



Safeguarding Policy

Shear Soccer Commitment to Safeguarding Statement from the Director: Shear Soccer is committed to safeguarding the welfare of Adults at Risk and Children. Shear Soccer will work to ensure the safety of all those who engage with and come into contact within the company. Shear Soccer expects all staff, players, volunteers, participants, contractors and guests to share this commitment. Shear Soccer believe that all staff, players, volunteers, participants, contractors and guests have a responsibility to report any concerns t should they be concerned about the welfare of any Adult at Risk or Child. Shear Soccer is committed to ensuring that: The safety and welfare of Adults at Risk and Children under the care of Shear Soccer is paramount. All Adults at Risk and Children that engage with Shear Soccer, regardless of age, culture, social background, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to safety and protection from abuse or harm. All suspicions, reports and/or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously & investigated thoroughly, which may involve the appropriate local authority teams where necessary.

Shear Soccer has a Designated Safeguarding Officer who implements, maintains and monitor best practice across the company. The designated Safeguarding Officer for Shear Soccer is: **Annette Emanuel**

This safeguarding policy is applicable for year 2026 and will be subject of ongoing review, and a minimum of once a year.

Aims of this policy:

- To safeguard all Children and young people who interact with Shear Soccer
- To demonstrate best practice around safeguarding Children.
- To increase awareness and understanding of safeguarding issues.
- To provide guidance for parents and carers to understand reporting procedures.
- To encourage a partnership between Shear Soccer and parents/carers of children associated with Shear Soccer.
- To ensure that coaches, parents, participants and other adults who are in contact with children and young people provide good role models of behaviour.
- To promote high ethical standards throughout Shear Soccer.

Key Safeguarding Terminology and Definitions:

Shear Soccer – refers its staff and all activities it undertakes. In certain circumstances it may also refer to third parties with an entrusted responsibility for delivering club-supported activity.

Staff – refers to persons employed by and receiving payment for services from Shear Soccer. This is irrespective of the length or nature of their contract.

Volunteers – Persons who freely offer their skills and expertise or take part in a task, event or enterprise Shear Soccer at their own expense in terms of time and/or resources.

Child – Defined in the Children’s act (1989) as any person under the age of 18.

Adult at risk – An adult (person aged 18 or over) who is, or may be in need of one of the following services: Health care; Relevant personal care; Social care work; Assistance in relation to general

household matters by reason of age, illness or disability; Relevant assistance in the conduct of their own affairs (due to age, illness or disability in prescribed circumstances)

Safeguarding – Preventative and reactional measures taken by Shear Soccer to ensure; the risk of harm or mistreatment to the welfare of vulnerable groups is minimised; the health or wellbeing of Vulnerable groups is not impaired when engaging in Shear Soccer related activities; an environment exists that allows Vulnerable groups to be cared for safely and allows for the best possible outcomes for them and provides them with the best life chances possible.

Welfare – The health, happiness and fortunes of an individual and the humanitarian aspects of their life including personal need and physical and mental development.

Significant Harm - The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. Section 47(1) of the Children Act 1989 states that: Where a local authority... have reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in the area and is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the authority shall make, such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

Child Protection - The process of protecting individual children identified as either suffering or likely to suffer significant harm because of abuse or neglect. It involves measures and structures designed to prevent and respond to abuse and neglect. Child abuse - involves acts of commission and omission, which results in harm to the child.

The four types of abuse are physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

Rules, Regulations and Guidance - Shear Soccer are governed by the legislation and rules/ regulations set out by several key governing agencies including the Government, Football Association and the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit .The content of this document has been developed with reference to policies and procedures of Affiliated Football, and the Affiliated Football Safeguarding Policy ,The FA, Safeguarding Guidance and the NSPCC Standards for Safeguarding Children in Sport and is underpinned by the following legislative documents and policies:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)
- The Children Act (1989and2004)
- What to do if you are worried about a child being abused Advice for Practitioners (2015)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Protection of Freedoms Act (POFA) (2012)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act (2013)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2015) (Updated version effective September 2016)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Unconventional on the Rights of The child (1989)
- The Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- The Care Act (2014)
- Every Child Matters 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- No Secrets 2000

Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport 2005 NSPSS and CPSU Shear Soccer recognise their responsibilities to maintain regular communication with its local councils (Devon County Council, Torbay Council), Local Authority children's services, Local Authority Designated Officer and the Police safeguarding teams. The communication of Shear Soccer with the Local Authorities is centered upon supporting the company with reporting/monitoring of Safeguarding incidents, sharing of best practice, sharing information/ changes in legislation, sharing of important local area information and workforce best practice and training and development and any other relevant appropriate Safeguarding support. Shear Soccer will ensure that any partner agencies also have robust

Safeguarding policies and Procedures in place and where appropriate there will be a Service level Agreement.

Senior Safeguarding Manager: Annette Emanuel The Senior Safeguarding Manager has responsibility to oversee and direct the safe provision of all activities and associated training relating to children and young people. A strategic role providing leadership and guidance on all safeguarding matters and relevant legislation, along with implementing safeguarding awareness and best practice club across Shear Soccer.

The Senior Safeguarding Manager will:

- Manage the implementation of the company's strategy and action and implementation plan for safeguarding.
- Ensure compliance with statutory obligations under relevant legislation and the Affiliated Football safeguarding Policy.
- Work closely with HR to develop and implement safer recruitment and induction practices across the organisation.
- Continuously work to maintain, embed and improve Shear Soccer safeguarding provision ensuring the highest standards for safeguarding vulnerable groups.
- Manage the development, implementation, promotion and review of the company's safeguarding vulnerable groups' policies, practices and good practice guidelines.
- Be the lead member of staff to manage safeguarding incidents, concerns and allegations.
- Be the lead member of staff to work in partnership with statutory and football authorities, sharing information where appropriate to safeguard vulnerable groups.
- Maintain accurate, confidential and up to date records on all safeguarding incidents, concerns and allegations.
- Give direction and guidance to staff in respect of safeguarding incidents, concerns and allegations.
- Support staff to respond appropriately to concerns about the welfare or safety of vulnerable groups.
- Lead and provide directions to Safeguarding Officers.
- Ensure that Safeguarding Officers are trained, supported and supervised.
- Act as the company's lead source of safeguarding support, advice and expertise.
- Ensure staff understand their individual responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable groups.
- Develop relationships with statutory and football authorities.
- Attend regular safeguarding training and maintain an up-to-date knowledge base of relevant legislation, regulations and best practice.
- Undertake the annual LSCB section 11 audit (Children Act 2004) and present the findings and take any relevant action

Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO): The DSO's support the Senior Safeguarding Manager to proactively promote and raise safeguarding awareness and assist with responding appropriately to safeguarding concerns and allegations. Shear Soccer will ensure that suitable policies and practices are in place to ensure that staff are appropriate and adequately trained to prevent or deal with safeguarding issues. **Safeguarding training Resources and Training:** Shear Soccer will ensure there are qualified and designated individuals within the organisation that will take the lead, ensuring that the company does all it can to meet its statutory and moral obligations. A safeguarding induction is provided to all staff. This will be delivered by the senior safeguarding manager or designated safeguarding officer. The SSM holds a specific Safeguarding Induction with all new staff who will be in contact with children. Key elements of the safeguarding policy are discussed in more detail and specifically to the individual's role. All staff working in direct contact with Children are required to complete a mandatory online Safeguarding Children Awareness workshop and undertake a refresher course, at least once every 3 years. Details of those satisfactorily completing this course are retained by the company's HR files. **Recruitment:** Shear Soccer have a specific safer recruitment policy which sets out in detail the process the company will undertake in ensuring staff are suitable to work with children and adults at risk. A copy is available on the Shear Soccer website. All staff will undertake a specific safeguarding and safer working practices induction upon employment. A briefing document and guidance for safer working practices will be provided and will also be available within induction

packs, under the safeguarding page. Key elements of the company's Safeguarding Children Policy are discussed in more detail if the role requires it.

DBS: Staff in roles that require contact with adults at risk, young people and children will undergo enhanced DBS disclosure, which is an on-going procedure throughout the association with the company. Enhanced DBS checks will enable the company to undertake more thorough recruitment and selection procedures for positions which involve working with children. Ratios: Any activity undertaken by the company will always fully consider the appropriate number of staff members available depending on the age of the Children involved, the degree of risk the Activity involves, and whether there are any additional disability needs. The lower the age of the participants, the greater the need for supervision. Regardless of these ratios a minimum of 2 members of staff or delivery partner will always be available to supervise an Activity. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of something impacting on the availability of one of the adults during the Activity (e.g. in the event of a participant requiring the attention of an adult during the Activity following an accident).

- For Children under 5 the recommended ratio should be no more than 1:6.
- For Children under 8 the recommended ratio should be no more than 1:8.
- For Children over 8 the recommended ratio should be no more than 1:10, but this varies depending on the Activity. Advice should be sought from the Safeguarding manager if unsure.

Image Policy: Shear Soccer takes its guidance on the use of images from guidelines issued by the FA.. All images are taken by company officials who have been briefed by the members of staff (and where possible a Club Safeguarding Officer) responsible for the activity being photographed / filmed. Before taking images of Children, parental consent is sought during the sign-up process. Parents/Legal Guardians are responsible for informing the company of any change of circumstances which may affect consent. Parents/Legal Guardians will be informed of how the image will be used. Shear Soccer will not allow an image to be used for something other than that for which it was initially agreed. All Children featured in Shear Soccer publications will be appropriately dressed. Where possible, the image will focus on the activity taking place and not a specific Child. Where appropriate, images represent the broad range of people participating safely in the event. Designated company photographers will, where applicable, undertake a DBS check and attend a Safeguarding Children workshop and in any case will be personally responsible for keeping up to date with the latest guidelines on the Use of Images policies issued by Shear Soccer, company Identification will always be worn. Children who are subject to family, care or legal proceedings, or who are under a court order will not have their image published in any company document or domain. No images of Children featured in Shear Soccer publications will be accompanied by personal details such as their school or home address. Recordings of Children for the purposes of legitimate coaching aids are only filmed by Shear Soccer officials and are stored safely and securely at the company premises.

BULLYING: Shear Soccer has a specific anti bullying policy.

Whistleblowing Policy: Whistleblowing refers to making a protected disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. By encouraging a culture of openness Shear Soccer wants to encourage staff to raise issues which concern them at work. Staff have a right and duty to raise matters of concern they may have about the services being offered by Shear Soccer or serious malpractice associated with them. Staff may be worried that by reporting such issues they will be opening themselves up to victimisation or detriment or risking their job security. However, all staff are protected by law if they raise concerns in the right way. Provided they are acting in good faith, it does not matter if they are mistaken. This policy is designed to ensure workers raise concerns properly and to ensure that mechanisms exist at Shear Soccer to address issues raised quickly and effectively. Although this list is not exhaustive, examples of situations in which a disclosure may be made include:

- The committing of a criminal offence
- Concerns over discrimination of any kind
- Concerns about bullying behaviour

Activities for Disabled Persons: All activities carried out for disabled persons are carried out under the guidelines of the Disability Discrimination Act. Contractors: All external contractors engaged by Shear

Soccer undergo a suitability test prior to commencing work. This will include evidence of the contractor's Safety Record, Safety Policy, Liability Insurance, Risk assessment and details of Competent Person. On arrival the contractor will receive a site induction from a member of the company which covers safeguarding children and provide details of the club's expected code of behaviour. Contractors are subject to regular inspection from staff. In the event of a Contractor carrying out work on an area that is usually occupied by children this work, where possible, will be undertaken when children are not present.

Service Level Agreements: The club commitment to safeguarding is outlined in any partnership agreements, service level agreements or any other agreements that are in place with any service provider or for commissioned services insofar as those services relate to Children.

Definitions of Poor Practice and Abuse: Poor Practice is unacceptable and will be treated seriously with appropriate action. Any behaviour that contravenes existing Codes of Conduct, infringes an individual's rights and/or reflects a failure to fulfil the highest standards of care is an indication of Poor Practice. A child or young person may not be aware that poor practice or abuse is taking place, as they may deem the behaviour as acceptable.

What is abuse? - Abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and represents an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child or a vulnerable adult regardless of their age, gender, race, ability, culture or sexual orientation. **Signs of abuse:** There are four main forms of abuse identified as follows, should you have any concern that abuse is occurring you should contact the Senior Safeguarding Manager or nominated designated safeguarding Officer for advice. **Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse can be caused through an act or omission. **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to engage in sexual activity, regardless of 'implied consent.' This includes penetrative (penetration of vagina, anus & mouth) and non- penetrative acts (touching – over or under clothing, any part of the body in a sexual way). Sexual abuse includes involving children in the watching of sexual acts, and encouraging children to engage in over-sexualised behaviour, and grooming offences which can also be committed via the internet. Sexual abuse can be perpetrated by anyone, including a parent or guardian, caregiver, extended family, friend, neighbour, stranger or a person in a position of trust (includes 16/17 year olds). **Neglect:** Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a Child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the Child's health or development. This includes failing to provide adequate nutrition, clothing, shelter, health care and protection from harm. Emotional neglect is the failure to meet the child's ongoing emotional needs for affection and a sense of belonging. **Emotional Abuse:** Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development, including verbal attacks on a child's sense of self, repeated humiliation or rejection. Exposure to violence, drugs, alcohol abuse or severe conflict in the home, forced isolation, restraint or causing a child to be afraid much of the time may also cause emotional harm. Emotional abuse rarely happens in isolation and it is usually part of a pattern of how the child is being treated over a significant period.

Bullying/ Cyberbullying (strand of emotional abuse): Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical, verbal and emotional, both face to face and via social media and other online forums. The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, cause them significant harm (including self-harm). All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have in place rigorously enforced anti- bullying strategies. **Cyberbullying:** This is when a person uses technology i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger, tweets), to deliberately upset someone. Bullies often feel anonymous from the incident when it takes place online

and 'bystanders' can easily become bullies themselves by forwarding the information on.

Domestic Abuse: Is a significant indicator of risk of harm to children, who may suffer directly or indirectly if they live in households where there is domestic abuse. Domestic abuse is likely to have a damaging effect on the health and development of children. Concerns around radicalisation and extremism: The Counter terrorism and Security act places a duty on specified authorities, including sport in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (the prevent duty) There is also a duty on local authorities to ensure there is a Channel Panel in place . This must include the local authority and senior police officers. The panel will assess to what extent identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The Act requires partners of the Chanel Panel to cooperate with the panel in carrying out of its functions and the police in undertaking he initial assessment as to whether a referral is appropriate. There will be training rolled out in this area so that staff across the Trust and Academy are aware of signs to be aware of and referral pathways. Liaise with Safeguarding manager if there are any concerns about this. Signs and Symptoms: The list below is not exhaustive and the presence of one or more of these indicators is not proof that abuse is taking place though they are indicators that abuse may have taken place:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if on part of the body not normally prone to such injuries.
- An injury for which the explanation seems inconsistent.
- Disclosure of what appears to be an abusive act.
- Disclosure of unsatisfactory home circumstances i.e. Domestic abuse, drugs and alcohol misuse, mental health concerns of a parent or other person within the home.
- Someone expresses concern about the welfare of the child.
- Unexplained changes in behaviour (e.g. becoming quiet, withdrawn or sudden outbursts).
- Oversexualised behaviour
- Displays variations in eating patterns including overeating or loss of appetite.
- Weight loss for no apparent reason.
- Becomes increasingly dirty or unkempt.
- Evasive parents/carers

Remember that: It is not the responsibility of staff (permanent or casual) or volunteers to decide if abuse has taken place, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns, in accordance with this procedure.

Responding to Allegations or Suspicions: All staff, volunteers and players have a responsibility to ensure the safety and welfare of children and to take appropriate steps to ensure that suspicions and allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to quickly and appropriately. It is not the responsibility of anyone within Shear Soccer to decide whether child abuse has taken place. Where there is a complaint against a member of staff the one of the following may occur: • A criminal investigation led by the Police. • A child protection investigation led in a multi-agency approach by the Local Authority. • A disciplinary or misconduct investigation led by the company, which may also involve The Football Association. • Shear Soccer will delay an internal disciplinary or misconduct investigation while a criminal or local authority investigation takes place. • If a member of staff suspects abuse is taking place, or a report/allegation of abuse has been disclosed to them, where possible the Senior Safeguarding Manager or a Designated Safeguarding Officer should be contacted as early as possible. However, it is recognised that an individual may need to respond to a situation immediately and prior to such contact if the nature of the suspicion or report is putting the child concerned in immediate danger. The Safeguarding manager will notify the LADO and consult with the police and local authority about children's social care as appropriate. Useful contact details are listed at the end of this policy.

The following guidelines offer help and support in responding to abuse or a suspicion of abuse: Staff should:

- Listen carefully rather than question the child directly.
- Stay calm and not offer their personal opinions/thoughts.
- Be aware that medical or criminal evidence may be relevant.

- Tell the child that you are listening and taking what they say extremely seriously.
- Seek medical attention if necessary.
- Take further action – they may be the only person able to prevent future abuse.
- Inform a Designated safeguarding Officer and/or the Safeguarding Manager of the information or another senior member of staff if these are not available.
 - Write down everything said (in their words as far as possible) and what was done – accuracy and detail is important. Keep this information stored in a secure place. Concerns can be recorded on the Safeguarding reporting form.

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS listed below: If you have an urgent Safeguarding enquiry then please call The FA/NSPCC 24-hour helpline on 0808 800 5000 – or if it is an emergency because a child or children are at immediate risk, then call the Police or Children’s Social Care in your area.

Nettie Emanuel– Designated Safeguarding Officer: 07791 667 540 If you have an urgent Safeguarding enquiry then please call The FA/NSPCC 24-hour helpline on 0808 800 5000 – or if it is an emergency because a child or children are at immediate risk, then call the Police or Children’s Social Care in your area.

MASH: The Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the central resource for the whole of Devon receiving all safeguarding and child protection enquiries. It is staffed with professionals from a range of agencies including police, health, mental health, education, social care, housing, probation, early years, youth offending, fire, and domestic abuse services. Where appropriate, the MASH team is able to immediately trigger a response, the MASH Devon, 0345 155 1071, mashsecure@devon.gov.uk MASH Torbay, 01803 208100, mash@torbay.gov.uk Emphasis being on interventions to the child or young person and their family to prevent harm.

Devon County Council LADO, Jane Parmenter, 01392 384964

Torbay Council LADO, Ivan Sullivan, 01803 208541

Kooth <https://www.kooth.com/> Kooth, from XenZone, is an online counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people, accessible through mobile, tablet and desktop.

Childline Tel: 0800 11 11 <https://www.childline.org.uk/> When you call, you’ll get through to a counsellor, they’re there to listen and support you with anything you’d like to talk about. Or you can have a 1-2-1 counsellor chat online. No problem is too big or too small

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000, help@nspcc.org.uk Contact the NSPCC for help, advice and support if you’re worried about a child or even if you’re unsure.

FA Case Management Team: FA Safeguarding Team at safeguarding@TheFA.com

Safeguarding Policy to be Reviewed in November 2026 by Director (Adam Shearer) and Head of Safeguarding Annette Emanuel.