

## Barnsley Women's Football Club

### Whistleblowing Policy

#### Introduction

Barnsley Women's Football Club (BWFC) is committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff and volunteers to maintain the same high standards. It is always possible, however, for things to go wrong or for organisations to unknowingly harbour illegal or unethical conduct. This Football Club has a culture of openness and accountability, and this policy is intended to encourage staff to report any concerns or suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, to provide guidance as to how to raise those concerns and to reassure staff that they are able to raise genuine concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals.

Although disclosure may be made to certain public authorities, the Club's policy is that disclosures should be made in the first instance to the Board of Directors. We strongly recommend that you seek advice from the Board before reporting a concern to anyone external.

Individuals are entitled to blow the whistle to a prescribed person rather than their employer or with the organisation in which the concern exists. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy produce a list of the prescribed persons and bodies who you can make a disclosure to which can be found on their website [here](#). In addition you can also blow the whistle to your legal adviser or to your MP.

#### Purpose

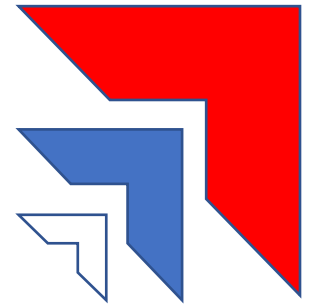
This policy sets out how individuals can raise concerns about the safety and welfare of players, spectators, volunteers and staff who participate or engage in any services and activities conducted under the name of Barnsley Women's Football Club. It will provide a method of raising concerns and will detail how feedback may be received in relation to any action(s) taken.

Barnsley Women's Football Club will aim to ensure that individuals:

- ☐ Get a response to their concerns.
- ☐ Are made aware of how to pursue the concern further if they are not satisfied with the response.
- ☐ Are reassured that individuals will be protected from reprisals or victimisation for whistleblowing in good faith.

#### Scope

Everyone involved in activity carried out under the jurisdiction of Barnsley Women's Football Club is covered by this policy.



## **Policy Statement**

Players, coaches, other employees, volunteers, officials, parents and / or team followers are often the first to recognise concerns which potentially compromise the welfare or safety of those engaged in our activities of any age and those employed by the Club including players. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be too difficult to handle. It may also be that they fear harassment or victimisation.

In these circumstances it may be easier for them to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of poor practice. Barnsley Women's Football Club would urge anyone to come forward and voice those concerns. If you have safeguarding or welfare concerns, doing nothing is never an option.

This policy details how individuals can raise a matter of concern without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. The policy is intended to encourage and enable individuals to raise serious concerns within the Football Club rather than overlooking a problem or blowing the whistle outside. It is in the interests of all concerned that disclosures of potential abuse or concerns are responded to and managed appropriately and without delay.

## **Safeguarding**

Barnsley Women's Football Club realise that raising a concern and reporting allegations is often difficult to do through fear of reprisals from those responsible for the alleged poor practice. This policy is designed to offer protection to anyone who raises a concern provided the disclosure is made:

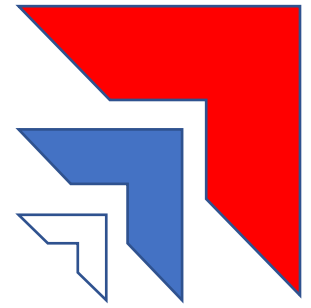
- ☐ In good faith
- ☐ If the individual believes what they say to be true, and are not intending / attempting to be malicious, even if the concerns subsequently are proven unfounded.

In these circumstances, Barnsley Women's Football Club will fully support the whistle-blower and will not tolerate any bullying, harassment or victimisation whatsoever. If this does occur any perpetrators will be dealt with.

## **Confidentiality**

Barnsley Women's Football Club will do its upmost best to keep confidential the identity of a whistle-blower. Should any allegations be made through whistle-blowing it should be noted that a statement may be needed to form part of the evidence.

Should the whistle-blower need to be identified for any reason or it becomes apparent that the whistle-blower will be identified because of any subsequent investigation, notice will be given to the whistle-blower, by a representative of Barnsley Women's Football Club (usually the Club's Welfare Officer) so that an opportunity is provided to discuss any likely consequences and support required.



### **Anonymous Allegations**

This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible and more difficult to investigate effectively, but they may be considered at the discretion of the Club. In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised and any potential safeguarding risks indicated
- The credibility of the concern
- The likelihood of confirming or clarifying the allegation from attributable sources
- Statutory agency advice e.g. LADO, Children's Social Care or the Police

### **Raising a Concern or Making an Allegation**

Anyone wishing to raise a concern should do so either verbally or in writing to Barnsley Women's Football Club's Designated Safeguarding Officer. The concern needs to be as specific as possible including any names, dates and locations (where possible).

**The Club's Senior Welfare Officer can be contacted either by phone 07769 973351 or through email [safeguarding@barnsleywomensfc.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@barnsleywomensfc.co.uk).**

If, after the course of an investigation, it has been found that the concerns or allegations are untrue or have not been substantiated then no action will be taken against the whistle-blower. If, however, it is established that they have made malicious allegations disciplinary action may be taken against them. In such cases, the discipline process will apply.

All investigations will initially be undertaken by the Club's Senior Welfare Officer with support where appropriate from another welfare officer and/or external statutory or safeguarding expertise. However, should you feel that you have not received a satisfactory response to your concern you can approach the following people or organisations:

- ☐ Paul Thompson – Chair of Barnsley Women's Football Club
- ☐ The FA Child Protection Team on 0207 745 4771 or by writing to The FA Case Manager, The Football Association, Wembley Stadium, Wembley, London, HA9 0WS
- ☐ The FA / NSPCC Child Protection 24-Hour Helpline 0808 800 5000.
- ☐ Or by going directly to the Police and/or Social Services