

Section 7

7.0 The FA safeguarding team

In case of child abuse or alleged child abuse, The FA's Safeguarding team will:

- Complete an initial assessment on the alleged perpetrator and take any action required to safeguard children, pending further Police and Children's Social Care inquiries
- Assess all individual cases under the appropriate FA misconduct and disciplinary procedures, irrespective of the findings of the Children's Social Care or Police inquiries
- Decide whether the nature of the concerns need to be dealt with by The FA Disciplinary Commission
- Support all Welfare Officers in carrying out their role and responsibilities
- Inform individuals when they are the subject of a child protection concern and provide a point of contact to keep the alleged perpetrator informed of proceedings
- Decide and advise on any contact with the media
- Monitor the types and volume of poor practice and child abuse referrals and utilise this information to inform its educational programmes and develop The FA referral process

Decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be handled sensitively.

Decisions about reinstatement may be difficult. The FA, advised by the Police and Children's Social Care and/or the NSPCC, will reach a decision based upon the available information. This could suggest that, on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true, regardless of any decisions relating to criminal prosecutions. The welfare of children and young people should always remain paramount. NB. The FA is entitled to carry out its own investigations independently of the Police and Children's Social Care and does so regularly where it believes this is necessary.

7.1 Possible outcomes

Cases of poor practice will be investigated by the CFA and may be subject to CFA disciplinary procedures. Cases of child abuse (having been dealt with by the statutory agencies) will be investigated by The FA's Safeguarding team who may refer the case to The FA Safeguarding Review Panel. In these circumstances, the following outcomes are possible:

- No case to answer
- Advice and or warning as to future conduct
- Further support or training
- Supervision and or monitoring
- Suspension.

7.2 "Whistle-blowing"

Whistle-blowing can be used as an early warning system or when it's recognised that appropriate actions have not been taken. It is about revealing and raising concerns over misconduct or malpractice within an organisation or within an independent structure associated with it.

Any adult or young person with concerns about a colleague can also use whistle-blowing by contacting The FA's Safeguarding team on 0800 169 1863 Extension 6300 or 6400 or via email on safeguarding@TheFA.com. Alternatively you can go direct the Police or Children's Social Care and report your concerns there.

7.3 Appeals

The appeals procedure is available to anyone who is subject to a decision made by The FA Safeguarding Review Panel or the Head of Judicial Services. Every individual and organisation wishing to appeal against decisions by The FA must do so in writing, to be received by The FA Head of Judicial Services, The Football Association, Wembley Stadium, PO Box 1966, London SW1P 9EQ within 14 days of the date of notification of the decision appealed against. The appeal must identify the specific decision(s) being appealed and set out the grounds of appeal and the reasons why it would be substantially unfair not to alter the decision. A fee of £100.00 must be enclosed with the appeal. The FA Disciplinary Appeal Panel will exclude anyone who sat on the initial decision-making panel and will consist of an independent Chair and two other members. Further information regarding The FA Appeals Procedure can be downloaded via – www.TheFA.com/~media/files/thefaportal/governance-docs/rules-of-the-association/2014-15/031e_disciplinary-procedures---appeal-regulations.ashx

7.4 Complaints procedures

A complaint may be made by an individual who has been the subject of a poor practice or child protection concern that has been dealt with by The FA's Safeguarding team. Please note, any matters relating to appeals with regard to Disciplinary Hearings, Suspensions and the Rules of The Association and Laws of the Game will be separately dealt with under established procedures and are not the subject of a complaint.

In the first instance the complainant is required to contact The FA Case Officer responsible for the relevant County FA (the contact details can be obtained from the County FA or on 0800 169 1863 Extension 6300 or 6400 or via email on safeguarding@TheFA.com). It is hoped that the member of staff will be able to resolve the complainants concerns and give appropriate assurances regarding the management of the case in question. A record of this resolution will be made and copied to the complainant. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response and wishes to take the matter further, they are required to put the matter in writing to The FA Case Manager, The Football Association, Wembley Stadium, PO Box 1966, London SW1P 9EQ within 28 days of the known outcome of the informal communication with The FA Case Officer. Further information about The FA's appeals process can be downloaded from The FA Handbook via – www.TheFA.com/~media/files/thefaportal/governance-docs/rules-of-the-association/2014-15/031e_disciplinary-procedures---appeal-regulations.ashx

7.5 Allegations of previous (historical) abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event. This may be by an adult who was abused as a child, by a volunteer or member of staff who is still currently working with children or young people or by a young person.

Where such an allegation is made, you should inform the CFA WO who will in turn inform The FA's Safeguarding team. Historical allegations should be treated with the same care and attention as current disclosures.

The FA will, following consultation, take appropriate action. This is because other children or young people, either within football or outside it, may be at risk from this person and anyone who has been abused has the right to be heard at any time. This position is reinforced by UK legislation and guidance.

7.6 Providing support

The FA will support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or young person, even if that concern is proved to be unfounded, in the following ways:

- Via the CFA Welfare Officer
- Via The FA's Safeguarding team
- Provision of specialist independent organisations contact details
- NSPCC Helpline and ChildLine
- NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit.

Consideration will be given to what support may be appropriate for children, young people, parents or carers, volunteers and members of staff during and after poor practice and child abuse referrals to The FA.

It is never easy to respond to a child or young person who tells you that they are being abused. You may well be feeling upset and worried yourself. Confidentiality is paramount. However, The FA acknowledges that having received a disclosure, individuals may have a need for some support. To download information on support groups and help lines for those who have received a disclosure please use this link – www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/raising-awareness---downloads-section

Every effort will be made to ensure that any child or young person, who has been subjected to poor practice or abuse, and their parents or carers, will be given support from the appropriate agencies and The FA. A list of independent support groups and help lines is available for those who have experienced abuse. To download use this link – www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/raising-awareness---downloads-section

The FA will also consider what support with the process may be appropriate for those against whom a complaint of poor practice or an allegation of abuse has been made. To download information on support groups and help lines please use this link - www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/raising-awareness---downloads-section