

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AT RISK IN FENCING POLICY

1. Purpose of Document

British Fencing wants to make sure that everyone involved in Fencing can do so in a safe and protected way. We need to ensure that everyone follows best practice and complies with the law. This policy identifies the steps that everyone in Fencing should follow to protect adults, particularly those at risk and how to deal with concerns that may arise.

2. Definitions

The adults referred to in this document are adults at risk using the definition from the Safeguarding Adults in Sport Steering Group (2013). This is defined as:

“those who have health or social care needs (irrespective of whether or not those needs are being met by social services) and who are unable to safeguard themselves as a result. While we recognise that some people will be vulnerable due to their learning disability or mental health needs, there are also those adults who are at risk due to a specific circumstance they may find themselves in, for example: domestic abuse; forced marriage; and sexual or commercial exploitation (this is not an exhaustive list).”

Just to reiterate, an adult at risk is not exclusively someone with a disability, whether that be physical, learning or sensory. Any one at some point given a particular circumstance can be vulnerable. Examples in fencing, (not exclusive) include:

- an elite fencer being groomed for sexual abuse by their coach
- a member of a learning disabled Fencing club being financially exploited by another club member
- a young woman confiding in her coach about a forthcoming holiday where she believes she will be married against her will
- a club which insists on receiving a parental consent form before taking a 20 year old participant with a mild learning disability on an away day trip
- a coach who regularly neglects the individual needs of disabled participants when training.

Adults at Risk is the preferred terminology and supersedes the previous phrasing of Vulnerable Adults

The definitions of abuse for Adults at Risk include:

- **Physical abuse** - includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

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- **Domestic violence**, including honour-based violence and includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse
- **Sexual abuse** - this includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult at risk has not consented or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- **Psychological abuse** - this includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- **Financial/material abuse** - including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- **Modern slavery** – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.
- **Discrimination** - is abuse which centres on a difference or perceived difference particularly with respect to race, gender or disability or any of the Protected Characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. Research tells us that bullying of vulnerable groups can be an issue in sport.
- **Organisational abuse** - this is abuse which centres around routines and schedules which have been designed for the benefit of the organisation and not the individual.
- **Neglect and acts of omission** - including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and hearing.
- **Self-neglect** - this covers a wide range of behaviour: neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Everyone should always be mindful of the need for vulnerable adults to consent to, and to be comfortable with, any proposed activity/service. Consent is a clear indication of a willingness to participate in an activity or to accept a service. The vulnerable adult may signal consent verbally, by gesture, by willing participation or in writing. Decisions with more serious consequences will require more formal consideration of consent and appropriate steps should always be taken to ensure that consent is valid. People should remember that no one can give, or withhold, consent on behalf of another adult unless special provision for particular purposes has been made for this, usually in law. In certain situations, the need for consent may be overridden. This is generally when it is in the public interest to do so, for example, the disclosure of information to prevent a crime or risk to health or life.

3. Legislation and Guidance

There are many pieces of legislation and Guidance that relate to Adults at Risk which include:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- England and Wales
 - Data Protection Act 1998
 - Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

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- No Secrets 2000
- Care Standards Act 2000
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 including the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Care Act 2014 (England only)
- Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales only)
- Making Safeguarding Personal Guide 2014
- Scotland
 - The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
 - Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000
 - Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
 - Public Bodies (Joint Working) Act 2014
- Northern Ireland
 - The Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986
 - The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007
 - The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008
 - Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership

4. The Principles

Safeguarding is everybody's business. It is important for everyone to be alert to possible signs of abuse or neglect and acting on their concerns. This is regardless of whether a person is a carer, banker, healthcare professional or coach. Enshrined within the Care Act is the requirement for Local Authorities within England and Wales to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board to ensure that all agencies are co-operating and working together. A similar system operates in Scotland under the Adult Protection Committees

A second catchphrase, 'safeguarding is personal', is intended to emphasise the importance of adults at risk being as involved as possible in any safeguarding process. With some exceptions, see later, safeguarding enquiries should only take place with the consent of the adult. The extent of any enquiry where there are suspicions of abuse or neglect should depend on the circumstances of the individual case and the views of the individual at the heart of it. As with other aspects of the social care legal framework the wellbeing of the individual through the safeguarding process is of central importance. This includes control by individuals over their day to day lives.

5. What to do if you have concerns

British Fencing takes all allegations and concerns raised seriously. The information provided will be referred to the relevant authorities as necessary.

If you become aware or suspect that abuse or poor practice is taking place you must report it.

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If the person is at immediate risk then please call the police on 999, otherwise your normal first point of contact will be your club's Welfare Officer. You can also get advice from British Fencing's Equality and Safeguarding Manager on 077177 40125

You should also record your concerns using the British Fencing Incident Report Form

6. Safer recruitment of people working with adults and adults at risk

It is important that appropriate recruitment procedures are put in place when recruiting new volunteers and staff to work with adults at risk.

This should include having full and clear job descriptions and to interview potential applicants, even when filling a volunteer position. Coaches working solely with adults do not require a criminal record check, but may do so if they are working with adults at risk.

7. Whistle blowing

British Fencing is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. In line with that commitment, all members are encouraged to come forward and voice any concerns. It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis

All suspicions and allegations of abuse or poor practice should be taken seriously, and reported. It is acknowledged that this can be difficult to do, particularly in cases where any form of abuse or poor practice is suspected particularly where there is loyalty to a colleague or friend. If there are concerns about making a report within the sport the police or adult social care should be contacted.

No one should be worried about reporting a concern because they fear harassment or victimisation. Individuals reporting concerns will be supported by British Fencing.

All information received will be treated in confidence and only shared on a need to know basis with those individuals who will be able to manage the situation. On occasion it may be necessary to seek advice, or inform the statutory agencies e.g. the Police or Local Authority Adult Services.