Gender-Sensitive Safeguarding
Self-Assessment Package

About Gender-Sensitive Safeguarding

Safeguarding encapsulates all actions taken to promote safe sport and to prevent, reduce, and respond to violence, harassment and abuse. Adding a gender-sensitive lens to safeguarding means acknowledging gender norms, roles, and inequalities, and actively incorporating them into your safeguarding approaches.

While all athletes can experience harm in sport, gender and sexual identity can influence vulnerability to different forms of harm. For example, women and girls are disproportionately affected by sexual harassment and abuse, while men and boys are more likely to experience physical violence, and LGBTQ+ athletes face elevated risks across multiple forms of interpersonal violence. Gender-sensitive safeguarding practices address these unique risk factors and reflect the needs of people of marginalised genders while seeking to create safer sports environments for all.

Practical Guidance for Using the Self-Assessment Package

This self-assessment package is designed to help organisations reflect on both everyday practice and wider organisational systems for gender-sensitive safeguarding. The **On the Pitch Self-Assessment** focuses on the experiences created for players through coaching, supervision, facilities and team culture, while the **Off the Pitch Self-Assessment** focuses on leadership, policies, training, reporting, monitoring and organisational support. Together, they provide a fuller picture of current strengths, gaps and priorities for improvement. Completing both assessments can help your organisation assess what is happening in practice and identify where change is needed.

A key part of the gender-sensitive safeguarding self-assessment involves identifying appropriate sources of evidence from people, processes, policy and practice. The **Self-Assessment Survey Questions** list provides a question bank your organisation can use to get input from coaches, staff, and players. The **Summary Sheet** helps you bring together your evidence, identify patterns across the self-assessment, and highlight priority areas for action.

Suggested Approach

1. Identify a small lead group to coordinate the process, ideally including safeguarding leadership and people with operational responsibility.
2. Complete a gender-sensitive safeguarding survey with coaches, staff, and players.
3. Complete both the On the Pitch and Off the Pitch assessments with input from a mix of perspectives, such as coaches, staff, volunteers, and players. Where possible,

include the voices of people from marginalised groups.

4. Create space for honest input. Be careful not to let senior views outweigh lived experience.
5. Use discussion to bring the evidence together and score the assessments based on what is actually in place, not what is intended or assumed.
6. If there is little evidence that a criterion is being met consistently, the score should reflect that. If a criterion is not relevant in your context, it can be marked as not applicable.
7. Record the results on the summary sheet to show patterns across the two tools and highlight priority areas.
8. Use the findings to agree a small number of practical actions, responsibilities and review points for your organisation.
9. Prioritise a few achievable actions first, rather than trying to change everything at once.
10. Repeat the self-assessments periodically to track progress and update actions.

Used in this way, the self-assessment package can support practical organisational learning, strengthen accountability, and provide a clear starting point for a gender-sensitive safeguarding action plan that is evidence-informed, realistic and relevant to your context.

Note on Language

Throughout this document, references to 'women and girls' include all people who identify as women or girls, including both cisgender and transgender women and girls. 'Marginalised genders' is used to encapsulate all people who experience marginalisation based on gender, including women and girls as well as non-binary, trans, intersex and gender diverse people in all their identities.

Self-Assessment Scoring Scale

Below is the scale you can use to indicate where your organisation is along your gender-sensitive safeguarding journey for each of the criteria in the self-assessments. Please read each score description carefully and then rate that criterion based on the scale below.

1. Foundation Level: We are at the beginning of the journey and don't currently have anything in place

2. Preparing and Planning: We are currently reviewing areas of strengths and weaknesses and planning the steps to be taken

3. Basic Implementation: We have started to implement basic practices, tools and resources

4. Strong Implementation: We are implementing and have dedicated significant thought and resources to this process

5. Maintaining and Improving: We are implementing consistently and have a systematic process for reviewing and improving our practices

A key part of the self-assessment process involves identifying appropriate sources of evidence to inform your score. Without evidence, your self-assessment may be influenced by intended (not actual) practice, group think, confirmation bias, personal agendas, or political bias.

Evidence sources might include:

- Gender-sensitive safeguarding survey question responses from coaches, staff, players, and volunteers as part of the self-assessment process.
- Observations and feedback conversations with players, officials, coaches, staff, community, stakeholders.
- Programmes of work, partnership agreements, staff competency matrices, education and training materials, quality assurance reports, theories of change.
- Strategy documents, policy statements, annual reports, guidance notes and action plans.

On The Pitch Self-Assessment

Emotional Safety

A) Promoting respect and equality

Coaches, staff and volunteers actively model and reinforce respectful behaviour during all activities. This includes addressing inappropriate comments and behaviours immediately, ensuring all players are listened to equally, and explicitly stating team values around respect at the start of each activity.

For example, if a coach overhears players making jokes about someone's appearance, gender or ability, they stop the activity to address it in the moment rather than waiting until later.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

B) Challenging stereotypes and ensuring equal treatment

Coaches actively identify and challenge gender stereotypes, ensuring equal encouragement and expectations for all players regardless of gender. Selection for teams, playing time, and leadership roles (e.g., team captain) are based on clearly defined, non-gendered criteria such as skill development, effort, attendance, and team contribution.

This includes avoiding language that reinforces stereotypes (e.g., "run like a girl", "man up").

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

C) Positive representation

Our organisation uses banners, announcements, social media, campaigns, and team communications that actively promote respect and gender equality. Players are exposed to role models of all genders, including athletes, coaches, referees, and sports leaders from diverse gender identities and backgrounds.

For example, promotional materials feature players of all genders in active, skilled roles, and coaches share stories of successful athletes from diverse backgrounds.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

Physical Safety

A) Safe and accessible facilities

All players have access to quality, safe, and well-maintained playing spaces that are well-lit and free from hazards. Safe access routes to facilities (car parks, walking paths, footpaths) are maintained. Changing rooms and bathrooms are safe and accessible for participants of all genders, including people of marginalised genders, with options for privacy when needed.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

B) Consultation on safety and accessibility

We regularly consult our coaches and players regarding the safety and accessibility of our facilities, equipment, and support. Their feedback directly informs decisions about facility improvements, equipment purchases, and safety protocols. For example, when planning facility upgrades or purchasing new equipment, the organisation creates structured opportunities to gather input from diverse voices rather than assuming one solution fits all.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

C) Inclusive accommodation and travel arrangements

Players have safe, respectful accommodation arrangements during travel, including transgender and non-binary players. Chaperone and supervision policies ensure mixed-gender staff are available when needed. This includes offering private changing spaces, single-occupancy room options when possible, and allowing people to use the bathrooms and changing facilities they feel most comfortable with, as well as ensuring appropriate supervision during travel and overnight stays.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

D) Injury and medical protocols

Injury and medical protocols respect privacy, dignity, and cultural/gender needs. This includes ensuring medical staff ask about rather than assume players' needs or preferences, providing private spaces for medical assessments and treatment, and respecting players' choices about who is present during medical care.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

E) Risk assessment and management

Risk management plans are in place for all activities, including mitigation and response strategies. All coaches and staff understand their role in implementing these strategies. Risk assessments consider gender-specific safety concerns, including specific risks to women and girls, marginalised genders and LGBTQ+ players, such as harassment, exclusion, body shaming, as well as practical considerations like rooming, supervision, and bathroom access during travel.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

Inclusion

A) Flexible and inclusive uniforms and equipment

Uniforms and equipment are flexible and inclusive of cultural, religious, gender-identity, and body diversity considerations. This includes offering options that accommodate different body types, allowing religiously appropriate attire (e.g., hijabs, modest coverage), and ensuring gear fits players of all sizes and abilities. For example, teams provide a range of sizes and allow players to adapt uniforms to meet their cultural or personal needs while maintaining team identity.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

B) Non-discrimination and accessibility

No one is excluded from participation because of their gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, financial status, disability, or other aspects of identity. Programme delivery actively accommodates diverse needs including language access, mobility requirements, dietary restrictions, and varied learning styles.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

Education and Awareness

A) Staff knowledge and capacity

All coaches and staff are familiar with our safeguarding policies and their responsibilities for implementing them and have received safeguarding training. This includes understanding how to recognise safeguarding concerns, how to respond appropriately, when to escalate issues, and how to implement risk mitigation strategies in their daily practice.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

B) Player awareness and education

All players are aware of our safeguarding practices and reporting processes. Players receive age-appropriate education on safeguarding, gender inclusivity (which includes differences between sex and gender), consent, boundaries, and bystander intervention. This education is ongoing rather than one-time and is integrated into regular activities rather than treated as separate from sport participation.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

Response & Support

A) Safe reporting culture

Players, staff, and coaches are supported in raising concerns during activities. Players know who the safeguarding focal points are, how to report concerns, and can access multiple reporting pathways. Safeguarding focal points are visible and approachable, and disclosure conversations are normalised rather than treated as exceptional events.

For example, coaches regularly remind players who they can talk to, safeguarding information is displayed visibly at facilities, and coaches create informal check-in moments where players can raise concerns comfortably and confidentially (with the option to report anonymously).

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

B) Active monitoring and intervention

Staff monitor and proactively address discriminatory behaviour. Coaches and staff intervene consistently and immediately when gender-based harassment, discrimination, or exclusion occurs. Staff recognise and address gendered micro-aggressions such as dismissive comments, unequal attention, or jokes that reinforce stereotypes.

This includes intervening in player-to-player interactions, addressing problematic behaviour from parents or spectators, and creating consequences for repeated discriminatory behaviour.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

C) Collective responsibility

Our organisation creates and embraces a collective culture of responsibility for reporting and raising issues. Everyone, from players to coaches to administrators, understands that safeguarding is a shared responsibility, not solely the job of designated safeguarding officers or focal points.

This includes creating team agreements about looking out for one another, being supportive when people speak up about concerns, and ensuring no one faces negative consequences for raising legitimate safeguarding issues.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

Off The Pitch Self-Assessment

Governance, Leadership & Policies

A) Safeguarding leadership

Our organisation has a designated Safeguarding Lead appointed at the board or management level with clear responsibilities, authority, and resources. Our leadership team demonstrates commitment to gender-sensitive safeguarding through policy development, public messaging, budget allocation, and strategic planning that prioritises safeguarding alongside other organisational goals.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

B) Gender-sensitive safeguarding policy

Our organisation has separate policies for safeguarding children and young people and safeguarding adults (where applicable).

These policies explicitly address gender-based risks including harassment, abuse, discrimination and the specific vulnerabilities faced by women, girls, and LGBTQ+ individuals in sport. The policy uses person-centred and inclusive language that moves away from deficit-based terms like "vulnerable groups" or "victims" towards prevention-focused, strength-based language that emphasises building support and agency. Our policies focus on creating safer, more supportive environments rather than simply protecting people from harm.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

C) Participatory policy development

We co-create, inform, and regularly review policies with diverse voices within our organisation, including women, non-binary people, LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and people from different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. When designing safeguarding policies, tools and processes, we use participatory approaches that actively seek and implement input from those most affected, gaining varied and gender-diverse perspectives by consulting with players, staff and coaches in the creation process.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

Prevention & Risk Assessment

A) Creating space for marginalised voices

We create dedicated space and resourcing for women, people of marginalised genders, and other marginalised groups to meet and discuss the issues that concern them in our sporting environment, and we support them to articulate and propose improved policies and practices based on their own experiences. This includes providing time during work hours, facilitating safer and more inclusive spaces for conversation through person-centred and trauma-informed approaches, and ensuring that insights from these discussions inform organisational decision-making.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

B) Safer recruitment practices

Our recruitment processes include comprehensive screening, reference checks, and background vetting for all staff, volunteers, board members, and coaches. Screening considers safeguarding concerns and assesses candidates' understanding of and commitment to gender-sensitive safeguarding principles.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

C) Code of conduct

Our organisation has a Code of Conduct which is gender-sensitive, tailored to our unique sporting context and the needs of our community, and was created with input from our coaches, staff and players. All staff, volunteers, board members, and coaches have read, understood, and signed the Code of Conduct. The Code includes expectations for respectful communication, clear boundaries, and zero tolerance for sexism, homophobia, transphobia, gender-based harassment and violence, and all forms of discrimination, harassment and abuse. This includes clear definitions of unacceptable behaviours, which are aligned with local legislation.

Select rating: ☐ **1** ☐ **2** ☐ **3** ☐ **4** ☐ **5**

Why did you give yourself this score?

Training & Awareness

A) Understanding power dynamics

We recognise that power imbalances are an underlying problem for safeguarding and commit to addressing how these manifest within our organisation and programmes. This includes understanding the unique power relationships in sport and how women, girls, marginalised genders and LGBTQ+ people are at greater risk of harm due to intersecting factors including gender, age, and positional power.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

B) Regular safeguarding training

Everyone in the organisation, including coaches, staff, players and volunteers, receives regular gender-sensitive safeguarding training that is updated to reflect current best practices and learning. Training is mandatory, appropriately scheduled, and includes ongoing refresher sessions rather than one-time orientation.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

C) Trauma-informed training delivery

We use a gender-sensitive safeguarding lens when conducting staff training, acknowledging that cultural gender norms, roles, and inequalities may impact how staff members engage with training. We make accommodations and modifications to ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants. This includes providing content warnings for trainings that discuss gender-based violence, domestic violence, or sexual violence; offering opportunities for staff to opt out if participating could cause harm; requiring external facilitators to read and sign our safeguarding policy; signposting to support services; and co-designing training content with diverse perspectives.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

Reporting & Response

A) Survivor-centred reporting procedures

Our reporting and response procedures are safe, transparent, survivor-centred, and gender-sensitive. We maintain multiple reporting channels including online, in-person, and anonymous options that are accessible to all genders and ages. Procedures clearly outline what happens after a report is made, expected timeframes, and support available to those who report.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

B) Due process and confidentiality

Our investigations follow due process and respect confidentiality while balancing the safety of all involved. Investigators are trained in trauma-informed, gender-sensitive approaches and understand the specific dynamics of gender-based harm in sport contexts.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

C) Referral pathways and specialist support

Our case management includes established referral pathways to specialist services such as gender-based violence services, LGBTQ+ support organisations, mental health services, and legal support. We maintain current contact information and relationships with these services to enable timely, appropriate referrals.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

Monitoring, Learning & Improving

A) Gender-disaggregated data and reporting

Our board receives safeguarding reports that include gender-disaggregated data. We systematically collect, analyse, and disaggregate data on safeguarding concerns by gender, age and other relevant demographics to identify patterns, gaps, and areas requiring targeted intervention.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

B) Learning from incidents

We learn from safeguarding incidents and use these learnings to review and adapt our safeguarding policies and processes. We document incidents, and use this information to analyse organisational culture and practices that may create conditions conducive to harm. This analysis informs continuous improvement without compromising confidentiality.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

C) Annual review with diverse input

We review safeguarding practices annually with input from players, staff, coaches, and other stakeholders. Reviews assess the effectiveness of policies, identify emerging risks, and ensure practices remain current with best practices in gender-sensitive safeguarding.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

D) Protection from retaliation

We have systems in place to prevent repercussions for anyone who reports safeguarding incidents in good faith. This includes clear anti-retaliation policies, monitoring for retaliation, providing support to those who report, and taking disciplinary action against anyone who retaliates.

Select rating: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Why did you give yourself this score?

Summary Sheet

This summary sheet is designed to help you bring together your evidence, identify patterns across the self-assessment, and highlight priority areas for action.



Minimal or no evidence

We have taken tentative or no steps towards meeting the criteria for gender-sensitive safeguarding.

Self -assessment scores N/A and 1



Some evidence

We recognise the importance of gender-sensitive safeguarding and are making changes needed to meet the criteria.

Self -assessment scores 2 and 3



Comprehensive evidence

Meeting the criteria for gender-sensitive safeguarding is standard practice, and responsive strategies are part of our culture.

Self -assessment scores 4 and 5

Self-assessment evidence in each domain

ON THE PITCH

Gender-Sensitive Safeguarding Goal: Emotional safety is promoted through respect, fairness, and positive representation.	☐	☐	☐
Gender-Sensitive Safeguarding Goal: Physical safety is supported through regular consultation, accessible facilities, and risk management.	☐	☐	☐
Gender-Sensitive Safeguarding Goal: Inclusion is strengthened by non-discrimination and inclusive uniforms and equipment.	☐	☐	☐
Gender-Sensitive Safeguarding Goal: Education and awareness are strengthened through knowledgeable staff and ongoing training for players.	☐	☐	☐
Gender-Sensitive Safeguarding Goal: Response & Support are strengthened by a safe reporting culture and collective responsibility.	☐	☐	☐

OFF THE PITCH

Self-assessment evidence in each domain



Gender-Sensitive Safeguarding Goal: Governance and policies are supported by leadership, inclusive language and participatory policy development.	☐	☐	☐
Gender-Sensitive Safeguarding Goal: Prevention & risk assessment creates space for marginalised voices and a clear code of conduct.	☐	☐	☐
Gender-Sensitive Safeguarding Goal: Training & awareness include understanding power dynamics and trauma-informed delivery.	☐	☐	☐
Gender-Sensitive Safeguarding Goal: Reporting and response are safe, fair, transparent, confidential and include access to specialist support.	☐	☐	☐
Gender-Sensitive Safeguarding Goal: Monitoring, learning and improving, are strengthened by annual reviews with diverse input.	☐	☐	☐

Self-Assessment Survey Questions

- What is your role? (i.e. athlete, coach, staff member, volunteer)
- Do you know if your club has a safeguarding policy? (yes/no/don't know)
- Do you feel that the safeguarding policy accommodates the needs of women and girls, people of marginalised genders, and LGBTQ+ people? Why/why not?
- Have you ever taken a safeguarding training course? (yes/no)
- Does your club have a designated person that both athletes and staff can go to if they don't feel safe? (e.g. safeguarding lead or welfare officer)
- Do you know who the designated safeguarding lead is?
- Do you know how to report a safeguarding concern?
- Do you feel safe to report a safeguarding concern? Why/why not?
- What would make you feel safer in sharing concerns?
- Do you feel comfortable in reporting a safeguarding concern? Why/ why not?
- What would make you feel more comfortable in sharing concerns?
- Have you ever reported a concern?
- If so, were you satisfied with the process? Why/why not?
- Does your organisation/club have a Code of Conduct?
- Have you read the Code of Conduct?
- Have you signed the Code of Conduct?
- Are you satisfied with the Code of Conduct? Why/Why not?
- Do you feel that our facilities are safe?
- If not, how could the safety of our facilities be improved?
- Do you feel that our facilities are accessible for all?
- If not, how could the accessibility of our facilities be improved?
- Does your club have a private and safe space to change clothes?
- Do you feel comfortable with the options provided for accommodation when travelling for competition/training camps? Why/Why not?
- Is our team uniform suitable for your needs? Why/why not?
- Is our sports equipment suitable for your needs? Why/why not?
- Have you ever seen a coach/staff member take action against any form of discrimination, harassment or abuse in the moment? If so, how?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you have identified and acted on any form of discrimination, harassment or abuse yourself? If so, how?
- Have you ever been asked for input for the purposes of developing a safeguarding policy?
- Have you ever been asked for input for the purposes of developing a code of conduct?
- Do you have gender diversity in your coaching staff?

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