

Safeguarding Adults Policy



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Version:	4	Reason:	Update
Approved by:	Activity Alliance Board	Approved date:	
Review date:	March 2028	Reviewer:	Safeguarding lead

If you require this document in a different format, please contact
Info@activityalliance.org.uk.

Foreword

Activity Alliance exists to create a future where all disabled people feel they belong in sport and activity. Our strategy, *We all belong*, sets out our ambition to address inequality, amplify disabled people's voices, and ensure sport and activity genuinely meet people's needs.

Safeguarding is fundamental to achieving this vision.

Disabled people continue to face significant barriers to being active, including unsafe environments, exclusionary practices, and unequal power dynamics. For inclusion to be meaningful, safeguarding must be more than a set of procedures; it must be embedded in our culture, our partnerships, and the way we listen to and work alongside disabled people.

This policy reflects our commitment to a person-centred approach, recognising disabled people as experts in their own lives. Safeguarding adults is not about removing choice or independence, but about enabling people to participate safely, confidently and on their own terms. It aligns with our strategic ambition to ensure disabled people influence decision-making, and that their lived experience shapes how sport and activity are designed, delivered and governed.

Creating safe, welcoming and inclusive environments is a shared responsibility. We cannot achieve this alone. It requires strong collaboration with partners, clear accountability, and a collective commitment to challenge poor practice and address inequality wherever it exists. Safeguarding is integral to building trust, strengthening partnerships, and driving the systemic change our strategy calls for.

This policy sets out how Activity Alliance, our staff, volunteers, partners and stakeholders will work together to safeguard adults at risk, uphold dignity and wellbeing, and respond swiftly and appropriately when concerns arise. It sits alongside our wider safeguarding framework and reflects our values: **we care**, **we unite**, and **we champion**.

By embedding safeguarding into everything we do, we take a vital step towards ensuring that disabled people not only have opportunities to be active, but experience sport and activity as safe, respectful and empowering spaces where they truly belong.

Adam Blaze

Chief Executive
Activity Alliance

Activity Alliance safeguarding policy

Activity Alliance works with many amazing organisations, groups and individuals, and are at the centre of influential programmes for disabled people.

Our teams work across various specialisms driving change in disability, inclusion and sport. However, the reality is that disabled people are the least active group in society, and we all must do more to change this negative picture.

Activity Alliance believes everyone has the right to live free from abuse or neglect regardless of age, ability or disability, sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status.

Safeguarding is a priority for Activity Alliance. We are committed to promoting the safety and welfare of all disabled people involved in sport and activity. We acknowledge that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and we are committed to preventing abuse and neglect through safeguarding the welfare of all participants involved. As part of that commitment we have developed comprehensive safeguarding policy, procedures and good practice guidance to promote to everyone we support.

This policy applies to everyone that participates in the support, planning and/or delivery of participation opportunities, sporting sessions or activities, including as volunteers.

Any activity promoted, endorsed or run by Activity Alliance must comply with these policies and procedures and have a safeguarding welfare plan in place. [You can download copies of our safeguarding policies and resources on the Activity Alliance website.](#)

Activity Alliance recognises that there is a legal framework for sports to safeguard adults who have care and support needs, and for protecting those who are unable to take action to protect themselves. Activity Alliance will act in accordance with the relevant safeguarding adult legislation and with the local statutory safeguarding procedures.

Activity Alliance also recognises that safeguarding responsibilities extend to online and digital environments linked to sport and activity, including email, messaging services, social media, virtual sessions and online communities. Safeguarding concerns may involve online abuse, bullying, harassment, hate, coercive or controlling behaviour, and other technology-facilitated harm, and should be responded to with the same care, seriousness and person-centred approach as concerns arising in face-to-face settings.

Activity Alliance requires that safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk sits within a framework. This is based on the NSPCC Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport, the NSPCC Safe Sport Events, Activities and Competitions guidance, Sport England Governance requirements and the Ann Craft Trust Guidance. It includes having:

- An overarching safeguarding policy, procedures and implementation plan.
- A safeguarding welfare plan for all activities.
- Guidance on prevention and best practice, including safe recruitment and vetting.
- Policy, procedures and systems for responding to concerns.

- Codes of conduct.
- A commitment to equity and diversity.
- Training and development.
- Access to advice and support.

Legal framework

This document has been written based on the following laws, reviews and guidance that seek to protect children, young people and adults at risk.

- [The Whyte Review](#) – The review was commissioned following a number of deeply concerning reports about the treatment of gymnasts, from grassroots through to the elite end of the sport, with a view to understanding the experiences of those gymnasts and determining any required change.
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)
- [Positions of trust guidance](#) – As of 28 June 2022, the law in England and Wales states that those in a position of trust in sports organisations, such as a coach, cannot legally have a sexual relationship with people they look after who are aged under 18 years old.
- [Online Safety Bill 2023](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#)
- [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#)
- [Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [Special educational needs and disability \(SEND\) code of practice – 0-25 years](#) – Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities; HM Government 2014
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [The Care Act 2014](#) - Care Act 2014, Section 20 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 24 March 2026. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations
- [Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims \(Amendment\) Act 2012](#)
- [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#) - Strengthens protections for adults experiencing domestic abuse, including coercive and controlling behaviour, economic abuse and psychological harm.
- [Serious Crime Act 2015](#) - Includes provisions relating to exploitation, modern slavery and abuse that may affect adults at risk.
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Mental Capacity Act 2005](#)
- [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015](#) – Updated 2023

This policy reflects current legislation and statutory guidance in England. Where national guidance is updated or under review, Activity Alliance will continue to monitor developments and ensure safeguarding practice remains lawful, proportionate and person-centred. This includes recognising the growing importance of online and digital environments within sport and activity, and the need to address risks such as online abuse, bullying, harassment, hate, coercion and other technology-facilitated harm.

This policy should be read alongside our policies, procedures and good practice guidance, these can be found by clicking on the following links or at [Activity Alliance safeguarding resources page](#) on our website.

Policies

[Activity Alliance Missing Participants Policy](#)
[Activity Alliance Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy](#)
[Activity Alliance Safeguarding Anti Bullying Policy](#)
[Activity Alliance Safeguarding E-Safety Policy](#)
[Activity Alliance Safeguarding Photographic Policy](#)
[Activity Alliance Safeguarding Policy Statement](#)
[Activity Alliance Safeguarding Whistleblowing policy](#)

Promoting good practice

[Activity Alliance Risk Assessment Form Template](#)
[Activity Alliance Safeguarding Event Welfare Plan Final](#)
[Activity Alliance Safeguarding Incident Report Form](#)
[Activity Alliance Safeguarding Parental Consent Transporting Children and Young People](#)
[Activity Alliance Staff and Volunteer Code of conduct](#)
[Activity Alliance voluntary and professional employment self-declaration form](#)

Recognising and responding to a concern and reporting procedures

[Activity Alliance Responding to an E Safety Concerns](#)
[Activity Alliance Responding to Safeguarding Concerns about staff and volunteers](#)
[Activity Alliance Responding to Safeguarding Concerns outside of Activity Alliance](#)
[Activity Alliance Safeguarding Complaints procedure](#)

What to do if you are worried about an adult

If you are worried about an adult, even if you are unsure, and think you or someone you know is being abused or neglected you should tell someone you trust.

This could be a friend, a teacher, a family member, a social worker, a doctor or healthcare professional, a police officer or someone else that you trust. Ask them to help you report it.

Supporting people when concerns are raised about abuse or neglect can be very difficult and distressing for everyone involved. Deciding what is the right thing to do can be stressful, particularly if the person you are concerned about is reluctant to accept support. If you are not sure what to do you can always seek advice.

[Victim Support](#)

For anyone affected by crime in England or Wales.

Phone: [08 08 16 89 111](tel:08081689111)

[Samaritans](#)

Emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicide.
Phone: [116 123](tel:116123) (24hrs)

[Stop Hate Crime](#)

Reporting and support for victims, witnesses and third parties.
Phone: [0800 138 1625](tel:08001381625)

[Ann Craft Trust – Find your local safeguarding adults board](#)

You can always contact your local Adult Services/Safeguarding Adults Team to discuss a concern and obtain advice: [Visit the Safeguarding Adults Board Directory](#)

[To report a crime](#)

In an emergency call 999 to contact the police. If the person is not in immediate danger call 101 to contact the police.

[Activity Alliance](#)

If the concern is an allegation relating to an adult who is working/volunteering or used to work at any Activity Alliance activity, then you will still need to follow the [Activity Alliance safeguarding reporting structure](#). You can also contact our safeguarding team using the details below:

[Jannine Walker](#)

Activity Alliance Lead Officer
Email: jannine@activityalliance.org.uk
Phone: 07725 273158

[Lucy Smith](#)

Activity Alliance Board Safeguarding Lead
Email: lucy@activityalliance.org.uk

[Agata Sromecka](#)

Activity Alliance Safeguarding support
Email: info@activityalliance.org.uk
Phone: 01509 227752

[Helen Derby](#)

Activity Alliance Deputy Officer
Email: helend@activityalliance.org.uk
Phone: 07764 291662

[Activity Alliance safeguarding principles](#)

The Activity Alliance safeguarding policy is based on the following principles:

- All disabled people, regardless of age, ability, culture, gender, language, race, ethnicity, religious belief, nationality, social/economic status and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All disabled people have the right to participate in sporting and leisure activities in an enjoyable and safe environment that takes account of their individual support, physical and or social development needs.
- All incidents of suspected/alleged poor practice or abuse should be taken seriously, be responded to swiftly and appropriately, and in line with Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) multi-agency policy and procedures.
- Activity Alliance will seek to ensure that our activities are inclusive and make reasonable adjustments for any impairment. We will also commit to continuous development, monitoring and review.
- Ensure steps are taken to minimise risks of harm to all people involved in activities.
- We will work together with other organisations that have a responsibility for safeguarding adults, including information sharing, when concerns arise.
- Provide, champion and promote an environment that is healthy, safe and secure.
- Confidentiality will be upheld in line with the Data Protection and Human Rights legislation, but our priority will be safeguarding adults who may be at risk.
- We recognise that abuse, neglect and poor practice can also occur in online and digital environments connected to sport and activity, including through messaging platforms, social media and virtual delivery. Concerns involving online abuse, bullying, harassment, hate or other technology-facilitated harm will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.
- Adults at risk should be protected from radicalisation and extremism, recognising that safeguarding against these threats is part of the wider safeguarding duty.
- The creation and promotion of a culture/environment in which people are valued and their right to be safe is upheld.
- We recognise that a disabled adult may or may not identify themselves, or be identified, as an adult with care and support needs or an adult 'at risk'.
- Additional barriers can exist when detecting the abuse or neglect of disabled people and can create additional safeguarding challenges that are sometimes not recognised, in particular:
 - Assumptions that indicators of abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury can relate to the persons disability or additional need without further exploration.
 - Disabled people have an increased likelihood of social isolation.
 - Disabled people are disproportionately impacted by bullying.
 - Disabled people have fewer outside contacts than non-disabled people.
 - Disabled people depend on others for practical assistance in daily living, including intimate care.
 - Some disabled people's speech and language communication needs may make it difficult to tell others what is happening.
- We are committed to using the [Activity Alliance 'talk to me' principles](#) throughout our safeguarding policies, procedures and good practice to support looking beyond standard demographics and creating a person-centred approach to safeguarding. Taking a person-centred approach is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all adults

at risk. This means keeping the person in focus when making decisions about their active lives and working in partnership with them.

The [Activity Alliance talk to me report](#) outlines 10 principles that providers, organisations, deliverers and supporters can follow to help make their sport or activity more appealing to, and supportive of, disabled people.

Safeguarding culture and prevention

Safeguarding adults is not only about responding to concerns when harm has occurred; it is about creating a culture that actively prevents abuse, neglect and poor practice. Activity Alliance is committed to fostering environments where safeguarding is embedded in everyday practice, decision-making and behaviours.

This includes:

- Promoting values-led leadership where dignity, respect and wellbeing are prioritised.
- Encouraging professional curiosity, confidence to challenge, and accountability at all levels.
- Creating safer environments that reduce risk, address power imbalances and support inclusion.
- Recognising and responding to low-level concerns and patterns of behaviour before harm escalates.

Prevention is a shared responsibility. By embedding safeguarding into our culture, partnerships and programmes, we aim to create sport and activity spaces where disabled people feel safe, respected and empowered to participate on their own terms.

The Care Act

The Care Act sets out the following principles that should underpin the safeguarding of adults:

Empowerment – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent. “I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding process and these directly inform what happens.”

Prevention – It is better to act before harm occurs. “I receive clear and simple information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs and what I can do to seek help.”

Proportionality – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. “I am sure that the professionals will work in my interest, as I see them, and they will only get involved as much as needed.”

Protection – Support and representation for those in greatest need. “I get help and support to report abuse and neglect. I get help so that I am able to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent to which I want.”

Partnership – Local solutions through services collaborating with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting, and reporting neglect and abuse. “I know that staff treat any personal and sensitive information in confidence, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that professionals will work together and with me to get the best result for me.”

Accountability – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding. “I understand the role of everyone involved in my life and so do they.”

Making safeguarding personal

Making safeguarding personal means working alongside the adult as an equal partner, recognising their strengths, experiences and right to make informed choices. Wherever possible, safeguarding responses should be co-produced with the adult, focusing on outcomes that matter to them and supporting independence rather than limiting it. Activity Alliance supports positive risk-taking, recognising that avoiding all risk can reduce choice, control and opportunity. Decisions should be proportionate, informed and transparent, balancing safety with the adult’s wishes, wellbeing and right to participate fully in sport and activity.

Wellbeing principle

The concept of wellbeing is threaded throughout [the Care Act 2014](#) and it is one that is relevant to adult safeguarding in sport and activity. Wellbeing is different for each of us, however, the Act sets out broad categories that contribute to our sense of wellbeing. By keeping these themes in mind, we can all ensure that adult participants can take part in sport and physical activities fully.

- Personal dignity (including treatment of the individual with respect).
- Physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- Protection from abuse and neglect.
- Control by the individual over their day-to-day life (including over care and support provided and the way they are provided).
- Participation in work, education, training or recreation.
- Social and economic wellbeing.
- Domestic, family and personal domains.

Our responsibility

Safeguarding adults is integral to delivering our *We all belong* strategy. By embedding strong safeguarding culture, prevention and person-centred practice, we strengthen trust, inclusion and belonging across everything we do.

Activity Alliance is committed to a person-centred approach to safeguarding. Activity Alliance will:

- Have a lead officer, deputy and board member for safeguarding.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding adults training, with additional role-specific training where required. Training will be supported by ongoing learning, reflective practice and access to advice, recognising that safeguarding adults is complex and requires confidence, judgement and continuous development.
- Promote learning from safeguarding concerns, complaints and reviews to strengthen practice, improve systems and reduce the likelihood of harm recurring.
- Require all those working for, volunteering at, or attending Activity Alliance activities to sign up to the [Activity Alliance staff and volunteers code of conduct](#) and read the [Activity Alliance Event Welfare Plan](#).
- We require all those working, volunteering or who have contact with children, young people and adults to be confident and aware to ensure risk of harm to all is minimal.
- Where concerns about children and young people's welfare arise, those who are working with, volunteering with or who have contact with children and young people must be aware of the reporting process – please see [Activity Alliance Responding to a Safeguarding Concern](#). They should take appropriate action to respond to and share those concerns within Activity Alliance and in some cases with other partner organisations e.g. clubs, schools, NGBs (National Governing Bodies), APs (Active Partnerships), DPULOs (Disabled People User Led Organisations) and local statutory agencies.
- Act against those who breach Activity Alliance policies.
- Ensure consistency and share good practice throughout Activity Alliance and the partners we support.
- We recognise our duty under the PREVENT strategy to safeguard adults from radicalisation. All staff, volunteers, and partners should be aware of the signs of radicalisation and know how to report concerns. Activity Alliance will provide access to PREVENT awareness training and ensure that safeguarding leads are equipped to respond appropriately to any concerns.
- Continue to review, monitor, and update Activity Alliance safeguarding policies in line with government advice.

Definition of adults at risk

An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and,
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and,
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

In recent years there has been a marked shift away from using the term 'vulnerable' to describe adults potentially at risk from harm or abuse.

Safeguarding Adults in Sport Framework

Safeguarding adults in sport and activity

Activity Alliance aligns its safeguarding adults policy and practice with recognised sector standards for sport and physical activity. We use nationally recognised frameworks to review, strengthen and continuously improve our safeguarding arrangements, including the Safeguarding Adults in Sport Framework.

This includes regular reflection on governance, leadership, safer recruitment, training, codes of conduct, participant voice, welfare, accountability and the management of safeguarding concerns, ensuring our approach remains effective, inclusive and responsive to the needs of disabled people. It also reflects the wider sport sector's increased focus on safeguarding culture, prevention and safer systems following national reviews and ongoing sector development.

Further information

The following websites all contain excellent support and resources to assist you with your learning and development.

[Ann Craft Trust \(ACT\)](#)

A national organisation, funded by Sport England collaborating with staff in the statutory, independent and voluntary sectors in the interests of people with learning disabilities who may be at risk from abuse.

Phone: 0115 951 5400

Email: ann-craft-trust@nottingham.ac.uk

[Hourglass](#)

National organisation who aim to prevent the abuse of older people by raising awareness, encouraging education, promoting research, and collecting and disseminating information.

Phone: 080 8808 8141

Email: enquiries@wearehourglass.org

[Carers Direct](#)

If you are a carer, the helpline advisers can give you information to help make decisions about your personal support needs and the needs of the person you are looking after.

Phone: 0203 904 4520

Email: info@carersdirect.org

[National Association for People Abused in Childhood \(NAPAC\)](#)

Provides help and support for people who were abused in childhood.

Phone: 0808 801 0331

Email: support@napac.org.uk

[Rethink](#)

For practical information and support around mental health.

Phone: 0808 801 8582

[The Samaritans](#)

Emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress, despair or suicide.

Phone: 116 123

Email: jo@samaritans.org

[Social Care Institute](#)

Improves the lives of people of all ages by co-producing, sharing and supporting the use of the best available knowledge and evidence about what works in practice.

Phone: 0203 840 4040

Email: info@scie.org.uk

[Sport and Recreation Alliance](#)

Provides useful information on among other things changes to legislation and guidance around safe recruitment, safeguarding adults.

Phone: 020 7976 3900

Email: info@sportandrecreation.org.uk

[PREVENT Duty Guidance](#)

The Prevent duty guidance outlines how specified authorities must safeguard individuals by having due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

[Educate Against Hate](#) – Practical advice and resources to protect children from extremism and radicalisation.

[ACT Early](#) – Advice and support for anyone concerned that someone they know may be at risk of radicalisation.