

Safeguarding: Welsh Gymnastics

2024-25

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Welsh Gymnastics Safeguarding Report

1. Purpose

This report covers the period from January 2024 to March 2025—extending beyond the previous calendar-year format to align with the financial year. This timeframe also allows for the full impact of recently introduced systems, especially new management information (MI) platforms, to be captured.

Two years ago, Welsh Gymnastics introduced a structured KPI framework to monitor safeguarding. Since then, the pace and depth of cultural and organisational change have exceeded expectations. What began as a compliance-driven model has evolved into a proactive, embedded safeguarding culture.

This report, therefore, does more than review the year—it reflects a key inflection point. It provides:

- A narrative assessment of safeguarding activity over the past 15 months.
- A critical reappraisal of the existing KPI framework, identifying areas of success and those in need of adjustment.
- A new set of KPIs for the coming year

The aim is to demonstrate how safeguarding is now embedded across the organisation, while recognising areas for continued improvement—particularly around capturing feedback directly from gymnasts.

2. Introduction

This reporting period marks a strategic shift for Welsh Gymnastics, moving to a financial year cycle and capturing data from new systems now becoming operational.

In the past two years, Welsh Gymnastics has transformed its approach to safeguarding—from a reactive, administrative task to a proactive, organisation-wide commitment. Safeguarding is now a core consideration in decision-making, with systems in place to not only respond to concerns but to prevent them.

This evolution reflects the direction set out in Welsh Gymnastics' 2025–2035 strategy, *Where Sport Begins*, which positions safeguarding and wellbeing as the golden thread running through every part of the organisation. This year's revised KPI framework mirrors the strategy's emphasis on People, Places, and Practices. The new KPIs have been deliberately reduced in number to make them simpler, clearer, and easier to embed across the whole system—while continuing to provide robust oversight and accountability.

Progress has been significant, but challenges remain. Chief among them is the difficulty in capturing reliable feedback from gymnasts. Survey participation remains low, limiting the ability to track trends or draw meaningful conclusions. New approaches—such as dip sampling, focus groups, and qualitative engagement—must be explored to generate deeper insight into gymnast safety and wellbeing.

While new MI systems have been implemented, their full analytical capability is still developing. Ensuring these tools can produce timely, accurate and actionable data is essential for shaping safeguarding strategy and supporting governance.

Welsh Gymnastics has worked with the other home nations and Globocol to develop the UK's first federal safeguarding model in sport. The framework enables each nation to retain control of their systems while allowing high-level cooperation and information sharing across national boundaries. This new element will be assessed in the 2025/26 KPI report.

The KPI framework, developed two years ago during a time of change, no longer fully reflects the maturity or complexity of safeguarding work in the organisation. This report marks a shift towards a more holistic and intelligent assessment—drawing on lived experience, cultural change, and the strategic use of evolving data.

3. Narrative Assessment of Safeguarding: January 2024 – March 2025

3.1 Strengthened Leadership & Governance

The appointment of a Safeguarding Manager alongside an Executive Director for Safeguarding has significantly strengthened strategic oversight. Safeguarding is now embedded at Board level through a dedicated Safeguarding & Wellbeing Subcommittee, ensuring it remains a central governance priority.

This shift means safeguarding is no longer a standalone function—it is fully integrated into Welsh Gymnastics' culture and decision-making processes.

3.2 Cultural and Operational Improvements

The Safe Environments Policy has changed how gymnastics operates: training and competitions can no longer take place behind closed doors, and the presence of a second adult during sessions is now routine.

New procedures for away trips ensure safeguarding is prioritised in planning and logistics. Collectively, these actions represent a genuine shift from compliance to embedded cultural change.

However, securing athlete feedback remains a challenge. Despite sustained efforts, survey response rates are low. Progress depends on reinforcing the shared responsibility of clubs, coaches, parents, and athletes to contribute to safeguarding data. A cultural shift is required—towards openness, shared accountability, and continuous feedback.

3.3 Strengthened Case Management & Incident Reporting

The implementation of a safeguarding IT system now allows for structured case tracking, review and escalation. Confidence in reporting processes has increased at club level, and cases are now handled with greater transparency and consistency.

Welsh Gymnastics, together with the other home nations, has worked in partnership with the safeguarding platform Globocol to develop the UK's first federal safeguarding model in sport. This new approach enables each nation to retain its own governance and control over specific areas, while also creating a framework for collaboration and information-sharing. The aim is to allow for the secure sharing of data at a UK-wide level, so that emerging patterns can be identified and individuals of concern can be tracked across the system. This element of the safeguarding model has only recently been finalised and will be critically assessed in the 2025/26 KPI report.

However, the value of this system lies in how well the data is used. Insights must be actively interrogated to identify emerging patterns—such as re-referrals, case types, and regional variation—so that proactive responses can be developed.

The Board has a critical role to play. Regular scrutiny of safeguarding data should be more than a formality—it must drive accountability and help identify risks. By triangulating MI with athlete and club feedback, the organisation gains a richer understanding of safeguarding effectiveness.

Looking ahead, Welsh Gymnastics will prioritise the development of analytical capacity within the safeguarding team to enable deeper insight and stronger evidence-based decision-making. Board members already receive narrative updates on high-risk cases, but there is now a need to expand this approach—ensuring that all safeguarding data is accompanied by clear, accessible analysis. This will support more meaningful oversight, enable strategic reflection, and drive continuous improvement across the system.

3.4 Increased Community Engagement

Welsh Gymnastics has deepened its engagement with the gymnastics community. Structured forums, targeted consultations, and sessions with the Young Ambassadors have helped shape safeguarding initiatives. These ambassadors have contributed to updates of Codes of Conduct and other key resources.

Reflection reviews now follow case decisions, while inductions, exit interviews and meetings with performance pathway parents and/or athletes offer an opportunity to share updates, raise concerns, and contribute ideas.

Communication has been enhanced through newsletters and social media campaigns like #WellbeingWednesday. Clubs are encouraged to share safeguarding content, and community feedback is actively used to shape training for coaches and safeguarding and wellbeing officers—ensuring it remains relevant and effective.

3.5 Education and Development

Safeguarding is now embedded within staff development and CPD frameworks. Structured training is complemented by competency assessments, tracked via the Sport 80 system, which prevents individuals without up-to-date qualifications from engaging in gymnastics activity.

New training content covers topics including concussion awareness, mental health, and safeguarding in high-performance environments. The Safeguarding Manager plays a pivotal role in case management, risk assessment, and supporting clubs.

Training extends to everyone with safeguarding responsibilities, including volunteers, coaches, and safeguarding and wellbeing officers. The Gateway Assessment ensures key personnel can recognise and respond to concerns. Club portals are increasingly used for reporting, and policies continue to evolve through direct engagement with clubs.

Crucially, safeguarding credentials are now a mandatory requirement for inclusion on the Welsh Gymnastics coach register. To be listed, coaches must complete a safeguarding CPD course and keep their certification up to date. Failure to do so results in automatic removal from the register, underscoring the importance of ongoing compliance in maintaining a safe environment. Coaches can demonstrate their compliance via their digital membership card.

4. KPIs

This section presents a critical reappraisal of Welsh Gymnastics' existing KPI framework, assessing its effectiveness in measuring safeguarding progress and identifying areas that require refinement. Since the introduction of structured safeguarding KPIs, Welsh Gymnastics has made significant strides in embedding safeguarding across the organisation. However, as safeguarding practices and data collection methods have evolved, some indicators no longer fully reflect the maturity of the current system.

This review highlights key successes—where safeguarding measures are firmly embedded and producing tangible outcomes—while also identifying areas that require adjustment. Particular attention is given to data reliability, survey response rates, and the need for alternative feedback mechanisms to ensure gymnast voices are more effectively captured. Additionally, where indicators have successfully served their purpose, recommendations have been made to retire or refine them to maintain a focused and meaningful framework.

The revised KPI framework continues to support evidence-based decision-making, ensuring that Welsh Gymnastics remains proactive in safeguarding and responsive to emerging challenges. The table below outlines each KPI, its intended outcome, measurement approach, and recommendations for improvement.

4.1 KPIs about Culture and Strategy

Outcome	Output	Indicator	Recommendation
Welsh Gymnastics creates a safe environment for all gymnasts.	Welsh gymnasts tell Welsh Gymnastics they feel safe.	Welsh Gymnastics standard safeguarding question	Collecting meaningful survey responses has been challenging. New methods of capturing data need to be explored to ensure more reliable and representative feedback.
Welsh Gymnastics creates a safe environment for performance gymnasts.	Performance gymnasts tell Welsh Gymnastics that the performance environment is safe.	Welsh Gymnastics standard performance safeguarding question.	Collecting meaningful survey responses has been challenging. New methods of capturing data need to be explored to ensure more reliable and representative feedback.
Welsh Gymnastics continually adapts to ensure a safe environment for all gymnasts.	Board has effective strategic oversight of Safeguarding and Wellbeing Plan.	Board receives written highlight reports from the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Subcommittee on progress of Safeguarding and Wellbeing Plan.	This indicator should be maintained

Welsh Gymnastics demonstrates its commitment to safe sport	All communication channels highlight Welsh Gymnastics commitment to safe sport.	Welsh Gymnastics website, leaflets, social media content	This indicator should be maintained
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4.2 KPIs about Safeguarding, concerns, and wellbeing

Outcome	Output	Indicator	Recommendation
Welsh Gymnastics uses the most up-to-date safeguarding, policies processes and procedures	Welsh Gymnastics policies and procedures reflect current best practice	Review of WG policies processes and procedures	This indicator should be maintained
Welsh Gymnastics safeguarding processes and procedures are effective	Safeguarding concerns are recorded, assessed, and acted upon in-line with best practice	Management information (MI) for safeguarding system show effective processes are being delivered.	This indicator should be maintained
Safeguarding processes and procedures are accessed by gymnasts, parents, coaches and clubs	Information about safeguarding on Welsh Gymnastics website is regularly accessed	Data from Welsh Gymnastics website	This indicator should be maintained
Welsh gymnastics processes and procedures reflect the needs of gymnasts, parents and coaches.	Gymnasts, parents, and coaches help improve Welsh Gymnastics approach to safeguarding.	Feedback reports and description of amendments.	Existing consultation mechanisms (e.g., young ambassador feedback, exit interviews, and case reviews) should be further refined to ensure safeguarding policies remain gymnast-focused and data-driven.

4.3 KPIs about Education and Development

Outcome	Output	Indicator	Recommendation
The indicator for Welsh Gymnastics staff recognising and responding to safeguarding concerns can now be retired, as the systems Welsh Gymnastics has implemented provide a more effective means of assessment.	Staff are fully trained to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns	A set of safeguarding competence questions on a range of subjects becomes part of the appraisal process	These indicators can be retired as Welsh Gymnastics' safeguarding systems now allow for more effective assessment through management information reporting.
Everyone with an active relationship with Welsh Gymnastics recognise and report to safeguarding concerns	People with an active relationship with Welsh gymnastics are trained to	A set of safeguarding competence questions on a range of subjects	

	recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns	becomes part of everyday operational process.	
Club welfare officers recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns	Develop and deliver appropriate training for different roles within the community that reflect the requirements in Wales	A set of safeguarding questions becomes embedded in the appraisal process for Club welfare officers	
Club coaches provide a safe experience for all gymnasts	Coaches attend training and gain competence on a range on safeguarding issues (good practice on load bearing, age appropriate training, coaching techniques etc)	CPD logs	

4.5 Refreshed KPI

The following KPI framework aligns with Welsh Gymnastics’ strategic ambition for 2025–2035, which places the safeguarding and wellbeing of gymnasts as the organisation’s highest priority. These KPIs respond directly to Goal 1: Prioritise Safeguarding & Wellbeing, ensuring that activity across People, Places and Practices continues to build a culture where everyone feels safe, valued and heard.

The total number of safeguarding KPIs has been deliberately reduced to support implementation across the full gymnastics community. This simplified framework ensures the indicators are clear, focused, and easy to understand across the organisation while still enabling robust progress monitoring. The aim is to create shared ownership of safeguarding through indicators that resonate with all parts of the sport.

This streamlined set of six headline indicators is designed to guide delivery of the Safe Sport Plan while remaining proportionate and sustainable. It also supports Welsh Gymnastics’ public accountability and annual reporting, in line with the organisation’s values of being aspirational, accountable, and nurturing.

KPI	What Welsh Gymnastics will measure	Why it matters	Building block
1. Gymnasts feel safe	Welsh gymnasts tell Welsh Gymnastics they feel safe.	Reflects the lived experience of safety across all environments. This is the primary test of culture.	People
2. Gymnast voices shape the sport	Number of active Gymnast Ambassadors and examples of policy or practice changes influenced by their input	Demonstrates a commitment to listening, learning, and acting.	People
3. Parents are engaged in safeguarding	Number of clubs offering open viewing or digital access for parents, and number	Parents are key to gymnast wellbeing. Transparency builds trust.	Places

	of parental safeguarding sessions delivered		
4. Compliance with recognised safeguarding standards	Maintenance of NSPCC Level 3 Standard and compliance with the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales)	External validation ensures that national standards are met and maintained.	Practices
5. The Board is accountable for safeguarding	100% of Board meetings receive Safeguarding and Wellbeing updates; Board safeguarding training completed	Strong governance is essential to embedding safeguarding.	Practices
6. Safeguarding information and resources are accessed and used	Website traffic and downloads of safeguarding policies; reach of safeguarding campaigns (e.g. Wellbeing Wednesday)	Demonstrates that the community is aware of and using safeguarding support.	Practices

5. Conclusion

Welsh Gymnastics is in a completely different position than it was two years ago. The shift from a reactive, compliance-driven approach to a proactive, culturally embedded safeguarding system is evident.

By mainstreaming safeguarding into every aspect of its operations, investing in governance, and taking a more sophisticated approach to monitoring, Welsh Gymnastics has created a safer, more transparent, and athlete-focused environment.

The focus now shifts to ensuring that safeguarding continues to evolve, remains sustainable, and has a lasting impact on the gymnastics community, parents, and athletes alike.