

# WHY YOUR ORGANISATION NEEDS A SAFEGUARDING ADULTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

**“We know that feeling unsafe or excluded from sport is a significant barrier to getting involved in sport and physical activity for some groups”**

- The government’s sport strategy  
**Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation 2015**

Participation in sport and activity can play an important role in helping people to live fulfilling lives. ‘Accessible leisure facilities, safe town centre and community groups ... can reduce the social and physical isolation which may increase the risk of abuse or neglect’ 14.12. The Care Act 2014.

The government policy is one of encouraging people to take part and develop a more active lifestyle. This is reflected in the current Sport England Strategy that sets out how resources will be allocated to sports organisations:

‘Our vision is that everyone, regardless of their age, background or level of ability, feels able to engage in sport and physical activity. Some will be young, fit and talented, but most will not’ (Jennie Price, Chief Executive, Sport England – Sport England: Towards an Active Nation Strategy 2016-2021).

With this comes a duty of care to those participating in sport and physical activity. Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation 2015 notes that organisations have a ‘duty of care’ which includes

‘safeguarding for children and people in a vulnerable situation’. Sport and physical activity organisations need to be informed enough to ensure that complaints/concerns about adults at risk are properly identified and acted upon. Organisations which fail to do this risk failing to meet their duty of care and leaving the individuals concerned at best disillusioned with sport and at worst vulnerable to harm.

If this vision of an active nation is to be realised, sports and physical activity organisations have a duty to ensure that adults are able to take part fully, free from abuse and neglect. That includes working to prevent abuse from occurring within sport and physical activity, and responding proportionately if abuse or neglect has occurred.

Organisations also have a duty to respond if they feel that an adult is suffering or likely to suffer harm outside of the sport or physical activity. The Care Act 2014 put the safeguarding of adults onto a statutory footing. The sport and physical activity sectors have regular contact with many people and so have a crucial role in the support, identification and reporting of adults who may be at risk of harm.

Thus policies and procedures have a dual role – safeguarding of people

when they are participating in sports and activity and responding to any signs of abuse that may indicate that abuse is occurring outside of the setting.

A safeguarding adults policy and procedures document sets out the best practice framework for an organisation to respond to safeguarding concerns and promotes the importance of safeguarding adults throughout the whole organisation. Safeguarding adults in sport and physical activity is an important responsibility to take on to ensure wider participation and safe access for everyone. Sport and physical activity organisations that demonstrate best practice in adult safeguarding, commit to both.

