

FIFA's minimum Package of Care in cases of harassment and abuse (with reference to cases under article 24 of the FIFA Code of Ethics)

Overview

When caring for victims of sexual abuse, the overriding priority must always be the health and welfare of survivors. The provision of any counselling, medico-legal services and protection from retaliation should be offered in such a way so as to promote their best interests and to minimize the number of (potentially) invasive interviews a survivor is required to undergo.

Appropriate, good quality care should be available to all individuals who have been victims of sexual abuse. Support should take place at a site where there is optimal access to the full range of services that may be required and in a location that is accessible for the survivor.

FIFA's minimum Package of Care¹ aims to ensure that victims and survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse - whose cases come under the scope of article 24 of the FIFA Code of Ethics - receive appropriate assistance and support in a timely manner, especially if they are involved in FIFA Ethics proceedings.

This Package of Care forms part of *FIFA's case-management system* in addressing cases of harassment and abuse in football. It sets out how FIFA will do its utmost to facilitate, refer and coordinate, as appropriate, assistance and support to survivors, within its remit. As the global governing body for football, FIFA is committed to respecting and promoting all international human rights and it has zero-tolerance for any form of harassment and abuse in football, as stated in article 24 of the [2023 FIFA Code of Ethics](#). *FIFA is not, however, a service provider when it comes to the provision of care that is required to effectively support survivors of abuse.*

Interaction with service providers

FIFA recognises that services for victims of sexual violence must be comprehensive, and that a multitude of services need to collaborate closely: law enforcement, social services, rape crisis centres, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other agencies to ensure not only that all the complex needs of the survivors are met but also a continuity in service provision.

In the long-term, and as part of its case-management system, FIFA will appoint a case management officer (caseworker) whose role will be to liaise with representatives of such groups and will have an important role to play in referring cases to appropriate services in a given country on a case by case basis. *Specifically, referral to these services will include, but are not limited to:*

- **Counselling and psycho-social support.** In some countries, specially trained counsellors are available to assist in the provision of information and social services to survivors. Some counsellors may provide (or assist the survivor in accessing) short- or long-term psychological support. These services can be state-run or provided by non-governmental organisations.

¹ Based on the United Nations Comprehensive Strategy on Assistance and Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Staff and Related Personnel: <https://conduct.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/keydoc13.pdf>

- **Police.** The main role of police is to investigate allegations of criminal activity, including cases of alleged sexual abuse. Police may be involved with both the victim and the alleged perpetrator. Some police forces have dedicated teams of officers for investigating sexual offences. If these exist in a given country, FIFA will contact them as necessary as part of an official investigation or as part of follow-up to ensure protection for victims against retaliation for reporting or speaking out.
- **Child protection authorities:** It is important to remember that children, including those participating in football, fall under the protection measures of domestic laws of the country in which they live. Child protection authorities / agencies in a given country have statutory responsibility for promoting children's rights and well-being, investigating concerns and allegations of abuse (often in collaboration with the police) as well as the coordination of essential services for victims' recovery. They have the primary duty of care. In some countries however, these agencies may be weak or non-existent and may rely on NGOs to deliver essential protection services for child victims
- **Safety planning and access to shelter or refuge services:** Effective strategies for safety planning vary dependent on the individuals, and case by case, although those linked with shelter services may be more likely to improve safety of survivors. But unfortunately many victims / survivors experience multiple barriers to help-seeking and service provision, involving logistical and financial challenges, tactics imposed by perpetrators, social stigma and fear.
- **Legal Aid:** legal aid is one component of care connected to the provision of other services for victims. Legal aid can assist survivors in understanding their legal rights, including as they may relate to involvement in FIFA Ethics proceedings, and making informed choices. It is an important building block of comprehensive access to justice.

Assistance and support that FIFA can provide (in general)

FIFA recognises that survivors should receive basic assistance and support in accordance with their individual needs directly arising from the alleged sexual abuse. This assistance and support will comprise: counselling and psycho-social support; access to shelter services where existing; legal aid and support to deal with the psychological and social effects of the experience, as necessary, and on a case-by-case basis.

Provision of assistance and support

- I. All assistance and support should be provided in a manner that does not increase the trauma suffered by the victims.
- II. Any assistance and support FIFA covers will be provided through existing local services.
- III. However, where necessary, FIFA will consider supporting the provision of new services, if deemed necessary and if it is an emergency, such as providing re-location support if a victim's involvement in an official FIFA Ethics proceeding raises their risk of harm.
- IV. A FIFA Case Management Officer (or FIFA case-worker) will be appointed to coordinate the provision of care to ensure that the process of referring survivors is simple, safe and respects the need for confidentiality, dignity and non-discrimination.
- V. FIFA will identify local implementing partners to provide the services outlined in this brief and to act as Victim Support Facilitators, as necessary.
- VI. The duration of the provision of assistance and support should be set in accordance with individual needs directly arising from the victim's involvement in a FIFA Ethics case in relation to their experience of sexual abuse.
- VII. The provision of any assistance and support by FIFA in every case is not an acknowledgement of the validity of the claims or an indication of acceptance of responsibility by the alleged perpetrator.