



# Guernsey FA

## Guernsey Football Association Safeguarding Children Policy

The Guernsey Football Association LBG (The Association) is committed to the protection, health, safety and welfare of children or young people (under age 18) who play or otherwise participate in football at all levels. The Association fully endorses The Football Association Child Protection Policy and is guided as appropriate by The Football Association Child Protection Procedures.

Every child or young person, defined as any person under the age of 18, who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of everyone involved in football. Football recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by seeking to protect them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying.

The Association is therefore committed to working to provide a safe environment for all children and young people to participate in the sport to the best of their abilities, whether involved in grassroots or professional football for as long as they choose to do so.

The Association recognises that the terms 'child or young person', 'abuse' and 'harm' are open to interpretation and challenge but for the purpose of this Safeguarding Children policy they are defined as follows:

A child or young person shall be defined as:  
'anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.'

Abuse shall be defined as:  
'a violation of an individual's human or civil rights by any other person or persons and, for the purposes of safeguarding children, shall include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, bullying and hazing.'

### GUERNSEY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION LBG

FOUNDED 1893 AFFILIATED TO THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION 1903

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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 behavioural development.'

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

### **Key principles**

- The child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual orientation
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Working in partnership with other organisations, children and young people and their parents and carers is essential.

The Association is committed to working in partnership with the Police, Social Care Departments, and other relevant organisations in accordance with their procedures. This is essential to enable these organisations to carry out their statutory duties to investigate concerns and protect all children and young people.

The Association holds with the principle that there are some roles within sport where adults have responsibility for, authority and influence over young people and therefore have an ethical obligation to safeguard and protect young people from exploitation. Whilst legally young people aged 16 and 17 have reached the age of consent for sexual activity, any inappropriate sexual relations with young people aged 16 or 17 will be considered a breach of a 'Position of Trust' within affiliated football and will be referred to the appropriate football regulatory authorities and may also be referred to the statutory agencies.

Concerns identified as child abuse will fall within the following five categories:

- Physical Abuse: A child is physically hurt or injured by an adult or an adult gives alcohol or drugs to a child or young person
- Neglect: A child's basic physical needs are consistently not met or they are regularly left alone or unsupervised
- Sexual Abuse: An adult or peer uses a child or young person to meet their own sexual needs
- Emotional Abuse: Persistent criticism, denigrating or putting unrealistic expectations on a child or young person

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- Bullying: Persistent or repeated hostile and intimidating behaviour towards a child or young person

Incidents of poor practice occur when the needs of children and young people are not afforded the necessary priority, so as their welfare is compromised.

Hazing is any action or situation, with or without the consent of the participants, which recklessly, intentionally, or unintentionally endangers the mental, physical, or emotional wellbeing of a child or young person. Hazing is not tolerated in affiliated football.

The Association has a three part approach to safeguarding, which includes:

- Getting the right people involved
- Creating a safe environment
- Promoting clear systems

#### **Getting the right people involved**

Leagues and clubs in affiliated football are required to have 'Recruitment Procedures' for all staff and volunteers who are part of the children's workforce, these procedures should include:

- Role profile or job description which highlights key responsibilities of the role
- Advertising the club or leagues positive stance on safeguarding and equal opportunities
- Confirmation of the identity of the applicant with original documentation
- Short listing and interviewing as appropriate for the role
- Recruitment checks in line with legislation and FA Policy requirements
- Requesting at least two written references, which should be followed up prior to any offer of appointment being made
- Substantiating qualifications e.g. requesting original copies of certificates
- Employment offers are subject to: suitable references and the relevant Criminal Records Checks, including checks of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Barred Lists as appropriate
- An induction appropriate for the role
- Identifying and facilitating training needs

A robust recruitment process is required for all of those working or volunteering with children and young people regardless of whether they are in regulated activity or not. Affiliated football recognises that the Disclosure and Barring Service is one of many

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important aspects of an effective recruitment process and requires all clubs and leagues to ensure they have safe recruitment procedures in place.

### **Creating a safe environment**

The Association is developing and will continue to develop its framework in which the people, the policies and the education programme will raise awareness of the responsibility that every person involved in football has in safeguarding children and young people.

To that end The Association will have clear policies on:

- Safeguarding and protecting children and young people
- Reporting poor practice and abuse
- Recruitment of staff and volunteers
- Whistle-blowing
- Confidentiality
- Health and safety
- Anti bullying
- Equality
- Codes of conduct (ethics)
- Complaints

In addition, there is a requirement for all those working or volunteering with children and young people in football to complete appropriate levels of introductory and ongoing safeguarding training. In this fast-moving world of ever-changing technological improvements and the increasing use of social media affiliated football must be mindful of both the potential benefits and the potential risks to children and young people. It's essential that clubs and leagues provide accessible guidance on the appropriate use of social media for players, parents, officials, volunteers and staff. This guidance should not be seen as an obstacle to communication but support to manage their safeguarding responsibilities on and off the pitch effectively.

This overarching policy is inclusive; however affiliated football recognises that some children and young people are disadvantaged by their experiences. It's important to recognise that children and young people with disabilities, those from ethnic minority or faith backgrounds or who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender may at times be more vulnerable. Being proactive in ensuring a comprehensive Equality policy is in place and encouraging a supportive and inclusive culture in clubs and leagues will help to safeguard those who may otherwise be more vulnerable. It's important that affiliated football addresses appropriately and robustly all forms of discrimination as and when it arises.

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### **Promoting clear systems**

Affiliated football is committed to working together to ensure that robust and consistent safeguarding systems exist across the game through a collaborative approach to safe recruitment, accessible education programmes and a coordinated approach to the sharing of information.

Affiliated football requires that all levels of the game have a Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) responsible in each club and league with youth team(s). The DSO must be appropriately recruited, trained and supported. This will be the person to whom any concern regarding the welfare of a child must be reported. It is essential that everyone involved in football recognises that taking no action when there is a concern regarding the welfare of a child is not an option.

To support this process affiliated football will also communicate clearly on:

- how to raise concerns about a child's welfare
- how to manage poor practice concerns
- what to do if you wish to make a complaint
- how to appeal any decisions made
- support that is available for those involved in disclosing, reporting or managing allegations of abuse

### **Raising a concern about abuse of a child:**

Reports should be directed to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) who will take the appropriate action, which may include:

- Seek advice if required
- Report to the Police, Social Care, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or LSCB in line with their policy and procedures (statutory agencies should acknowledge receipt of the referral)
- If the allegation relates to anyone involved in football report this to The FA Safeguarding Team who will acknowledge receipt of the referral
- Record actions taken
- Follow the advice and guidance of the statutory agencies
- Grassroots football to follow the guidance of The FA
- Professional football to liaise with The FA Safeguarding Team to agree actions to be taken
- Work collaboratively to ensure actions and safeguards are effective across football and information is shared appropriately in line with statutory guidance and legal responsibilities

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The Association is committed to safeguarding children and young people at all levels of the game. This overarching policy represents the intentions and commitment of The Association. Our policy clarifies what is expected of everyone involved in working or volunteering with children and young people in affiliated football in Guernsey and we will use our best endeavours to adopt, and ensure that members adopt, wherever reasonably practicable, recommended guidelines provided by The Football Association.

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