derby Care Line number, **01332 786968**, should therefore be replaced.
- **Derbyshire – children and adults:** Call Derbyshire 01629 533190.
- **Staffordshire – children:** 0300 111 8007, option 1; out of hours 0345 604 2886.
Adults: 0345 604 2719; out of hours 0345 604 2886. The current **0800 1313 126** entry should be replaced.
- **Stoke-on-Trent – children:** 01782 235100; out of hours 01782 234234.
Adults: 0800 561 0015; out of hours 01782 234234.
- **Leicester City**, where relevant to direct work with learners: children and adults 0116 454 1004, available 24 hours.
- **NSPCC Helpline:** 0808 800 5000.
- **Childline:** 0800 1111, for children and young people seeking confidential support.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Staff and Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment and DBS Procedure
- Managing Allegations and Low-Level Concerns Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Online Safety, Social Media and Photography Policy
- Lone Working and One-to-One Working Policy
- Transport Policy
- Data Protection and Safeguarding Records Retention Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Missing Child and Late Collection Procedure
- Health and Safety and First Aid Policies.



This policy will be formally reviewed at least annually and sooner following a serious safeguarding incident, changes in legislation or statutory guidance, significant organisational or delivery changes, learning from a safeguarding review, or identified weaknesses in practice. Each revision must be approved by the Sporting Communities Board of Directors and communicated to all relevant personnel.

Last reviewed: 20/06/2026