

# COMMUNICATION FROM THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM ON BEHALF OF THE CRICKET REGULATOR AND ENGLAND AND WALES CRICKET BOARD.

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EXTERNAL SAFEGUARDING REVIEWS

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JANUARY 2025



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# INTRODUCTION

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The ECB safeguarding strategy 2022-2024 outlined the preventative work undertaken to support cricket organisations embed a culture of safeguarding across the game. Through a collaborative approach, we have seen significant change in safeguarding provision across the game over the past three years. We know that cricket organisations have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities, and their risks, which has led to earlier identification and reporting of safeguarding concerns.

Cricket is now better placed to understand the nature of concerns that arise across the network, and this insight is used to inform priority work streams and preventative strategy. Where cases arise where safeguarding standards have fallen below best practice directly in cricket, in a setting where multiple individuals are impacted, we have taken the opportunity to conduct reviews to help us understand the factors present, learn lessons and work towards best practice.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has commissioned two such reviews to date, with a third ongoing. Separate external safeguarding professionals authored the two. Neither reviewer had any prior connection to Cricket or any relevant Cricket organisation. We believe that commissioning reviews to understand and learn from the past can be viewed as a positive and proactive step towards the game, understanding the challenges and moving towards continuous improvement. This communication is focused primarily on the learning of the second review due to concerns regarding jigsaw identification within the first review. It should be noted, however, that there are many similarities between the environment, context, and behaviours in both instances.

Both completed reviews provide a list of recommendations from the respective authors. We are publishing this statement to share the recommendations with the network and to provide an update on the steps we are taking to address any identified recommendations.

We have chosen not to name the perpetrators, locations and cricket organisations involved to protect the women's identity and to focus on the behaviour of the perpetrators, the environments they created and the impact on the women involved. Naming them may detract from this.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**DISCLAIMER:**  
THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CONTAINS DETAILS OF  
SEXUAL ABUSE AGAINST CHILDREN AND ADULTS.

We recognise that the terms ‘victim’ and ‘survivor’ are often used interchangeably, although they have different emphases. We have chosen to use the term victim throughout to place the focus on the harm the child or person has or is still experiencing and to avoid implying that they have experienced resolution to these experiences.

The reviews involved perpetrators who had been coaching in women’s and girls’ cricket for a significant period and the offending stretches back to the 1980s. We recognise some of the abuse is classed as non-recent, but it is no less critical. We also acknowledge that the perpetrator’s respective routes into coaching would be different today.

Both perpetrators were recognised as qualified and competent coaches, who had achieved significant success at club/pathway level and were well-known and highly respected members of their respective cricketing communities. In addition to coaching roles, both strategically contributed to developing women’s and girls’ cricket. However, despite the apparent external relative success, it was during these times that both coaches perpetrated their abuse on multiple women and girls, some of whom were children at the time.

Both have subsequently been convicted of multiple counts of sexual assault and voyeurism offences and received custodial sentences. An independent safeguarding panel has disqualified them from further involvement in cricket.

## METHODOLOGY

The primary method of evidence gathering for the reviews was witness testimony, gathered in the form of personal interviews.

The vast majority of these were undertaken in person by the review author. The venues for the various interviews were, as far as possible, chosen by those being interviewed to ensure that they were comfortable and familiar with the environment. Where availability or location prevented a personal meeting, the interviews were undertaken via an online platform, such as Zoom. All interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the respective interviewees.

Those contributors to the review whose allegations have been the subject of forensic examination at Crown Court and resulted in convictions are referred to in the review documents as victims. They all provided their consent to that terminology. The women and girls involved have been put in the position of victim by the perpetrator, but that wording shouldn’t undermine how brave and determined they have been.

A key objective of the reviews was for the victims to be given a ‘voice’ to ensure they had an opportunity to contribute to understanding the environment and identifying what lessons can be learned from their cases.

The subsequent interviews enabled a full and informed understanding of the abuse they suffered, including its context and its impact. Any quotes within the review documents are taken from those conversations.

The interviews also allowed the review author to obtain the perspectives of the victims. In some cases, they were able to identify the various factors and influences that served to inhibit them in sharing their abusive situation. . In one of the reviews, the victims were unaware they had been subject to voyeurism offences until statutory agencies informed them.

## THE VOICE OF THE VICTIMS

The victims in the first review were young women and girls in pathway cricket. A highly respected coach perpetrated their abuse without their knowledge. They were filmed in bathrooms and changing rooms without their knowledge or consent. The level of shock and betrayal for those women has been significant.

The victims in the second review were sexually assaulted while alone with their coach. For some, this occurred on more than one occasion. Over time, they began to realise the abuse they had suffered had happened to their teammates also. Collectively, they protected one another by ensuring no one was left alone in his company.

**“ We can deal with this and make sure things don’t happen, to keep actually having a cricket coach... We almost felt within ourselves, we were making sure everyone was safe and nothing really happened. ”**

**“ No one is ever going to believe us because we are just women that are probably just a pain in their arse anyway. They’re not going to take us seriously. So, we thought, let’s just contain it within us. ”**

**“ It felt like a gentleman’s club really, like it was we were just an afterthought, weren’t taken seriously, we were problems. ”**

Negative perceptions held by the women in the second review (at the time) impacted their ability to share their concerns. Their perception of the coach’s status, how they were viewed within the club, what would happen to their only coach and how any complaint would be dealt with were the primary inhibiting factors that prevented them from seeking support. They had a right to be confident of support, but they were not.

The fact that the Women’s team did not consider themselves to be fully integrated within the club, with several of them describing their team as a ‘separate entity’, undoubtedly contributed to their lack of confidence that they would be listened to should a complaint be made. They believed the coach was well regarded, and they would be the one that would be believed whilst they would be labelled as troublemakers.

The women elected to train on a separate night from the men to ensure they had all the facilities at their disposal. This meant they practised in isolation from the rest of the club. This unintentionally added to their feeling of not being fully included and welcome. The focus was very much on the male teams, and a by-product of this was the feeling of women being excluded.

Both coaches were audacious in their behaviours in different ways. They both appeared to have little or no concerns that their actions, however seemingly outrageous, would be challenged by others. This may have been an indication that the safeguarding culture within cricket at the time was neither attentive nor proactive.

There was a lack of knowledge and understanding amongst the victims and their teammates as to how to raise a safeguarding complaint or who to approach to discuss any concerns. Additionally, in both settings, there were no female staff members or volunteers available to them as a safeguarding lead, which in hindsight they have indicated would have been helpful to them. In both settings, a culture of safeguarding was not established.

The lack of challenge, over a lengthy period, to concerns of intruding on personal space, making inappropriate comments and presenting as ‘over-familiar’ supports their view of being unable to raise concerns.

Both coaches demonstrated predatory behaviours in their role as the sole lead coach in their respective settings. They operated in an ideal environment in which they were free to carry out their abusive behaviour. They were the link between their respective club/pathway settings, representing them at meetings and being their ‘voice.’

In one setting, the knowledge that the senior players chose to manage their coach’s opportunities to abuse, rather than formalise their concerns, primarily because reporting them would mean the loss of their coach, is evidence of how they perceived their status within the club.

## REVIEW CONCLUSIONS

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The women's team felt separated from the rest of the club, and there were significant barriers to reporting. The women perceived the coach to be held in high regard within the club and felt they would be ostracised and/or overlooked for future opportunities if they raised concerns. They were also concerned not to hurt the family of the perpetrator and their own families. Previous experience with the County Cricket Board had also eroded confidence within the team that any report would be dealt with appropriately. The women tried to protect each other, including one who prevented her sisters from playing cricket in order to protect them.

A game-wide structure for reporting concerns was not developed at this time.

Despite the existence of some policies and individuals who were nominally responsible for safeguarding matters, the safeguarding culture during the relevant period had not positively developed, and awareness was low. It was neither attentive nor proactive and safeguarding risks were not recognised even when they seemed apparent.

Coaches could secure selection for roles as a coach at both county and club level merely by volunteering and having a coaching qualification. Their motives were never scrutinised, and their behaviour was never the focus of attention.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Both review authors identified their own recommendations, based upon the information and knowledge acquired throughout the review. Their knowledge of broader cricket regulations, policy and guidance was limited to conversations with the ECB safeguarding team and reviews of safeguarding policy and strategy. The review authors were not asked to consider how their recommendations could be implemented, and you will note our response to the recommendations at the end of each section.

For ease of processing, they have been summarised and grouped together to include our response and next steps.

# REPORTING RECOMMENDATIONS

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Cricket needs to build confidence and belief in its safeguarding systems. To that end, proactive steps are recommended to ensure that players and members of cricket clubs have confidence that any safeguarding concern they raise will be dealt with fairly, positively, and effectively.

Cricket should create a digital platform, such as a mobile phone application (app), to record and report safeguarding concerns. Such an app should ensure confidentiality and anonymity for the reporting person.

A centralised database should include a safeguarding flagging system to ensure that relevant behaviour and/or reported concerns can be identified and acted upon. To this end, the database should be the subject of consistent review and assessment by a suitably qualified person.

Investment in Women's cricket is required to ensure that players never feel inhibited from reporting a safeguarding concern due to a fear of losing a fundamental resource that they value, with no hope of a replacement. Such valued coaching provision, and other support resources, should be in place, in any event.

## OUR RESPONSE

Over the past three years the reporting of safeguarding concerns has continued to increase across cricket. We have also seen a significant increase in the reporting of low-level concerns since inception of the low-level concerns reporting process. This continues to be a positive outcome from the continued education and awareness training, support, and engagement across the game. We will continue to promote resources and tools which encourage the reporting of concerns and continue to monitor the themes of reports.

While we consider the requirement of technology solutions to be an important aspect of delivering messages and reporting concerns, we believe this should be embedded within existing technology products we know our participants are using, rather than standalone apps. For the first time last year, safeguarding messages and reporting of concerns were completed via The Hundred App. We will continue to build upon a technological approach by engaging with our digital colleagues to build upon this approach.

We continue to discuss with digital colleagues how participant registration could be embedded across our game and how we can create opportunities in non-traditional formats without adding an additional administrative burden. This has many interdependencies, and it is a long-term strategic project.

In recent years, investment in Women's sports has significantly increased across the professional and recreational fields. The new Women's professional structure, which commences in 2025, will inject further investment. This provides an opportunity for safeguarding provisions to be firmly embedded within the county organisation, ensuring consistency between the Men's and Women's sports.



# COACHING RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that coaching accreditation should be the subject of annual assessment and review, by the ECB, with appropriate records of that assessment being retained. The annual review should include a safeguarding assessment.

It is recommended that the coaching of youth players should not be undertaken by a single coach, or any other person, such as a parent. A minimum of two people should be present at coaching sessions at all times.

Recruitment and selection of coaches should be undertaken via Human Resources procedures that include interview, the acquisition and appropriate scrutiny of relevant references and a safeguarding assessment to ensure suitability and appropriateness of motive.

A central registration database of players and coaches should be retained by the ECB, which includes personal identification, to enable the centralised oversight of players and coaches and any movement between clubs.



## OUR RESPONSE

We are currently part of a broader coaching consultation across sport being led by the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMPSA), in response to the recommendations from the Whyte Review into allegations of abuse in gymnastics. CIMPSA have proposed the need for clear deployment standards to be created across sport for all coaches and they are currently piloting a coaching workforce register. In response to this, we have drafted detailed proposals which if progressed will create regulations which will establish deployment standards across the game.

We continue to encourage and promote the 'rule of two' (i.e. two adults present where they are working with U18s and not being 1-2-1 with an U18). We understand there is a demand for 1-2-1 coaching especially in the talent pathway environment and we are reviewing the guidance provided to parents. Our commitment to informing parents is supported by the development of a Parent Education Handbook from 2025, which shall provide accredited resources and information for parents in both the professional and recreational game.

Our Safer Recruitment guidance was updated at the start of 2024 and supports clubs to follow the appropriate mechanisms when recruiting. This will continue to be a focus as more volunteers support the delivery of recreational cricket across England and Wales. We continue to track the requirements of DBS qualifications and recently commenced a 12-month project to deliver Safer Recruitment within Cricket training in partnership with the NSPCC to all county organisations with a cascade model in place for clubs through their County Safeguarding Officer.

The safeguarding team are currently working with colleagues from across digital and technology to enhance systems, which in time will improve how we engage with coaches in affiliated cricket, to have a better understanding about how they are deployed across cricket

We are taking the opportunity to introduce declarations into these systems which include a working knowledge of Positions of Trust and maintaining relevant qualifications, as well as the declaration they will maintain qualifications which are regulated.



# FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that changing facilities should be provided at all clubs to accommodate players of both genders to train and/or play at the same venue on the same day.

## OUR RESPONSE

The facilities team continue to work towards creating safe, inclusive and multi-functioning facilities across England and Wales. The safeguarding team is embedded within this work to ensure safeguarding requirements are understood by those delivering the facilities strategy.

The facilities team have previously changed advice and guidance around signage, following previous recommendations. This makes it more straightforward for everyone to understand when they can and cannot enter a changing room.

In collaboration with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion colleagues, we have updated our guidance on Creating Welcoming Environments to include advice on safety and privacy in changing rooms and showering facilities. We continue to ensure we are providing clubs with the best possible resources to keep the changing environments safe and inclusive.



# EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Safeguarding training and/or educational material should be provided by the ECB to all cricket clubs, including the issues of how to identify and report 'low-level concerns' and, as a means of improving the level of safeguarding awareness, the key message that, 'safeguarding is the responsibility of everybody', not just club officials.

The ECB should ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the range and profile of the safeguarding leads within each cricket club reflect the demographic profile of the club membership.

It is recommended that appropriate training be provided to clubs so that they are able to undertake effective recruitment and selection processes that include relevant and proportionate safeguarding assessments.

The role of County Safeguarding Officer should be a full-time role.



## OUR RESPONSE

We are redeveloping our suite of safeguarding courses. In the coming weeks, the new Safeguarding Level 2 will be available to anyone involved in regulated activity.

As part of this new suite of courses, we are developing a safeguarding offer to introduce a young volunteer programme across the game. This is designed to ensure we deliver messages to 14 to 17-year-olds that allow them to keep themselves safe.

We are engaged in positive conversations around the introduction of deployment standards across the game which include the introduction of clear regulations around the completion and validity of safeguarding qualifications. This process linked to a digital membership solution will allow us to have a clearer picture of individual volunteers across the game, providing messaging directly to ensure they are meeting our minimum requirements for deployment.

We are currently working with colleagues from the recreational game on how we can best deliver this recommendation. Through consultation, we will pilot the introduction of a Women's game advocate into each recreational club providing Women's and girls' cricket the platform to be represented at committee level. As part of their role they will provide the opportunity to advocate choice for participants including reporting concerns to an individual who is representative to themselves. This will be launched initially across the women's game, and we hope will be adding a resource representative of the players in the team.

The role of the County Safeguarding Officer has developed significantly over the previous four years. It is mandated within the County Partnership Agreement (CPA), and a detailed job description is provided. Most counties now have a full-time County Safeguarding Officer in post, and those that do not are being supported by the team in achieving a standard of capacity that allows their CSO to fulfil the role both reactively and proactively.



## NEXT STEPS

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Our new safeguarding strategy for 2025-2028 has been launched alongside the ECB's updated Inspiring Generations strategy. The strategy aims to move the game from a position of safeguarding compliance to safeguarding culture. The aims of the new strategy support our response to the recommendations in the reviews and our broader ambitions to embed safeguarding.

We want to ensure we prioritise the voices and perspectives of those with lived experience, as well as children, adults, and parents/carers, in safeguarding and the game. We recognise that these groups have knowledge and experiences that allow us to continually improve our safeguarding delivery. We will consult with stakeholder groups to support the development of this work. An additional update regarding progress will be provided in Spring 2025.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we all have a role to play. As a leader, safeguarding professional, member of staff, volunteer or participant, we ask for your continued support in embedding a culture of safeguarding across the game. This means understanding your personal and organisational responsibilities for creating safe, inclusive and welcoming environments, recognising when something doesn't feel quite right and holding your organisations and clubs to account to ensure safeguarding underpins everything they do. This can be as simple as asking a clarification question if you are unsure about something or ensuring you are up to date on safeguarding requirements. Having knowledge and confidence about what is expected will support you to recognise when something may not be right.



## SHARING CONCERNS

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[www.cricketregulator.co.uk/safeguarding/share-a-concern](https://www.cricketregulator.co.uk/safeguarding/share-a-concern)

If you have any concerns about a child or adult or a person's behaviour, you should share these as soon as you can, and immediately if there is a risk of imminent harm. It is natural to feel a little anxious about sharing a safeguarding concern, but remember, it is not your responsibility to decide if the information you are aware of, or have witnessed is abuse, poor practice or something else, but it is your responsibility to share any concerns you have. You may be the only person aware of the concern, or the only person in a position to share the concern.

There are several ways to share a concern:

- To your County Safeguarding Officer
- To the Cricket Regulator directly:  
[safeguarding@cricketregulator.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@cricketregulator.co.uk) / **020 7432 1200**.
- If urgent and you cannot contact the Cricket Regulator or County Safeguarding Officer, you should call the NSPCC 24-hour helpline on **0808 800 5000**.
- If it is an emergency and someone is at immediate risk, then call the Police or Children's Social Care in your area.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

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Your County Safeguarding Officer has access to links and documentation for support services that are hosted on the CSO SharePoint site. Please contact them directly if you require these.



