

Sporting Communities

Safeguarding and Protecting Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy

This policy applies to all workers, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid workers, volunteers and sessional workers, agency workers, students or anyone working or volunteering on behalf of Sporting Communities.

The purpose of this policy:

- to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults who receive services from Sporting Communities.
- to provide workers and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child, young person and vulnerable adult protection.

Sporting Communities believes that a child, young person or vulnerable adult should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children, young people or vulnerable adults and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice to that principle.

Sporting Communities is committed to creating and maintaining an enjoyable and safe environment for all involved in our activities while providing the highest possible standard of service.

We are dedicated to devising and implementing policies to ensure everyone at Sporting Communities understands their responsibilities and the company's procedures.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children, young people or vulnerable adults with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of Sporting Communities and to allow workers and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child, young person or vulnerable adult protection issues.

NB: A young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989)
The definition of a Vulnerable Adult, as stated by 'Who Decides – Lord Chancellors Department 1997', is:

'A Vulnerable Adult is someone who is aged 18 or over who; is or may be in need of community care services by reasons of mental health or other disability, age or illness and is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against harm or exploitation'

Policy principles

Sporting Communities is dedicated to the following:

- the welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults is paramount and should be the first consideration
- all children, young people and vulnerable adults, regardless of protective characteristic have a right to participate in a fun and safe environment
- the rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and vulnerable adults should always be respected

- all reasonable steps to protect children, young people or vulnerable adults from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment will be taken
- all members of Sporting Communities have a responsibility to operate to this policy. Failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action
- Allegations of poor practice will be taken seriously and investigated in accordance with good practise.
- all Sporting Communities workers will be recruited via a fair recruitment procedure and be exempt from Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. They will be provided with guidance and training in Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults procedures and good practice
- working in partnership with parents and carers is essential for the safeguarding and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- confidentiality should be upheld in line with legislation and government guidance
- all Sporting Communities workers who work with children, young people or vulnerable adults should adhere to the e-safety policy and related procedures

Government guidance and legislation

Sporting Communities' safeguarding policy and procedures are based upon principles within UK, international legislation and government guidance. Below is an overview of relevant legislation and guidance. We all have a legal and moral obligation and responsibility to contribute to making Sporting Communities a safe and friendly place to be. Our policies and procedures take into account the following:

- GDPR 2018
- The Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Police Act 1997
- The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- The Data Protection Act 1998
- Every Child Matters 2003
- "Caring for the young and vulnerable" - Home Office guidance for preventing the abuse of trust 1999
- The 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' - 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children - 2006
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - 1990
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Act 2006
- Information sourced from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, 'Guidance on the protection of Vulnerable Adults', August 2005

Promoting good practice

Sporting Communities acknowledges that good practice is essential when working with young people. To provide children, young people and vulnerable adults with the best possible experience and opportunities all of our workers must operate within an accepted ethical framework. Below is a list showing what is meant by good practice and poor practice, so that workers and volunteers are able to identify whether poor practice and possible abuse may be taking place.

Good practice:

All people at Sporting Communities should adhere to the following actions:

- always be publicly open when working with children, young people or vulnerable adults
- avoid any unobserved situations and encourage open communication
- treat all children, young people and vulnerable adults equally and with respect and dignity
- promote fairness and confront and deal with bullying
- always put the welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult first
- respect the personal space of the child, young person or vulnerable adult; avoid any situation that could appear to encourage an intimate relationship
- avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any physical support is compulsory it should only be provided with the consent of the child, young person or vulnerable adult and done openly involve parents or guardians wherever possible
- parental consent to be obtained if workers are required to transport children or young people who are a legal minor
- carer consent to be obtained if workers are required to transport vulnerable adults
- request written parental/carers consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays
- ensure that at residential activities adults do not enter a child, young person or vulnerable adult's room without good reason and then with another member of workers present.
- at residential activities members of workers will not invite children, young people or vulnerable adults into their rooms
- be a good role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- always operate from a premise of constructive feedback.
- recognising the developmental needs and capacity of the children, young people and vulnerable adults and in so doing ensures the persons wellbeing is not put at risk to gain other success
- ensures any injury is recorded along with details of any treatment given
- ensure that in emergencies treatment of the young people is carried in accordance with first 'aid at work' practise.
- to ensure that the correct ratio of adults to children, young people or vulnerable adults is maintained at all times – for the protection and welfare of the young people and the adults involved
- to dress in appropriate clothing for the activity, and not wear or carry anything that could be injures to ones self or participants.

Poor practice

These actions are regarded as poor practice.

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult away from others
- reducing a child, young person or vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control

- doing things of a personal nature that the child, young person or vulnerable adult is able to do for themselves
- engaging in rough, highly physical or sexual activity
- making inappropriate comments to a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- taking children, young people or vulnerable adults alone in a car on journeys*
- sharing a room with a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- taking a child, young person or vulnerable adult anywhere where they will be alone with you**
- engaging in improper touching of any form
- allowing children, young people or vulnerable adults to openly use threatening language
- allowing allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

* When a case arises where it is impossible to avoid certain situations, for example transporting a child, young person or vulnerable adult in your car, the tasks should only be carried out in accordance with the Lone Worker Policy, or under the full consent and understanding of both a Sporting Communities Director, the parent, guardian or carer and the child, young person or vulnerable adult involved.

** Exceptions to this will be in relation to services such as mentoring or counselling and must fall in line with the Lone Worker Policy.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a child, young person or vulnerable adult, the child, young person or vulnerable adult seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions or if the child, young person or vulnerable adult misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague, complete an Incident Report Form and send it to your Line Manager and the Welfare Officer. In emergency cases please follow the Safeguarding Flowchart.

Use of photographic / filming equipment

Sporting Communities are alert to the concerns of inappropriate photography or filming and will ensure to the best of their ability to stop and or report as soon as possible.

Defining abuse

It is not always easy to recognise where abuse has occurred, however all working and volunteering within Sporting Communities have a duty to be watchful and respond appropriately to suspicions of poor practice, abuse or bullying. This does not mean that it is our worker's or volunteer's responsibility to make a decision as to whether the situation is poor practice, but it does mean that it is our worker's or volunteer's duty to report absolutely any concerns.

Abuse has many forms, but essentially it is a term which describes the way in which a child, young person or vulnerable adult can be harmed by individuals or groups. This does not necessarily excluded those that the individual may know well.

Abuse tends to be categorised into four main forms; physical, emotional, sexual or neglect that leads to injury or harm. It is most common within a relationship of trust or responsibility, where an abuse of power or breach of trust occurs. Abuse in all of its forms can affect any child, young person or vulnerable adult. It is so critical that any abuse is prevented as the effects can be so destructive that if not prevented they may follow the individual into later life.

Physical abuse

Defined as when individuals deliberately inflict injuries on a person, or knowingly do not prevent such injuries. It includes harm caused by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, drowning or using excessive force. Giving a child, young person or vulnerable adult alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute abuse, along with the failure to supervise their access to these substances.

No abuse of any kind will be tolerated.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse can be described as repetitive emotional ill treatment of a person, which is likely to cause harsh and permanent unfavourable effects on their emotional development. Examples can be telling a child, young person or vulnerable adult that they are a waste of time, making them feel insignificant and unwelcome or calling them names and bullying them.

Activities can easily fall foul of creating such effects as described above via overzealous e.g. criticising a child, young person or vulnerable adult and expecting too much of them. As a result it may cause anxiety which in turn can result in the loss of self-confidence.

Sexual abuse

This can occur when a person, uses another person to meet their own sexual needs or gratification. This includes any sexual contact, showing a child, young person or vulnerable adult pornography or talking to them in a sexually overt manner. This can also occur if there is any inappropriate physical contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

Neglect

Neglect occurs when adults fail to meet a child, young person or vulnerable adult's physical or mental needs, which then in turn results in serious harm to their growth or health. An example of neglect would be failing to provide a person's basic needs such as food, water, shelter, protection, medical care, etc. This could also be exposing a child, young person or vulnerable adult to unbearable heat or cold.

The definitions above are a guidance. Sporting Communities will deal with the above issues in depth within its induction training.

Signs of abuse - action

As mentioned previously it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such detection however it is important to remember that it is not the responsibility of those working in Sporting Communities to decide that abuse is occurring. It is their responsibility to act on any concerns. Some of the signs that abuse is occurring, which should be looked out for, may include one or more of the following:

- another person expresses concern about the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult
- difficulty in making friends
- unexplained changes in a child, young person or vulnerable adult's behaviour e.g. bad tempered, upset, quiet, reserved, clingy, tearful and reluctance
- unexplained or suspicious injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- mistrust of others, particularly those with whom a close relationship
- the person describes or discloses what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- being prevented from socialising with others
- displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite
- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt
- sudden increases in unexplained money
- a shortage of money or frequent loss of belongings

There are many ways in which we may become aware of the possible occurrence of abuse, mainly through some of the ways listed above, or even witnessing it occur. In some cases it may be reported to us or we may be directly informed by the person affected.

How to respond to any suspicions

It is important to remember that no matter how you have been made aware, it is not the responsibility of any of Sporting Communities' workers or volunteers to make the decision as to whether a child, young person or vulnerable adult is actually being abused, it is simply your responsibility to act on any concerns by contacting the appropriate authorities so that the correct and necessary action can be taken to protect them.

If you believe a disclosure is about to be made, or a child, young person or vulnerable adult is in the process of disclosing, you must tell them that you will have to talk to other people. Never tell them that you will keep it a secret. Tell the child, young person or vulnerable adult that you must talk to other people who can help. Be open and honest. Tell them who you will have to speak to and why.

If a child, young person or vulnerable adult directly informs you then it is important that you respond in a caring calm manner. Support them and listen carefully to show that you are taking them seriously, avoid questioning them, to avoid it being argued that they have been led during questioning.

The main priority is the safety of the individual. If any medical attention is needed you must call an ambulance immediately. Ensure that the child, young person or vulnerable adult knows that you will need to tell other people in order to stop the abuse continuing.

Make certain that you record all information straight away and report the incident as soon as possible to Sporting Communities' Welfare Officer. Information recorded should be very thorough and should be made at the time of the concern, detailing all the facts and not including your own opinions. The record should include the following:

- child, young person or vulnerable adult's details e.g. name, age, address, phone number, etc.
- the nature of the allegation, including the dates, times, etc.
- a description of the signs, for example any visible injuries or indirect signs
- details of the witnesses
- an account of what the child, young person or vulnerable adult has said
- who the alleged abuser is if known
- who was consulted, give details.

Sporting Communities expects its members to talk about any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult immediately with the Welfare Officer. If this person is not available then you should seek advice from one of the other Directors.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident, as it may be just one of a series of other incidents which together cause concern.

Internal inquiries and suspension

The Welfare Officer will make an instant decision, potentially after a conversation with the Directors about whether the accused should be momentarily suspended until further police and social services inquiries. Irrespective of the police or social services inquiries, Sporting Communities will review all individual cases in order to make a decision as to whether the accused person can return and how it would carefully be handled. The welfare of the child, young person or vulnerable adult will however remain of paramount importance throughout.

Recruiting people who will be working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

It is important that all reasonable steps are taken to prevent unsuitable people from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This applies equally to paid, volunteer, full time and part time workers. To ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults the following points should be taken into consideration when recruiting:

- all workers and volunteers to complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about the applicants past and a self-disclosure about any criminal record
- all workers and volunteers, where relevant should undertake an enhanced level Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check/will provide their DBS which

will be verified, should the DBS check not be completed before employment commences, a risk assessment will be undertaken and the necessary safeguards put in place. This information will be treated confidentially, sensitively and in accordance with the GDPR 2018.

- two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children may be obtained
- evidence of identity, for example passport or driving licence with photo
- a check will be made that the application form has been completed in full, including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures
- qualifications to be confirmed
- the job requirements and responsibilities will be clarified
- safeguarding procedures are explained and training needs identified e.g. basic safeguarding awareness

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to ensure all workers and volunteers are fully conversant with all aspects of this policy.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to make sure that confidentiality is maintained for everyone that is concerned in any allegations. Information should be handled on a need to know basis only.

All information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

Safeguarding Team Contacts

Cheshire East Consultation Service - 0300 123 5012 (option 3)

Cheshire East Consultation Service Out of hours Emergency Duty team - 0300 123 5022

Derby City First Contact Team - 01332 641172 (9am-5pm weekdays only)

Derby City Care Line - 01332 786968 (evenings and weekends)

Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Referral Team - 01782 235100

Staffordshire First Response - 0800 1313 126

NSPCC Report Abuse - 0808 800 5000

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.