

WHY HAVE DIFFERENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS?

In the past sports organisations have combined the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults in their training and their policies and procedures.

Many sport and physical activity organisations support both children and adults and it may seem easier to have one safeguarding policy and procedures. However, there are a number of valid reasons why this is not recommended:

- The issues for children and adults are not the same
- The definitions and terms used differ
- Procedures for reporting abuse and handling cases are not the same
- There is different legislation and policy
- Having one policy and procedure can in fact complicate matters

Having separate policies and procedures will enable everyone within a sport organisation to be clear about how to effectively safeguard both children and adults. Adding safeguarding adults at risk to a safeguarding children policy and procedures often dilutes the message about adults, particularly when organisations base the policy and procedures on those originally written for children.

One important difference between safeguarding adults and safeguarding children is an adult's right to self-determination. Adults may choose not to act at all to protect themselves and only in extreme circumstances will the law intervene - often when an adult is assessed to lack capacity in that area, or where the concerns may extend to children (e.g. living in the same household).

This can make safeguarding adults more complex because it is not solely focused on creating an appropriate process and system to safeguard; but also needs to take into account the importance of creating a culture which embraces the adults themselves and informs and consults them on all decisions about them.