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# Safeguarding: Welsh Gymnastics

2025-26

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# 1. Purpose

This report covers the period from April 2025 to March 2026.

This is an independent assessment of safeguarding across Welsh Gymnastics, building on the structured KPI framework introduced in 2023 and the subsequent year of implementation.

The review has been undertaken using data and supporting information provided by Welsh Gymnastics, which has been tested, challenged and triangulated where possible to form an objective view of progress.

Two years on from the introduction of the KPI framework, safeguarding within Welsh Gymnastics has continued to evolve. The organisation has moved beyond the initial transition and is now operating within a more structured, increasingly embedded safeguarding system.

This system is characterised by clearer operational processes, improved governance and oversight, and greater alignment with national best practice.

However, while there is clear evidence of significant progress, the system is still, as expected, maturing. As such, this report reflects both the progress made and the areas where further development is required to achieve a fully mature, consistently evidenced safeguarding model.

The purpose of this report is therefore to provide independent assurance rather than internal performance reporting. It does this by:

- Providing an objective narrative assessment of safeguarding activity over the past 12 months.
- Assessing how safeguarding is being delivered, evidenced and assured in practice, not solely through policy intent.
- Reviewing progress against the KPI framework, including where indicators are not yet fully measurable or require refinement.
- Identifying areas where further strengthening is required, particularly in relation to data quality, consistency of application, and the ability to capture participant voice across the system.

Overall, the assessment is of a safeguarding system that is increasingly coherent, visible and operationally embedded. At the same time, it recognises that achieving full consistency, depth of evidence, and system-wide maturity will require continued focus over the next phase of delivery.

## 2. Introduction

This reporting period marks a further step change in the development of safeguarding within Welsh Gymnastics. The organisation has moved beyond establishing systems and is now focused on embedding, evidencing and refining safeguarding practice across all levels of delivery.

Safeguarding continues to be positioned as a core organisational priority, aligned to the Where Sport Begins strategy. It is increasingly evident not only in governance and policy, but in the day-to-day operation of clubs, programmes and performance environments.

Several key developments have defined this period:

- The implementation of a Safe Environment framework, aligned to CPSU standards, provides a structured and evidence-based approach to safeguarding across clubs.
- The introduction and embedding of an Open Environment policy, shifting the organisation towards a preventative safeguarding model based on visibility and transparency.
- Strengthening of operational safeguarding controls, including live registers, workforce compliance mechanisms, and clearer accountability structures.
- Continued development of case management and reporting systems, including integration with the Globacol platform and the emerging UK-wide federal safeguarding model.

These developments represent a move towards a more integrated safeguarding system, where governance, delivery and assurance are aligned.

Importantly, this period has also seen a very significant improvement in the organisation's ability to capture participant voice. Over 7,000 safeguarding survey responses were received, providing a robust and representative evidence base for the first time. This marks a step change from previous years, where low response rates limited insight.

However, challenges remain:

- While survey engagement has improved significantly, ensuring consistency and representation over time will remain important.
- While MI systems are now in place, their analytical capability is still developing, limiting the ability to fully interrogate trends and patterns.
- There remains variation in implementation across clubs, reflecting differing levels of capacity and maturity.

The KPI framework, while still broadly relevant, is now being applied to a more complex and developed system. This report therefore places greater emphasis on qualitative assessment, operational evidence and cultural indicators, alongside traditional measures.

## **3. Narrative Assessment of Safeguarding: April 2025 – March 2026**

### **3.1 Strengthened Leadership & Governance**

Safeguarding governance remains strong and well-embedded within Welsh Gymnastics. Strategic oversight is provided through established leadership roles and reinforced by the Safeguarding & Wellbeing Subcommittee, ensuring safeguarding remains a central Board priority.

Governance arrangements are now supported by:

- Clear escalation pathways, including referral to the Director of Safeguarding where required
- Structured oversight of safeguarding activity, including case management and policy implementation
- Increasing use of management information to inform Board-level discussions

The continued operation of the Case Management Panel (CMP) ensures that safeguarding concerns are managed consistently, proportionately and with appropriate scrutiny.

Safeguarding is now fully integrated into organisational governance and is no longer treated as a standalone function. The focus is increasingly on how effectively governance translates into consistent practice across the system.

### 3.2 Cultural and Operational Improvements

This period has seen a further shift from cultural change to cultural consolidation, with safeguarding expectations increasingly embedded into everyday practice.

The Open Environment policy has been a key driver of this shift. By requiring activities to be observable, either directly or through alternative arrangements such as livestreaming<sup>1</sup>, it has:

- Increased transparency across all environments
- Reduced the risk of hidden harm
- Reinforced shared accountability between clubs, parents and staff

The implementation of the Safe Environment framework has further strengthened this approach. Clubs are now assessed annually against a structured checklist covering workforce, safeguarding, governance and health and safety, with performance RAG-rated based on evidence provided.

This has introduced:

- A consistent national approach to safeguarding assurance
- A clear link between policy expectations and operational delivery
- A structured process for identifying and addressing areas for improvement

Capturing athlete feedback has improved significantly. Over 7,200 responses were received this year, with 98% of respondents reporting that they always feel safe, over 90% stating they know who to speak to, and over 93% confident their concerns will be listened to. These results represent a high benchmark for perception-based safeguarding indicators and provide a strong indication that safeguarding arrangements are being experienced positively across a range of environments. While overall results are high, this does not remove the need for ongoing analysis. As data becomes more established, there is an opportunity to explore

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<sup>1</sup> **Live streaming** in this context refers to the use of video technology to allow activities within the gym to be viewed in real time from an adjacent or designated viewing area. This is intended to support transparency and oversight where direct physical observation is not possible. Its use should be proportionate, appropriately managed, and compliant with safeguarding, privacy and data protection requirements.

patterns at a more local level, including variation between clubs, environments or cohorts, to identify where further support or intervention may be required.

This provides far stronger evidence base than in previous years. However, continued work is required to ensure feedback remains consistent and representative over time, and to complement quantitative data with deeper qualitative insight.

### **3.3 Strengthened Case Management & Incident Reporting**

The safeguarding IT system is now embedded and supports structured case tracking, review and escalation. This is the first full reporting period where consistent management information is available, enabling Welsh Gymnastics to begin understanding safeguarding activity in greater detail.

A total of 252 safeguarding cases were reported through the Globacol Club Portal during the year. Month-by-month data is now available, providing an initial baseline for understanding reporting levels and variation across the year.

Case data provides a high-level breakdown of concern types, with the majority relating to general welfare and broader safeguarding issues. Most cases are managed at club level, with escalation to Welsh Gymnastics or statutory services where required. At present, 46 cases remain open, including 6 Level 2 cases requiring statutory intervention.

The system is now operational and generating useful insight. The next phase of development will focus on increasing adoption across clubs, improving data consistency, and strengthening the ability to identify trends and inform proactive safeguarding responses.

### **3.4 Increased Community Engagement**

Engagement with the gymnastics community continues to strengthen, with a growing emphasis on participation, communication and shared responsibility.

The National Young Ambassadors programme plays a key role in this, with young people contributing to safeguarding resources, including the development of gymnast-facing support materials. This supports a shift towards participant-led safeguarding and strengthens the visibility of young people within the system.

Safeguarding messaging is regularly communicated through:

- Newsletters
- Social media campaigns
- Club engagement activity

Feedback mechanisms, including reflection following case decisions and engagement with parents and athletes, continue to provide valuable insight. External feedback also highlights positive and supportive environments, particularly within performance settings.

While engagement has improved, continued focus is required to ensure consistent and meaningful participation from gymnasts across all settings.

### **3.5 Education and Development**

Safeguarding training and development continue to be embedded across the organisation.

Key developments include:

- Mandatory safeguarding requirements linked to the Coach Register, ensuring that only compliant individuals are recognised as active
- Training provision covering safeguarding, wellbeing, mental health and concussion awareness
- Use of systems such as Sport 80 to track compliance and prevent participation where requirements are not met

The Coach Register operates as a central safeguarding control within Welsh Gymnastics. Fully integrated with the membership system, it functions as a licensing mechanism, preventing individuals from operating within any gymnastics environment unless all mandatory requirements are met. These include a valid DBS check, completion of recognised safeguarding training, active membership status, and the appropriate coaching qualifications for the role. Where any of these elements are missing or have lapsed, individuals are unable to register and are therefore excluded from participation in coaching activity.

This approach moves safeguarding beyond policy into active control, providing real-time assurance that only compliant and appropriately vetted individuals are able to operate within the sport.

Workforce safeguarding has been further strengthened through:

- The use of a publicly accessible Coach Register, improving transparency and accountability
- Recruitment of chaperones for camps and events, providing dedicated safeguarding support in higher-risk environments

These measures ensure that safeguarding is embedded not only in policy, but in workforce practice and behaviour.

### **3.6 Operational Safeguarding and Safe Delivery**

A key area of progress this year has been the strengthening of operational safeguarding arrangements.

The introduction of live squad registers, containing up-to-date participant and emergency information, ensures that safeguarding data is:

- Current
- Accessible to relevant staff
- Able to support real-time decision-making

This represents a move towards active safeguarding management, rather than static record-keeping.

Combined with the Safe Environment and Open Environment policies, these measures demonstrate that safeguarding is now:

- Embedded in day-to-day delivery
- Visible in how environments are structured and managed
- Supported by clear systems and controls

Taken together, these developments indicate that safeguarding within Welsh Gymnastics is now operationally embedded, with clear evidence of systems, culture and practice aligning across the organisation.

## 4. KPIs

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 reporting period marks a significant step forward in how these KPIs can be applied. Welsh Gymnastics now has access to a much stronger evidence base, underpinned by:

- Large-scale survey data (over 7,000 responses) capturing gymnast voice
- Structured management information from the safeguarding case management system
- Increased visibility of workforce compliance and operational safeguarding controls

As a result, the KPI framework is no longer reliant on limited or anecdotal evidence. It is increasingly supported by quantitative data, operational insight and lived experience, allowing for a more meaningful assessment of safeguarding across the organisation.

KPI	What Welsh Gymnastics will measure	Independent assessment	Why it matters	Building block
1. Gymnasts feel safe	Welsh gymnasts tell Welsh Gymnastics they feel safe.	Survey data indicates a consistently high proportion of gymnasts report feeling safe, with a significant increase in response rates providing a more robust and representative evidence base than in previous years. While this is a positive indicator, ongoing attention is required to ensure consistency of responses across different environments and over time.	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	There is clear evidence that gymnast voice is becoming more systematically incorporated into safeguarding and wider organisational practice. The role of the Young Ambassadors programme, alongside feedback mechanisms, demonstrates a shift towards more participative approaches. However, further work is required to evidence the consistency and impact of this engagement across the full system.	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 of parental safeguarding sessions delivered	The introduction of Open Environment principles has increased visibility and transparency, with growing evidence that parents are more able to observe and engage with gymnastics environments. While this represents a positive cultural shift, the extent of consistent implementation across all clubs is still developing and would benefit from more systematic measurement.	Parents are key to gymnast wellbeing. Transparency builds trust.	Places
4. Compliance with recognised safeguarding standards	Maintenance of NSPCC Level 3 Standard and compliance with the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales)	Welsh Gymnastics continues to align its safeguarding framework with recognised national standards, with policies and procedures reflecting current best practice. Independent validation through recognised standards provides assurance of compliance; however, the focus is increasingly on how these standards are applied consistently in practice across the organisation.	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	There is clear evidence that safeguarding is embedded within Board governance arrangements, with regular reporting, structured oversight through the Safeguarding & Wellbeing Subcommittee, and increasing use of management information. Board engagement appears strong, with safeguarding established as a standing priority, although	Strong governance is essential to embedding safeguarding.	Practices

		continued focus is required to ensure oversight translates into consistent operational practice.		
6. Safeguarding information and resources are accessed and used	Website traffic and downloads of safeguarding policies; reach of safeguarding campaigns (e.g. Wellbeing Wednesday)	Safeguarding information is visible across multiple channels, including digital platforms and communications campaigns, supporting awareness across the community. However, limitations in available data (including website analytics) constrain the ability to fully assess reach and usage. Strengthening access to reliable data in this area will be important to demonstrate impact.	Demonstrates that the community is aware of and using safeguarding support.	Practices

## 5. Conclusion

This report provides independent assurance that safeguarding within Welsh Gymnastics has continued to strengthen over the reporting period, with clear evidence of progress across governance, culture and operational practice. The organisation has moved beyond the establishment of core systems and is now operating within a more structured and increasingly coherent safeguarding framework. Safeguarding is visible across multiple levels of the organisation, from Board oversight to day-to-day delivery within clubs and performance environments.

Importantly, this period marks a step change in the availability and quality of evidence. Increased engagement, particularly through safeguarding surveys and improved reporting systems, has provided a more reliable basis for assessing both experience and activity. This strengthens the organisation's ability to move from demonstrating intent to evidencing impact, which is critical to long-term assurance.

However, safeguarding maturity is not yet uniform across the system. Variability in implementation, limitations in data consistency, and the developing nature of management information systems mean that further work is required to achieve a fully mature and consistently evidenced model. The next phase of development should therefore focus on strengthening analytical capability, improving consistency across all environments, and deepening the use of participant voice to inform practice.

Overall, Welsh Gymnastics is well positioned to continue this progression. The foundations are now firmly in place, and there is clear evidence of both commitment and capability to deliver the next stage of safeguarding development. Continued focus on evidence, consistency and

continuous improvement will be essential to ensuring that safeguarding is not only embedded, but demonstrably effective across the whole system.