



**English Federation
of Disability Sport**

Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy



*** IMPORTANT NOTE**

EFDS recognise that it is no longer appropriate for the Child and Vulnerable Adult policy to be shown as one document. The law is different for those under 18 and adults aged 18 and over. Additionally the 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act' 2006 has implications for sporting bodies to consider safeguarding adults in a much greater capacity than ever before. Work is currently underway to separate these two documents and issue guidelines regarding safeguarding vulnerable adults in sport.

July 09

English Federation of Disability Sport Child/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

Policy statement

The English Federation of Disability sport (EFDS) has a duty of care to safeguard all children/vulnerable adults involved in sport from harm. All children/vulnerable adults have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children/vulnerable adults and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. EFDS will ensure the safety and protection of all children/vulnerable adults involved in the organisation through adherence to the child/vulnerable adult Protection guidelines adopted by EFDS.

Definition

A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989).

A Vulnerable Adult is defined as any person aged 18 or over who:

- Is or may be in need of assistance by reason of mental, physical or learning impairment, age or illness who
 - Is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation which may be occasioned by the actions or inactions of other people.

Statement of Intent

The English Federation of Disability Sport will.....

- Respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of people the policy wishes to protect.
- Ensure that effective procedures are in place, regularly reviewed and updated in line with legislation.
- Ensure those working within the organisation are safe to do so.
- Ensure all staff are trained and equipped to implement the policies and procedures
- Strive to ensure that any partner organisations have appropriate policies and procedures in place.
- Ensure that all incidents of suspicious poor practice and allegations are taken seriously and handled affectively and that confidentiality is upheld in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998.
- Accept it is the responsibility of the child/vulnerable adult protection experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place.

Policy aims

The aim of the EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Policy is to promote good practice:

Providing children/vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection whilst in the care of EFDS; allow all staff /volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child/vulnerable adult protection issues.

Promoting good practice

Child/vulnerable adult abuse, particularly sexual abuse, can arouse 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 the appropriate action to take.

Abuse can occur within many situations including the home, school and the sporting environment. Some individuals will actively seek employment or voluntary work with young people in order to harm them. A coach, instructor, teacher, official or volunteer will have regular contact with young people and be an important link in identifying cases where they need protection. All suspicious cases of poor practice should be reported following the guidelines in this document.

When a child/vulnerable adult enters a club having been subjected to child/vulnerable adult abuse outside the sporting environment, sport can play a crucial role in improving the child/vulnerable adult's self-esteem. In such instances the club must work with the appropriate agencies to ensure the child/vulnerable adult receives the required support.

All paid staff and volunteers also have the right to protection from false allegations.

Good practice guidelines

All personnel should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to protect themselves from false allegations. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- Treating all young people/disabled adults equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always putting the welfare of each young person first, before winning or achieving goals.
- Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with players (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child/vulnerable adult or to share a room with them).
- Building balanced relationships based on mutual trust which empowers children/vulnerable adults to share in the decision-making process;
- Making sport fun, enjoyable and promoting fair play.
- Ensuring that if any form of manual/physical support is required, it should be provided openly and according to guidelines provided by the Coach Education Programme. Care is needed, as it is difficult to maintain hand positions when the child/vulnerable adult is constantly moving. Young people should always be consulted and their agreement gained. Some parents are becoming increasingly sensitive about manual support and their views should always be carefully considered.
- Keeping up to date with technical skills, qualifications and insurance in sport.
- Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children/vulnerable adults in the changing rooms. If groups have to be supervised in the changing rooms, always ensure parents, teachers, coaches or officials work in pairs.
- Ensuring that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female member of staff. However, remember that same gender abuse can also occur.

- Ensuring that at tournaments or residential events, adults should not enter children/vulnerable adults's rooms or invite children/vulnerable adults into their rooms.
- Being an excellent role model – this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of young people and disabled adults – avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will.
- Securing parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to administer emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keeping a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given.
- Requesting written parental consent if club officials are required to transport young people in their cars.

Practices to be avoided

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

- Avoid spending excessive amounts of time alone with children/vulnerable adults away from others
- Avoid taking or dropping off a child/vulnerable adult to activities

Practices never to be sanctioned

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- Share a room with a child/vulnerable adult
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching
- Allow children/vulnerable adults to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child/vulnerable adult, even in fun
- Reduce a child/vulnerable adult to tears as a form of control
- Allow allegations made by a child/vulnerable adult to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for children or Vulnerable Adults, that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow children/vulnerable adults to stay with you at your home unsupervised

N.B. It may sometimes be necessary for staff or volunteers to do things of a personal nature for children/vulnerable adults, particularly if they are young or are disabled. These tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents and the person involved. There is a need to be responsive to a person's 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, or where there is physical contact, lifting or assisting a child/vulnerable adult to carry out particular activities. Avoid taking on the responsibility for tasks for which you are not appropriately trained.

Incidents that must be reported/recorded

If any of the following occur you should report this immediately to another colleague and record the incident. You should also ensure the parents of the child/vulnerable adult are informed:

- If you accidentally hurt a young person / vulnerable adult.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner.
- If a player appears to be sexually aroused by your actions.
- If a player misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done.

Use of photographic/filming equipment at sporting events

There is evidence that some people have used sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young and disabled sportspeople in vulnerable positions. All clubs should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer.

Videoring as a coaching aid: there is no intention to prevent club coaches and teachers using video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid. However, performers and their parents/carers should be made aware that this is part of the coaching programme and such films should be stored safely.

(NB Please refer to the EFDS/DSE Photographic and Media Policy within the current Marketing Plan)

Recommended action for the effective implementation of EFDS Child and Vulnerable Adults Policies and Procedures

It is the responsibility of the EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer to ensure that all recommendations are effectively implemented.

Recruitment and training of staff and volunteers

EFDS recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse children/vulnerable adults in some way and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children/vulnerable adults. Pre-selection checks must include the following:

- All volunteers/staff should complete an application form. The application form will elicit information about an applicant's past and a self disclosure about any criminal record.
- Consent should be obtained from an applicant to seek information from the Criminal Records Bureau.
- Two confidential references, including one regarding previous work with children/vulnerable adults. These references must be taken up and confirmed through telephone contact.
- Evidence of identity (passport or driving licence with photo).
- Interview and Induction

All employees (and volunteers) will be required to undergo an interview carried out to acceptable protocol and recommendations. All employees and volunteers should receive formal or informal induction, during which:

- A check should be made that the application form has been completed in full (including sections on criminal records and self-disclosures).
- Their qualifications should be substantiated.
- The job requirements and responsibilities should be clarified.
- They should sign up to the organisation's Code of Ethics and Conduct.
- Child/vulnerable adult protection procedures are explained and training needs are identified.

Training

In addition to pre-selection checks, the safeguarding process includes training after recruitment to help staff and volunteers to:

- Analyse their own practice against established good practice, and to ensure their practice is likely to protect them from false allegations.
- Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- Respond to concerns expressed by a child/vulnerable adult.
- Work safely effectively with children/vulnerable adults.

EFDS recommends:

- Coaching staff to attend a recognised 3-hour good practice and child/vulnerable adult protection awareness training workshop, to ensure their practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice and child/vulnerable adult protection.
- Non-coaching staff and volunteers to complete a recognised awareness training on child/vulnerable adult protection.
- Relevant personnel to receive advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.
- Relevant personnel to gain a national first aid training (where necessary).
- Attend update training when necessary. Information about meeting training needs can be obtained from Sports Coach UK, the NSPCC, and the Child Protection in Sport Unit.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in EFDS, in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether or not child/vulnerable adult abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.

EFDS will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child/vulnerable adult.

Where there is a complaint against a member of staff there may be three types of investigation:

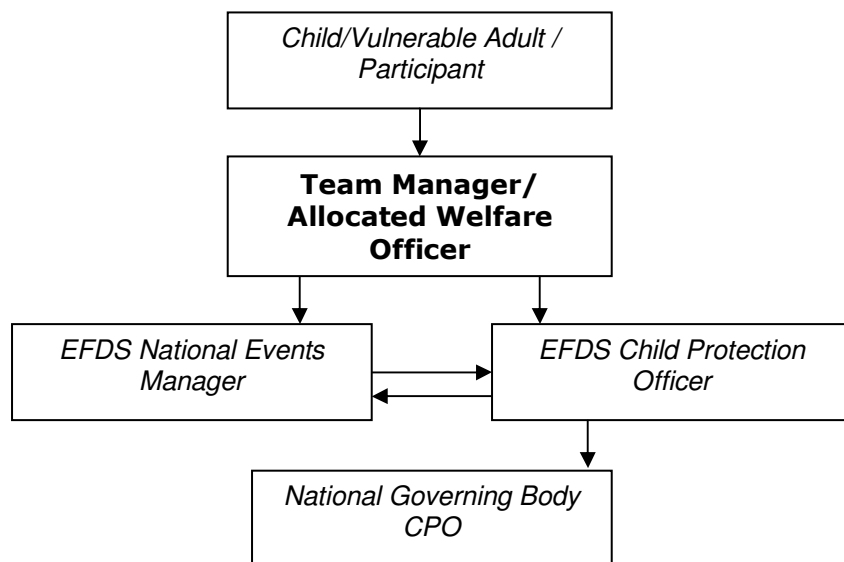
- A criminal investigation,
- A child/vulnerable adult protection investigation,
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation.
- The results of the police and child/vulnerable adult protection investigation may well influence the disciplinary investigation, but not necessarily.

Action if there are concerns

1. Concerns about poor practice:

If, following consideration, the allegation is clearly about poor practice; the EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer will deal with it as a misconduct issue.

If the allegation is about poor practice by the EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer, or if the matter has been handled inadequately and concerns remain, it should be reported to the relevant (Sport Governing Body) officer who will decide how to deal with the allegation and whether or not to initiate disciplinary proceedings.



2. Concerns about suspected abuse

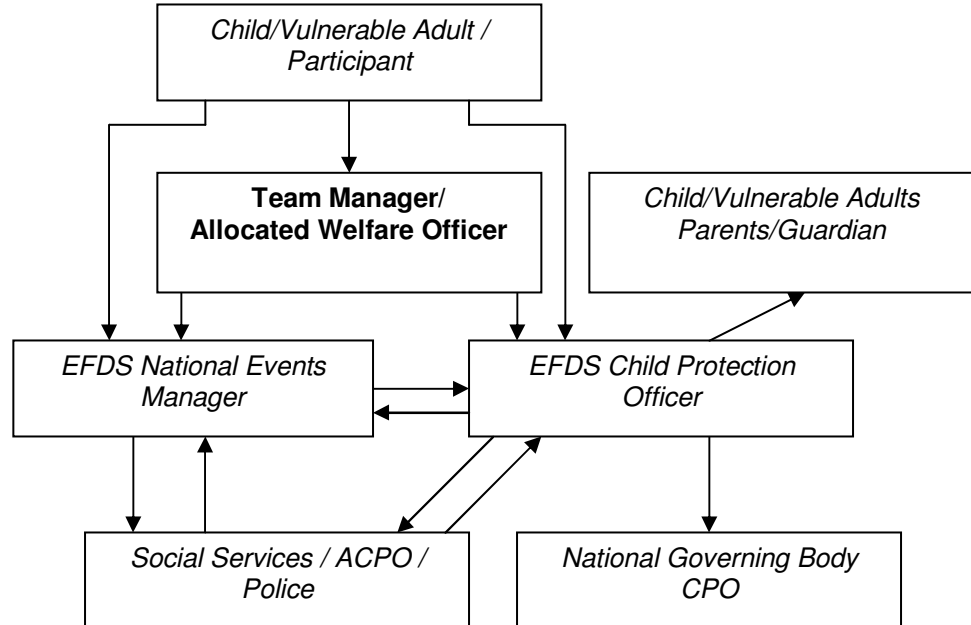
Any suspicion that a child/vulnerable adult has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child/vulnerable adult in question and any other child/vulnerable adult who may be at risk.

The EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer will refer the allegation to the social services department who may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.

The parents or carers of the child/vulnerable adult will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.

The EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer should also notify the relevant (Sport Governing Body) child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer who will deal with any media enquiries.

If the EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made to the appropriate Manager or in his/her absence the (Sport Governing Body) child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer who will refer the allegation to Social Services.



Confidentiality

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 the following people:

- The EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer
- The parent/Guardian of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation.
- Social services/police.
- The EFDS National Event Manager and (Sport Governing Body) child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer.
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child/vulnerable adult).
- Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

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

Internal Enquiries and Suspension

The EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.

Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the EFDS Child Protection Committee (which is made up of the EFDS Child Protection Officer and two trustees) 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 EFDS Child Protection Committee 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 the child/vulnerable adult should remain of paramount importance throughout.

Support to deal with the aftermath of abuse:

Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children/vulnerable adults, parents and members of staff may need. Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association for Counselling Directory is available from The British Association for Counselling, 1 Regent Place, Rugby CV21 2PJ, Tel: 01788 550899, Fax: 01788 562189, E-mail: bac@bacp.co.uk, Internet: <http://www.bacp.co.uk>.

Consideration should be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged perpetrator.

- Allegations of previous abuse
- Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child/vulnerable adult or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children/vulnerable adults).

Where such an allegation is made, the EFDS child protection officer should follow the procedures as detailed above and report the matter to the social services or the police. This is because other children/vulnerable adults, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to abuse is automatically

excluded from working with children/vulnerable adults. This is reinforced by the details of the Protection of Children's Act 1999.

Action if bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, the same procedure should be followed as set out in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' above.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children/vulnerable adults to speak and share their concerns (It is believed that up to 12 children/vulnerable adults per year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the EFDS child Protection Officer or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

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. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully's parents.

- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.
- Provide support for the victim's coach.
- Impose sanctions as 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.

3. Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment (e.g. a parent or carer):

Report your concerns to the EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible.

If the EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately.

Social Services and the EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer will decide how to involve the parents/carers.

The EFDS child/vulnerable adult Protection Officer should also report the incident to the Sport Governing Body. The Governing Body should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident play a role in EFDS and act accordingly.

Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis only.

See 4 below regarding information needed for social services and police.

4. Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse:

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following:

- The child/vulnerable adult's name, age and date of birth of the child/vulnerable adult.
- The child/vulnerable adult's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- 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. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child/vulnerable adult's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?
- If so what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so record details.
- If the child/vulnerable adult was not the person who reported the incident, has the child/vulnerable adult been spoken to? If so what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.
- If you are worried about sharing concerns about abuse with a senior colleague, you can contact social services or the police direct, or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000, or Childline on 0800 1111.