Adults At Risk Policy

Downham Town

Football Club

Implementation date:	**31/01/2026**
Signed by:	**George Dickson**
Review date	**31/01/2027**

Introduction:

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.

Downham Town Football Club aim to create an atmosphere 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 Downham Town Football Club (the "Club") and Foundation/CCO 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.

Aims:
The aims of the Club and Trust's Safeguarding Policies are to:

- Develop a positive and pro-active approach to safeguarding to best protect all children, young people and adults at risk who use our facilities or engage in associated activities, enabling them to participate and achieve in an enjoyable and safe environment.

- Facilitate the provision of a range awareness training for all staff or volunteers in line with guidance from The National League and in line with The FA requirements.
- Work with our schools in supporting their policies both on school's premises and when undertaking partnership work at the Stadium or elsewhere.
- Cooperate with partners in delivering projects for adults potentially at risk including older people, people with disabilities, mental health participants and those on the recovery projects.
- Demonstrate best practice around safeguarding the welfare of all adults at risk.
- Promote ethical work with adults at risk.
- Work towards achieving the National League Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Adults at risk.

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 the Club believes or is informed that circumstances exist which may harm adult(s) at risk or pose or may pose a risk of harm to them, the Trust 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 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 the Club and Trust(*) 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:
The Clubs arrangements in fulfilling its commitment to safeguarding adults at risk:

1. George Dickson is the Clubs Board Safeguarding Champion. There are Club Welfare Officers for all parts of the Club and Trust. 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 and Trust have in place a responsible Safer Recruitment processes.
3. This policy can be viewed upon our Club website. WWW.dowhamtownfc.com
4. As an Association member the National League Football safeguarding policies and procedures whilst further specific and individual Trust policies are developed and adopted.
5. The Club ensure that, where the role requires, all staff and volunteers complete The FA Safeguarding Children Workshop.
6. The Club 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.
7. The Club are committed to the sharing of information to protect adults at risk, children, and young people, in line with the Data Protection Act (1998). In addition to this Safeguarding Policy, the Club and Trust promote several initiatives which seek to address and encourage young people's and families' enjoyment as participants and spectators.

Reporting Concerns and Whistle blowing 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 Downham Town FC. 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 Club, projects or as part of the Trust's 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:
We at Downham Town FC 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 TELLING 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.

Refer to Club Anti Bullying policy.

Responding to Concerns or Allegations:
It is not the responsibility of anyone employed by Downham Town FC. 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 Club Welfare Officer (CWO)/Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) 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 CWO/DSO.

Make a written record of the incident or grounds for concern:
You will be guided by the CWO/DSO 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.

Don't 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 CWO/DSO. CWO/DSO 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'.
- CWO/DSO 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:

- General Children Safeguarding Policy
- Equality, Inclusion & Diversity Policy
- Whistleblowing 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

Useful further reading and associated external policies:
1-5-safeguarding-adults-in-affiliated-football-policy-and-procedures-colour-version%20(11).pdf

Reporting a concern, useful contacts:

Club Welfare Officer: Vicky Drakard
Contact number: 07983291510
Email Address: downhamtownfcwelfare@gmail.com

National League DSO: Martyn Cannon
Contact number: 01217142207
Email: Safeguarding@thenationalleague.org.uk

County FA DSO: Ken D'Rosario
Contact number: 07777 607567
Email Address: Safeguarding@NorfolkFA.com

FA Safeguarding Team
Contact number: 0800 169 1863
Email Address: Safeguarding@theFA.com

Appendix A - Legislation and guidance underpinning safeguarding of Adults:

Children's Safeguarding Legislation	
November 1989	UN convention on the Rights of the Child
July 1998	Data Protection Act
October 2003	Female Genital Mutilation
November 2003	Sexual Offences Act
November 2004	The Children Act
November 2006	Safeguarding vulnerable groups Act
April 2010	The Equality Act
May 2012	Protection of Freedoms Act
September 2016 (with annual updates)	Keeping Children Safe in Education
February 2017	Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)

Adults at Risk Safeguarding Guidance	
January 2015	No Secrets: Guidance on protecting vulnerable adults in care
2017	Volunteer Now's Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
Adults at Risk Safeguarding Legislation	
July 1998 / 2018	Data Protection Act
April 2005	The Mental Capacity Act
April 2010	The Equality Act
May 2014	The Care Act

General Legislation	
2003	Sexual Offences Act
2015	Serious Crime Act
2015	Counter Terrorism and Security Act