

# Safeguarding Quality Assurance Framework



## 1.1 Introduction

The club has a priority commitment to safeguarding that creates and reinforces attitudes and behaviours that value children and adults at risk, creates a culture of accountability and drives continuous improvement.

## 1.2 Objectives

The club drives a culture that promotes listening to and acting on the experiences and views of stakeholders to drive continual improvement:

- The Club proactively seeks and acts on feedback from stakeholders on a regular basis to strengthen its safeguarding arrangement
- There is a culture of listening to children and adults at risk and taking account of their experiences and views in individual decisions and to inform enhancements to the Club's approach to promoting and protecting their rights, safety and wellbeing.

This Safeguarding Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) outlines the structures and processes to monitor, evaluate, and improve safeguarding practices across the Club. It ensures that:

- All safeguarding measures meet legal, regulatory, and best practice standards
- Creates that culture of accountability and drives continual improvement

## 2. Governance and Leadership

### 2.1 Roles & responsibilities

While the Club's Board is ultimately responsible for ensuring that there are effective safeguarding measures in place, there is a clear expectation that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility as detailed in the SGF.

In terms of QAF the following responsibilities are in operation:

| Who        | Responsibility                                                                                                             |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1921 board | QAF review and overall compliance                                                                                          |
| SSM        | Overview of DSO and support of DSO                                                                                         |
| DSO        | Operational implementation of QAF<br>Incident and case reviews<br>Reviews and Evaluation of Policies, Plans and Procedures |
| SWG        | Training & development – implementation of WDP<br>Ongoing review and monitoring incident<br>Case reviews                   |

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## 3. Policies and Procedures

The club will implement policies and procedures as required by the SGF, RMP, SS and Plans:

- Be transparent and publicise on the club's website
- Operate accessible reporting procedures
- Adopt and share a Whistleblowing and Complaints policies
- Implement policy review dates and responsibilities
- Publicise clear contacts

## 4. Training and Development

The club will establish a Workforce Development Plan. This will include:

- Mandatory induction training
- Role-specific and refresher training
- Training logs maintained and reviewed

## 5. Safer Recruitment and Staff Conduct

The club will establish a Safer Recruitment Policy. This will include:

- Enhanced DBS checks
- References and employment history verified
- Written applications
- Codes of conduct
- Complaints and Disciplinary policies

## 6. Culture and Environment

The club will drive and promote:

- Open and transparent safeguarding culture
- Empowering children/vulnerable adults to speak ("Voice of the child")
- Staff feel safe to report concerns
- There is an environment where individuals feel comfortable and confident in challenging and/or reporting breaches.

There are clear procedures and support available for individuals reporting a breach and those finding themselves the subject of a complaint/ allegation.

Breaches are taken seriously and acted on in line with relevant procedures, for example, staff disciplinary procedures and managing allegations against staff.

Support is available for individuals reporting concerns, those affected by safeguarding concerns, and where appropriate, those finding themselves the subject of an allegation.

## 7. Case Management and Record Keeping

We will operate an electronic safeguarding concern management system which:

- allows direct recording/reporting by staff (alerts safeguarding staff immediately as concerns are reported;

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- is compliant with data protection requirements and enables restricted access
- has functionality to assign and monitor actions;
- capture data to support analysis of trends as required
- secure, confidential storage
- allows regular case audits by DSO, SSM and SWP

## 8. Audit and Monitoring

We will operate a systems to monitor and audit our safeguarding operations including:

- Internal reviews by SWG on an ongoing basis as per Section 10
- external audits from football agencies
- Action plans for improvements
- Regular reporting to the 1921 Board and LG
  - Quarterly standard form (See RMP)
  - Immediate reports of potential Level 3 4 incidents (Section 11)
  - Updates at each LG meeting
- Reviews and evaluations (Section 10)



## 9. Feedback and Participation

Feedback is sought from all levels of the club as part of the review process to assess the extent to which procedures are embedded, identify any gaps in procedures and to ensure they are cohesive.

The club will provide a range of safe and inclusive opportunities for staff and relevant stakeholders to form and express their views and share concerns.

- Demonstrate that the views and concerns of staff and relevant stakeholders are acted upon, as appropriate;
- Ensure that staff and relevant stakeholders receive feedback in a timely manner; and
- Provide opportunities for staff and relevant stakeholders to participate in the review and evaluation of consultation measures.
- There is demonstrable evidence of how feedback is used to develop and review club policies and practices.

There is a supportive internal response to the raising of concerns, complaints and whistleblowing.

Consultation measures are regularly evaluated and reviewed.

- Feedback from children, adults, and families
- Incorporation of lived experience into policy
- Mechanisms for anonymous feedback

We will implement confidential surveys:

- Annual staff survey
- Parent survey six monthly
- Voice of Player

We will:

- monitor scores, report scores and seek to increase scores and
- reflect feedback in review and evaluation process below

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## 10. Review and evaluation

The club regularly assesses whether procedures are effective in practice or if further development or improvement is required

### Ongoing reviews

We will review all the elements of the SGF

- Plans (eg SP, QAF, SGF)
- Policies (RMP, individual policies)
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Risk Assessments (SRR, RA)
- Agreements (SLA with affiliates)

These reviews will be undertaken:

- when there are changes to the risk activity
- after a near miss or accident
- when there are changes to the type of people involved in the activity
- when there are changes in good practice
- when there are legislative changes
- annually if for no other reason

Review periods and policy versions are included in policies and procedures and a record of changes/ additions is kept.

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## Incident Review and Learning

We will operate a process for learning and making improvement from incidents to help achieve the objectives of the QAF.

| Level | Category    | Characteristics                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Response            | Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Responsibility |
|-------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 4     | High impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Third part harm suffered</li> <li>• Risk crystalises</li> <li>• Significant Loss suffered</li> <li>• Significant damages suffered</li> <li>• Police / LADO FA / NL /EFL action</li> </ul> | Serious Case Review | Full review all aspects of the case<br>External Independent support                                                                                                                                                                   | Board          |
| 3     | Moderate    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 2 characteristics + risk of medium/high damage but did not crystalise</li> <li>• Significant disciplinary action</li> <li>• LADO referral – but no action</li> </ul>                | Case review plus    | Detailed internal assessment of Case management actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial decision</li> <li>• Referrals made</li> <li>• Following of procedures</li> </ul> Recommendations for changes<br>Action plans | DSO with SWG   |
| 2     | Moderate    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breach of policy</li> <li>• Disciplinary action taken</li> <li>• No damage</li> </ul>                                                                                                     | Case review         | Headline case features and learnings presented to SWG and actions agreed<br>Recommendations for changes<br>Action plans                                                                                                               | DSO with SWG   |
| 1     | Low level   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor practice</li> <li>• Practice reminders issues</li> <li>• No disciplinary action</li> <li>• No damage or harm</li> </ul>                                                              | Incident review     | Headline case features and learnings presented to SWG and actions agreed<br>Actions                                                                                                                                                   | DSO            |

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## 11. Multi-Agency Working

Safeguarding is a key consideration during activity planning, delivery and reviews with other agencies.

We will operate a multi-agency approach by working.

- Local safeguarding board collaboration with the:
  - LADO
  - NL / FA / Cumberland FA
  - Affiliates (COO -CUCST)
- Joint case reviews with NL/EFL and FA

Contractual agreements with close affiliates clearly:

- respective safeguarding responsibilities
- operate formal agreements (SLA) with CUCST

## Review of QAF

This Policy will be kept up to date, particularly as the Club changes in nature and size and new requirements emerge.

To ensure this, QAF, and the way it is implemented, will be reassessed and amended on an **ongoing basis and reviewed annual basis will be as follows:**

- QAF will be considered as agenda items and discussed at the:
  - Safeguarding Working Group meetings
  - Feature as part of the 1921 Safeguarding board reports
- The Policy will be reassessed and amended on an ongoing basis by the CEO in consultation with the Safeguarding Working Group
- The 1921 Board will:
  - include recruitment within safeguarding as an agenda item and feature in the Board Report
  - conduct an annual review of the Policy as part of the annual Safeguarding review

|                                           |                                                                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
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| Signed                                    |  | Nigel Clibbens<br>Chief Executive |