



Co-funded by
the European Union

D2.1 – SAFEGUARDING IN GRASSROOTS SPORT

SAFEGUARDING APPROACHES FOCUSING ON GRASSROOTS SPORT ENVIRONMENT

October 2026

A mapping and analysis of existing safeguarding frameworks in
sport and tools to implement them at grassroots level

Table of Contents

I.	Summary	3
II.	Introduction.....	5
III.	Mapping and analysis of the existing safeguarding frameworks in sport	9
IV.	Mapping and analysis of the existing tools to implement safeguarding frameworks at grassroots level	50
V.	Analysis and recommendations.....	68
VI.	The importance of culture and cultural change	78
VII.	Final conclusions	83
VIII.	Research and project references.....	84
IX.	Acknowledgements and Transparency	86

I. Summary

Principal conclusion

A safeguarding policy is a necessary foundation, but it is not evidence that safeguarding is functioning in practice. For grassroots sport, the decisive question is whether safeguarding is understood, resourced, enacted, discussed, reviewed and trusted in everyday organisational life.

This deliverable maps a partner-selected sample of safeguarding frameworks, policies, programmes and implementation tools that are relevant to grassroots sport. The sample is intentionally heterogeneous: it includes international and national standards, federation policies, national systems, club-level concepts, reporting structures, educational programmes and behavioural interventions. Because these resources differ in purpose, legal status, target group, geography and maturity, they should not be ranked as though they were equivalent products.

The analysis therefore distinguishes between the existence of safeguarding measures and the conditions that make those measures more likely to be implemented meaningfully. This distinction is supported by recent research. Gomez and Schoch (2026) describe a risk of 'performative compliance', whereby visible measures may signal commitment without necessarily forming a comprehensive strategy with lasting practical impact. Research on safeguarding culture similarly shows that effective practice depends on the interaction between safety-management systems, committed leadership and stakeholder engagement (Owusu-Sekyere, Rhind and Hills, 2021).

Across the mapped examples, the most transferable approaches for grassroots organisations are those that combine **a clear minimum safeguarding system with practical implementation support**: simple role-specific guidance, staged self-assessment, realistic templates, accessible reporting routes, repeated education, external support and opportunities for participants and volunteers to practise how they would respond to difficult situations. The strongest examples also connect prevention,

response and organisational learning rather than treating safeguarding as a one-off policy-writing exercise.

The main implications for the SAFE project are:

1. **Do not create another large policy repository.** Curate and translate existing high-quality resources into short, role-specific and context-sensitive implementation pathways.
2. **Measure safeguarding readiness** through behaviour and implementation indicators as well as document existence. A club should be able to show not only that a policy exists, but that people know what it means, where to report and what happens next.
3. **Use micro-learning** to address recurring real-life situations in grassroots sport: coach-athlete boundaries, changing rooms, travel, digital communication, bullying, discriminatory behaviour, bystander action, reporting and responding to concerns.
4. **Design for different levels of organisational capacity.** Clubs should be able to start with a clear minimum baseline and then progress towards more mature practice without being overwhelmed.
5. **Treat cultural change as the organising principle** that connects policies, leadership, education, participant voice, bystander behaviour, reporting and continuous review.

II. Introduction

SAFE project and purpose of this deliverable

SAFE – Safeguarding Approaches Focusing on grassroots sport Environment – aims to strengthen safeguarding in the everyday environments where children, young people and adults train, compete and build communities. The project deliberately builds on existing initiatives rather than starting from scratch. Its added value is to identify what can be adapted for the realities of grassroots sport and to support organisations in developing the readiness and confidence to apply safeguarding mechanisms in practice.

In line with the project description, SAFE will develop awareness materials, educational resources and micro-learning tools, while supporting a broader cultural change across the sector. The project therefore needs more than a catalogue of policies. D2.1 should provide a reasoned bridge between existing knowledge and the later SAFE tools: it should identify what is already available, where implementation tends to become difficult, which approaches appear most transferable, and what the SAFE toolkit should add.

Project reference: [SAFE project – ENGSO Education](#)

European safeguarding context

Safeguarding in sport has become an increasingly important European priority, linked to children's rights, human rights, equality, integrity, good governance and the prevention of interpersonal violence. The EU and the Council of Europe have contributed through policy cooperation, funding, recommendations and rights-based instruments, while international and national sport bodies have developed a rapidly expanding range of standards, policies, toolkits, reporting systems and educational resources.

This expansion is positive, but it creates a second challenge for grassroots sport: abundance does not automatically produce implementation. Small and volunteer-led organisations may face limited time, expertise, confidence and access to specialist support. In addition, safeguarding practices operate within established sport cultures, power relationships and informal norms. Research has consistently shown that

organisational tolerance of harmful behaviour, power imbalances, cultures of silence and dominant performance values can undermine formal safeguards (Mountjoy et al., 2016; Roberts, Sojo and Grant, 2020; Tuakli-Wosornu et al., 2024).

Aim and research questions of the mapping

The purpose of this mapping is to identify and critically examine selected safeguarding frameworks and implementation tools that can inform SAFE's work with European grassroots sport organisations. Rather than asking only 'which framework is best?', the analysis asks a more useful set of implementation questions:

1. Which characteristics make a safeguarding framework or tool easier to understand, adapt and use in grassroots settings?
2. Which contextual or organisational conditions enable implementation, and which conditions constrain it?
3. Where is there evidence of practical use or evaluation, and where are conclusions based mainly on document design or partner experience?
4. How can SAFE help clubs move from formal compliance towards safeguarding that is embedded in everyday behaviour and organisational culture?

Methodological approach

This deliverable is a qualitative, partner-informed mapping rather than a systematic review or an effectiveness evaluation. SAFE partners nominated frameworks and tools that they considered relevant to their national, sport-specific or organisational contexts. The material was then reviewed comparatively to identify recurring implementation-enabling and implementation-constraining characteristics.

To make comparison more transparent, the current analysis uses the following SAFE implementation-readiness lens. The dimensions are informed by the criteria already used in the partner mapping and by research on safeguarding systems, organisational culture and implementation.

Dimension	Key question for grassroots transfer
1. Accessibility and proportionality	Can volunteers and non-specialists understand the resource quickly, and can a small club apply it without disproportionate administrative burden?
2. Governance and accountability	Are responsibilities, decision-making, review arrangements and escalation routes clear?
3. Prevention and everyday practice	Does the resource translate principles into concrete behaviour, risk management, safer recruitment, communication and day-to-day routines?
4. Reporting, response and support	Are concerns easy to raise, are next steps clear, and is there access to appropriate internal or external support?
5. Education and behavioural capability	Does it build practical competence through role-specific, repeated or scenario-based learning rather than awareness alone?
6. Culture, leadership and participation	Does it address leadership behaviour, power, participant voice, bystander action, inclusion and the norms that shape what is tolerated?
7. Monitoring and learning	Does it support self-assessment, feedback, incident learning, review and continuous improvement?
8. Transferability and contextual fit	Can the approach be adapted to different sports, legal systems, languages, organisational sizes and levels of resourcing?

Limitations and interpretation of 'what works'

The mapping should not be read as a causal ranking of safeguarding interventions. Most mapped resources have not been evaluated using comparable outcome measures, and many are policies or toolkits whose public documentation cannot show how consistently

they are used. A policy that looks comprehensive on paper may be weakly implemented; conversely, a concise resource may be highly effective when supported by strong leadership, training and external services.

Accordingly, the terms 'works', 'useful' and 'effective' are used cautiously in this report. Where the document discusses likely strengths or limitations, these are best understood as judgements about implementation readiness and transferability, supported by the mapped content, partner experience and, where available, research evidence. The absence of published evaluation evidence should not be interpreted as evidence that an initiative is ineffective.

The individual entries below retain the partners' examples and practical observations. The later synthesis draws across these entries using the implementation-readiness lens above and gives greater weight to conclusions that are also supported by research or documented implementation experience.

III. Mapping and analysis of the existing safeguarding frameworks in sport

Please note that the words 'useful' and 'relevant' below mean useful and relevant for the sake of the SAFE project in particular, which focuses on the grassroots level. We are not doubting that any of the frameworks below is useful or relevant on safeguarding in sports in its particular context.

The frameworks and tools in this document were screened on accessibility, transferability, implementation effort, relevance for different target groups and evidence of practical use in the particular context of grassroots sports. The terms useful and relevant have to be interpreted with the criteria above in mind.

The selected frameworks and tools were each selected by a partner of the SAFE project. Each partner assessed the criteria above combined with personal experiences to ensure many relevant frameworks and tools were collected. While doing this the document ensured it took all the high value experience of the partners.

The mapping has a predominantly European focus because it reflects the contexts and experience of the SAFE partners. A small number of non-European or international examples are included where partners considered their design or implementation lessons transferable to European grassroots sport.

III. 1. International Multisport Frameworks

[International Safeguards for Children in sport](#)

Name of the organisation: UNICEF UK

Year of publication: 2014

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

Focused on both elite and grassroots sport.

Very practical and focused on the organisational side of sport.

Broad view, from policy, risk management, code of conduct to procedures for recruitment and responding to violations of integrity.

Lots of other frameworks are based on this document.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

Focused on the **organisational side of sport**, less on the individual side of sport.

There are 8 safeguards which are very important for the grassroots level but they are not worked out yet and therefore not implementable easily. Safeguard 1 for example notes the importance of a code of conduct but a grassroots club can't find a template of any concrete help on how to make a code of conduct in this framework.

IOC Consensus Statement on Interpersonal Violence and Safeguarding in Sport

Name of the organisation: International Olympic Committee

Year of publication: 2024

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

Available in multiple languages (9) + global effort as it's written by 15 international experts.

Involvement of athletes perspectives and voices.

Broad focus: taking in account experiences of ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, women, children and individuals with a disability.

Emphasises a **whole-of-system approach**: prevention, detection, response and recovery.

Integrates human rights, good governance and mental health.

Lots of safeguarding frameworks of international sport organisations are based upon this document.

Introduction of a new socioecological model of interpersonal violence in sport.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

Is only a base document -> needs follow up (and practical translation) to and for grassroots level.

Not implementable for a grassroots club.

Not easily understandable for non-experts.

International Safeguards for Adults in sport

Name of the organisation Safe Sport International:

Year of publication: 2023

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

Expands safeguarding beyond children by recognising that **adults in sport can also experience abuse, harassment, exploitation, and neglect.**

Provides one of the first comprehensive **international safeguarding frameworks specifically focused on adults in sport.**

Particularly relevant in the context of growing awareness of **power abuse, harassment, discrimination, and athlete welfare issues** in elite and grassroots sport.

Offers organisations a structured framework for creating **safe, inclusive, and accountable environments for all participants**, regardless of age.

Useful because it mirrors the child safeguarding structure, enabling organisations to develop **coherent “whole-of-sport” safeguarding systems**.

Highlights the importance of **trauma-informed approaches**, support systems, and safe reporting pathways.

Reinforces that safeguarding is linked not only to protection, but also to **good governance, integrity, and organisational responsibility**.

Encourages continuous improvement through **monitoring, evaluation, and partnership working**.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

As a newer framework, it currently has **less visibility, uptake, and tested implementation experience** than child safeguarding standards.

Adult safeguarding in sport still lacks clear consensus internationally, which can create **ambiguity in interpretation and application**.

Some concepts remain relatively broad, especially regarding **boundaries between welfare, wellbeing, and safeguarding**.

Limited practical examples for dealing with complex cases involving elite sport power dynamics or institutional abuse.

May be difficult for organisations to operationalise without existing safeguarding infrastructure or specialist expertise.

Voluntary adoption reduces consistency and accountability across the sport sector.

III.2. International Single-sport Frameworks

[International Hockey Federation – Safeguarding policy](#)

Name of the organisation: International Hockey Federation

Year of publication: 2019

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

Clear standards and guidance

The policy provides an international benchmark for what safe and appropriate behaviour in sport looks like. Grassroots clubs can use it as a foundation when developing their own safeguarding policies.

Increases awareness of risks

The document highlights key risks such as abuse, harassment, and misuse of power, helping to raise awareness at the local level.

Core principles applicable at all levels

Elements such as:

- codes of conduct
- reporting procedures
- protection of minors.

Support for policy development

Clubs without an existing safeguarding framework can use this policy as a reference or model to build their own approach.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

Written from a '**hockey** perspective'.

The document is rather **general** and therefore remains somewhat superficial to implement directly in grassroots clubs. There is limited practical guidance.

Focused on an elite and international context: the policy is mainly designed for international federations and high-performance sport, which can make some measures less suitable for small, local clubs.

Quite complex with a formal structure: it often includes formal and detailed procedures that may be difficult to implement in volunteer-based organisations.

International Tennis Federation – Safeguarding policy children and adults

Name of the organisation: International Tennis Federation

Year of publication: 2026

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

Comprehensive safeguarding approach

Unlike some policies that focus only on children, the ITF policy also includes **adult safeguarding**, making it highly relevant for clubs with diverse age groups.

Clear behavioural standards

The policy outlines **codes of conduct and expected behaviours** for coaches, staff, and volunteers, which grassroots clubs can directly adapt.

Strong focus on prevention and awareness

It emphasises:

- recognising signs of abuse
- creating a safe environment
- fostering a respectful culture

These are highly applicable in local club settings.

Reporting and response procedures

The policy provides guidance on **how to report and respond to concerns**, which is essential for grassroots clubs to ensure proper handling of incidents.

Holistic safeguarding perspective

It addresses different forms of harm such as:

- emotional, physical, and sexual abuse
- neglect

- bullying and harassment
making it a **useful educational tool** for clubs.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

Designed for international and professional environments

The policy is primarily intended for **ITF events, elite competitions, and national federations**, meaning some procedures may not fit smaller clubs.

Level of detail and complexity

It includes **extensive guidelines and formal processes**, which can be difficult to implement in volunteer-driven organisations.

Limited direct practical translation

While the principles are clear, clubs may need to **translate them into simpler, day-to-day practices** (e.g. training session supervision, parent involvement).

Resource requirements

Some recommendations assume the availability of:

- safeguarding officers
 - structured reporting systems
 - trained personnel
- which are not always present at the grassroots level.

III.3. European Multisport Frameworks

Building European Safe Sport Together (BESST)

Name of the organisation: Project 'Building European Safe Sport Together (BESST)' –
Funded by the European Union

Year of publication: 2023-2024

The Erasmus+ BESST project first and foremost created a new basis from which abuse in sport can be combated. It does so by **providing a unified definition (“transgressive behaviour”)** as well as outlining/defining all kinds of abuse, thus bringing attention to also lesser-known forms of misconduct. The results of the project is not one framework or tool per se, but rather **several tools/frameworks tailored to the different actors/stakeholders** we experience in sports, such as sport organisations, sport event organizers and so on. It also allows you to choose your specific objective, e.g. If you want to raise awareness, educate others on safeguarding/misconduct. In **BESST 2.0** there is also a focus on the use of **VR as a potential way** to ensure better safeguarding/fighting of transgressive behaviour.

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

BESST provides fundamentals that matter to anyone: Establishing a unified definition (Transgressive behaviour), giving access to resources such as frameworks, toolkits etc. depending on your role in the sport system and also deep-dives into Safe Sport research, culminating e.g. in [defining all kinds of misconduct in sport in a report \(page 28 onwards\)](#).

The frameworks ([e.g. for clubs](#)) give kind of a step-by-step guidance on how to implement sound safeguarding, what to do in case of misconduct and also inform about good practices elsewhere.

- BESST provides a [unified definition](#) of transgressive behaviour
 - Also a comprehensive [overview of definitions of different forms of misconduct](#) (in sport).
- Provides [frameworks](#) and [tools](#) for **each role in sport** (coach, organizer, ...)
- The framework(s) gives **step-by-step guidance on implementing safeguarding**, what to do in case of misconduct and inform about good practices.
- BESST 2.0 focuses on **Virtual Reality**

- Might be a thing to take in consideration when focusing on micro learning in the SAFE project.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

There is no exclusive focus on the grassroots level, meaning that findings might not reflect challenges on the grassroots level to the utmost extent.

BESST 2.0 focuses on Virtual Reality (VR) as a potential future tool in spreading Safe Sport education/frameworks – yet, this technology might be too complicated for the most basic levels of grassroots sport (as of now).

- **No exclusive focus on grassroots level.** Findings might not 100 % reflect challenges on the grassroots level.
- BESST 2.0 is still developing and **virtual reality might be too high a threshold** for the grassroots level

Partnership European Fair Play Movement (EFPM) with the European School Sport Federation (ESSF)

Name of the organisation: European Fair Play Movement and European School Sport Federation

This initiative is a close cooperation between EFPM and ESSF. The goal is to contribute, in the specific context of school sport, to the protection of minors by shaping **safe sporting cultures in schools** and reinforcing educator responsibility.

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

This joint initiative between EFPM and ESSF contributes to the protection of minors by shaping **safe sporting cultures in schools** and reinforcing educator responsibility.

Very practical and focused on the organisational side of sport Key educational objectives include:

- Integrating fair play as a **core educational value**, not just a competition principle
- Promoting respect, inclusion, dignity, and integrity in school sport environments
- Supporting **educational programmes and Erasmus+ projects** with ethical and protective dimensions

Recognising exemplary behaviour as a way to reinforce positive norms in youth sport.

Broad view, from policy, risk management, code of conduct and considers violations of integrity in the school sport framework

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

It focuses specifically on school sports.

[Stop Racism in Sport and EFPM common initiatives in safeguarding participants from Racism](#)

Name of the organisation: European Fair Play Movement

Stop Racism in Sport was founded following an observation made by Thierry Witsel: there is a lack of organisations in Belgium that specifically combat racism in the world of sport.

Following this observation, the organisation was founded with the aim of getting out into the field to work closely with victims of everyday racism, both on the sidelines and on the

pitch. It is driven by a strong desire to bring about change and to enable everyone to practise their sport without fear of being judged or discriminated against because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion.

EFPM shares the objectives of Stop Racism in Sport and together the two organisations use Fair Play as one of the tools to combat racism in sport.

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

EFPM and *Stop Racism in Sport* are aligned through a **common safeguarding objective**:

Preventing discrimination, racism, and exclusion as core safeguarding risks in sport, particularly for children, young people, and vulnerable groups.

Within EU safeguarding frameworks, **racism and discrimination are recognised as forms of psychological harm and abuse**, and therefore fall fully under:

- Safeguarding of minors
- Protection of athletes' dignity and integrity
- Safe and inclusive sport environments

The EFPM–Stop Racism in Sport association operates primarily at the **educational, preventive, and cultural level**, which is explicitly encouraged by EU sport policy.

Through EFPM-recognised educational actions and *Stop Racism in Sport* expertise, safeguarding-relevant activities include:

- **Workshops for young athletes and coaches**
 - a. Understanding racism as a safeguarding issue
 - b. Linking fair play values to safe behaviour
- **Awareness sessions in schools and grassroots sport**
 - a. Inclusive sport culture
 - b. Respect for diversity

- **Educational materials and campaigns**

- a. Anti-racism messages framed as athlete protection and dignity

Safeguarding contribution:

- Addresses **bullying, harassment, and exclusion**
- Strengthens **protective environments** in youth and amateur sport

Reinforces the role of adults as safeguarding duty-bearers.

This approach promotes **norm-setting and role-model education**, an important complement to formal safeguarding policies.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

The process promotes positive initiatives and is not, as such, locally or nationally embedded.

- EFPM and *Stop Racism in Sport* **do not act as investigative or enforcement bodies**
- Their role is **educational, preventive, and awareness-raising**
- Safeguarding cases remain the responsibility of:
 - a) Sport organisations
 - b) Safeguarding officers
 - c) Public authorities

This clear division of roles is consistent with EU safeguarding guidance.

III.4. European Single-sport frameworks

Union of European Football Associations – Child Safeguarding Policy

Name of the organisation: Union of European Football Associations (UEFA)

Year of publication: 2020

Other relevant information: The policy has to be combined with the UEFA child safeguarding toolkit.

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

Is made with both national federations and clubs in mind

Has been made more practical applicable via [‘the UEFA Child & Youth Protection Toolkit’](#)

Specifically includes grassroots level

UEFA explicitly promotes safeguarding across **all levels of football**, including **amateur and youth sport**, making the policy directly relevant for local clubs.

Practical tools and templates available

The policy is supported by a **safeguarding toolkit (2020)** that includes:

- codes of conduct
- reporting templates
- guidance documents

These resources help clubs translate policy into **practical actions**.

Focus on education and culture:

- training coaches and volunteers
- involving parents

- informing children
- all of which are essential in grassroots environments.

Clear and structured approach

The framework is organised into **key safeguarding goals**. To make it easier for club to gradually implement safeguarding goals as:

- prevention
- awareness-raising
- reporting mechanisms

Adaptability to context:

The toolkit recognises that safeguarding must be **adapted to local realities**, allowing clubs to apply measures according to their size and resources.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

Written from a football perspective

The policy is solely focused on youth football

The policy writes out principles but doesn't say how to implement principles as such

Still somewhat complex for small clubs. Despite being practical, the policy and toolkit can still be too detailed or structured for very small, volunteer-run clubs.

III.5. National Multisport Frameworks

EDU-ACT Project – Educational Action Through Sport

Name of the organisation: EDU-ACT Project – **Funded by the European Union**

Year of publication: 2024 – 2026

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

The EDU-ACT project is useful for a grassroots safeguarding toolkit because it promotes inclusive and participatory learning **through sport-based educational activities**. The project uses **non-formal and interactive learning methods** that encourage engagement, cooperation and active participation among young people and organisations. This is highly relevant for grassroots sport environments where practical and accessible educational approaches are often more effective than purely theoretical materials.

EDU-ACT is based on interactive and collaborative learning methods that can easily be adapted by grassroots clubs and organisations. The project encourages participation, social inclusion and cooperation between different stakeholders, which supports the development of safer and more inclusive sport environments.

Another strength is its **accessibility and adaptability**. The activities and educational approaches can be implemented at local level **without requiring highly specialised resources** or complex governance structures. This makes the project particularly suitable for smaller grassroots organisations and volunteer-led clubs.

The project is also relevant because it demonstrates how sport can be used as a tool for education, inclusion and community engagement. Its practical and activity-based approach may support awareness-raising and positive behavioural development among young participants.

Condensed version:

EDU-ACT promotes inclusive and interactive learning through sport-based

educational activities. The project encourages participation, cooperation and social inclusion using practical and adaptable methods suitable for grassroots organisations and volunteer-led clubs.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

The EDU-ACT project is less useful as a standalone safeguarding framework because it is primarily focused on educational and inclusion activities rather than detailed safeguarding governance or formal protection procedures. It does not provide a complete operational safeguarding system with reporting pathways, case-management procedures or structured safeguarding standards.

*Another limitation is that the project is largely activity- and project-based. Long-term sustainability may depend on continued funding, organisational capacity and local implementation support. **Grassroots organisations may therefore require additional safeguarding guidance** and institutional support beyond the project activities themselves.*

The project is also less prescriptive than formal safeguarding frameworks. Organisations seeking detailed policies, compliance procedures or legal safeguarding standards may need complementary resources adapted to their national safeguarding context.

Child Protection from Violence in Sports – Champions Factory

Name of the organisation: Champions Factory - project **Funded by the European Union**

Year of publication: 2024-2025

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

The “Child Protection from Violence in Sports” project is useful for a grassroots safeguarding toolkit because it combines **practical safeguarding measures** with

education and awareness activities for children, coaches and parents. The project focuses on creating safer sport environments through **training, codes of conduct, child protection policies** and **educational materials** adapted for sport clubs in Bulgaria.

A major strength is its practical and multi-stakeholder approach. The project works simultaneously with children, coaches, parents and sport organisations, which supports the development of a shared safeguarding culture. The initiative includes workshops, safeguarding training, educational posters and reporting awareness activities that can be transferred to grassroots sport settings.

Another reason it is relevant is that the project directly addresses an identified gap in Bulgarian sport organisations, where safeguarding structures and child protection policies are often underdeveloped. The project therefore offers **practical examples of how clubs can begin implementing safeguarding standards** and awareness measures.

Condensed version:

The project combines child protection policies, coach education, awareness activities and practical safeguarding tools adapted for grassroots sport organisations in Bulgaria. It promotes a multi-stakeholder safeguarding culture involving children, parents, coaches and clubs.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

The project is less useful as a comprehensive safeguarding framework because it focuses mainly on awareness-raising, education and prevention activities **rather than a complete operational safeguarding system**. It does not provide a fully standardised national safeguarding structure or detailed long-term reporting and case-management procedures.

Another limitation is that the project is strongly dependent on project-based implementation and external funding. Long-term sustainability and broader adoption by sport organisations may require additional institutional support and integration into national sport governance structures.

The initiative is also relatively recent and still developing, meaning that its long-term effectiveness and scalability across different sport contexts may require further evaluation.

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)

Name of the organisation: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

Released by the Child Protection in Sport Unit of the United Kingdom

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

The CPSU framework is very useful for a grassroots club toolkit because it is built around **practical implementation**, not just high-level principles. CPSU explicitly says it helps sport organisations develop, implement and embed a safeguarding and welfare culture, and it offers safeguarding standards, an annual review process, training, tools, templates and forms that organisations can use or adapt. That is highly relevant for grassroots sport, where clubs often need **ready-made, usable materials** rather than abstract policy language

CPSU framework is built for practical development, implementation and embedment of a safeguarding and welfare culture. It consist out of safeguarding standards, annual review process, training, tools, templates which organisations can adapt and use

A major strength is that CPSU provides a **clear operational structure**. Its materials are organised around concrete functions such as self-assessment, safeguarding plans, safer event tools, case-management tools and the role of the **club welfare officer**. For a grassroots toolkit, this is especially valuable because it shows how safeguarding can be broken down into manageable components: governance, planning, safer recruitment, event safety, reporting and concern handling

CPSU is clearly structured. Materials are organised around concrete cornerstones of safeguarding: self-assessment, safeguarding plans, safer events, case-management

and the club welfare officer. This way safeguarding is broken down into multiple manageable components.

It is also relevant because it is **adaptable to different levels of organisational capacity**. CPSU offers self-assessment tools that help clubs and organisations review their safeguarding arrangements and identify gaps, which makes it easier for smaller clubs to start with basics and improve over time. For a toolkit aimed at grassroots clubs, this kind of staged or developmental approach is much more realistic than expecting full compliance with a highly technical system from the start.

CPSU is adaptable to different levels of organisational capacity. It offers self-assessment tools for clubs to get an overview of the current situation and control on the gaps and next steps. Clubs can start on their level and improve over time instead of a one-speed approach.

Another reason it is useful is that CPSU is **strongly recognised and well-established**. It was founded in 2001, works directly with UK Sport Councils, governing bodies and other organisations, and has become a long-standing reference point for safeguarding in sport. That gives it credibility as a model for designing transferable toolkit content

CPSU is a long-standing framework (strongly recognised and well-established). Trough it existence of 25 years the framework is built through and on experience and effectiveness.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

The CPSU framework is less useful when a toolkit needs a full case-response and formal reporting model. CPSU itself states that it can give safeguarding advice but cannot investigate specific cases, and directs organisations with concerns to governing bodies or the NSPCC helpline instead. That means it is excellent for prevention, structure and capacity-building, but weaker as a standalone model for the full response pathway a grassroots toolkit may want to explain.

CPSU framework has less elaborated on a full case-response and formal reporting model

It is also less useful if the toolkit needs a **single mandatory legal or regulatory framework**. CPSU is influential and widely used, but much of its value comes from guidance, support and sector standards rather than a single statutory model that all clubs must follow in the same way. For grassroots clubs in other countries, this may reduce direct transferability unless the toolkit clearly separates what is “good practice guidance” from what is “mandatory procedure.”

The framework has been created for the UK context and therefore takes into account the legal obligations that apply there.

For grassroots clubs in other countries other legal or regulatory frameworks may apply

A further limitation is that the CPSU model can become **administratively heavy** if transferred too literally. It offers many resources and strong governance support, but very small volunteer-led clubs may struggle if a toolkit reproduces too many forms, standards or review tasks without simplification. For grassroots settings, the toolkit would need to extract the essential pieces and avoid overwhelming clubs. This is an inference based on the structure and volume of CPSU implementation materials rather than a criticism CPSU makes of itself.

The framework might be administratively heavy for small volunteer-led organisations. There's need for a light version (essentials only) of the framework for those who rely on volunteers only or are still at the very beginning of their safeguarding story

Sport Ireland - Safeguarding Guidance 2019

Name of the organisation: Sport Ireland

Year of publication: 2019

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

The Irish Safeguarding Guidance is not just tools, but a **complete safeguarding system** (roles, reporting procedures, training, risk assessment...). It gives a clear view of how safeguarding can be structured from governance to implementation.

The Safeguarding Guidance brings **clarity of roles and responsibilities**. It describes the role of the **Club Children's Officer (CCO)** and the **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**. Where a CCO plays a key role in building a child-centred club environment, the DLP handles formal reports. This division is extremely relevant for grassroots clubs because one of the biggest practical problems in safeguarding is confusion over who supports children internally and who handles formal reporting.

The Safeguarding Guidance is **highly operationalised**. It requires the sport organisation to do a **risk assessment of potential harm**, write out a **Child Safeguarding Statement**, list relevant persons and review all of these every two years.

Another major strength is the **training pathway**. Sport Ireland has role-based safeguarding training, including specific training for designated roles. For a grassroots toolkit, this is important because it shows that safeguarding is not only about documents but also about building competence among coaches, volunteers and officers. A toolkit inspired by this model could easily include differentiated learning modules.

The Irish model is also relevant because it is explicitly aligned with **legislation**, including the Children First Act 2015, and it identifies when duties are legal rather than

optional. That makes it especially useful as a reference for governance and accountability

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

The Irish framework is quite formal and document-heavy. Therefore it is less useful for organisations who are searching for a simple, easy to implement toolkit. For example, a risk-of-harm assessment might be difficult to execute for an organisation with less safeguarding expertise and/or fewer staff or volunteers.

The Irish framework is less directly transferable outside Ireland because of the direct link between framework and the **Irish legal context**.

The framework might be too compliance-oriented for grassroots clubs. It might make them focus on what has to be done on paper (and legally) and less on a 'positive sporting culture' in the club.

[SPORTUNION Austria – Child and youth protection concept](#)

Name of the organisation: SPORTUNION Austria

Year of publication: 2024

SPORTUNION is one of Austria's three national grassroots sports umbrella organisations and represents around 4,500 local sport clubs across the country. Nearly half of its members are children and young people, making safeguarding a key priority. SPORTUNION has established a comprehensive child and youth protection framework that aims to prevent all forms of violence, abuse and boundary violations in sport. The framework includes safeguarding policies, codes of conduct, risk assessment tools, reporting and case-management procedures, training opportunities and designated safeguarding officers in each regional federation. Its goal is to help sport clubs create safe, respectful, and child-centred sporting environments while providing clear guidance and support when concerns or incidents arise.

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

Clear focus on grassroots

Safeguarding framework for the federation: **Structured approach**; the concept describes the foundations and requirements for Safeguarding in (grassroots) sport clubs

Offers **ready-to-use** toolbox with templates, questionnaires and evaluation forms **for use by sport clubs**

Contact persons (paid staff/safeguarding officers) in the regional federations, who support and act as contact persons in the 9 regions of Austria

References and Links to national bodies/initiatives such as 100% Sport, SAFE SPORT and vera*

Useful example of how safeguarding can be embedded within a nationwide system and implemented across diverse sporting environments

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

Some tools are still under development. There is no concrete experience and evidence yet regarding their use in sport clubs.

Focused on children and youth in sport; less guidance on protection of other vulnerable groups such as adults, persons with disabilities, LGBTGI+ participants.

Focus more on safeguarding procedures rather than innovative approaches to prevention, capacity building, participant engagement.

[You are not alone \(Et ole yksin\) – Support Service \(Finland\)](#)

Name of the organisation: Väestöliitto (Finland)

Year of publication: since 2018

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

“You Are Not Alone” (Et ole yksin / Du är inte ensam) is a **Finnish support service** developed to prevent inappropriate behaviour, harassment and abuse in sport and youth activities. The service provides practical tools, guidance and educational materials for sport clubs, coaches and organisations to create safer environments for children and young people. Although the service is primarily designed for the Finnish sport context, some materials are also available in English, which improves accessibility and increases its relevance at the European level. Following materials have been developed by the service (text below).

The **“Season Plan for a Safer Sports Club”** ([link in Swedish](#)) is a **practical annual planning tool** developed by the Finnish “You Are Not Alone” service. The material helps sport clubs integrate safeguarding, wellbeing and prevention of inappropriate behaviour into their everyday activities **throughout the entire season**. Rather than being a one-time policy document, it provides a continuous framework for safer sport culture.

The **“Model Rules for Coaches and Volunteers Working with Children and Young People”** ([link in Swedish](#)) is a **safeguarding guideline** developed by the Finnish “You Are Not Alone” service. The document provides practical behavioural rules for coaches and volunteers on grassroots level to help prevent bullying, harassment, discrimination and abuse in sport. The material includes guidance on respectful communication, professional boundaries, safe behaviour in training and travel situations, and how to respond to inappropriate behaviour or safeguarding concerns. One of its strengths is that it translates safeguarding principles into concrete everyday actions that are easy for sport clubs and coaches to apply.

The material **“Tell us if you experience inappropriate behaviour in our activities – we take it seriously”**([link here in English](#)) is a **practical communication poster** designed for sport clubs and organisations. Its purpose is to encourage children, young people and parents to report inappropriate behaviour and safeguarding concerns in a safe and accessible way. The poster explains the club’s commitment to safer sport principles, clarifies reporting channels, can be put in the club's training facilities and reassures participants that all concerns will be taken seriously and handled confidentially with the wellbeing of the child as the priority. It also promotes transparency by clearly describing how concerns are processed within the organisation.

The online course **“Prevention of violence and harassment in sport clubs”** ([link here in English](#)) is made for coaches, employees and volunteers of sport clubs. **In this course, you will learn about preventing and addressing violence against children in sport clubs.** It takes about one hour to complete the course. Through a link at the end of the course you can download all the materials and instructions which have been referenced throughout it. After completing the course, you receive a certificate of completion.

Besides the materials already mentioned earlier, the “You Are Not Alone” [resource bank](#) also includes several other materials available in English or partly translated into English. These materials are particularly valuable because they are practical, preventive and easy to adapt for sport clubs and youth organisations. Several resources support low-threshold learning and awareness-raising, making them relevant for wider use and replication across Europe.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

The service has been developed within the Finnish sports system and requires long-term coordination and funding to maintain and continuously update the materials.

Although an increasing number of resources are available in English, not all materials have been translated, which may limit accessibility for international users.

Some guidance refers to Finnish legislation, organisational structures and support services, meaning that adaptation would be needed before implementation in other European countries.

[Finlands Svenska Idrott's Safe space principles on the website \(Finland\)](#)

Name of the organisation: Finnish Sports Federation (FSI)

Year of publication: 2024

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

The policy presents safeguarding principles approved by the board of the Finnish Sports Federation (FSI).

The principles apply to all activities within the organisation and provide **clear guidelines for creating safe, respectful and inclusive sport environments for children, young people and adults.**

The policy is **publicly available on the FSI website**, making it easy to access and implement.

The policy draws inspiration from **safeguarding practices both within and beyond the sports sector** (culture - and youth sector) and is integrated into all of the federation's activities, including registration forms.

It is also introduced at the beginning of training sessions and events, ensuring that participants are aware of the safeguarding principles and expected standards of behaviour.

It is also available in English and has been used as part of the SURE project Sustainability policy ([in english here](#) page 10).

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

The principles are intentionally concise and provide an overarching framework rather than detailed implementation guidance. Organisations may therefore need additional tools, training and procedures to put the principles into practice.

As the principles are tailored to the Finnish Sports Federation, organisations in other countries may need to adapt the examples and implementation methods to fit their own structures and legislation.

[Guide for Safeguarding officers at Sports Events \(Finland\)](#)

Name of the organisation: Finlands Svenska Idrott

Year of publication: 2024

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

A practical safeguarding guide developed for safeguarding officers to prepare for the role at **sports competitions and events**. It gives information on how to prepare for events, respond to inappropriate behaviour, support participants and use reporting channels such as anonymous forms and dedicated contact information.

One of the strengths of the material is that it **combines preventive safeguarding work with practical event-based measures, including visible contact persons, communication materials and low-threshold reporting opportunities**. The guide is easy to adapt and could be replicated by sport organisations and event organisers across Europe to support safer sport environments.

The material is based on **practical experiences and close cooperation with safeguarding officers** and the sports field, making the guidance realistic and easy to apply in everyday situations on grassroots level. It also emphasises preventive safeguarding work, visible support structures and low-threshold reporting channels.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

The material is based on the Finnish sports system and organisational structures, meaning that some roles and reporting procedures would need to be adapted to fit other national contexts

[Guide for Safeguarding officers in sport organisations \(Finland\)](#)

Name of the organisation: Finlands Svenska Idrott

Year of publication: 2024

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

A practical safeguarding guide developed **to support safeguarding officers in their daily life in sport organisations and clubs**. The guide provides concrete instructions on the role, responsibilities and procedures for handling cases of harassment, bullying, discrimination and other inappropriate behaviour.

The guide includes guidance on listening and responding to concerns, confidentiality, documentation, reporting procedures and cooperation with clubs and federations. It also emphasises low-threshold support, preventive safeguarding work and the importance of visible and accessible reporting channels.

One of the strengths of the guide is that it **provides clear and practical support for individuals working in safeguarding roles within sport organisations**. The material

could easily be adapted and replicated by other sport federations and organisations across Europe to strengthen safer sport structures and reporting practices.

The guideline is based on practical experiences and close cooperation with safeguarding officers and the sports field, making the guidance realistic and easy to apply in everyday situations. It also emphasises preventive safeguarding work, visible support structures and low-threshold reporting channels.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

The guide is based on the Finnish sports system and organisational structures, meaning that some roles, responsibilities and reporting procedures would need to be adapted to fit other national contexts.

The guide is intended for organisations that have designated safeguarding officers in place. Organisations without such structures may need additional guidance and capacity-building before the material can be fully implemented

Safe and inclusive sport environments (Sweden)

Name of the organisation: Swedish Sports confederation

Year of publication: 2024

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

The document provides **practical guidance for preventing and responding** to discrimination, harassment and violence in grassroots sport.

It combines a **rights-based approach** with **concrete implementation tools** such as prevention models, checklists and crisis action plans, supporting clubs and federations in creating safer sport environments. By combining prevention and response

measures, it strengthens the capacity of sport organisations to implement safeguarding in everyday practice.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

Although the document provides valuable guidance, it is relatively **general and requires local adaptation for implementation in different sports and organisational contexts.**

It is only available in **Swedish**, limiting its accessibility and transferability outside Sweden.

[German national Olympic committee – safe sport code \(Germany\)](#)

Name of the organisation: German national Olympic committee

Year of publication: 2024

The **DOSB calls its Safe Sport Code (SSC) a role-model code** for all associations and clubs on every level (pro, grassroots, in between) in Germany to aid their fight against misconduct. It was adopted by the DOSB General Assembly, but **implementation remains voluntary**, resulting in the German Swimming Association already opting out again.

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

The document was attempted to be written so that **all levels** in the German Sport system **can reasonably implement it**. We **could be able to derive what the grassroots level can cope with/is expected to cope with.**

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

The document is **no role model in terms of tools** – if there is a case of misconduct, no independent, external investigation is required. Instead, they can investigate

themselves (if they want to do so), something that e.g. Athleten Deutschland e.V. (for whom safeguarding is a major issue topic) is critical about

In general, it has **more of a “judicial” or “bureaucratic”** than an educative or aiding **style**.

[Organic Law 8/2021 on the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents against Violence \(Spain\)](#)

Name of the organisation: Spanish Government

Year of publication: 2021

It is Spain's national legal framework for preventing and responding to violence against children and adolescents. It applies to all organisations working with minors, including grassroots sport clubs, federations, schools, and youth organisations. The law requires organisations to implement child protection measures, establish reporting procedures, and appoint Child Protection Officers. Its main focus is creating safe environments through prevention, early detection, and effective response to safeguarding concerns. Although it is a legal framework rather than a practical toolkit, it provides the foundation upon which safeguarding policies and procedures should be developed and implemented across the sports sector.

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

Establishes the national legal foundation for safeguarding children and young people in Spain, including within grassroots sport organisations.

It introduces **mandatory** prevention measures, reporting obligations, and the **appointment** of Child Protection **Officers** in organisations working with minors.

For the project it demonstrates how safeguarding can be **structurally embedded** into sports governance and highlights the growing expectation for grassroots clubs to implement formal child protection measures.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

It is a **broad legal framework** rather than a practical grassroots toolkit specifically designed for sport clubs.

While it establishes important safeguarding obligations, it provides **limited operational guidance** on how small community sport organisations should implement safeguarding measures in practice.

Many grassroots clubs may lack the resources, expertise, or capacity to translate the legal requirements into everyday procedures.

[Save the Children Spain – Safeguarding resources \(Spain\)](#)

Name of the organisation: Save The Children Spain

Year of publication: 2023

The resources provide practical guidance for organisations working with children and adolescents. The target groups include NGOs, schools, youth organisations, grassroots sport clubs, coaches, volunteers, and staff working directly with minors. The main focus is prevention of harm, safe organisational procedures, codes of conduct, reporting mechanisms, and appropriate response to safeguarding concerns. Although not designed specifically for sport, the resources are useful because they can be adapted to grassroots sport settings and help translate safeguarding principles into everyday practice.

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

Provides practical, **implementation-oriented** safeguarding guidance that can be adapted by grassroots sport organisations.

Unlike purely legal or policy frameworks, it **includes concrete prevention measures, codes of conduct, reporting procedures, and awareness materials** that are directly applicable in everyday work with children and young people.

For the SAFE project, it offers a transferable example of how safeguarding principles can be translated into practical tools and actions at community level.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

It is **not specifically developed for the sports sector**, meaning some tools and recommendations may require adaptation before being applied in grassroots sport environments.

The materials are designed for broader child protection contexts and may not fully address sport-specific safeguarding risks, such as coach-athlete relationships, changing room environments, or competition-related safeguarding challenges.

III.6. National Single-sport Frameworks

[England Hockey - SafeGuard](#)

Name of the organisation: England Hockey

Year of publication: last review 2026

England Hockey is the national governing body of hockey in England, it is also a member of EuroHockey and the FIH, the continental and international organisations for hockey in the region. England Hockey has approximately 140,000 individuals who play regularly

across 800 clubs. Over 15,000 coaches, umpires and officials are supported and developed by England Hockey. **SafeGuard** is their set of resources designed to provide role-specific safeguarding information for all involved in hockey activity dependent on their role. With so many members fulfilling so many different roles it is necessary to have a diverse set of resources such as this.

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

Each role has its own specific guidance regarding their safeguarding responsibilities.

Policy supported by education content:

<https://www.englandhockey.co.uk/governance/safeguarding/safeguarding-training-education>

Template documents and posters useful for printing out and sharing amongst club members.

The core safeguarding policy has **clear review periods**, ensuring it remains up to date.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

If looking for a specific document, it can be difficult.

Individual documents are long and can be quite **overwhelming** to a volunteer with limited time to take-on the information.

The information is all provided in text format, which can be difficult for some to process, utilising different mediums would allow for more people to interact positively with the information.

Maintaining and reviewing such a diverse range of resources will take a lot of time, so would be difficult for other organisations to adopt.

[Come together action plan \(Belgium\)](#)

Name of the organisation: Royal Belgian Football Association (RBFA)

Year of publication: 2021

The Belgian Football Association launched the Come Together action plan. The goal is to tackle all forms of discrimination and promote inclusion in Belgian football.

To put this action plan into practice, they've developed a few tools, such as a reporting point, training sessions, a Diversity Board, the Come Together Awards, and the National Chamber in the fight against Discrimination and Racism. In addition, every year we organize and create various awareness initiatives and campaigns.

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

The framework contains multiple parts of safeguarding: **reporting mechanisms, tools, training sessions and a disciplinary follow up.**

It supports the board members of grassroots clubs with tools.

The overarching federation (RBFA) supports the grassroots clubs when problems around diversity become too big to handle at club level.

The initiative extends over multiple years.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

There are not that many concrete written out documents. It's more focused on awareness-raising and education than on policy.

Focused only on football.

Focused on discrimination only.

III.7. Regional/Communal level Multisport Frameworks

Sportzentrum Salzburg Mitte (SZM) – Institutional Safeguarding Framework/Policy (Austria)

Name of the organisation: Sportzentrum Salzburg Mitte (SZM)

Year of publication: 2025

The Safeguarding Concept of Sportzentrum Salzburg Mitte is an institutional safeguarding framework developed for one of Salzburg's largest sports facilities, which hosts more than 300,000 users annually, including children, adolescents, adults, women and men, as well as people with and without disabilities. The sports centre is used by nine schools and around 40 sport clubs and federations. The concept aims to create a safe sporting environment by identifying risks, establishing clear responsibilities and reporting procedures, implementing codes of conduct, appointing safeguarding officers and introducing preventive measures throughout the facility. While its primary focus is the protection of children and young people, it also seeks to raise awareness among coaches, staff, volunteers and partner organisations, embedding safeguarding principles into the daily operation of the sports centre and the wider sports community.

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

Practical example of how risk assessment, reporting procedures, codes of conduct, safeguarding officers and preventive measures can be integrated into the **day-to-day operation** of a **sports venue**.

Implementation of several measures within the management structure of the sports centre.

Addresses a **diverse user** population – including children, young people, adults and persons with disabilities – and **requires cooperation** between schools, sport clubs, federations, staff and volunteers.

While SZM is focusing on safeguarding mechanisms **within the facility's infrastructure**, it is the responsibility of sport clubs and schools to implement safeguarding principles and behavioural standards during actual training sessions.

Operationalization of safeguarding measures in a **multi-stakeholder sport environment**, therefore it can serve as a transferable example for other sports facilities and community sport settings.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

No information on the practical side of conducting training and sports sessions.

The document is very context-specific and tailored to the governance, infrastructure and operational realities of Sportzentrum Salzburg Mitte. The concept focuses on organisational procedures and responsibilities within this single sports venue rather than on educational approaches, training methodologies and awareness-raising campaigns.

Still limited information on the practical implementation, effectiveness and evaluation of the safeguarding measures.

[SIMBA Sports - child and youth protection concept \(Austria\)](#)

Name of the organisation: SIMBA Sports

Year of publication: /

SIMBA Sports is the commercial branch of a grassroots sport club specializing in trend sports such as parkour. It offers regular training sessions at Sportzentrum Salzburg Mitte as well as holiday sports camps for children and young people. The **Child and Youth Protection Concept** of SIMBA Sports is a club-level safeguarding framework designed to ensure the physical, emotional and social well-being of children and young people

participating in the organisation's sports and holiday programmes. The concept outlines measures to prevent bullying, discrimination, exclusion and sexual violence, while promoting a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for all participants. Key elements include background checks for coaches, mandatory safeguarding and operational training, clear behavioural and communication guidelines, enhanced supervision of younger children, anti-discrimination commitments, regular review of safeguarding practices and opportunities for parental feedback.

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

Practical example of a **Safeguarding concept at club-level**, aiming at a safe, supportive and inclusive environment.

Demonstrates how a smaller sport organisation can translate safeguarding requirements into concrete operational measures : **Background Checks** of coaches, mandatory **onboarding** and **code of conduct** for all coaches, clear communication of rules to coaches and participants/children, clear statement against bullying exclusion and discrimination, feedback opportunities for parents. Annual review of concept.

Illustrates how child protection can be embedded into **everyday sport delivery** and organisational culture.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

Only available in German.

The concept focuses mainly on internal policies and operational procedures rather than on evidence-based safeguarding interventions.

Primarily addresses the protection of children and young people participating in sports programmes and holiday camps, providing less guidance on safeguarding other participant groups or on broader systemic approaches to safe sport.

III.8. Regional/Communal level Single-sport Frameworks

[Newcastle Hockey Club - Safeguarding and Protecting Young People in Hockey Policy \(England\)](#)

Name of the organisation: Newcastle Hockey Club

Year of publication: 2025-2026

Newcastle Hockey Club is a grassroots hockey club based in the North East of England, the club is medium-sized for a hockey club in England and has 4 men's teams, 5 ladies teams and around 80 junior players. The club's **Safeguarding and Protecting Young People in Hockey Policy** is an example of how the guidance of a national federation, in this case England Hockey, can filter down to an individual club level. The policy also includes guidance for the practical application of safeguarding measures in a team sport context.

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

Primary use is as an example of how a **national policy**/guidance can **filter down** to the **individual club** context.

This is a **very practical example**, with appendices for a WhatsApp policy and photo consent form.

The clear register of approvals and amendments provides a **record of good governance** and clear responsibility for implementation.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

The document itself does not introduce any new concepts to the aforementioned England Hockey information and is instead a repackaging of the advice given by England Hockey.

Due to its substantial links to external information, it cannot be used as an independent document and requires users to look more broadly to understand the full picture.

Surf Clube de Viana (Local club) – Safeguarding in Sports Project (Portugal)

Name of the organisation: Surf Club de Viana – **Funded by the European Union**

Year of publication: 2026

The Surf Clube de Viana in Portugal (Viana Surf Club) is **responsible for the implementation** of Erasmus+ project “Safeguarding in Sports”, an initiative funded by the European Commission through the National Erasmus+ Agency and the European Solidarity Corps.

The “Safeguarding in Sport” initiative at the Surf Clube de Viana is focused on **ensuring a secure, non-violent, and inclusive environment for athletes, especially those in a vulnerable position**. It promotes human rights and child protection through weekly workshops and activities.

This Project was recently highlighted by the Observatory on Sport, Education and Communities in Portugal.

Why is it a useful and relevant document?

Details of the “Safeguarding in Sports” Project:

- This project focuses on **protecting** children and young people in the context of sports, combating violence, and **promoting well-being**.
- The mission is to **raise community awareness** of the dangers associated with violence in sports and to reaffirm that sports should be a place of freedom.

- The target audience is young people in general, with special attention to vulnerable groups, aiming for their inclusion and safety.

Main Objectives of the Project:

Prevention of violence: To actively combat the rise in violence and bullying in sport.

Social inclusion: To promote safe **access** to sport for young people from **vulnerable groups** or those facing social exclusion.

Defence of human rights: To ensure physical integrity, health, well-being and equal opportunities.

Ethical training: To transform the community's perception of the hidden dangers in sport by empowering coaches and athletes.

The club is already implementing safeguarding Initiatives and specific safeguarding strategies to protect its athletes, youth, and staff:

Violence Prevention: Aims to establish sports as the "safest place in the world," teaching youth how to look out for one another and prevent bullying or abuse.

Inclusivity & Vulnerable Groups: Integrates young people facing social exclusion and focuses heavily on safeguarding their rights within the club's environment.

Educational Workshops: Integrates awareness seminars where athletes learn about safety protocols, mutual respect, and emotional regulation in and out of the water.

Why is it a less useful and relevant document?

We don't have much public information about this project yet, because it's just starting, but the fact that the **project is led by a local sport club** it's very significant at national level.

The project is in the **beginning** and will develop several **local** activities in Viana do Castelo in Portugal.

IV. Mapping and analysis of the existing tools to implement safeguarding frameworks at grassroots level

IV.1. International Multisport Tools

IOC Safeguarding Toolkit for IFs en NOCs

Name of the organisation: International Olympic Committee:

Year of launching: 2025

This toolkit is developed to help National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and International Federations (IFs) to write policies and procedures to protect athletes against intimidation and abuse.

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

It sets out important safeguarding principles (which apply to all contexts).

Could inspire grassroots clubs to work on safeguarding.

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

Focused on elite athletes and designed for high-performance and elite sport structures.

Toolkit for international federations and National Olympic Committees, not grassroots clubs.

Too complex, too extensive for grassroots clubs.

Not tailored to the daily problems a club has to deal with.

[Safe Sport International - Guidance and Standards Hub](#)

Name of the organisation: Safe Sport International

Year of launching: 2026

This **curated collection** brings together guidance, tools, and organisations from **across the global safeguarding landscape** – supporting learning, collaboration, and informed action to strengthen safety and wellbeing in sport.

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

Serves as a comprehensive **resource hub** that complements the safeguarding standards with practical guidance and implementation support.

Useful for organisations at different stages of safeguarding development because it provides **tools, examples, learning materials, and thematic guidance**.

Supports the transition from policy commitments to **practical safeguarding action and organisational change**.

Particularly relevant for capacity building, staff training, and improving safeguarding competence within sport organisations.

Encourages organisations to view safeguarding as an ongoing process requiring **continuous learning, adaptation, and accountability**.

Helpful for ensuring greater consistency in safeguarding practice across different sports, countries, and governance structures.

Reinforces the idea that safeguarding is a **shared responsibility across the whole sport ecosystem**.

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

The large volume of materials can make the resource hub feel **fragmented or difficult to navigate** for users seeking quick practical guidance.

Guidance documents vary in depth and specificity, which may create inconsistencies in application.

Many resources are designed as supporting materials rather than step-by-step implementation tools.

Limited evidence on the long-term effectiveness of some recommended practices across diverse sport settings.

Heavy reliance on organisational self-assessment and self-regulation may weaken accountability.

Smaller organisations **may lack the capacity to effectively use** and adapt the available resources.

IV.2. International Single-sport Tools

[FIFA Guardians safeguarding programme](#)

Name of the organisation: Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)

Year of launching: 2019

Other relevant information:

The FIFA Guardians programme is a global initiative by FIFA to 1) protect players (especially minors) from abuse 2) create a safe football environment and 3) support the national Football associations with frameworks, tools and training. The goal is to have a global standard for safeguarding in football.

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

The programme has an educational part to provide safeguarding officers and trainers with online training. It's developed together with 'The open university', an expert in online and remote learning.

Focus on minors is relevant as many grassroots clubs have a lot of minor members.

FIFA tries to make policies which are applicable from the highest to the lowest (grassroots) level.

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

Strong focus on children's only.

Focused on football only.

Available in a limited number of languages.

Not all educational content is open to everybody.

It remains largely top-down and can be difficult to translate into local practice without adaptation.

IV.3. European Multisport Tools

Council of Europe - Protecting children in sport with Start to Talk!

Name of the organisation: Council of Europe

Year of launching: 2018

Start to Talk! has been around since 2018 and is a European campaign focused on protecting children in sports and breaking taboos around abuse.

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

Provides a **policy-oriented European framework** specifically focused on preventing violence and abuse against children in sport.

Strongly grounded in **human rights and child protection standards**, linking sport safeguarding to key Council of Europe conventions such as the Lanzarote Convention and Istanbul Convention.

Promotes a **multi-stakeholder approach**, engaging governments, sport organisations, safeguarding officers, researchers, and people with lived experience.

Emphasises the importance of **breaking silence and changing culture** in sport by encouraging open discussion about abuse and safeguarding.

Particularly valuable for federations and public authorities because it combines **policy guidance, educational resources, expert networks, and practical tools**.

Includes a strong focus on **child participation**, recognising children and young people as active contributors to safer sport environments.

Useful for organisations developing safeguarding systems because it offers **shared terminology, capacity-building resources, and examples of implementation practices**.

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

Strong emphasis on children means it offers **limited guidance on safeguarding adults in sport**.

More focused on **awareness-raising and advocacy** than on detailed operational implementation.

Some recommendations remain relatively **broad and non-binding**, making practical application uneven across organisations.

Heavily shaped by a European institutional context, which may reduce relevance for organisations outside Europe.

Limited practical guidance on **monitoring effectiveness and measuring safeguarding outcomes**.

Can depend significantly on the political will and resources of governments and sport bodies for implementation.

Safe Sport Allies (SSA)

Name of the organisation: Project 'Safe Sport Allies' **Funded by the European Union**

Year of launching: 2021-2023

From the many stories about violence against young athletes, it appears that **signs of boundary-crossing behaviour are often overlooked** or that **bystanders decide not to act**. That's why the Safe Sport Allies project wants to provide useful insights into developing, implementing, and evaluating an intervention programme to encourage **prosocial bystander behaviour**.

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

An Erasmus+ project built on scientific research - led by Thomas More (Tine Vertommen)

Focused on **bystanders (behaviour)** (who play an important role in safeguarding) and how to learn to detect signs of boundary-crossing behaviour.

Within the project **workshops** on bystander behaviour have been developed. These workshops come with a **manual** to do the workshop in the club **without expert guidance**.

There has been further development with Safe Parasport allies (SPA) and Safe Football Allies (SFA).

Project is focused on local clubs (volunteers for example).

Everybody in the club gets involved in the project and the training (trainers, participants, parents, board).

Focus on behavioural change.

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

Highly focused on bystander behaviour which is only one aspect of safeguarding.

Only available in English and Dutch.

Projectwork so implementation depends on organisations to further spread the projects output.

Difficult for clubs to organise workshops for all stakeholders + find people within the clubs to guide the workshop(s).

Behavioural change is hard to measure and to accomplish.

GRASS Toolkit - The Safe Sport Digital Toolkit

Name of the organisation: Project 'Safer Grassroots Sports' **Funded by the European Union**

Year of launching: 2024-2025

This toolkit, made in the scope of the **'Safer Grassroots Sport'** project provides ready-to-use resources, from policy templates to educational materials, tailored to the needs and realities of sport organisations at grassroots level.

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

The toolkit **is quite comprehensive** with 9 different workstreams. For each workstream there are proposed actions and documents on **3 different levels: 'starter', 'a little more' and the 'total approach'**.

The toolkit **has a self-assessment scan**. The scan tells you the strong and weaker points of your current safeguarding approach.

Each workstream **contains a good practice** on grassroots level.

Project is focused on **local clubs** (volunteers for example).

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

A quite comprehensive toolkit might be **overwhelming** for a grassroots club.

It's **a project work** so implementation depends on organisations to further spread the projects output.

IV.4. European Single-Sport Tools

The UEFA Child & Youth Protection Toolkit

Name of the organisation: Union of European Football Associations (UEFA)

Year of launching: 2020 (with updates)

The UEFA Child & Youth Protection Toolkit is relevant for grassroots clubs because it provides a complete and professional framework for safeguarding young people, but it's less suitable as a direct guide since it's too policy-focused and complex for small, volunteer-run clubs.

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

The toolkit is comprehensive but practical (concrete tools and templates). It can help grassroots clubs to build basic policy quickly.

Written by Terre des hommes and experts. Built for grassroots clubs.

Toolkit is modular and therefore adaptable to different national contexts - also available in multiple languages.

Focus on minors is relevant as many grassroots clubs have a lot of minor members.

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

Focused only on football – primarily developed for federations.

Focused on policy more than education, training, practical implementation.

Clubs still need time and expertise to implement.

IV.5. National Multisport Tools

100% Sport – SAFE SPORT Department (Austria)

Name of the organisation: 100% Sport

Year of launching: 2022

100% Sport is a competence centre for organized sport in Austria, primarily funded by the Austrian Ministry of Sport. While it is not directly affiliated with the national sport federations, it supports the sports sector through expertise, education and advisory services in areas such as gender equality, integrity and safeguarding. Its **Safe Sport Department** serves as Austria’s national focal point for safeguarding in sport, providing guidance, training, awareness-raising activities, reporting pathways and resources to prevent and address violence, abuse, discrimination and other forms of misconduct in sporting environments. The department works with sport organisations, clubs, coaches, athletes and policymakers to promote safe, respectful, and inclusive sport for all participants.

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

The **SAFE SPORT department offers different resources** for sports officials/coaches/athletes/parents: including checklists, templates for obtaining criminal record extract, examples of codes of conduct/honor, guides to action, contact points etc.

Training of **Safeguarding Officers** and management of **Network of Safeguarding Officers** (Federations at national and regional level, sport organisations).

Example of how safeguarding can be supported through a dedicated **national competence centre**.

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

100% Sport operates still at a very national level with federations and not so much (yet) at the grassroots level with sport clubs (material is open to all, but in direct contact, they do not have the capacity to reach to the basis).

Functions primarily as a national support and advisory body rather than as a sport organisation implementing safeguarding measures in day-to-day practice.

[vera* Vertrauensstelle "Trust Office" \(Austria\)](#)

Name of the organisation: Vera Austria

Year of launching: 2022

vera* is an independent trust and reporting service for people affected by violence, harassment, abuse or neglect in sport. Operated by the Safe Sport Department of 100% Sport, it provides confidential, free-of-charge information, counselling, case-management and referral to further support services for athletes, coaches, volunteers, parents and other individuals involved in sport. Rather than investigating cases itself, vera* serves as a neutral first point of contact, helping affected persons understand their options and access appropriate support while ensuring confidentiality and victim-centred guidance. The service addresses concerns related to physical, psychological and sexual violence, as well as neglect, across grassroots, competitive and elite sport settings. In 2025, vera* handled a total of 108 cases. The most frequently reported contexts for incidents were training and competition settings, training camps, sports facilities and digital environments. Reports of psychological violence accounted for the largest share of cases, followed by sexualised and physical violence.

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

National body to report incidents of and suspected harassment and violence in organised sport. (it is a “dual” body, with one being responsible for organised sport – operated by 100% Sport – and one being responsible for art&culture – operated by an interest group from arts&culture, financed by public funds).

Everybody in organised sports, regardless of their role, can contact vera*, as long as the incident happened in organised sports: Athletes and victims of harassment and violence in organised sports, regardless whether amateur/competitive/elite sports, fulltime and volunteer staff (coaches, referees...), parents/guardians.

Low-threshold, confidential access point, neutral first contact-point, victim-centred.

Strengthens the Safeguarding approach by linking prevention with **concrete response and aftercare mechanisms**.

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

Individual case work focuses on listening and supporting. vera* does not provide psychotherapy or legal representation, but it offers guidance and contact to further services if needed.

In sports, only cases from organised sports can be supported, sometimes responsibilities are unclear.

Operation of vera* is dependent on public funding by Ministry of Sports. Support is not structurally guaranteed.

It is not a preventive tool in itself; it does not directly reduce the occurrence of violence in sport but responds after concerns arise, meaning its effectiveness depends on being used in combination with broader safeguarding measures such as prevention education, awareness-raising and strong institutional safeguarding policies.

SAFE SPORT Online-Course (Austria)

Name of the organisation: 100% Sport

Year of launching: 2026 (latest update)

The SAFE SPORT e-learning platform (100% Sport Academy) is a free, accessible online training tool designed to strengthen knowledge and awareness around safeguarding in sport. It provides structured learning modules that cover the identification, prevention and appropriate response to issues such as violence, abuse and discrimination in sport contexts. The course is available anytime and can be completed at one's own pace via computer, tablet or smartphone, making it highly suitable for coaches, athletes, volunteers and sport officials across all levels. Through interactive elements such as videos, texts and knowledge checks, it aims to build practical safeguarding competencies and promote a culture of respect and safety within sport organisations. For certain education and training pathways in different sport organisations, it is already mandatory to complete this online course as part of the required qualification.

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

Structure with three modules to relevant safeguarding-aspects: texts/reading, videos and questions/short knowledge-checks.

The user must correctly answer the questions at the end of each section to open the next section.

Usage is user-friendly: The course takes around 90 minutes in total, but **can be paused and completed at your own pace.**

Acknowledgement by some sport federations in Austria: The e-learning certificate is recognised as a basis for further education in the field.

Course is aiming at coaches and volunteers/officials/board members and gives an overview.

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

The course gives an overview on the broad topic of safeguarding in sport and covers “everything”, therefore is not too specific and lacks depth in parts.

It is primarily a **theoretical learning tool**, meaning it does not directly change behaviour in real-life sport environments without further application and follow-up.

As an online course, it offers **limited opportunities for interaction, discussion or practical skills training** compared to in-person workshops.

Its role is **foundational**, meaning it must be combined with other safeguarding tools to be effective.

Guidelines for children and youth sport (Sweden)

Name of the organisation: Swedish Sports Confederation

Year of launching: 2025

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

The document provides a **common national framework** for children and youth sport, helping sport federations and clubs create safe, inclusive and development-oriented environments. By establishing **common principles** across the Swedish sport system, it supports a shared safeguarding culture and consistent implementation.

It **translates the UN Convention** on the Rights of the Child into sport-specific principles and promotes **long-term participation, wellbeing and child-centred decision-making** rather than early selection and performance.

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

The document focuses primarily on **children** and young people and **provides broad principles** rather than concrete safeguarding tools.

It's only available in **Swedish**, limiting its accessibility and transferability outside Sweden.

[Guidance on assessing the best interests of the child \(Sweden\)](#)

Name of the organisation: Swedish Sports Confederation

Year of launching: 2023

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

The document provides **practical guidance** for applying the principle of the best interests of the child in **decision-making** within sport organisations.

It supports clubs and federations in **implementing child rights** consistently and complements the Guidelines for Children and Youth Sport by translating principles into everyday practice. This helps strengthen child-centred decision-making and **bridges the gap between policy and implementation**.

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

The document is intended as **a supporting tool** rather than a standalone safeguarding framework and focuses exclusively on children and young people.

It's only available in **Swedish**, limiting its accessibility and wider international use.

[Guidelines for inclusion of transgender and intersex people \(Sweden\)](#)

Name of the organisation: Swedish SPorts Confederation

Year of launching: 2025

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

The document provides **evidence-informed guidance** on creating safe and inclusive sport environments for **transgender and intersex people**.

It offers **practical recommendations** on leadership, facilities, education and competition, making it particularly useful for sport organisations seeking to translate safeguarding and inclusion principles into everyday practice.

Because it focuses on **concrete implementation** rather than overarching policy, it complements broader safeguarding frameworks by showing how inclusion can be embedded in organisational routines.

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

While the document offers **valuable guidance on inclusion for transgender and intersex participants**, its scope is **limited** to a specific target group and does not address safeguarding more broadly.

It contains relatively **little on governance**, reporting structures, organisational accountability or safeguarding systems that apply across all participants. As a result, its relevance to the overall analysis is more limited than documents addressing safeguarding at an organisational level.

It's only available in Swedish.

[Safeguarding officer network \(Finland\)](#)

Name of the organisation: Finlands Svenska Idrott

Year of launching: 2023

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

The **Safeguarding officer network** developed by the FSI is a practical safeguarding initiative that creates **clear and accessible reporting channels within sport**

organisations. All member federations have appointed 1-2 trained harassment safeguarding officers who provide support for individuals experiencing or witnessing harassment, bullying, discrimination or other inappropriate behaviour in sports activities.

Because the Swedish-speaking sports community in Finland is relatively small, the model also allows individuals to contact safeguarding officers across different sports and federations if they feel more comfortable doing so. The safeguarding officers receive training at the beginning of their assignment, have their own email addresses, and participate in network meetings twice a year for peer support, shared learning and continued development. Finlands Svenska Idrott also provides support in cases of inappropriate behaviour that require further investigation.

Some safeguarding officers also volunteer during competitions and events, where they are visible and accessible for participants. At events they may use dedicated phone numbers, anonymous online forms and communication materials to lower the threshold for reporting concerns.

All these practices are taken from the [IOC safeguarding officer training programme](#).

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

The network has been developed for the Swedish-speaking sports community in Finland, where close cooperation between member federations is possible. Larger sport systems may require a different organisational structure and greater coordination.

The model relies on trained volunteer safeguarding officers and ongoing support from the coordinating organisation which requires long-term commitment, training and resources to maintain.

IV.6. National Single-sport Tools

Portuguese Football Federation Certification Process of the Clubs

Name of the organisation: Portuguese Football Federation

Year of launching: 2015

The Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) implemented since 2015 the “**Certification Process**” of the Football and Futsal clubs in the country.

This is a very useful and relevant practice because it’s innovative for Portugal and also at European Level.

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

It’s a long-lasting practice.

The process was designed to evaluate, recognise, and certify the activities of all organisations that provide football and futsal training to young players up to the age of 19 years old, thereby making a decisive contribution to **raising the quality standards of player development** in Portugal but also to **protect** these players.

The certification process includes several mandatory requisites on the topic of Safeguarding as example we can indicate the following:

- The Sport Organisation confirms compliance with child protection procedures (Law No. 147/99, as amended) and ensures that at least one responsible person (Academy Director, Training Entity, School Monitoring Officer, or D.R.E. Trainee Monitoring Officer) has completed UEFA/Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) online safeguarding training.
- The responsible person has also completed the Portuguese Institute of Youth and Sport course “*Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Young People in Sport*”, focused on preventing and responding to potential abuse in sports.
- The Sport Organisation confirms that it has requested and verified criminal records for all staff and collaborators who may have contact with minors, including service providers not listed on the certification platform.

The Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) provides a reporting channel for breaches of its Ethics Code, including safeguarding violations, harassment, corruption, match-fixing, and related offences.

IV.6. Regional/Communal Multisport Tools

Flemish Safeguarding officer network & Aan de slag als club-API - Sportieq

Name of the organisation: Sportieq

Year of launching: 2018

Why is it a useful and relevant tool?

Its Flemish sportfederations objective is to **have a safeguarding officer in every grassroots club**. That way every member of a sport club **should be able to tell or report something which felt not ok to a closeby and accessible person**. If telling or reporting to this person doesn't feel right (e.g. a conflict of interest) there is the possibility to report to the safeguarding officer of the federation itself or a universal reporting channel or in last resort to Sportieq.

Why is it a less useful and relevant tool?

Appointing a safeguarding officer on club level is only one step of safeguarding.

Not every sport club has a safeguarding officer yet. It's an objective mostly, not an obligation.

Safeguarding officers in clubs only get a limited training (two times 3 hours).

V. Analysis and recommendations

From heterogeneous examples to defensible conclusions

The mapping confirms that safeguarding resources cannot be meaningfully compared by document length, legal status or the number of measures they contain. An international consensus statement, a statutory national requirement, a club policy, a reporting service and a bystander workshop solve different problems. The analytical question for SAFE is therefore not whether one model is universally superior, **but which combinations of structures and practices appear most capable of supporting safeguarding in diverse grassroots environments.**

A central distinction is required between safeguarding architecture and safeguarding activation. Architecture refers to the formal system: policies, codes, designated roles, risk assessments, reporting mechanisms, training requirements and case procedures. Activation refers to whether these elements are understood, trusted and used: whether coaches change behaviour, volunteers intervene, participants know where to seek help, leaders act on concerns and organisations learn from experience.

Key message

Safeguarding readiness should not be assessed by asking only 'Do you have a policy?'. A more meaningful question is: 'What happens in this organisation before, during and after a safeguarding concern – and how do we know?'

This is precisely where Gomez and Schoch's (2026) analysis is important. Their study of international federations identifies a risk of performative compliance: organisations may adopt visible safeguarding measures partly in response to external expectations and reputational pressures, while comprehensive implementation remains uneven. The implication for grassroots sport is not that policies are unimportant. It is that SAFE

should avoid reproducing a compliance logic in which policy adoption becomes the end point.

Cross-case synthesis: recurring patterns in the mapped examples

Pattern identified in the mapping	Illustrative mapped examples	What it suggests for grassroots practice
Policy or standard as a foundation	International Safeguards; IOC; FIH; ITF; UEFA; DOSB	Clear standards help define expectations, but high-level documents usually require translation into local routines, role-specific guidance and support.
Staged self-assessment and ready-to-use tools	GRASS toolkit; CPSU; Sport Ireland; SPORTUNION Austria	Self-assessment is most useful when it leads directly to prioritised next steps, templates and a realistic improvement plan rather than a compliance score alone.
Role-specific learning and practical guidance	FIFA Guardians; England Hockey; Finnish officer guides; 100% Sport e-learning	People engage more readily when safeguarding is connected to their actual role. Training should be concise, practical and reinforced through scenarios and discussion.
Local safeguarding officers and networks	Sportieq Club-API; Finlands Svenska Idrott; Sport Ireland	A visible contact person can lower the reporting threshold, but one officer cannot carry the whole culture. Clear backup, supervision and conflict-of-interest routes are essential.

Pattern identified in the mapping	Illustrative mapped examples	What it suggests for grassroots practice
Independent or external support and escalation	vera*; national/federation support structures; CPSU advice model	Grassroots clubs need somewhere to go when a concern exceeds their expertise or involves internal conflicts. External pathways increase credibility and reduce isolation.
Mandates, certification and incentives	Spanish legal framework; Portuguese club certification; federation requirements	External requirements can accelerate uptake, but formal compliance should be paired with implementation checks and learning to reduce box-ticking.
Behavioural and culture-focused interventions	Safe Sport Allies; Fair Play workshops; safe-space principles; season-planning approaches	Changing everyday behaviour requires more than information. Repeated practice, bystander confidence, visible norms and leadership consistency are critical.
Continuous planning and review	Finnish season plan; CPSU review; annual club concepts	Safeguarding is more likely to remain active when embedded in the yearly rhythm of the club rather than treated as a one-off project.

What appears to enable implementation at grassroots level

The mapping and supporting literature point to a set of mutually reinforcing implementation conditions. These are not independent 'success factors' and they should

not be ranked statistically. Their value lies in showing what a functioning safeguarding environment requires in combination.

1. Proportionality and usability

Grassroots organisations often depend on volunteers and have limited specialist capacity. Resources are more implementable when they use plain language, explain concepts briefly, separate minimum requirements from further development, and provide ready-to-use examples. Comprehensive should mean covering the necessary functions of safeguarding, not producing the longest possible document.

2. Clear ownership with distributed responsibility

Safeguarding needs named accountability, but it must not be delegated entirely to a single officer. Boards and senior leaders need to own the system, coaches and volunteers need clear behavioural responsibilities, and participants need accessible routes to raise concerns. Research on safeguarding culture identifies committed leadership as one of the central elements of effective culture (Owusu-Sekyere, Rhind and Hills, 2021).

3. Translation into everyday contexts

The strongest grassroots resources address situations people actually encounter: one-to-one coaching, changing rooms, transport, overnight stays, digital communication, photography, team messaging, bullying, discriminatory language, boundary violations and concerns about another adult or participant. Practical translation reduces the gap between knowing a rule and knowing what to do.

4. Low-threshold reporting plus credible response

A reporting channel is only meaningful if people know it exists, trust it, understand what will happen next and have alternatives where there is a conflict of interest. Grassroots clubs should not be expected to investigate every complex case themselves. Referral and escalation relationships with federations, specialist services or public authorities are therefore an important part of implementation capacity.

5. Education that builds behavioural capability

Awareness is necessary but insufficient on its own. Training is more likely to influence practice when it is role-specific, repeated, scenario-based and connected to decisions participants may actually face. The Safe Sport Allies work is particularly relevant because it targets bystander behaviour and the capacity of multiple club stakeholders to notice and act (Adriaens et al., 2024; Verhelle, Vertommen and Peters, 2022).

6. Participant voice and stakeholder engagement

Safeguarding is stronger when athletes, children, adult participants, parents, coaches and volunteers are involved in shaping expectations and reviewing practice. Engagement improves contextual fit and makes it easier to identify risks that leadership may not see. It also helps shift safeguarding from something 'done to' a club to something created with its members.

7. External support, networks and shared infrastructure

Small clubs cannot reasonably reproduce the expertise of national safeguarding systems. The mapping shows the value of federation officers, networks, helplines, competence centres and independent reporting or support services. A European toolkit should therefore help clubs connect to the relevant national ecosystem rather than imply that every club must solve all safeguarding functions internally.

8. Monitoring implementation, not only document presence

A policy, training certificate or named officer is a weak proxy for safety. More useful indicators include whether members know the reporting route, whether leaders review risks, whether actions from concerns are followed up, whether training changes confidence and behaviour, and whether participants feel able to speak up. The International Safeguards evaluation demonstrated that organisational progress can be tracked over time and can include changes in knowledge, behaviour, discussion and disclosures (Rhind and Owusu-Sekyere, 2020).

9. Continuous review and adaptation

Safeguarding systems need to evolve with organisational changes, new forms of communication, emerging risks and lessons from incidents or near misses. Rhind and colleagues' CHILDREN pillars include the need for approaches that are dynamic, culturally sensitive, resourced, engaged and networked (Rhind et al., 2017).

What commonly constrains implementation

1. **Overly legalistic or abstract resources** that establish principles but leave volunteers unsure how to act in routine situations.
2. **Toolkits that are so extensive** that clubs cannot identify a realistic starting point or priority sequence.
3. **A narrow focus on policy adoption, certification or training completion** without checking whether behaviour and organisational routines have changed.
4. **Treating safeguarding as the responsibility of a single officer**, which can create dependency, overload and conflicts of interest.
5. **Reporting mechanisms that are difficult to find, unclear** about confidentiality or next steps, or lack an external escalation route.
6. **One-off awareness training with little opportunity** to practise decisions, discuss grey areas or revisit learning.
7. Failure to adapt to the local legal, cultural, linguistic and organisational context.

8. **Cultures that normalise harmful behaviour**, discourage challenge, prioritise performance or reputation over welfare, or interpret speaking up as disloyalty.
9. Insufficient resources and weak links between local clubs and the wider safeguarding ecosystem.

These constraints should not be interpreted as reasons to abandon formal frameworks. They show why formal frameworks require implementation infrastructure and cultural reinforcement. Roberts, Sojo and Grant's (2020) systematic review is especially relevant: organisational tolerance of abuse, conformity to dominant sport values, power imbalances and isolation were among the organisational factors associated with non-accidental violence. This supports a whole-of-system approach rather than a narrow focus on individual misconduct.

Recommendations for European grassroots sport organisations

The following recommendations translate the mapping into a practical baseline. They are designed to be adaptable across sports and countries; legal duties and reporting requirements must always be aligned with the relevant national context.

Recommendation	Minimum practical action	What 'embedded' practice looks like
1. Make safeguarding a leadership responsibility	Name a board-level accountable person and review safeguarding at least annually.	Leaders routinely discuss risks, allocate resources, model expected behaviour and follow up agreed actions.
2. Adopt a concise safeguarding framework that fits the club	Have a clear policy, code of conduct and role description, adapted to the organisation rather than copied without discussion.	Members can explain the core expectations and see them reflected in recruitment, coaching, events and communications.

Recommendation	Minimum practical action	What 'embedded' practice looks like
3. Map risks in real club situations	Review the main safeguarding risks in training, facilities, travel, changing, digital communication and events.	Risk review is repeated when activities change and leads to visible adjustments in practice.
4. Provide at least two reporting routes	Offer an identifiable club contact and an alternative/external route where appropriate.	Reporting information is visible, accessible and trusted; people understand what happens after a concern is raised.
5. Train by role and through scenarios	Include safeguarding in coach/volunteer induction and provide short recurring learning.	Members practise responses to realistic situations, discuss grey areas and know when to seek specialist help.
6. Develop bystander and speaking-up capability	Make it explicit that everyone can challenge inappropriate behaviour and raise concerns.	People have simple language and confidence to intervene early; leaders respond constructively rather than defensively.
7. Involve participants in safer-sport decisions	Ask athletes/participants and, where relevant, parents what helps them feel safe and what barriers they see.	Participant feedback influences rules, communication, event design and review of safeguarding arrangements.
8. Support the safeguarding officer – do not isolate them	Clarify the officer's remit, training, backup and escalation route.	The role is connected to a wider network, has access to advice and is protected from conflicts of interest.

Recommendation	Minimum practical action	What 'embedded' practice looks like
9. Embed safeguarding into existing routines	Include it in registration, recruitment, coach meetings, season planning, event planning and team communication.	Safeguarding is part of normal club management rather than a separate annual compliance task.
10. Monitor culture and implementation	Track a small set of indicators beyond policy existence.	The club reviews awareness, confidence, reporting accessibility, response quality, learning from concerns and participant feedback, and adapts accordingly.

A practical maturity pathway for grassroots organisations

Because organisational capacity varies considerably across European grassroots sport, SAFE should avoid a binary 'compliant/non-compliant' model. A staged pathway is more realistic, provided that the first stage still contains a credible minimum safeguarding baseline.

Stage	Core characteristics	Typical SAFE support
1. Foundation	Basic policy and behaviour expectations; named responsibilities; risk awareness; clear reporting and external referral information.	Starter checklist, editable templates, 10–15 minute micro-learning, simple action plan.

Stage	Core characteristics	Typical SAFE support
2. Active implementation	Role-specific induction; safeguarding integrated into routines; visible reporting; scenario practice; stakeholder communication.	Role pathways, scenario cards/videos, season-planning prompts, communication pack.
3. Embedded culture	Leadership ownership; participant voice; bystander confidence; repeated learning; open discussion; external network support.	Culture reflection tool, leadership prompts, bystander modules, peer-learning examples.
4. Learning organisation	Regular review of data and feedback; learning from concerns and near misses; policy and practice updated over time.	Review dashboard, culture pulse questions, annual learning cycle and improvement planning.

VI. The importance of culture and cultural change

Policies are infrastructure; culture determines how that infrastructure is used

The most important conclusion from the mapping is that cultural change should not appear as a final, additional chapter after 'the real safeguarding work'. **Culture is the mechanism through which policies, reporting arrangements, codes of conduct and training become meaningful** – or remain symbolic. It shapes what behaviour is normalised, whose voice is taken seriously, whether adults challenge one another, whether leaders protect organisational reputation or participant welfare, and whether people expect a concern to be handled fairly.

Owusu-Sekyere, Rhind and Hills (2021) provide a useful scientific foundation for SAFE. Their Safeguarding Culture in Sport Model conceptualises safeguarding culture through three interacting components: safety-management systems, committed leadership and stakeholder engagement. The model also emphasises that these elements are dynamic and dependent on internal and external context. This is highly compatible with SAFE's focus on adaptable grassroots implementation.

Safeguarding-culture component	What it means in a grassroots sport organisation	Implications for the SAFE toolkit
Safety-management systems	Clear policies, roles, risk management, safer recruitment, reporting, response, referral and review.	Provide a minimum baseline, practical templates, risk scenarios and a clear 'what happens next?' pathway.

Safeguarding- culture component	What it means in a grassroots sport organisation	Implications for the SAFE toolkit
Committed leadership	Leaders communicate that welfare matters, allocate time/resources, act consistently and accept scrutiny.	Include board/leader micro-learning, commitment prompts, decision scenarios and an annual review conversation.
Stakeholder engagement	Athletes, participants, parents, coaches and volunteers understand expectations, can speak up and help shape safe practice.	Include participant voice tools, bystander practice, accessible communication and feedback mechanisms.

Culture change must address power and everyday norms

Safeguarding risks do not arise only from a lack of information. Sport can contain strong hierarchies, close relationships, traditions of obedience, performance pressure and informal loyalty norms. The 2024 IOC consensus statement places safeguarding within a socioecological perspective and emphasises prevention, response and holistic welfare across the wider sport ecosystem (Tuakli-Wosornu et al., 2024). For grassroots organisations, this means that culture work should explicitly explore power, boundaries, inclusion, communication and the conditions under which people feel able to question a coach, volunteer, parent or leader.

Examples of cultural questions that the SAFE toolkit should help clubs discuss:

- What behaviours do we excuse because someone is successful, experienced, popular or difficult to replace?
- How easy is it for a young athlete, adult participant, parent or volunteer to disagree with a coach or leader?

- What happens when someone raises a concern that is inconvenient or reputationally sensitive?
- Do people know the difference between normal sporting challenge and behaviour that humiliates, intimidates, discriminates or crosses personal boundaries?
- Whose voices are absent when we make decisions about safety?
- Do our everyday digital practices, travel arrangements, changing-room routines and social events reflect the standards written in our policy?

Moving beyond performative compliance

Gomez and Schoch (2026) provide a particularly useful warning for SAFE: visible safeguarding measures can have symbolic value and help organisations demonstrate legitimacy, but this can create pressure to prioritise measures that are easy to display. At grassroots level, the equivalent risk is 'a checklist culture' in which a club uploads a policy, appoints an officer and records training completion without testing whether the system is trusted or used.

SAFE should therefore frame compliance as a floor, not a ceiling. Formal requirements are necessary because they create clarity and accountability. The toolkit should then ask implementation questions: Have people seen the policy? Can they apply it to a real situation? Do they know where to report? Is there an alternative route? Does the officer have support? Has the board reviewed a concern? What changed afterwards?

Implications for the SAFE toolkit and micro-learning tools

The project description emphasises adaptability, practical tools, awareness, education, micro-learning and cultural change. The mapping indicates that SAFE's distinctive contribution should be implementation support rather than another comprehensive policy framework.

Toolkit component	Recommended design principle
1. Safeguarding readiness self-assessment	Assess implementation and culture as well as document existence. Produce a short prioritised action plan rather than a score alone.
2. Starter / developing / embedded pathway	Allow organisations to progress at different speeds while maintaining a credible minimum baseline.
3. Role-specific micro-learning	Separate content for board members, safeguarding officers, coaches, volunteers, participants and parents where relevant.
4. Scenario-based learning	Use short cases on boundaries, digital communication, travel, discrimination, bullying, bystander action and reporting. Ask 'What would you do next?'.
5. Culture reflection module	Help clubs examine normalised behaviour, power, silence, performance pressure, inclusion and leadership responses.
6. Bystander action tools	Give people simple intervention options: direct action, distraction, delegation, documentation where appropriate, and safe follow-up.
7. Reporting pathway builder	Help clubs map internal contacts, alternative routes, federation/national services and emergency/statutory pathways relevant to their country.
8. Season-planning integration	Prompt clubs to revisit safeguarding during recruitment, registration, team start-up, events, travel and end-of-season review.

Toolkit component	Recommended design principle
9. Leadership and board checklist	Focus on ownership, resources, conflicts of interest, review and learning rather than policy approval alone.
10. Implementation dashboard	Track a small set of indicators: awareness, confidence, training reach, reporting visibility, response follow-up, participant feedback and agreed improvements.

Suggested SAFE implementation indicators

The project should be cautious about claiming that any short checklist can measure whether a club is 'safe'. However, a small implementation dashboard can help clubs and the project monitor whether safeguarding is becoming more active in practice.

1. Percentage of key role-holders who know the club's safeguarding contact and at least one alternative reporting route.
2. Percentage of coaches/volunteers completing role-specific learning and reporting increased confidence in responding to a scenario.
3. Evidence that safeguarding risks are reviewed at least annually and before higher-risk activities or events.
4. Evidence that safeguarding is included in induction, registration or season-start communication.
5. Participant feedback on whether they feel respected, listened to and able to raise concerns.
6. Number and type of safeguarding concerns or questions raised, interpreted carefully: an initial increase in reporting may reflect greater awareness and trust rather than a deterioration in safety.
7. Evidence that concerns lead to documented follow-up, referral or organisational learning as appropriate.
8. Number of agreed improvement actions completed from the previous review cycle.

VII. Final conclusions

The mapping demonstrates that Europe **does not lack safeguarding policies, standards or tools**. The more persistent challenge is implementation across highly diverse grassroots environments. The most useful resources are not necessarily those with the greatest volume of content, but those that **help organisations understand what to do next, adapt measures to their context, access support and maintain attention over time**.

The evidence also supports a stronger conclusion than the original draft: **policies alone are not enough, and safeguarding should not be developed merely to satisfy an external requirement**. Formal structures are essential, but they become protective only when leaders own them, members understand them, reporting is trusted, concerns are acted upon, participants have voice, and harmful norms are challenged.

For SAFE, cultural change should therefore be treated as the central implementation challenge rather than an optional complement. The project is well positioned to connect the formal and cultural dimensions of safeguarding through practical, proportionate and digitally accessible micro-learning. Its success will depend on helping clubs move from 'we have safeguarding documents' to 'we routinely behave, decide, communicate and learn in ways that make safeguarding real'.

Up next: a toolkit on cultural change in grassroots sport clubs

The next SAFE output should build directly on this conclusion. The cultural-change toolkit should not duplicate existing safeguarding standards. Instead, it should help grassroots sport organisations activate those standards in daily practice through reflection, short learning interventions, leadership prompts, participant engagement, bystander capability, practical routines and a continuous improvement cycle.

VIII. Research and project references

- Adriaens, K., Verhelle, H., Peters, G.-J. Y., Haerens, L. and Vertommen, T. (2024) 'The Safe Sport Allies bystander training: developing a multi-layered programme for youth sport participants and their coaches to prevent harassment and abuse in local sport clubs', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 1389280. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1389280>
- ENGSO (2026) SAFE – Safeguarding Approaches Focusing on grassroots sport Environment. Project description. <https://www.engso-education.eu/safe/>
- Gomez, C. and Schoch, L. (2026) 'Safeguarding in sport: Toward a performative compliance of international sport federations?', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, OnlineFirst. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902251404389>
- Mountjoy, M. et al. (2016) 'International Olympic Committee consensus statement: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport', *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 50(17), pp. 1019–1029. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2016-096121>
- Owusu-Sekyere, F., Rhind, D. J. and Hills, L. (2021) 'Safeguarding culture: towards a new approach to preventing child maltreatment in sport', *Sport Management Review*, 25(2), pp. 300–322. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14413523.2021.1930951>
- Rhind, D. J. A., Kay, T., Hills, L. and Owusu-Sekyere, F. (2017) 'Building a system to safeguard children in sport: The eight CHILDREN pillars', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 41(2), pp. 151–171. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723517696966>
- Rhind, D. J. A. and Owusu-Sekyere, F. (2020) 'Evaluating the impacts of working towards the International Safeguards for Children in Sport', *Sport Management Review*, 23(1), pp. 104–116. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2019.05.009>
- Roberts, V., Sojo, V. and Grant, F. (2020) 'Organisational factors and non-accidental violence in sport: A systematic review', *Sport Management Review*, 23(1), pp. 8–27. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2019.03.001>
- Tuakli-Wosornu, Y. A. et al. (2024) 'IOC consensus statement: interpersonal violence and safeguarding in sport', *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 58(22), pp. 1322–1344. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2024-108766>

Verhelle, H., Vertommen, T. and Peters, G.-J. Y. (2022) 'Preventing sexual violence in sport: Determinants of positive coach-bystander behaviour', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 862220. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.862220>

Note on mapped sources: the individual framework and tool headings in the mapping contain hyperlinks to the primary institutional source where these were supplied by partners. The references above provide the main research basis used to strengthen the comparative analysis and recommendation.

IX. Acknowledgements and Transparency

European Union funding

This publication has been developed within the framework of the Erasmus+ Sport project **SAFE – Safeguarding Approaches Focusing on grassroots sport Environment**, Project Reference **101244978**.

The SAFE consortium gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the **European Union through the Erasmus+ Programme**, which has made the implementation of the project and the development of this publication possible.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Contributions of the SAFE partnership

This publication, and in particular the mapping and comparative analysis of existing safeguarding frameworks, policies and implementation tools, has been developed through the collective contribution of the SAFE partnership. The consortium would especially like to acknowledge **Sportieq**, as leader of Work Package 2, for coordinating the mapping and analysis process.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions, expertise, examples and feedback provided by the following organisations:

- Sportieq
- European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO)
- Finlands Svenska Idrott
- Bulgarian Sports Federation for Children and Youth at Risk
- Sportzentrum Mitte
- Unió de Federacions Esportives de Catalunya (UFEC)
- Bragança Football Association
- European Gay & Lesbian Sport Federation (EGLSF)

- European Olympic Academies (EOA)
- EuroHockey
- Swedish Sports Confederation
- EduTech Gamechanger AB
- European Fair Play Movement (EFPM)
- Italian Rugby Federation

The frameworks and tools presented in this publication were identified and examined with the support of the project partners, drawing on their knowledge of safeguarding systems, practical experience and national and organisational contexts. Their contributions made it possible to bring together a diverse range of approaches and to consider their relevance and transferability to grassroots sport environments across Europe.

Use of artificial intelligence tools

Artificial intelligence tools were used in a supporting capacity during the preparation and refinement of this publication. In particular, generative AI tools supported the **organisation, comparison and synthesis of information relating to different safeguarding frameworks and tools**, as well as editorial tasks such as language refinement, structuring and consistency checks.

AI-generated outputs were not treated as independent evidence or authoritative sources. The underlying frameworks, publications and other source materials remained the basis of the analysis. AI-assisted suggestions and comparative observations were reviewed, assessed and, where necessary, revised by the project team. The interpretation of the findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in this publication therefore remains the responsibility of the authors and the SAFE project consortium.

Scope and responsibility

The mapping presented in this publication is not intended to constitute an exhaustive inventory of all safeguarding frameworks, policies and tools available in Europe or internationally. It represents a selected collection considered particularly relevant to the objectives of the SAFE project and to the realities of grassroots sport.

Safeguarding policies, legislation, guidance and organisational practices continue to evolve. Readers are therefore encouraged to consult the original and most recent versions of the frameworks and tools referenced in this publication when applying them in practice.

The publication is intended as a research, learning and capacity-building resource. It does not replace applicable national legislation, professional safeguarding advice or the safeguarding obligations of individual sport organisations.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.