Venue Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Number:	VSP-01	**Issue:**	1.0	**Issue Date:**	October 2026
Approved By:	Sport & Communities Director				

1.0 Policy Statement and Scope

1.1 Active Bolton recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and adults at risk. Active Bolton is committed to providing safe, welcoming and inclusive venues where people are respected and valued.

1.2 Active Bolton will remain alert to signs of abuse, neglect, exploitation and poor practice and will follow the procedures in this policy so that concerns receive prompt and effective action.

1.3 This policy applies to every person who participates, visits, works, coaches, officiates, volunteers or otherwise operates at an Active Bolton venue or activity. Contractors and partner organisations are expected to demonstrate equivalent safeguarding standards.

1.4 Actions involving adults at risk will be prompt and proportionate, taking account of the adult's wishes, feelings, mental capacity, safety and well-being.

2.0 Policy Principles

2.1
- the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount;
- everyone has an equal right to protection from harm;
- safeguarding is everybody's responsibility;
- all concerns and allegations will be taken seriously and responded to promptly;
- Active Bolton will encourage a culture in which people feel able to raise concerns; and
- Active Bolton will work with statutory agencies, governing bodies and partners where this is necessary to safeguard people.

3.0 Responsibility for Safeguarding

3.1 The Board of Trustees has overall accountability for this policy and its implementation. The Sport & Communities Director oversees operational arrangements, supported by designated safeguarding leads and venue Welfare Officers.

3.2 The Welfare Officer is the first point of contact for a safeguarding concern involving a child or adult at risk and has a proactive role in raising safeguarding awareness.

3.3 Current Welfare Officer and deputy contact details must be displayed at each venue and made available to employees, volunteers, participants and parents or carers.

3.4 Safeguarding concerns connected with tennis may also be reported to the LTA Safeguarding Team. Immediate danger or suspected criminal conduct must be reported to the emergency services.

3.5 All people within the scope of this policy are responsible for reporting concerns in accordance with Section 13.

4.0 Policy Aims

4.1
- protect children, including children of adults who use Active Bolton services, and adults at risk from harm;
- provide clear information so people can meet their safeguarding responsibilities;
- support good practice and high safeguarding standards;
- set out reporting, responding and recording arrangements; and
- explain Active Bolton's commitment to learning, accountability and continuous improvement.

5.0 Definitions

5.1 A child is anyone under the age of 18. A parent includes birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role.

5.2 In England, an adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support, is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves from the risk or experience of abuse or neglect.

5.3 Safeguarding children means promoting welfare, protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health or development, ensuring safe and effective care, and taking action to enable the best outcomes.

5.4 Safeguarding adults means protecting a person's right to live safely, free from abuse and neglect.

6.0 Safe Recruitment

6.1 Active Bolton will follow its Safe Recruitment Policy when recruiting employees, coaches, volunteers, contractors and self-employed workers whose roles involve children or adults at risk.

6.2
- use clear role descriptions and person specifications;
- complete identity, right-to-work, qualification and reference checks;
- obtain an appropriate DBS and barred-list check where the role is eligible;
- explore gaps or concerns arising from employment history; and
- ensure required checks are satisfactorily completed before regulated activity begins.

7.0 Training and Induction

7.1 Employees, coaches, volunteers and Welfare Officers will complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role and renew it in line with organisational or governing-body requirements.

7.2 Safeguarding induction will cover this policy, Codes of Conduct, reporting and recording arrangements, low-level concerns, information sharing and Welfare Officer contact details.

7.3 Additional training or briefings will be provided when responsibilities, legislation, guidance or identified risks change.

8.0 Standards of Practice and Behaviour

8.1 Everyone within scope must comply with this policy, the relevant Active Bolton Codes of Conduct and any governing-body standards applying to the activity.

8.2
- maintain professional boundaries;
- treat children and adults at risk with dignity and respect;
- avoid favouritism, intimidation, humiliating behaviour and unnecessary one-to-one isolation;
- use appropriate language, physical contact and communication methods;
- never misuse a position of authority or trust; and
- report conduct that causes concern, even where the threshold for an allegation may not appear to have been met.

8.3 Breaches may result in safeguarding, disciplinary, contractual, regulatory or criminal action, as applicable.

9.0 Transportation and Trips

9.1 Parents or carers are normally responsible for transport to and from Active Bolton venues and activities.

9.2
- the destination, reason, timetable and responsible adults will be communicated in

advance;

• appropriate consent and emergency-contact information will be obtained;

• drivers will hold a valid licence, suitable insurance and roadworthy vehicle documentation;

• seatbelts and legally required restraints will be used;

• risk assessments and emergency arrangements will be in place; and

• one-to-one transport will be avoided unless an emergency or a specifically assessed arrangement makes it necessary.

10.0 Supervising Children

10.1 Children under 12 must have parental supervision while at a venue unless they are taking part in an organised and appropriately supervised session.

10.2 For organised sessions, parents or carers must deliver children directly into the care of the coach or responsible person and collect them in accordance with the activity arrangements.

10.3 Supervision ratios will reflect governing-body guidance, the age and needs of participants, the activity, venue layout and identified risks. At least two suitable adults should normally be present for group activities.

10.4 A child must not leave an organised session unaccompanied unless written permission and an appropriate arrangement are in place.

11.0 Positions of Trust

11.1 A person aged 18 or over who regularly coaches, teaches, trains, supervises or instructs a child or adult at risk may hold a position of trust.

11.2 People in positions of trust must recognise the power imbalance within the relationship, maintain clear professional boundaries and never use their position for personal advantage or gratification.

11.3 Any concern about a misuse of trust or inappropriate relationship must be reported immediately through the safeguarding procedure.

12.0 Abuse, Harm and Increased Vulnerability

12.1 Safeguarding concerns may involve physical harm, emotional or psychological harm, neglect, discriminatory abuse, financial abuse, domestic abuse, organisational abuse, self-neglect, exploitation, online abuse, bullying, modern slavery, radicalisation or other harmful conduct.

12.2 • disability, illness, dementia, learning difficulty or mental-health needs;

• communication barriers or dependence on others for care, transport, funding or selection;

• domestic abuse, poverty, homelessness, substance misuse or social exclusion;

• racism, discrimination or fear of authority;

• isolation from family, friends or other protective networks; and

• high-performance environments, competitive pressure or fear that reporting will affect selection or progression.

12.3 A person may experience several factors at the same time and vulnerability can change. Active Bolton will avoid assumptions and consider the person's individual circumstances.

13.0 Reporting a Safeguarding Concern or Allegation

13.1 Everyone must take concerns seriously and act promptly, including where the incident is non-recent or occurred outside an Active Bolton activity.

13.2
• if anyone is in immediate danger, contact emergency services;

• report the concern promptly to the Welfare Officer or designated safeguarding lead;

• do not investigate, confront the person who is the subject of the concern or promise confidentiality;

• record what was seen, heard or disclosed using the person's own words where possible;

• include the date, time, location, people involved and immediate action taken; and

• preserve relevant information and follow instructions from safeguarding or statutory professionals.

13.3 Where appropriate and safe, concerns may be discussed with the adult at risk or a child's parent or carer. This must not happen if it could increase risk, compromise evidence or interfere with a statutory response.

13.4 Concerns connected with tennis will be referred to the LTA Safeguarding Team where required. Other concerns will be referred to the relevant governing body, local authority, police or professional service as appropriate.

14.0 Responding to a Disclosure

14.1
• listen carefully and remain calm;

• reassure the person that speaking up was the right thing to do;

• take the information seriously without expressing disbelief or blame;

• ask only open and necessary questions to clarify what is being said;

• explain what will happen next and that the information must be shared with people who can help;

- do not investigate or seek proof;
- make sure immediate safety and support needs are addressed; and
- write an accurate record as soon as possible after the conversation.

14.2 For an adult at risk, ask what outcome the adult wants and seek consent to share information where it is appropriate and safe to do so. Concerns may still need to be shared without consent in the circumstances described in Section 17.

15.0 Low-Level Concerns

15.1 A low-level concern is behaviour that falls below expected standards, may be inconsistent with a Code of Conduct or creates unease about a person's suitability, even where the allegation threshold does not appear to have been met.

15.2 All low-level concerns must be reported to the Welfare Officer or designated safeguarding lead. The concern will be recorded, reviewed and referred to the relevant governing body or statutory agency where required.

15.3 Patterns of seemingly minor concerns may indicate a more serious risk. No concern should be withheld because it appears small or uncertain.

16.0 Making Safeguarding Personal

16.1 Safeguarding adults will be person-led and outcome-focused. The adult at risk will be involved, as far as possible, in decisions about safety, support and information sharing.

16.2 The adult's views, wishes, feelings, beliefs, dignity and right to make choices will be respected while balancing duties to protect the adult and others from harm.

16.3 Where an adult finds it difficult to communicate their wishes, Active Bolton will consider appropriate support, including a trusted person or independent advocate.

17.0 Mental Capacity and Consent

17.1 Adults are presumed to have capacity unless it is established otherwise. A person must not be treated as unable to decide merely because the decision appears unwise.

17.2 Where there is concern about an adult's capacity to make a relevant safeguarding decision, Active Bolton will seek advice from the local authority or appropriate health and social-care professionals.

17.3
- there is an immediate risk to the adult or another person;
- a child may be at risk;

- coercion or duress is suspected;
- sharing is necessary to prevent or report serious crime;
- the adult lacks capacity for the relevant decision;
- the person causing harm also has care and support needs; or
- there is another legal or statutory duty to share.

17.4 Where information is shared without consent, the decision and reasons will be recorded and explained to the adult when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

18.0 Confidentiality

18.1 Safeguarding information will be handled confidentially and shared only on a need-to-know basis. Confidentiality must not be used as a reason to avoid reporting a concern.

18.2 Absolute anonymity cannot be guaranteed because a person may need to be identified to protect someone from harm, support a fair process or meet a legal duty.

18.3 Everyone involved in a concern must protect privacy and avoid discussion outside the proper reporting and decision-making process.

19.0 Information Sharing and Retention

19.1 Information sharing must be necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure.

19.2 Active Bolton will be open about information sharing where it is safe and appropriate, seek consent where appropriate, obtain advice when uncertain and prioritise safety and well-being.

19.3
- what information was shared;
- with whom it was shared;
- the date and purpose;
- the lawful or safeguarding basis for sharing;
- any limitations placed on onward use; and
- the reasons for a decision to share or not share.

19.4 Safeguarding records will be retained securely in accordance with Active Bolton's retention requirements, legal obligations and relevant governing-body guidance.

20.0 Whistleblowing

20.1 Whistleblowing is the reporting of wrongdoing in the public interest, including where safeguarding procedures are absent, concerns are covered up, action has not been taken or a person fears repercussions.

20.2 Concerns should normally be raised through Active Bolton's Whistleblowing Policy, the Welfare Officer or designated safeguarding lead. A person may also contact an appropriate governing body, statutory agency or independent reporting service.

20.3 No person should suffer retaliation for raising a genuine concern in good faith.

21.0 Related Policies and Procedures

21.1
- Safe Recruitment Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Codes of Conduct;
- Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Online Safety and Communication Policy;
- Photography and Filming Policy;
- Use of Changing Facilities Policy;
- Safeguarding at Events, Activities and Competitions;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Disciplinary Procedure; and
- Data Protection and Retention Policies.

22.0 Policy Review

22.1 This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier following a change in legislation, statutory guidance, governing-body requirements, organisational arrangements or significant safeguarding learning.

22.2 The designated safeguarding lead will coordinate the review and make sure current reporting routes and contact arrangements remain accessible.

Updates of Policy:

Issue No	Description of Revision	Date
1.0	First Active Bolton issue, reformatted to the QMS policy standard and updated from the previous venue safeguarding	October 2026

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	policy.	