

AFC Wimbledon Safeguarding Strategic Plan 2024 – 2027

Approved by the PLC Board 18th April 2024

At AFC Wimbledon Football Club, we are proud of our reputation as an inclusive and welcoming community organisation – we strive to be A Home for Everyone. We recognise that the safety and wellbeing of everyone we serve is of paramount importance and we are committed to championing the rights of children, young people, and adults at risk. Through creating environments where everyone feels safe, valued, and respected we seek to make it as difficult as possible for anyone to abuse others and to eliminate risk through safe practice.

This 2024 / 2027 Strategy has been designed to ensure that safeguarding remains at the core of all Club and Foundation activities. We believe that our delivery should be properly influenced through working closely with our stakeholder groups. Anyone reading this strategy should gain a clear understanding of the safeguarding standards that they can expect from AFC Wimbledon Football Club.

The strategy will be delivered through our seven principles:

1. Safeguarding is embedded in organisational leadership, governance & culture.
2. Everyone takes responsibility for safeguarding.
3. There are effective safeguarding related policies, procedures, and practice in place. These are consistently implemented, regularly reviewed and where necessary developed.
4. Children & adults at risk are informed about their rights and everyone is equipped with safeguarding knowledge & skills.
5. Concerns & complaints are taken seriously & responded to swiftly & appropriately.
6. There is a clear commitment to working together to promote and protect the safety & welfare of children & adults at risk.
7. There is a culture that promotes listening & respecting views & wishes.

Our safeguarding approach is underpinned by legislation, regulatory guidance, and current best practice. We are regularly audited independently by our regulatory body (the relevant League the men's first team participates in – currently the EFL) to ensure that we remain compliant with Safeguarding rules and standards. To ensure we deliver the highest levels of safeguarding practice and that this is consistently maintained, we are devising an implementation plan to complement the strategy. Regular scrutiny through our safeguarding governance framework will ensure that we drive continuous improvement in an accountable and transparent manner.

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Leadership and Governance

Principle

Safeguarding is embedded in organisational leadership, governance & culture.

Objective

- All Board Directors, and all other Senior Leaders, to complete mandatory safeguarding training to ensure that they can effectively contribute to the organisational Safeguarding Strategic Plan.
- Embedding the Safeguarding Governance Framework across all business areas to enhance the flow of information from operational to Board Level and to promote accountability.
- To incorporate our safeguarding principles into all elements of organisational business.
- To embrace learning from independent scrutiny and review to enhance and strengthen culture

Roles and Responsibilities

Principle

Everyone takes responsibility for safeguarding

Objective

- The organisation ensures that our people understand their individual safeguarding responsibilities through effective HR governance.
- Our people champion professional attitudes and behaviours in line with our Club values.
- Our people respect the rights of children and adults at risk, to ensure that our environments are truly a 'Home for Everyone.'
- The organisation ensures our people are equipped with the skills to ensure that they understand the importance of safeguarding, the impact of abuse and how to recognise signs raising concerns.

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Prevention, Policies, Procedures and Practice

Principle

There are effective safeguarding related policies, procedures, and practice in place. These are consistently implemented, regularly reviewed and where necessary developed.

Objective .

- Our policies and procedures are accessible and understood by everyone using plain language and images where appropriate.
- We reduce the risk of harms through safer recruitment, safe practice, and effective risk planning.
- To ensure that our EDI, Wellbeing, and safeguarding strategies are effectively aligned to promote a coordinated and efficient approach to tackling potential risk through vulnerability.
- We will implement a Safeguarding Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) which will underpin continuous improvement

Education and Empowering

Principle

Children & adults at risk are informed about their rights and everyone is equipped with safeguarding knowledge & skills.

Objective

- Embedding an effective safeguarding competency framework to ensure that everyone is provided with safeguarding knowledge commensurate with their role and responsibilities.
- Driving safeguarding awareness where developmental needs are identified, new guidance or legislation is issued.
- To actively promote the AFC Wimbledon brand through a communication strategy which will raise the confidence of those accessing our activities.
- Development and delivery of an effective Speaking Up strategy to ensure that children, young people, and adults at risk are empowered to report any concerns they may have.

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Protection

Principle

Concerns & complaints are taken seriously & responded to swiftly & appropriately.

Objective

- To ensure all safeguarding and wellbeing concerns are recorded promptly and positive action is taken to reduce risk.
- To embed the understanding and practice of reporting and recording of low-level concerns to develop a positive no blame culture where these are identified.
- Developing a valued DSO -led network to support peers and to ensure that safeguarding is championed across the organisation.
- Continuously improving our safeguarding delivery through mature review and ensuring we undertake a transparent approach where delivery could have been better

Working together

Principle

There is a clear commitment to working together to promote and protect the safety & welfare of children & adults at risk.

Objective

- To work efficiently with statutory and regulatory partners alongside the EFL to ensure children and adults at risk are kept safe from harms through effective interventions. .
- To work efficiently with charitable and commercial partners to ensure children and adults at risk are kept safe from harms through effective procedures.
- To use our safeguarding information to inform the work of other stakeholders to provide a targeted approach to planning.
- To support national safeguarding campaigns such as FA Play Safe, Parents in Sport, Safeguarding Adults and Safer Internet Day to promote wider awareness.

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Listening Culture

Principle

There is a culture that promotes listening & respecting views & wishes

Objective

- To develop a culture of listening to children & adults at risk whilst considering their wishes and feelings.
- To identify where children and adults at risk have experienced trauma and to respond appropriately.
- To ensure there are effective means for our people and service users to confidently report any worries, concerns, or feedback.
- To proactively seek feedback from stakeholders on a regular basis to strengthen our safeguarding arrangements.