



## Safeguarding Policy 2017/2018

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**MFC** FOUNDATION

## **STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

Middlesbrough Football Club (MFC) and Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation (MFCF) are fully committed to the safeguarding and welfare of children, young people, young players, vulnerable adults, vulnerable groups and expects all staff, players and volunteers to share this commitment. This is paramount to the Board.

The Club makes provisions for children and young people, young players and vulnerable adults (Vulnerable Groups) ensuring that:

- The welfare of these groups is paramount.
- All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to safety and protection from abuse and harm.
- Processes are in place for the protection of vulnerable groups from radicalisation.
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff, players and volunteers working for MFC and MFCF have a responsibility to report concerns to the Club Head of Safeguarding and Designated Safeguarding Officers.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Signed on behalf of Middlesbrough Football Club & Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation

**Neil Bausor**  
Chief Executive - MFC

**Ray Mallon**  
Chairman - MFCF



## CLUB CONTACTS AND USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Club contacts for any safeguarding issues that may arise are as follows:

**Robin Bloom;** Board Level Senior Safeguarding Lead (BLSSL) **07980 769554**

**Brian Robinson;** Club Head of Safeguarding (CHOS) **07834 687980**

## DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS (DSO)

**Yvonne Ferguson** Head of Supporter Services  
**MFC- (Matchday)** Tel: 01642 757 648 / 07841 997 704

**Barry Dawson** Head of Education & Welfare  
**MFC Academy** Tel: 01325 722 222 / 07801 335 763

**Ann-Marie Anderson** Sponsorship & Fundraising Manager  
**MFCF** Tel: 01642 757 676 / 07976 437 262

If you have **serious concerns about the immediate safety** of the child or young person contact the Police or Social Services. Record the name of the person you spoke to and tell your CHOS/DSO what you have done.

## USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS:

### Middlesbrough Council Social Services

During Working Hours: Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 5:00pm, Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm  
First Contact Team: 01642 726 004 – out of hours 08702 402994

### Stockton Children's Services Social Care

During Working Hours: Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 5:00pm, Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm  
First Contact: 01642 527 764 / 01642 527 636

### Out of Children's Services hours:

Emergency Duty Team 08702 402 994 / Cleveland Police: 01642 326 326

**North Riding FA:** 01642 717 778

**Premier League Safeguarding;** [safeguarding@premierleague.com](mailto:safeguarding@premierleague.com)

**FL Child Protection Advisor:** 01772 325 811/07795 628 379

**FA Safeguarding Team:** 0800 169 1863 or via [safeguarding@thefa.com](mailto:safeguarding@thefa.com)

**NSPCC Helpline number:** 0808 800 5000/[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**Text phone number:** 88858

**CEOP Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre** [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)  
(Dedicated to eradicating the sexual abuse of Children)

**Child Protection in Sport Unit** [www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/cpsu](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/cpsu)  
(works with sports governing bodies to minimise the risk of Child abuse)

Other useful safeguarding links can be found on **page 28**



## POLICY STATEMENT

MFC and MFCF recognises its duty of care to safeguard all children, young people and young players, vulnerable adults/groups involved in activities organised by MFC and MFCF from harm. All children have the right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. MFC and MFCF will do their utmost to ensure the safety and protection of all children/groups involved in activities through adherence to the safeguarding guidelines adopted by the Club.

## DEFINITIONS

**A child is defined as under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).** However, for the purpose of the Club's Safeguarding policies and practices for home match day supporters, when referring to a child, the policies refer to a person under 14 years of age. Supporters under 14 years of age are not allowed to enter the stadium without a qualifying adult (age 18-years and over). As a result, and in line with reasonable adjustments, any supporter who is under 14 years of age must attend with their parent or guardian. Supporters over 14 years and under 18 years are allowed to enter the stadium unaccompanied however they are not allowed to be responsible for another supporter. Only supporters aged 18 years and over can be responsible for a supporter under the age of 18 years.

**Vulnerable Adults** defined as an adult (person aged 18 or over) who is receiving one of the following services; health care; relevant personal care; social care work; assistance in relation to general household matters by reason of age, illness or disability; relevant assistance in the conduct of their own affairs or conveying (due to age, illness or disability in prescribed circumstances). See Attachment 1 (Vulnerable Adults Policy).

**Staff or employees is defined as any member of the workforce either paid or unpaid.**

**Vulnerable Groups** is defined as the collective term used when talking about or referring to children, young people and vulnerable adults as a whole

## POLICY AIMS

The aim of our Safeguarding Policy is to promote good practice and to enable staff to ensure that we:

- Provide children, young people, young players, vulnerable adults, (vulnerable groups) with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of MFC and MFCF.
- Undertake to provide relevant safeguarding training, delivered by appropriate training providers as appropriate to their role for staff, players and volunteers.
- Allow staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses too specifi safeguarding issues.
- Provide education and awareness raising, to young players and parents to understand their role in safeguarding.

## SCOPE

This policy covers all activities within the; Stadium, Training Ground, Academy, Foundation and any external Club managed activities.



## PROMOTING GOOD PRACTICE WITH CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE/YOUNG PLAYERS

### INTRODUCTION

Child abuse, physical, emotional, neglect and in particular sexual abuse, can result in strong emotions in those facing such a situation. It is important to understand these feelings and not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the footballing environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people/young players in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer may have regular contact with young people/young players and be an important link in identifying situations where a young person needs protection.

Any concern regarding poor practice should be reported following the MFC and MFCF procedure guidelines which supports this policy.

If it is brought to the attention of the Club or Foundation that a child joining the activities has been subject to child abuse outside the footballing environment, we recognise that football can play a crucial role as part of a care plan or in improving a child's self esteem. In such instances the Club and Foundation will work with the referral agencies to ensure the child receives the appropriate support.

### GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

All personnel are encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to safeguard children and vulnerable groups, to report any concern about the welfare of a child and also to protect themselves from allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate within MFC and MFCF:

#### **Good practice means:**

- Always respond to any request to complete or update your DBS Criminal Records Check
- Always inform the HR Department in respect of your behaviour with regard to any investigation, allegation or arrest which may have an impact upon the role you have in working with children or vulnerable groups.
- Always work in an open environment; for example, avoid private or unobserved situations and encourage an open environment, ie no secrets.
- Treating all young people/young players/vulnerable adults/groups equally and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first before winning and achieving goals.
- Always maintaining a professional relationship with young people and players; for example, never have an intimate relationship with a child U18 (even if they are over 16 years old) when you are responsible for their supervision, care, support or coaching.
- Always maintaining a professional relationship with vulnerable adults; for example, never have an intimate relationship with a vulnerable person (even if they are over 16 years old) when you are responsible for their supervision, care, support or coaching.
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children to share in the decision-making process.
- Making football fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.



## Coaching Contact:

- Ensure that if any form of manual/physical contact is required, it should be provided openly and according to coaching guidelines provided by the National Governing Body (NGB) of the sport and in line with The Premier League or Football League Child Protection Guidance. Care is needed as contact may be difficult to maintain when a child is constantly moving. Young people/young players should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should be carefully considered.
- All care givers must be subject to DBS checks at the highest level.
- Keeping up to date with the technical skills and qualifications in football to the appropriate level.
- Always ensure that coaches and staff work in pairs, particularly if there is a requirement to be in dressing rooms or undertake any personal care.
- All staff should be vigilant and ensure adults around children act in accordance with the standards set by MFC and MFCF. Staff are also responsible for those who enter changing rooms, etc.
- Ensure that if mixed teams are taken away they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff and that appropriate staff ratios are planned and maintained NB: However, same gender abuse can also occur.
- Ensure that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children's rooms or invite children into their rooms. (See point above).
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking, not drinking excessive amounts of alcohol, not using drugs or not using bad language in the company of children/young people/young players/vulnerable groups.
- When coaching gives enthusiastic and constructive feedback recognising the development needs and capacity of young people/young players and vulnerable adults/groups – avoid excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Secure parental consent in writing to act, if the need arises, in emergency circumstances to give permission for the administration of medication or emergency treatment in line with the information advised on the current 'Parental Consent Form' as amended from time to time.
- Keep a written record of any injury or incident that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given and/or action taken.
- Advise parents, the CHOS and DSO on any issue in relation to any treatment of children or vulnerable groups and to log such details on an incident/accident report form.
- Request written parental consent if Club/Foundation Officials are required to transport children/young people/young players/vulnerable adults/vulnerable groups in their cars and ensure that coaches/staff are accompanied by another member of staff. This should be avoided unless absolutely necessary.



## POSITIONS OF TRUST

When an individual accepts a role within the club that involves working with or volunteering with vulnerable groups, he or she needs to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent to the role

As a result of their knowledge, position and the authority of the role, all staff working with vulnerable groups are in positions of trust in relation to the vulnerable groups in their care. Positions of trust can be described as one's which one party has power and influence over the other by the virtue of their work or nature of the activity. It is vital for all those in such positions of trust to understand the power they may have over those in their care, and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence.

Staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification. Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries. They should record and report any incident giving concern in accordance with the club's safeguarding policies and procedures.

## PRACTICES TO BE AVOIDED

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable they should only occur with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the Club/Foundation or the child's parents/guardian. For example, a child sustains an injury and needs to go to hospital, or a parent fails to arrive to pick a child up at the end of a training session/match:

- Avoid taking children to your home where they will be alone.
- Avoid taking children to your home where they will be alone with you.

## PRACTICES NEVER TO BE SANCTIONED

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Share a room with any under 18's.
- Engage in rough, physical or sexual provocative games, including horseplay.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child to go unacknowledged, unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children or vulnerable adults that they can do for themselves

Staff should avoid taking on any caring responsibilities for which you are not appropriately trained and for which consent forms have been obtained.

It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children, particularly if they are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/guardians and the child/player involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's sensitivities and reactions. If a person is fully dependent on you, talk with him/her about what you are doing and give choices where possible. This is particularly so if you are involved in any dressing or undressing of outer clothing, if personal care is required, or where physical contact such as lifting or assisting a child to carry out particular activities are required. If you are unsure on any of the issues in this section you must check with the DSO, with your supervisor and with parents or carers. In addition, the DSO should be able to assist with further information.





If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to the CHOS, DSO or your line manager who will know what to do next. You should make a record of the incident. You should be guided by the Club senior staff who will make a decision about how, when and by whom a parent is informed of the situation.

- If a child or young person is injured during an activity.
- If you accidentally hurt a child or young person or you observe another adult hurting a child.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a child or young person appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a child or young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.
- If there is a sudden change in behaviour, ie the child or young person's behaviour becomes bad or they become withdrawn.

## **GUIDELINES FOR USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC FILMING EQUIPMENT**

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled people in vulnerable positions. It is advisable that all staff/volunteers be vigilant, with any concerns to be reported to the CHOS or appropriate DSO.

MFC and MFCF have an Images Policy and designated photographers. Written parental consent must be sought prior to any child or young person in the care of MFC or MFCF being photographed or filmed. Any observers will be asked not to photograph or film. Please refer any queries or concerns to the CHOS or DSO. (Please refer to Images Policy).

## **SAFER RECRUITMENT**

MFC and MFCF recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. When undertaking, pre-selection checks the following should be included:

- Staff/volunteers who will work with children will complete an MFC/MFCF application form. This application form will collect information about an applicant's past and self-disclosure (relevant to the role) about any criminal record or involvement with the Police or family courts.
- Consent will be obtained from an applicant to seek information/or an application from the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS).
- Two confidential references will be taken up in writing. No open references will be accepted unless confirmed through telephone contact. Any gaps in employment will be explored.
- Evidence of identity will always be required including eligibility to work in the UK (valid passport or driving licence with photo).
- The Club or Foundation will check with The FA to ensure the person is not suspended from football by The FA.
- Information received may prevent an offer of employment being made or a volunteer being used by MFC or MFCF. The individual will be notified of the decision in writing.
- It is Club/Foundation policy that a CRC must be processed and the Disclosure issued before employment can commence.
- A CRC must be in date and be no older than 3 years.
- It is Club/Foundation policy that a DBS applicant must sign up to the DBS Ongoing Update Service.



## RESPONDING TO SUSPICIONS OR ALLEGATIONS

It is not the responsibility of anyone employed by MFC and MFCF, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether or not the alleged harm or abuse has taken place. However, it is their responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

MFC and MFCF will ensure that all staff/volunteers are fully supported and protect anyone, who in good faith, reports his/her concerns that a colleague is, or may be, harming or abusing a child.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation (internal and external):

- A criminal investigation.
- A safeguarding investigation.
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.

The results of the Police and safeguarding investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, and/or any future action, but not necessarily.

### ACTION IF THERE ARE CONCERNS

The following action should be taken if there are concerns:

#### POOR PRACTICE

- If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about unacceptable behaviour; the DSO will deal with it as a misconduct issue in line with the Company Disciplinary Procedures.
- If the allegation is about unacceptable behaviour by the CHOS or DSO, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, it should be reported to the Group General Counsel (BSSL) who will discuss with appropriate management and decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.

#### SUSPECTED ABUSE

- Any suspicion that a child has been harmed or abused by either a member of staff or volunteer should be reported to the CHOS or appropriate DSO, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The CHOS will refer the allegation to the Social Services Department who may involve the Police, or alternatively go directly to the Police if out of hours.
- Contact with the parents or carers of the child will be discussed with the appropriate authorities, and a decision will be made about which is the right organisation to make contact with the parents or carers of the child in order to inform them of any disclosure. This will be done as soon as practicable after discussion with the appropriate authorities.
- The CHOS or DSO should also notify the Group General Counsel (BSSL) and the FA/ Premier League/Football League Safeguarding Advisor. The Media Department will also be informed, in line with the Football Media Protocol, in order that they can deal with any media enquiries.
- If the CHOS is the subject of the suspicion/allegations, the report must be made to the Group General Counsel(BSSL) who will refer the allegations to Social Services.



## CONFIDENTIALITY

MFC and MFCF will operate on the premise that all information imparted to a member of staff will be treated in confidence. Confidentiality is a key issue in the lives of young people and vulnerable adults/groups. They may trust a member of staff with issues of a personal nature and wherever possible their confidences should be respected. Staff must not make promises on confidentiality they may be unable to keep.

Furthermore, staff should always make any complainant fully aware of any situation where confidentiality must not be maintained as in a case of a concern for the protection of children or vulnerable adults or the welfare of either.

Young people or vulnerable adults may disclose information that is difficult for the member of staff to deal with without further advice/support, or which must be reported to statutory agencies. In this case the complainant should be told that the situation will be discussed with the CHOS or DSO with a speciality in that area, or with the Line Manager, but confidentiality will be maintained if possible.

## INFORMATION SHARING

MFC and MFCF is committed to sharing information for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in line with Working Together (2013) and with respect for The Data Protection Act (1998). Any decision to break confidentiality should always be preceded by staff informing the complainant of what is about to happen and the reason for the decision. The staff member should also try to seek the consent of the person who makes the disclosure. There will be no breach of confidence if the person to whom a duty of confidence is owed, consents to the disclosure. Staff should, in the first instance, seek the consent from the person if considering sharing information with other agencies. It is therefore essential that members of staff understand the balance between the need for confidentiality and the need for the sharing of information. For that reason, they must not promise absolute confidentiality to the person who discloses any concern or allegation. Information which is considered important in protecting the safety and welfare of the child or vulnerable adult will be shared by the Club and Foundation with the appropriate statutory and regulatory agencies in order to seek help and keep those involved safe.

If a person discloses information and asks for it to be kept confidential then this person cannot be told that information (disclosure) is totally confidential since it has to be passed on or referred for help to be sought.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people in line with data protection laws, eg, that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure.

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes (but is not limited to) the following people:

- CHOS/DSOs.
  - The parents/guardian of the person who is alleged to be abused (only with guidance from statutory agencies).
  - The person making the allegation.
  - Social Services/Police.
  - Group General Counsel (BSSL)/Chief Executive/Chief Operating Officer.
  - Media Department.
  - Department Head/Direct Line Manager.
  - The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child) \*
- \*Seek Police and Social Services advice on who should approach alleged abuser.



Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people in line with data protection laws, eg, that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure.

## INTERNAL ENQUIRIES AND SUSPENSION

- The CHOS (or appropriate DSO for the relevant area) will make an immediate decision in conjunction with the Group General Counsel (BSSL) about whether any individual accused of harm, inappropriate behaviour or abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further Police and Social Services inquiries. If suspension is agreed as the best course of action, this must be done in line with the Company disciplinary procedures. The Head of HR & Administration will issue appropriate paperwork.
- The FA/PL should be informed of any serious safeguarding concern or complaint in order that they may consider the risk posed across football.
- Irrespective of the findings of the Social Services, Police or FA enquiries, the Head of HR & Administration in conjunction with the Group General Counsel(BSSL), will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police. In such cases, the Group General Counsel (BSSL)/Chief Executive/Chief Operating Officer and Club Head of Safeguarding must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of children should always remain paramount.

## SUPPORT TO DEAL WITH AFTERMATH

- Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to children, parents and members of staff. Use of help lines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy Directory is available from:

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy  
BACP House  
15 St John's Business Park  
Lutterworth  
Leicestershire  
Tel: 01455 883300  
Fax: 01455 550243  
Minicom: 01455 550307  
Text: 01455 560606  
e-mail: [bacp@bacp.co.uk](mailto:bacp@bacp.co.uk)  
Internet: [www.bacp.co.uk](http://www.bacp.co.uk)

- Consideration should be given about what support may be appropriate to the alleged perpetrator of the abuse.
- Social Services can signpost children and their families to support services within the community so can be consulted for advice.



## **ALLEGATIONS OF PREVIOUS ABUSE (HISTORIC COMPLAINTS)**

Allegations of harm or abuse may be made some time after the event, eg by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children. Where such an allegation is made, MFC and MFCF will follow the procedures as detailed in this policy and report the matter directly to the Police or Social Services.

## **ACTION IF BULLYING IS SUSPECTED**

MFC and MFCF takes all complaints of bullying seriously and has a zero tolerance for bullying. Serious and prolonged bullying may lead to isolation. There have been some well publicised examples of children that are committing suicide as a result of bullying. Therefore, if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek advice from the CHOS and DSO who may discuss the matter with the Club Doctor.

The same procedure should be followed as set out in the section relating to responding to suspicions or allegations, if bullying is suspected. All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies in place.

## **ACTION TO HELP THE VICTIM(S) AND PREVENT BULLYING**

- Take all signs and complaints of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns. Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge of the activity. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim(s) and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim(s) that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to not tell any one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the CHOS or appropriate DSO who may contact the school (or organisation where the bullying is happening).

## **ACTION TOWARDS THE BULLY(IES)**

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. If bullying is found to have occurred seek a resolution which satisfies the victim. This may include an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully(ies) parents/guardian.
- Insist on the return of borrowed items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.
- Provide support for the coach of the victim(s).
- Impose sanctions if necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.
- Remain vigilant following the disclosure/investigation.
- Record the outcome of the complaint.
- Ensure relevant coaching staff are aware of the outcome and that they monitor the situation to reduce the chances of a re-occurrence.



## OTHER POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with other MFC and MFCF related policies. The full policies can be found in the Employee Handbook, Safeguarding Policy or Personnel Procedures Manual.

These include but are not limited to:

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

IMAGES POLICY

MASCOTS POLICY

SOCIAL NETWORK AND BLOGGING POLICY

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING POLICY

DIVERSITY and SOCIAL INCLUSION POLICY

## HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

The policy reflects the consideration we give to the protection of young people both within the Company's environment and when away from the Company when undertaking trips and visits. It is reviewed annually or within four weeks of the outcome of a serious safeguarding incident.

## INFORMATION FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

### DEFINING ABUSE

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm.

Child abuse and neglect are generic terms encompassing all ill-treatment of children as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or development.

Children may be abused or suffer neglect through the infliction of harm, or through the failure to act to prevent harm. Abuse can occur in a family or an institutional or community setting. The perpetrator may or may not be known to the child.

Abuse can happen to a child regardless of their age, gender, race or ability. Abusers can be adults (male or female) and other young people, and are usually known to and trusted by the child and family.

### RECOGNITION – SIGNS OF ABUSE

There are five main forms of abuse; physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and bullying. Should you have any concern that abuse is occurring you should contact the appropriate DSO immediately.



## **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Where adults or other young people physically hurt, or injure children, including by hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. This category of abuse can also include when a parent or carer reports non-existent symptoms of illness or deliberately causes ill health in a child they are looking after, as in Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

Examples of physical abuse in sport may be when a child is forced into training and competition that exceeds the capacity of his/her immature and growing body; or where the child is given drugs to enhance performance or delay puberty.

## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

When adults (male or female) or other young people use children to meet their own sexual needs. The power of the coach over young performers, if misused, may also lead to abusive situations developing.

## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

The persistent emotional ill treatment of a child likely to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve communicating to a child they are worthless, unloved, inadequate, or valued only in terms of meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of children that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the child very nervous and withdrawn. Ill-treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Examples of emotional abuse in sport include subjecting children to constant criticism, name-calling, sarcasm or bullying. Putting a child under consistent pressure to perform to unrealistically high standards is also a form of emotional abuse.

## **NEGLECT**

When adults fail to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Refusal to give a child love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

Examples of neglect in sport could include not ensuring children are safe, exposing them to undue cold or heat, or exposing them to unnecessary risk of injury.

## **BULLYING**

Bullying is not always easy to define and can take many forms including social media bullying, causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Examples of bullying in sport could include constantly pointing out the weaknesses of a child in front of other children and not giving praise.



## COMMON SIGNS OF ABUSE

Every child is unique, so behavioural signs of abuse will vary from child to child. In addition, the impact of abuse is likely to be influenced by the child's age, the nature and extent of the abuse, and the help and support the child receives. However, there are some behaviours that are commonly seen in children and young people who have been abused:

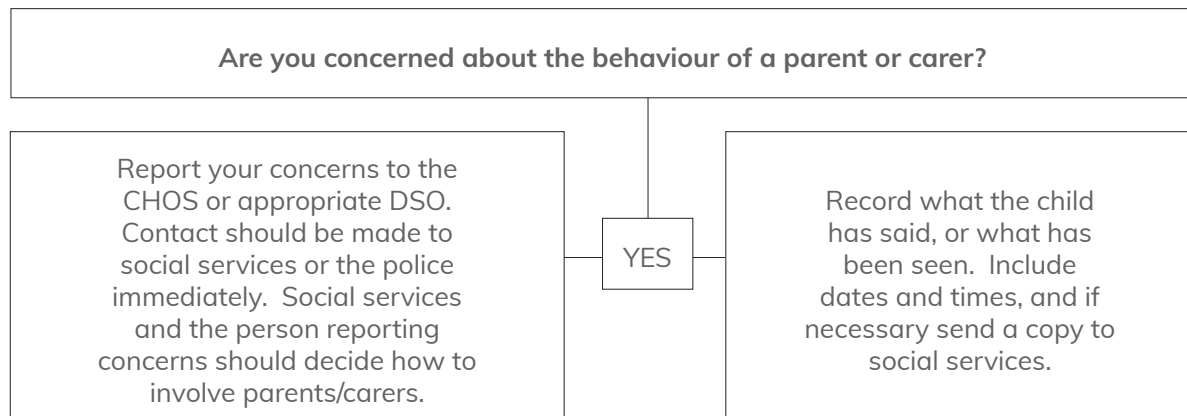
- The child appears distrustful of a particular adult, or a parent or a coach with whom you would expect there to be a close relationship.
- The child has unexplained injuries such as bruising, bites or burns, particularly if these are on a part of the body where you would not expect them.
- The child has an injury which is not explained satisfactorily or properly treated.
- A deterioration in the child's physical appearance or a rapid weight gain or loss.
- Pains, itching, bruising or bleeding in or near the genital area.
- A change in the child's general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn or unexpectedly aggressive. Such changes can be sudden or gradual.
- If the child refuses to remove clothing for normal activities or wants to keep covered up in warm weather.





## A QUICK GUIDE TO PROCEDURES

This guide is designed to take the most appropriate action in relation to concerns about either a parent or carer.



### Remember:

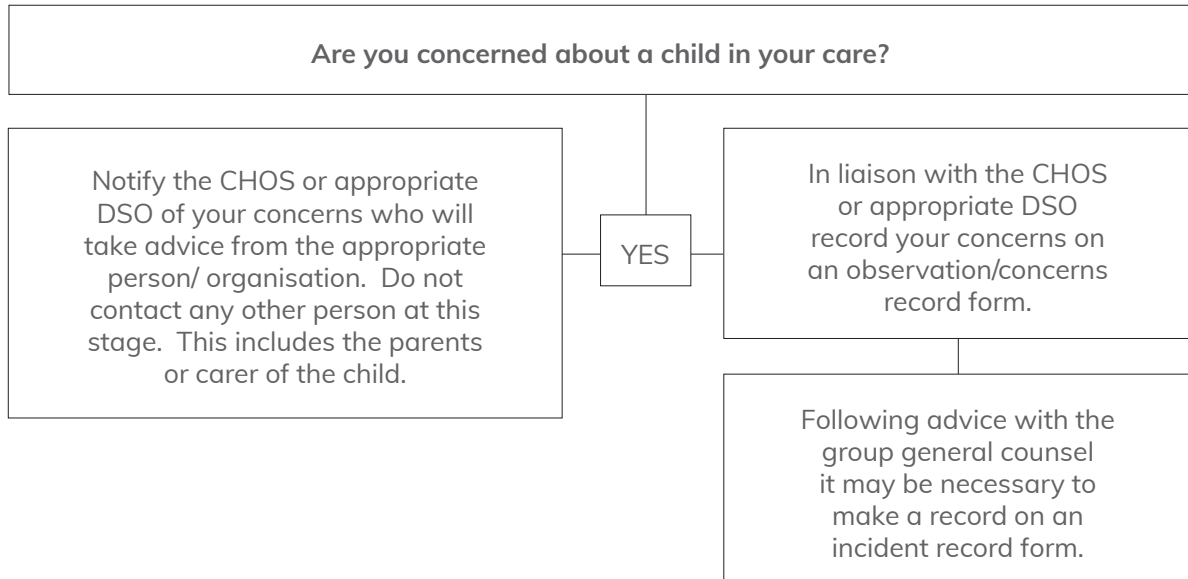
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.
- Ensure the CHOS or appropriate DSO follows up with Social Services.

The CHOS should also report the incident to the Group General Counsel(BSSL) who should ascertain whether or not the person(s) involved in the incident play a role within MFC or MFCF and act accordingly.

If you do not know who to turn to for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns with a senior colleague, you should contact the Social Services direct or the **NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 or Childline on 0800 1111.**



This guide is designed to take the most appropriate action in relation to concerns about either a child in your care.



**Remember:**

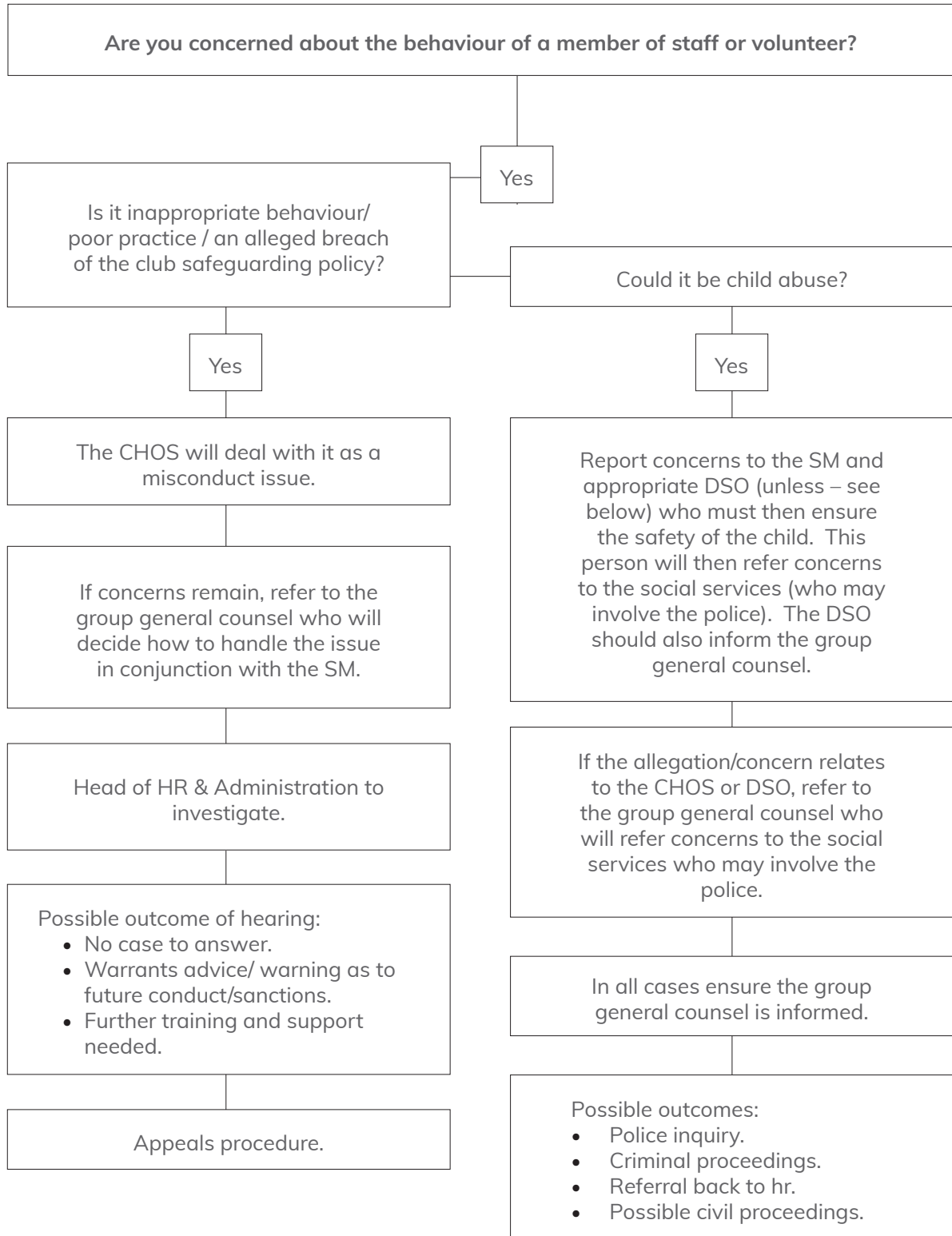
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.
- Ensure the CHOS or appropriate DSO follows up with Social Services.

The CHOS should also report the incident to the Group General Counsel(BSSL) who should ascertain whether or not the person(s) involved in the incident play a role within MFC or MFCF and act accordingly.

If you do not know who to turn to for advice or are worried about sharing your concerns with a senior colleague, you should contact the Social Services direct or the **NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 or Childline on 0800 1111.**



The flowchart shown below is designed to inform the most appropriate action in relation to concerns about a member of staff or volunteer within MFC or MFCF.





## GUIDANCE FOR RESPONDING TO A CHILD WHO DISCLOSES

- Ensure the immediate safety of the child (this may involve getting them to hospital).
- Reassure the child and take what they say seriously.
- Do not make any promises not to tell.
- Keep questions to a minimum; use them to clarify what you have been told.
- Make a full record of what was said, seen or heard.
- Contact your CHOS immediately. If they are unavailable, then report your concerns to either the County Football Association's Welfare Officer or the Football League/Premier League Lead DSO as appropriate. If unavailable, then report your concerns direct to Children's Services or the Police if you feel the child is in danger or at risk.
- Alternatively, you may report your concerns to the NSPCC 24-hour Helpline 0808 800 5000.
- Following the basic guidelines will help to do the right thing in the right way. Use these notes when reporting your concerns verbally, try to stay calm and unemotional and use simple and clear language.
- Referrals to the Police and Children's Services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours; if unable to within this timescale, then at the earliest opportunity.
- Keep a record of the name, role of the officer or staff member to whom the concerns were passed to and recorded; include the date and time of the referral.
- Include any actions you have taken and any advice given.
- Do not share the information with anyone else: parents, colleagues, other Club personnel. However, you may need some support yourself and you should discuss this with either the Head of HR & Administration or the Head of Education & Welfare Officer.
- If you remain concerned that sufficient action has not been taken, you should go directly to the NSPCC helpline, Children's Services or the Police.



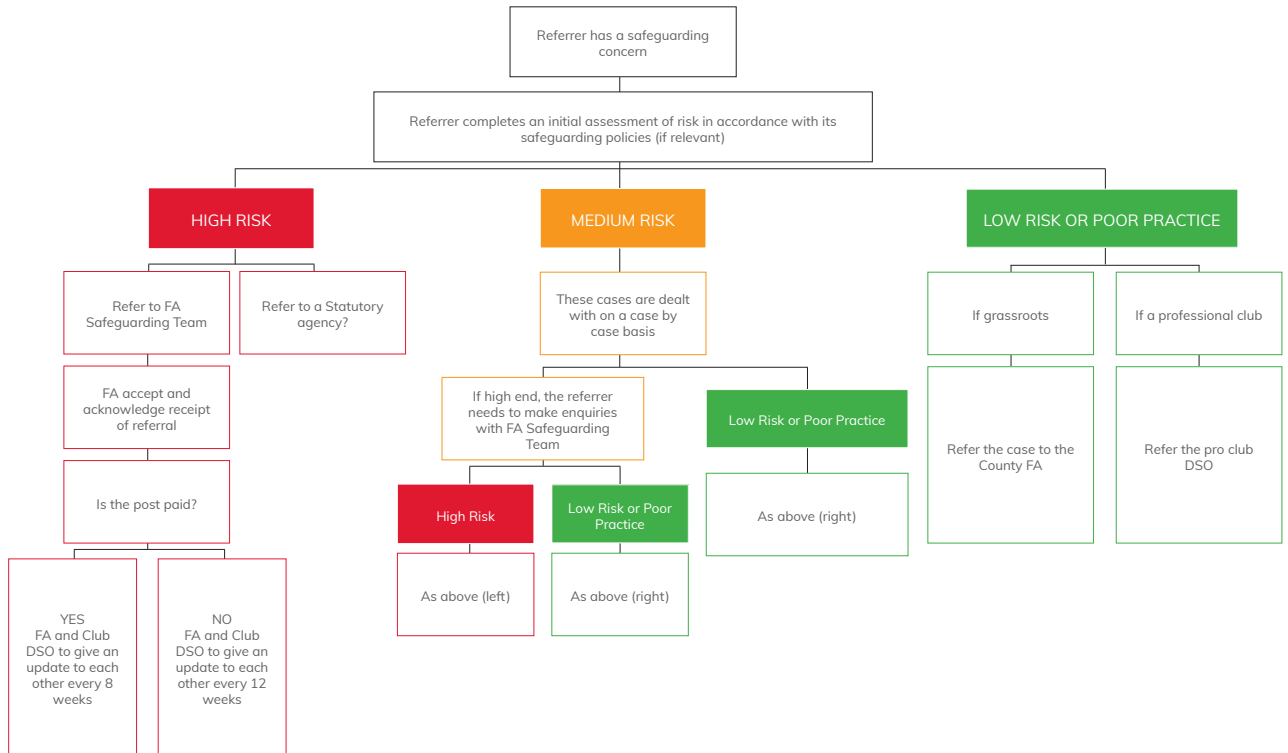
## WHAT TO DO IF THERE ARE CONCERNS

Information passed to Social Services or the Police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern. Information should include the following:

- Name of child.
- Age of child and date of birth.
- Home address and telephone number.
- Is the person making the report expressing their own concerns or those of someone else?
- What is the nature of the allegation? Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries, behavioural signs, indirect signs.
- Witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents/guardian been contacted? If so, what has been said?
- Details of other people consulted.
- If it is not the child making the report, has the child concerned been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.



## REFERRAL PROCESS TO THE FA/PL SAFEGUARDING TEAM



### MAKING A REFERRAL

A referral is made by completing an ‘Affiliated Football Referral Form’ and sent to The FA Safeguarding Team or County FA (depending on level of risk assessed) within 24 hours. Referrals can be made over the phone but a written referral needs to be sent within 24 hours. If the case is assessed to be high risk, the referrer needs to consider whether statutory agencies (LADO or Police) should be contacted. To avoid doubt, if a child is in imminent risk of harm the Police need to be contacted immediately. A referral to The FA Safeguarding Team should follow within 24 hours.

The FA/PL Safeguarding Team, the Club DSO and the County FA Welfare Officer will update each other (at least) every eight weeks, if the concern relates to an individual in a paid position, and (at least) every 12 weeks, if the position is not paid. Updates will include when a case is opened, closed or when there is a change in risk assessment.

The FA’s Safeguarding Team can be contacted on 0844 980 8200 (Extn 6401 or 6876) or alternatively the relevant County FA Welfare Officer can be emailed directly or telephoned.



## STRATEGY MEETINGS

When a Strategy Meeting is held, The FA Safeguarding Team is usually represented by the County FA Welfare Officer. If the participant being investigated is employed by a professional club, The FA Safeguarding Team and the relevant CHOS/DSO within the professional game will discuss who attends the Strategy Meeting.

## SUSPENSIONS

When The FA suspends a participant The FA Safeguarding Team will notify the relevant CHOS/DSO of the suspension. This notification will be via a copy of the suspension letter sent to the participant.

For further details of The FA process of investigation and decision making (including the appeals process) please refer to The FA's Safeguarding Rules and Regulations available on [www.theFA.com](http://www.theFA.com).

## DEALING WITH POOR PRACTICE CONCERNS

Affiliated football takes poor practice seriously. All cases should be dealt with in line with the relevant football bodies disciplinary process and their safeguarding policies. Grassroots clubs or members of the public need to alert their local County FA of any concerns. Professional clubs need to send a referral to The FA Safeguarding Team where repeated poor practice incidents occur. The FA will then assess whether the matter needs to be dealt with by the Safeguarding Team or can be dealt with by the Club or County FA. To avoid doubt a referral needs to be made where there are three incidents of poor practice by the same individual.

Poor practice is defined as follows:

- When insufficient care is taken to avoid injuries (eg by excessive training or inappropriate training for the age, maturity, experience and ability of players).
- Allowing abusive or concerning practices to go unreported (eg a coach who ridicules and criticises players who make a mistake during a match).
- Placing children or young people in potentially compromising and uncomfortable situations with adults (eg inappropriate use by a coach of social media with a young player(s)).
- Ignoring health and safety guidelines (eg allowing young players to set up goal posts unsupervised by adults).
- Failing to adhere to the Club's code of practice (e.g. openly verbally abusing the referee).
- Giving continued and unnecessary preferential treatment to individuals.

The judgement about whether an incident is one of child abuse or poor practice may not be able to be made at the point of referral, but only after the collation of relevant information. The majority of poor practice concerns can be dealt with by the grassroots or professional club, or alternatively with support and guidance from The Premier League or Football League as appropriate, or the County FA.



**MFC** FOUNDATION

#### Other Useful Safeguarding Links

MSCB email [mscb@middlesbrough.gov.uk](mailto:mscb@middlesbrough.gov.uk)

MSCB Secure email [mscb@middlesbrough.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:mscb@middlesbrough.gcsx.gov.uk)

MSCB Website [www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/mscb/safeguarding](http://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/mscb/safeguarding)

Access to Tees LSCBs Child Protection Procedures <http://www.teescpp.org.uk/>

#### Useful web links:

LSCB Training Redcar and Cleveland

LSCB Training Middlesbrough

E-Learning <http://mrcscb.virtual-college.co.uk/>

PREVENT-Working\_Together\_Against\_Extremism.pdf

Safeguarding\_against\_radicalisation PL-MFC 16-17.pdf

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/550511/Keeping\\_children\\_safe\\_in\\_education.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf)





## POLICY UPDATE

This policy will be updated in July 2017, unless following any safeguarding incident and subsequent review, then the policy may be updated earlier.

## VERSION CONTROL

- 4.1 This policy will be reviewed and updated at least every year by the owner, and more frequently if necessary.
- 4.2 The Chief Operating Officer will ensure this document is available on the Club intranet, including any interim updates.
- 4.3 The following identifies all version changes.

Version	Date	Reason for Update	Author
0.8	July 2015	Safeguarding Policy Update	Yvonne Ferguson
0.9	September 2016	Premier League Safeguarding Policy Update	Brian Robinson
1.0	May 2017	Safeguarding Policy Update	Brian Robinson