



HEALTH • OPPORTUNITY • OUTREACH • PARTICIPATION • SUPPORT

OXFORD CITY FC Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy

Implementation Date:	October 2025
Agreed By:	Eddie Odhiambo – Designated Safeguarding Lead Justin Merritt - Owner
Next Review Date:	October 2026

Safeguarding children and adults at risk is of paramount importance for the Club. We are committed to raising awareness and empowering everyone we engage with, to create safer environments and identify and report concerns promptly and effectively. 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.

The safeguarding children policy and procedure, for those under the age of 18, is covered in a separate document.

Oxford City FC aim to create an environment where all adults feel valued and safe and a place where their welfare is promoted. This policy sets out the procedures for protecting adults at risk working with the Trust staff, board members or volunteers.

Policy statement: This Policy outlines the procedures that Oxford City Football Club (OCFC) are committed to.

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.

This Policy outlines our approach to safeguarding and applies to everyone involved with the Club. All staff, and partner organisations have a role to play in ensuring that the responsibilities/commitments to safeguarding set out in this policy are upheld and at the forefront of everything they do.

The Club accepts that we are required to fulfil our duty of care, which 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.

Principles and values:

The guidance given in the policy and procedures is based on the following principles:

- 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.
- 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, we will also commit to continuous development, monitoring, and review.
- The rights, dignity and worth of all adults will always be respected.
- 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.
- Where we (OCFC Staff) believe or is informed that circumstances exist which may harm adult(s) at risk or poses or may pose a risk of harm to them, we will refer the matter to a statutory agency such as the Police or Social Care Team for further investigation. The F.A. Case Management Unit may also be informed.
- 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.
- All allegations will be taken seriously and responded to quickly.

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.

Adults at risk of harm:

Defined as: A person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support (whether the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and:

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

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. Not all adults with care and support needs will be at risk of harm. This will depend on the individual, their current situation, and the circumstances they are in.

Abuse:

Abuse is defined as a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It includes acts of commission (such as an assault) and acts of omission (situations where the environment fails to prevent harm). Abuse may be single act or omission or series of acts or omissions.

Capacity:

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

Care and Support needs:

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. This includes if the adult has a condition because of physical, mental, sensory, learning, or cognitive disabilities or illnesses, substance abuse or brain injury. This list is not exhaustive.

Safeguarding Concerns:

Any concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately and we will pay attention to what adults feel. We will be rigorous and vigilant in protecting everyone using our services from abuse, bullying and intimidation. We will do this through a careful recruitment and selection process, on-going supervision and monitoring arrangements and guidance on appropriate behaviour.

Everyone involved in OCFC is obliged to make sure that anyone using the services is safe. They must report concerns without delay. All those involved with us will be made aware of this policy and of what to do if they have any concerns. There is guidance for those responsible for responding to concerns so that they are properly dealt with.

Commitment:

OCFC arrangements in fulfilling its commitment to safeguarding adults at risk:

1. Justin Merritt has Senior Safeguarding responsibility. Steph Best is the club safeguarding Champion for the Board / Committee. There are Club Welfare Officers for all parts of the Club. 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.
2. The Club have in place a responsible Safer Recruitment processes.
3. OCFC reference, accept and adopt The Football Association's and The National League's safeguarding policies and procedures whilst further specific and individual policies are developed and adopted.
4. OCFC ensure that, where the role requires, all staff and volunteers complete The FA Safeguarding Children Workshop.
5. OCFC 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.
6. OCFC are committed to the sharing of information to protect adults at risk, children, and young people, in line with the Data Protection Act (1998).
7. In addition to this Safeguarding Policy, OCFC promote initiatives which seek to address and encourage young people's and families' enjoyment as participants and spectators.

Reporting Concerns and Whistleblowing Policy:

Although this policy gives details of how to raise concerns, there is a stand-alone policy. That policy sets out how individuals can raise concerns particularly about the vulnerable adults and children involved at OCFC. 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 OCFC, projects or as part of OCFC practices. It provides a method of raising concerns and how people can receive feedback on any action taken.

Refer to Club Whistleblowing policy.

Anti-bullying:

OCFC 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. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. 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. We are a supportive club. 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. Bullying is not just an issue for children and young people.

Responding to Concerns or Allegations:

It is not the responsibility of anyone employed by OCFC in a paid or unpaid capacity to decide whether the alleged harm or abuse has taken place. 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 Designated Safeguarding and Welfare Staff or by contacting the appropriate authorities.

When to report suspicions or incidents:

Staff are not expected to be experts in recognising abuse; however, staff should be vigilant and respond swiftly and appropriately. If any of the following circumstances occur, you should report this immediately to the designated safeguarding staff.

Make a written record of the incident or grounds for concern:

You will be guided by the Designated Safeguarding Staff as to how, when and by whom carers are to be informed:

- If you suspect an adult at risk may be the victim of abuse by any person, including neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse.
- If an adult at risk appears to have been the victim or perpetrator of bullying, including on-line cyberbullying.
- 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.
- If there is a sudden change in behaviour, i.e., the adult at risk behaviour alters significantly, they become withdrawn or tearful. 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.
- If you suspect an adult at risk has been exposed to any inappropriate or indecent images or discloses any inappropriate on-line behaviour.
- If you accidentally hurt a child or an adult at risk, or you observe another adult hurting an adult at risk.
- If he/she seems distressed in any manner and you have concerns for their emotional state or welfare.
- 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.
- 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.

Do not worry that you may be mistaken. Being worried about doing the wrong thing is not a reason not to act. It is better to have discussed it with somebody with the experience and responsibility to make an assessment.

How to report a concern:

- **If the adult at risk is in danger or injured, then call the emergency services.**
- If you receive an allegation, or have suspicion, or disclosure of poor practice or abuse. Report this to your Designated Safeguarding Staff.
- The Designated Safeguarding Staff will gather the relevant information and inform the National League DSO (Steps 1 & 2), or County FA DSO 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'.
- Designated Safeguarding Staff to submit an incident form within 24 hours and send to CFA DSO.

Possible outcomes:

If concern is considered poor practice/misconduct:	If concern is considered, to be potential abuse:
Refer to CWO/DSO for resolution.	Criminal investigation/ prosecution
Club Resolution	Investigation by the FA Safeguarding Case Management Team
Club Disciplinary action	Resolution as poor practice / misconduct
No further action	Club Safeguarding procedures

Other Club Policies:

Please read this policy in conjunction with our other club policies and procedures relating to Safeguarding in football:

- Children Safeguarding Policy
- Equality, Inclusion & Diversity Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Prevent Duty Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Adult Player Code of Conduct
- Coaches, Team Managers and Club Officials Code of Conduct
- Spectators & Parents/Carers Code of Conduct
- Young Player Code of Conduct

Reporting a concern, useful contacts:

Safeguarding safeguarding@oxcityfc.co.uk

OCFC Club Welfare Officers:

Jordan Piper j.piper@ignitesportuk.com

Aliyah Anthony a.anthony@ignitesportuk.com

Jack Stanley j.stanley@ignitesportuk.com

Eddie Odhiambo e.odhiambo@ignitesportuk.com

Ryan Hairsine r.hairsine@ignitesportuk.com

County FA DSO: Nigel Saverton Nigel.Saverton@oxfordshirefa.com

FA Safeguarding: Safeguarding@theFA.com

National League Safeguarding: Safeguarding@thenationalleague.org.uk