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Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy

Maldon & Tiptree Football Club

Club policy for the protection and wellbeing of adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect. For committee approval; not an FA-issued or FA-approved document.

Policy owner	Club Board / Chairman
Chairman	Jamil Trofder
Club Secretary & Welfare Officer	Garry Neave-Houghting
Safeguarding contact	garry.mtfc@gmail.com | 07538 973069
Version / issue date	1.0 | November 2026
Approval status	Approved
Review	At least annually, and sooner after an incident or change in guidance

1. Our safeguarding commitment

Maldon & Tiptree FC is committed to providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive football environment for every adult. Abuse, neglect, exploitation, discrimination, bullying and harassment are unacceptable. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all staff, directors, coaches, players, volunteers, contractors and visitors must act on concerns and treat people with dignity and respect.

The club will take concerns seriously, respond promptly, listen to the adult's wishes wherever possible, and work with appropriate statutory agencies and football authorities. The club will not investigate suspected abuse itself.

2. Scope and who may be an adult at risk

This policy applies to all club activities, including matches, training, academy or education links, travel, hospitality, events, digital communications and interactions with supporters. It applies to adults aged 18 or over, including those with care and support needs.

Under the Care Act 2014, the statutory adult safeguarding duty concerns an adult who (a) has needs for care and support, whether or not the local authority meets those needs, (b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and (c) because of those needs is unable to protect themselves from the abuse or neglect or the risk of it. Not every disabled person or older adult meets this test; support and safeguarding must be person-centred, not based on labels.

3. Principles for working with adults

- Empowerment: support informed choices and the adult's own desired outcomes.
- Prevention: identify risks early and maintain safe environments.
- Proportionality: use the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk.
- Protection: offer support and representation where needed.
- Partnership: work with the adult, carers (where appropriate), agencies and The FA/County FA.
- Accountability: make responsibilities, decisions and records clear.

Presume an adult has capacity to make a particular decision unless established otherwise under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Provide accessible information and practical support. An unwise decision alone does not demonstrate lack of capacity. Seek specialist advice where capacity, coercion or best-interests decisions are in question.

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4. Roles and accountability

The Chairman, Jamil Trofder, provides board-level leadership, ensures adequate resources and oversight, and makes safeguarding a regular governance item. The Club Welfare Officer, Garry Neave-Houghting, is the club's first point of contact for safeguarding concerns, supports referrals, keeps restricted records and liaises with relevant agencies. The board must provide an alternative reporting route where a concern involves the Welfare Officer or Chairman.

Coaches, managers, staff and volunteers must follow this policy, complete role-appropriate training, maintain professional boundaries, promptly report concerns and cooperate with any statutory or football safeguarding process. Safeguarding responsibilities cannot be delegated away by a manager or director.

5. Recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation

Concerns may arise from a disclosure, observation, a change in behaviour, an injury, a pattern of incidents or information from another person. Types of harm include physical, sexual, psychological or emotional, financial or material abuse; domestic abuse; discriminatory abuse; organisational abuse; neglect and acts of omission; self-neglect; and modern slavery. Online grooming, coercive control, hate incidents, harassment and exploitation may also be relevant.

Signs are not proof of abuse. Do not assume that the absence of visible injuries means an adult is safe. Be alert to barriers to disclosure, including fear, dependence on a perpetrator, communication needs and worries about losing access to football.

6. What to do if someone raises a concern

- If there is immediate danger, a crime in progress or urgent medical need, call 999. Do not delay emergency assistance to contact a club official.
- Listen calmly; take the person seriously; avoid leading questions, promises of secrecy or personal investigation. Explain that information may need to be shared to protect them or others.
- Establish the adult's immediate safety, wishes and desired outcome where possible. Do not confront the alleged perpetrator.
- As soon as possible, record the adult's own words, date, time, location, observations, persons involved and actions taken. Separate fact from opinion.
- Report promptly to the Club Welfare Officer: Garry Neave-Houghting, 07538 973069, garry.mtfc@gmail.com. If unavailable, conflicted or implicated, report directly to Essex adult social care, police and/or the relevant County FA safeguarding contact.
- Where the adult may meet the Care Act safeguarding criteria, refer concerns to Essex County Council adult safeguarding services. Seek advice even if the threshold is uncertain. For non-emergency police matters, call 101.
- If the concern relates to a person in a position of trust, preserve evidence and seek statutory and County FA/FA safeguarding advice before taking internal disciplinary steps that could compromise enquiries.

Do not wait for the adult to make a formal complaint where there is a serious risk, suspected crime, coercion, or a risk to other people. Record the reasons for any referral or decision not to refer.

7. Consent, information sharing and confidentiality

Where safe and appropriate, explain proposed referrals and seek the adult's consent. An adult's refusal does not automatically prevent proportionate sharing where there is a lawful basis, serious risk, suspected crime, public interest or risk to others. Consider capacity, coercion and the adult's wishes; seek statutory advice where needed. Share only necessary information with people who need it, using secure methods in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

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Safeguarding records must be accurate, dated, access-controlled and kept separately from general club records. Retention and disposal must follow an approved club schedule and relevant legal or FA requirements. Never circulate disclosures through general team chats or social media.

8. Safer recruitment, training and conduct

The club will use proportionate safer recruitment procedures, including role descriptions, identity and reference checks, interviews, induction and appropriate DBS checks where the role is eligible. A DBS check is not a substitute for safe practice and must not be requested at an ineligible level. Staff and volunteers must complete the safeguarding learning required for their roles by The FA, league and County FA, with renewal dates monitored.

All personnel must observe the club code of conduct, maintain professional boundaries, avoid exploitative relationships, seek consent for contact or personal care, and challenge discriminatory or abusive behaviour. Staff must not use their position to obtain money, gifts, sexual contact or other personal benefit.

9. Safe participation and reasonable adjustments

The club will ask participants what adjustments or assistance they need and agree arrangements respectfully and confidentially. Consider accessible communication, safe travel, supervision, changing facilities, medical and emergency plans, and opportunities to raise concerns privately. Avoid unnecessary restrictions on an adult's independence; review individual risks with the person and, where appropriate, relevant professionals.

For photography, filming and online communication, follow the club's consent, privacy and digital communications rules. Do not share sensitive personal information or images that could expose someone to harm. Concerns about online exploitation must be reported using the same safeguarding route.

10. Allegations, whistleblowing and poor practice

Any allegation involving a club official, coach, volunteer or contractor must be treated fairly and without prejudgment, with immediate protective steps where proportionate. Report safeguarding allegations to the appropriate statutory services and football safeguarding authority; the club must not conduct its own fact-finding interview in place of an agency investigation. Employment or disciplinary action should be coordinated with relevant agencies and applicable legal obligations.

Anyone may report concerns in good faith without retaliation. Where club reporting routes are compromised, concerns may be raised directly with Essex adult safeguarding services, police or Essex FA / The FA safeguarding team. Complaints about poor practice must not be used to divert or delay safeguarding referrals.

11. Working with partners and reviewing risk

The club will cooperate with Essex County Council adult safeguarding, Essex Police, Essex FA, The FA, health professionals and education or community partners where appropriate. Relevant club risk assessments, matchday plans and emergency arrangements will be reviewed regularly, after serious incidents and when activities change. Where external organisations deliver activities, responsibilities and reporting routes must be agreed in advance.

12. Quick-reference reporting contacts

Emergency services	**999 — immediate danger or urgent medical help**
Police non-emergency	101
Club Welfare Officer	Garry Neave-Houghting | 07538 973069 | garry.mtfc@gmail.com

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Essex adult safeguarding	Essex County Council: use the current "Report adult abuse or neglect" route on essex.gov.uk; verify the current telephone/contact details before circulation
Football safeguarding	Essex FA / The FA safeguarding team: consult their current official safeguarding reporting pages
Independent advice	Ann Craft Trust: anncrafttrust.org (adult safeguarding guidance)

For a safeguarding concern involving a child under 18, use the club's separate Safeguarding Children Policy and children's social care referral procedures.

13. Adoption, approval and review

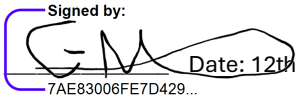
This policy takes effect only when approved by the club. The Chairman and Club Welfare Officer should check that the club's operating procedures, reporting arrangements, training and local contact details reflect this policy. It should be reviewed at least annually and following any material safeguarding incident, legislative change or updated FA guidance.

Approved by (Chairman): Jamil Trofder

Signature: 

Date: 12th November 2026

Club Secretary & Welfare Officer: Garry Neave-Houghting

Signature: 

Date: 12th November 2026

Next review due: 12th November 2027

Reference framework: Care Act 2014 (including statutory safeguarding guidance); Mental Capacity Act 2005; Equality Act 2010; Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR; The FA safeguarding guidance and role-specific requirements. This policy is club-authored and must be checked against the latest applicable FA, league and local-authority guidance before adoption.