



SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE GROUPS STRATEGY

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Watford F.C. Safeguarding Framework

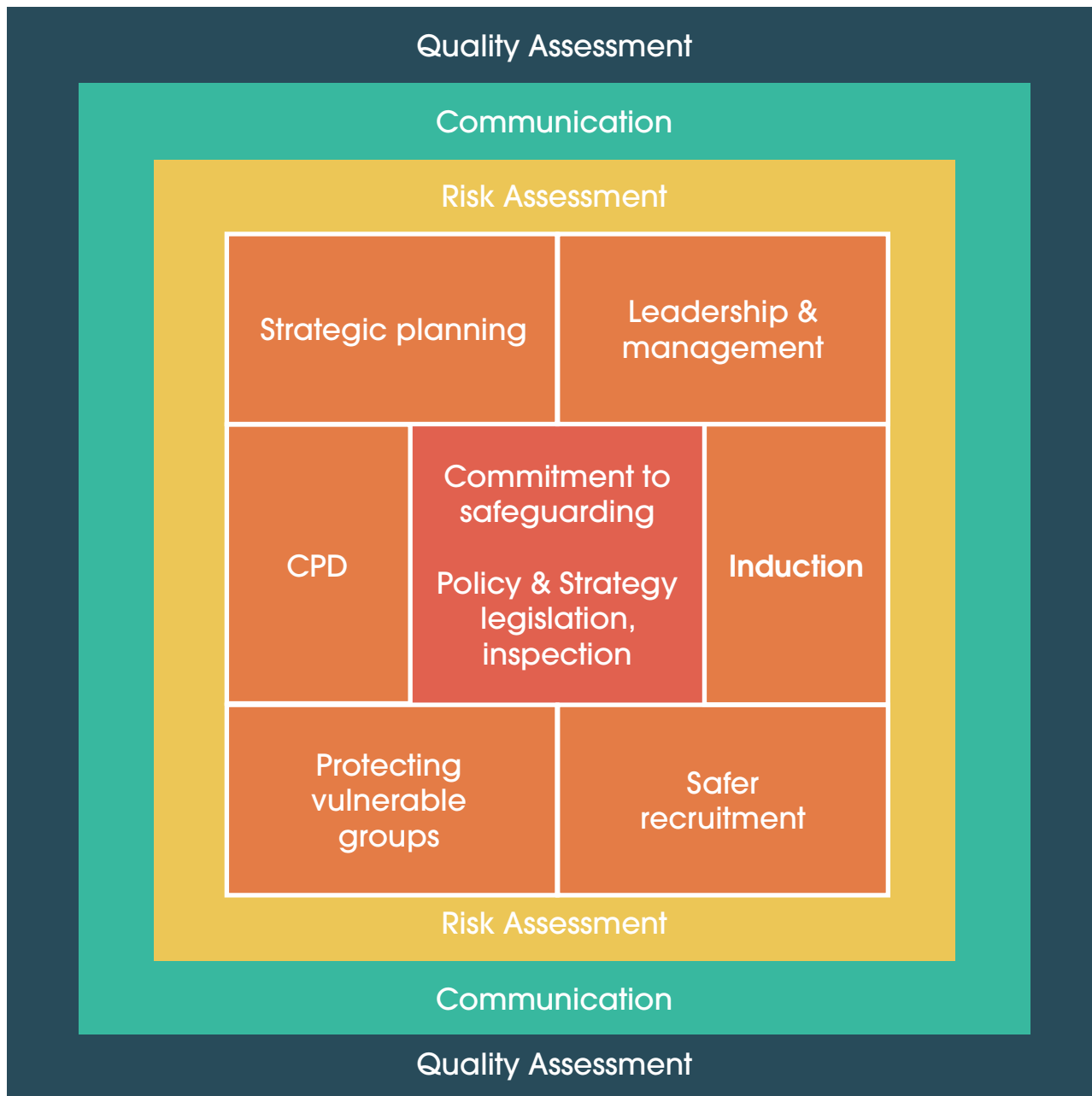


Figure 1

1. Introduction

Watford F.C. (The Club) is committed to maintaining the highest possible standards to meet its social, moral and legal responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of every child/young person or adult at risk with whom it comes into contact. (Referred to collectively as vulnerable groups).

The Club, working in partnership, has a key role to play in safeguarding vulnerable groups and promoting their welfare. Awareness of safeguarding issues, as well as the implementation of good practices and robust procedures are key to effective safeguarding within club activity.

This strategy is intended to set out how the Club can continue to improve its safeguarding of vulnerable groups; whilst actively encouraging and enabling our partners to make their own positive contributions. This strategy compliments the Club's Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policies.

Watford F.C. is committed to ensuring the well-being of vulnerable groups and we recognise the importance of safeguarding legislation and its interrelationship with other key legislation, as shown in figure 2 below:



Figure 2

2. The overarching **objectives** of this Safeguarding Strategy are:

- To ensure we have an effective whole organisation approach to safeguarding and promoting welfare;
- To ensure that the club's stance on safeguarding is made clear to all our partners and service providers; and to clarify the concept of safeguarding and promoting welfare;
- To actively promote safeguarding within all partnerships and commissioned services; and seek to establish minimum safeguarding standards;
- To embed our belief that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable groups is always everyone's business and continuing responsibility;
- To encourage, embed and maintain the best safeguarding practice and continuous improvement; and to comply with safeguarding legislation, guidance and policies;
- To identify and address any shortfalls in the service we provide.



3. We shall achieve our objectives by carrying out the following **strategic activities**:

3.1 Strategic Planning

- By ensuring that safeguarding is embedded within our strategic and operational planning processes;
- By setting and monitoring the club's vision, values and priorities, which are aligned to safeguarding vulnerable groups and safer working practice, (Children Act 1989 & 2004, Care Act 2014);
- By reviewing this strategy and associated safeguarding policies annually.

3.2 Leadership and Management

- By developing and implementing a comprehensive club-wide 'safeguarding action and implementation plan' to ensure that our safeguarding arrangements continue to improve;
- By continuing to work closely with the Premier League to further develop our safeguarding arrangements;
- By ensuring all personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act;
- By highlighting in job descriptions and recruitment processes, employee's responsibilities in relation to safeguarding;
- By developing a safeguarding workforce development plan to identify education and training requirements of all employees, to ensure safer working practice;
- By co-ordinating, monitoring and evaluating our safeguarding arrangements and sharing best practice through consultation with employees;
- To provide evidence of the Club's compliance with the Premier League's 'Safeguarding Audit Criteria';
- To develop a Club 'check and challenge' tool to address safeguarding responsibilities in partnership working;
- By working to, and developing service level agreements that set out the minimum delivery standards required within a service providers setting;
- Establishing standardised best practice in relation to safeguarding.

3.3 Safer Recruitment

- By implementing an effective safer recruitment procedure for employees and volunteers (including risk assessment) to ensure their suitability to work with vulnerable groups.



3.4 Induction

- By providing a thorough induction to all employees to raise awareness and understanding of the Club's safeguarding arrangements and policies, safer working practices, the standards expected from them and their responsibilities in relation to these;
- By ensuring that the Club's codes of ethics, conduct and behaviour form part of the Club's induction process and is promoted to everyone across the club.

3.5 Continuous Professional Development

- By ensuring employees acquire and maintain (through education, training and development) the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies relevant to their role. Enabling them to ensure that appropriate safeguarding and protection arrangements for vulnerable groups are always in place;
- By ensuring that the Club's safeguarding workforce development plan makes it clear what roles require training and includes those who do not have direct access to vulnerable groups.

3.6 Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups

- By ensuring that all relevant employees and service providers are subjected to the relevant Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal record checks (CRC);
- By educating and empowering vulnerable groups where appropriate to take responsibility for their own safety and wellbeing and that of others (i.e. scholars);
- By ensuring that all employees demonstrate an active commitment to promoting safeguarding and safer working practice.

3.7 Risk Assessment

- By undertaking thorough risk assessments of the activities that the Club delivers, ensuring effective processes are in place to remove or reduce any identified risk;
- By ensuring relevant service level agreements are in place with partners that clearly specify safeguarding arrangements;
- By ensuring that accountability is at the core of all activities undertaken with vulnerable groups; and as part of the planning process it is essential that all partners are clear who is responsible for each area.

3.8 Communication

- By effective internal and external communications that promote clear understanding of strategic aims and objectives, policies, operating procedures and guidance notes.

3.9 Quality Assessment

- By internal review of our safeguarding processes and procedures and benchmarking the Club's performance against the Premier League safeguarding audit criteria to identify good practice, non-compliance and areas for improvement;



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- By ensuring that the Club's safeguarding policies are reviewed annually or earlier if there is a major change in the organisation, legislation, statutory or football authority guidance or after any safeguarding incident;
- By ensuring that the Club's safeguarding action and implementation plan is regularly reviewed (at least quarterly) to ensure that it remains relevant and mapped against the Club's objectives to achieve its strategy;
- By providing robust and evaluative evidence of progress and compliance during monitoring visits conducted by the Premier League;
- By ensuring the workforce development plan is regularly evaluated and reviewed to ensure that it meets the needs of the Club, employees and volunteers who work with or on behalf of vulnerable groups;
- By ensuring that the Club's vision, values and priorities regarding its safeguarding provision are effectively disseminated to employees, volunteers, partners, vulnerable groups and their parents/carers;
- By ensuring that the Club's stance on safeguarding is made clear to all partners and service providers and that the Club can evidence that everyone involved is clear about their respective responsibilities;
- By ensuring observations of activities involving vulnerable groups take into account safeguarding arrangements and support the Club's commitment to continuous improvement;
- By sharing and identifying best practice with other Premier League and Football League clubs so that all employees benefit from consistently high standards;
- By regularly consulting with vulnerable groups to identify whether there are any barriers to their involvement in Club programmes and activities;
- By consulting with staff engaging with vulnerable groups to ensure that implementation of the Club's policies and procedures remains relevant and practical; and to identify where delivery can be improved;
- By reviewing the Club's substitute accommodation arrangements and provision to ensure that the Club fulfils its statutory requirements; and is able to provide an auditable process;
- By further developing the Club's existing safeguarding framework and processes to protect vulnerable groups from radicalisation.

In summary, the **key processes** in implementing the strategy are: -

- Safeguarding planning and development;
- Policy and strategy review;
- Safe recruitment and selection;
- Effective risk assessment; management and accountability;
- Self-assessment and continuous improvement;
- Safeguarding education and training;
- Working in partnership;
- Communication of the club's commitment to safeguarding.



4. Roles & Responsibilities

- Overall responsibility for the safeguarding strategy lies with the Operations Director;
- The Operations Manager will monitor the development and implementation of safeguarding policies and operating procedures;
- The Head of Safeguarding (HOS) is responsible for developing and reviewing safeguarding policies and operating procedures. The HOS will provide leadership, advice and support in relation to the safeguarding and protection of vulnerable groups; promoting good practice and co-ordinating action within the club on receipt of concerns or referrals;
- The Premier League Safeguarding Monitor undertakes safeguarding support and compliance visits to the club;
- Designated Safeguarding Officers within Watford F.C. Academy, Watford F.C. Community Sports Trust and Watford F.C. Ladies are responsible for promoting and ensuring that the safeguarding standards of the Club are consistently applied;
- All operational employees' job descriptions will include general responsibilities relating to safeguarding.

5. Safeguarding Framework

The safeguarding framework (see page 3) forms the basis and **structure** of the Club's approach to safeguarding and its drive for continuous improvement. The key principles, activities and procedures underpinning this framework are set out in the clubs safeguarding policies.

6. Communication of the Safeguarding Agenda

The Club will ensure that:

- Safeguarding is embedded in its organisation through the effective implementation and communication of the safeguarding strategy. The strategy to safeguard vulnerable groups will be prioritised and effectively resourced.
- Information about its commitment to safeguarding vulnerable groups and relevant advice is openly displayed; and easily accessible to employees, partners, vulnerable groups and their parents/carers.
- Its safeguarding standards are made clear to all partners & service providers; and that partners are provided with copies of policies, procedures, good practice guidelines and designated safeguarding staff contact details.
- Safeguarding, whistleblowing and complaints procedures will be publicised, promoted and be accessible.

7. Policy, Framework and Strategy Review

This safeguarding strategy and framework is representative of the club's vision, values and priorities and these are reflected in our specific safeguarding policies and procedures.

Each of the above shall be **formally reviewed** at least annually to ensure they remain effective and up to date. The Operations Director is responsible for approving this safeguarding strategy.