



Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport

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Clive Betts MP
House of Commons
London
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Dear Clive,

Thank you for raising the important issue of player safety at sports grounds during the recent debate on the new clause regarding player welfare. I appreciate you highlighting the incident at Bath City involving a young player, and inquiring about the current role of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975.

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA) outlines the duties in relation to workplace safety placed upon dutyholders. A dutyholder may be a football club, or a third party such as a landlord that owns the football ground and rents to the football club, or those clubs who lease the management or the advertising boards to third parties. Dutyholders are required to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of employees and also those who are not employed by them but may be affected by their undertaking. Regulation 3 of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires dutyholders to conduct risk assessments to identify potential harms and implement control measures for all persons, including players.

National Governing Bodies are also responsible for the rules and regulation of their specific sports and for ensuring appropriate measures are in place to protect participants from general risks inherent to that activity.


The FA's Ground Grading Criteria for Steps 1 to 6 of the Men's National League System (NLS) includes guidance on distances needed between the touchline, goal line, and pitch perimeter barriers. The NLS also uses 'StadiumPower' for its Stadium Accreditation System, centrally holding ground grading data and allowing clubs to track compliance. However, ground grading does not cover participant health and safety. For this, clubs have ongoing obligations under Health and Safety legislation to ensure their ground is safe as a place of work. As the field of play is a workplace, the playing surface and support infrastructure should be subject to a suitable and sufficient risk assessment by the clubs.



As you noted, the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 was enacted with the specific purpose of establishing a consistent legal framework for spectator safety, and therefore its remit is strictly limited to this area. Additionally, the new Bill's regulator will have a very tightly defined scope and purpose focused on protecting and promoting the long term financial sustainability of the game for the benefit of fans and local communities. While player safety falls outside both of these scopes, the safety, wellbeing, and welfare of everyone taking part in sport is absolutely paramount to the Government, as can be seen in the measures mentioned above.

Thank you again for raising this and for your attention to this matter. I have placed a copy of this letter in the Libraries of both Houses.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Peacock', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Stephanie Peacock MP
Minister for Sport, Media, Civil Society and Youth