



Safeguarding policy

November 2025

Context

Switch the Play Foundation is the UK's only charity dedicated to supporting all athletes – irrespective of their sport, background or stage of their sporting career – with their successful transition into life outside of competing or taking part in sport. We recognise that, while sport offers many positives, it can also create environments where abuse and harm may occur, and where athletes may face barriers to recognising or reporting concerns about their own experiences.

In supporting athletes through their transition out of the competitive sporting environment, we are often in a unique position where individuals may disclose, have previously felt unable to disclose, or begin to recognise that they have experienced abusive or harmful environments. Abusive practice can become normalised and sportspeople may have previously felt there would be an impact on their sporting career by speaking out.

We recognise that the sporting environment can, at times, lead to decisions being made for athletes, with too much focus on performance rather than the person. This can create vulnerabilities during an athlete's transition out of sport. We have a responsibility to support individuals to regain agency, rebuild self-belief, and move forward with confidence beyond their sporting careers.

Principles

We are courageous. We will not shy away. That's not in our DNA. We exist with purpose, to empower the hidden majority to redefine their path. We are caring, we are focussed, we are collaborative, we are impactful.

What this means in safeguarding is that we have a clear commitment to promoting safer environments and to calling out poor behaviour and abuse. We will support all our staff, our teammates, trustees and the clients we serve to speak out and raise concerns, and we will listen and act on those concerns. We will show care and compassion and be a cheer leader for those who need help finding a voice or who have experienced abuse and harm.

We seek to collaborate with those in and out of the sport sector to prevent further abuse and harm, to learn and to move forward towards systemic change with a shared goal of making sport a safer place where everyone can thrive.

This policy is for you and about you if you are a member of staff, a teammate, a client, a trustee or a stakeholder of Switch the Play Foundation. You have the right to feel safe and protected from abuse and harm, in or out of sport, no matter who you are.

Policy Statements

- It is our policy to create safe psychological spaces in which individuals can feel able to raise concerns or worries about abuse and harm.
- It is our policy to identify when the work carried by and on behalf of Switch the Play may lead to individuals opening up to increased vulnerability, and have procedures, training and support available to manage this.
- It is our policy that it is our collective responsibility to call out poor behaviour, bullying and abuse/harm, to avoid the over reliance of victims having to come forward. We recognise that serious abuse and harm can start with poor behaviour or pushing the boundaries, so we will encourage reporting and calling out behaviour that does not meet with our team code.
- It is our policy to listen, and to manage safeguarding disclosures using best practice, kindness and compassion.
- It is our policy to support our teammates foster positive, boundaried, relationships with those they are mentoring to support clients move forward, avoiding over reliance or risk of harm.
- It is our policy to ensure that safeguarding risks are identified and managed in a timely and proportionate manner to minimise the likelihood of abuse or harm occurring to others. While some individuals who disclose abuse may not wish to progress a formal complaint, we have a duty to assess and respond to any identified risk. We will always take appropriate action to address risk, balance confidentiality with the need to protect others, and share information with statutory agencies and partner organisations in line with safeguarding and data protection principles. We will ensure proper recording and capture lessons learned.
- It is our policy that any third parties we work with are held to the same safeguarding expectations that we hold ourselves to.
- It is our policy to ensure any events run by Switch the Play Foundation are run in a way that supports everyone involved feel safe and able to raise concerns if they need to.

- It is our policy to consider specific contextual safeguarding concerns such as power imbalance in sporting environments, radicalisation through sport, online abuse etc through sport, and ensure staff and stakeholders remain up to date and aware of the risks people face in sport.
- It is our policy to ensure suitable checks are made on staff, volunteers and others who are in a position of trust.

Policy Review

This policy will serve as an agile document to provide our intentions towards safeguarding, and will be updated and reviewed when identified amendments are required or within a three year period if no updates have been necessary.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Young'.

Rob Young
CEO