



# PHOENIX SPORTS CLUB

## **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy**

1. This policy will:
  - a. Set out Phoenix Sports Club's definition a vulnerable adult.
  - b. Set out how Phoenix Sports Club will seek to safeguard vulnerable adults.
2. It is drafted in line with FA Guidance and relevant legislation.
3. It will be subject to amendments, removals, and additions as agreed upon by the Club Committee, except on matters reserved to the Board who will in such cases hold jurisdiction.
4. It has been absorbed into Club policy and dictates the Club's approach to bullying.
5. It cannot supersede any aspect of the Club's safeguarding policies or statute or instrument binding on the Club and should only be used in conjunction with said policies and legislation.
6. This policy was reviewed on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024, and is binding in respect of the 2024/2025 season onwards.

## Section 1 – Reader guidance

1. This policy should be interpreted and applied in conjunction with the Club's wider policies on safeguarding, including:
  - a. Safeguarding Children Policy;
  - b. Anti-Bullying Policy;
  - c. Code of Conduct;
  - d. Social Media Policy.

## Section 2 – Introduction

2. Safeguarding children and adults at risk is of paramount importance to Phoenix Sports Club.
3. We are committed to raising awareness and empowering everyone we engage with, to create safer environments and identify and report concerns promptly and effectively.
4. We all share a responsibility for promoting and protecting the safety and welfare of Children and Adults at Risk, irrespective of individual roles and responsibilities.
5. Phoenix Sports Club aim to create an atmosphere where all adults feel valued and safe and a place where their welfare is promoted.
6. This policy sets out the procedures for protecting adults at risk working with or using the Club.

## Section 3 – Policy statement

7. This policy outlines the procedures that Phoenix Sports Club are committed to.
8. The policy is designed to encourage the development of good practice and stress the responsibility of all, to be alert to early indicators of abuse, neglect, and exploitation and to act quickly when there is any concern regarding the welfare or safety of an adult at risk.
9. This Policy outlines our approach to safeguarding and applies to everyone involved with the Club;
  - a. all staff have a role to play in ensuring that the commitments to safeguarding set out in this policy, and their subsequent responsibilities, are upheld and at the forefront of everything they do.
10. Phoenix Sports Club accepts that we are required to fulfil our duty of care;

- a. this means that we must do everything that can be expected of us to help safeguard and protect people from harm, and to act when we suspect that someone is being harmed or is at risk of harm.

#### Section 4 – Aims

11. The aims of the Club's collective safeguarding policies are to:

- a. develop a positive and pro-active approach to safeguarding to best protect all children, young people and adults at risk who use our facilities or engage in associated activities, enabling them to participate and achieve in an enjoyable and safe environment;
- b. facilitate the provision of a range awareness training for all staff or volunteers in line with guidance from The National League and in line with The FA requirements;
- c. demonstrate best practice around safeguarding the welfare of all adults at risk;
- d. promote ethical work with adults at risk;
- e. work towards achieving the National League Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Adults at risk.

#### Section 5- Principles and values

12. The guidance given in the policy and procedures is based on the following principles;

- a. all adults, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation status have the right to be protected from abuse and poor practice and to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment;
- b. the club will seek to ensure that our sport and any other recreational activities are inclusive and make reasonable adjustments for any ability, disability, or impairment;
  - i. we will also commit to continuous development, monitoring, and review.
- c. the rights, dignity and worth of all adults will always be respected;
- d. we recognise that ability and disability can change over time, such that some adults may be additionally vulnerable to abuse, particularly those adults with care and support needs;
- e. Where the Club believes or is informed that circumstances exist which

may harm adult(s) at risk or poses or may pose a risk of harm to them, the Club Welfare Officer will refer the matter to a statutory agency further investigation;

- i. the FA Case Management Unit may also be informed.
- f. we all have a shared responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of all adults and will act appropriately and report concerns whether these concerns arise within the club for example inappropriate behaviour of a coach, or in the wider community.
- g. all allegations will be taken seriously and responded to quickly.

13. The Club recognises the role and responsibilities of the statutory agencies in safeguarding adults and is committed to working with partners to protect adults at risk.

#### Section 6 – Adults at risk of harm

14. An **adult at risk** is defined as a person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support irrespective of whether the local authority is meeting any of those needs, and:

- a. is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, and;
- b. because of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

15. An individual's level of vulnerability to harm may vary over time depending on the circumstances they are in and their needs at that time;

- a. not all adults with care and support needs will be at risk of harm.
- b. this will depend on the individual, their current situation, and the circumstances they are in.

#### Section 7 – Abuse

16. **Abuse** is defined as a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons;

- a. it includes acts of commission (such as an assault) and acts of omission (situations where the environment fails to prevent harm).
- b. abuse may be single act or omission or series of acts or omissions.

#### Section 8 – Capacity

17. **Capacity** refers to an individual adult's ability to take a specific decision or take a particular action at a particular time even if they are able or not able to make

other decisions at other times.

18. The starting point should be that the person has capacity to decide unless it can be established that they cannot.

#### Section 9 – Care and support needs

19. Care and support needs can arise from or are related to a physical or mental impairment or illness and are not caused by other circumstantial factors.

a. This includes if the adult has a condition because of:

- i. physical;
- ii. mental;
- iii. sensory;
- iv. learning, or cognitive disabilities or illnesses;
- v. substance abuse;
- vi. brain injury;

1. this list is not exhaustive.

#### Section 10 – Safeguarding concerns

20. Any concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately and we will pay attention to what adults feel.

21. We will be rigorous and vigilant in protecting everyone using our services from abuse, bullying and intimidation;

a. we will do this through a careful recruitment and selection process, ongoing supervision and monitoring arrangements and guidance on appropriate behaviour.

22. Everyone involved in the Club is obliged to make sure that anyone using the services is safe;

a. they must report concerns without delay;

b. all those involved with us will be made aware of this policy and of what to do if they have any concerns;

i. there is guidance for those responsible for responding to concerns so that they are properly dealt with.

## Section 11 – Commitment

23. Phoenix Sports Club arrangements in fulfilling its commitments to safeguarding adults at risk:
- a. Warren Strong is the Designated Safeguarding Lead and is responsible for safeguarding;
    - i. this is a Board level role.
  - b. there are welfare trained staff at all levels of the Club;
  - c. all concerns, allegations, or disclosures regarding the welfare of adults at risk will be referred to the appropriate DSO at the National League or County FA who will decide as to the seriousness and nature of the information and will refer and report to the appropriate agency;
  - d. the Club has in place a Safer Recruitment Policy;
    - i. this policy can be viewed on the Club website.
  - e. the Club accept and adopt The Football Association's and The National League's safeguarding policies and procedures whilst further specific and individual Trust policies are developed and adopted;
  - f. the Club ensures that, where the role requires, all staff and volunteers complete The FA Safeguarding Children course;
  - g. the Club are committed to ongoing safeguarding training and development, appropriate to the role of the employee and the level of their involvement with adults at risk;
  - h. the Club are committed to the sharing of information to protect adults at risk, children, and young people, in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.
  - i. in addition to this Safeguarding Policy, the Club and Trust promote several initiatives which seek to address and encourage young people's and families' enjoyment as participants and spectators.

## Section 12 – Reporting Concerns and Whistleblowing Policy

24. Although this policy gives details of how to raise concerns, there is a stand-alone policy.
25. That policy sets out how individuals can raise concerns particularly about the vulnerable adults and children involved at Phoenix Sports Club.
- a. There may also be issues around equality or discrimination matters that raise concerns that may be raised in a similar manner. Those principles

also cover all other aspects of malpractice by individuals, within the Club, projects or as part of the Trust's practices.

- b. It provides a method of raising concerns and how people can receive feedback on any action taken.

26. Our Reporting Concerns and Whistleblowing Policy is available on our website, and by request.

### Section 13 – Anti-bullying

27. Phoenix Sports Club are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all our participants so they can participate in activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

28. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club.

29. If bullying does occur, all participants, parents and carers should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively;

- a. We are a TELLING club.
- b. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Welfare Officer/Designated Safeguarding Officer or lead coach of the session or project.

30. Bullying is not just an issue for children and young people.

31. Our Anti-Bullying Policy is available on our website, and by request.

### Section 16 – Responding to concerns or allegations

32. It is not the responsibility of anyone employed by Phoenix Sports Club, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether the alleged harm or abuse has taken place.

33. However, it is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to act, by reporting any concerns or allegations of abuse of an adult at risk to the Club Welfare Officer or by contacting the appropriate authorities.

### Section 15 – When to report suspicions or incidents

34. Staff are not expected to be experts in recognising abuse; however, staff should be vigilant and respond swiftly and appropriately.

35. If any of the following circumstances occur, you should report this immediately to the Club Welfare Officer:

- a. if you suspect an adult at risk may be the victim of abuse by any person, including neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse;

- b. if an adult at risk appears to have been the victim or perpetrator of bullying, including on-line cyberbullying;
- c. if you observe any injuries/marks on an adult at risk which they cannot account for, their explanation for the injury seems unlikely or you have suspicions as to how the injury may have been caused;
- d. if there is a sudden change in behaviour, i.e., the adult at risk behaviour alters significantly, they become withdrawn or tearful;
  - i. if an adult at risk voices their intentions to self-harm or if you suspect, he/she may be exhibiting signs/symptoms of self-harm or an eating disorder.
- e. if you suspect an adult at risk has been exposed to any inappropriate or indecent images or discloses any inappropriate on-line behaviour;
- f. if you accidentally hurt a child or an adult at risk, or you observe another adult hurting an adult at risk;
- g. if he/she seems distressed in any manner and you have concerns for their emotional state or welfare;
- h. if an adult at risk appears to be sexually aroused by your actions or may have developed an infatuation with you or another member of staff;
- i. if an adult at risk misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, which may compromise your position or working relationship with that adult at risk.

36. You will be guided by the Club Welfare Officer as to how, when and by whom carers are to be informed.

37. Do not worry that you may be mistaken;

- a. being worried about doing the wrong thing is not a reason not to act;
- b. it is better to have discussed it with somebody with the experience and responsibility to make an assessment.

#### Section 16 – How to report a concern

38. If the adult at risk is in danger or injured;

- a. call the emergency services.

39. If you receive an allegation, or have suspicion, or disclosure of poor practice or abuse;

- a. report this to your Club Welfare Officer.

40. The Club Welfare Officer will gather the relevant information and inform the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer so that a decision can be made as to who should investigate the matter, or escalate to the FA Safeguarding Case



Management Team should the matter meet the threshold.

41. The Club Welfare Officer must submit an incident form within 24 hours and send to County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer.