



PORT VALE FOOTBALL CLUB
SAFEGUARDING WHISTLEBLOWING
POLICY & PROCEDURES
2023-24

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Version Control

Document Title:	Safeguarding Whistleblowing Policy - Season - 2023/2024
Document Owner:	Port Vale Football Club - Rich Talbot – Head of Safeguarding
Reference:	August 2023 (Revised Version)

Document Review

Last Reviewed	Position	Reason
03/2021	Jon Bloore (DSO)	
08/2021	Tim Bailey (DSO)	
08/2022	Tim Bailey (DSO)	
03/08/2023	Rich Talbot (Safeguarding Manager)	Annual review to include staff changes & structure
02/02/2024	Rich Talbot (Head of Safeguarding)	Updated staff changes & structure

Version History

Version	Date Released	Originator	Authorised	Comments
1.0	08/2019	Chris Taylor	Board	Safeguarding Whistleblowing Policy
1.1	03/2021	Jon Bloore	Board	Revised Version
1.2	08/2021	Tim Bailey	Board	Revised Version
1.3	08/2022	Tim Bailey	Board	Revised Version
1.4	03/08/23	Rich Talbot	Board	Revised Version
1.5	02/02/24	Rich Talbot	Board	Revised Version

1. Introduction

Statement

1.1 Port Vale Football Club (hereafter referred to as the Club) is committed to ensuring that we create a safe environment for everyone visiting or taking part in activities at the Club. The Club takes our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all Adults at Risk, Children and Young People very seriously. Our approach to any concerns will always be focused on such individuals and their best interests will always be paramount when dealing with any incident.



This Policy sets out our commitment to safeguarding and provides a framework for what to do if concerns arise about the welfare or protection of any Adult at Risk, Child or Young Person whilst at the Club.

It is intended to encourage individuals to raise any concerns that they may have in relation to the health, safety and welfare of any Adult at Risk, Child or Young Person, detailing how their concerns can be raised. It provides for a method of raising concerns, assurance of receiving a response, how feedback will be received on any action taken and how to pursue the matter if they are not satisfied.

Carol Shanahan

Chair and Co-owner

Scope

1.2 This Policy is for use across the Club and is to be observed by all those working or volunteering and who may encounter an Adult at Risk, Child or Young Person, this to ensure best practice in safeguarding is promoted and adhered to.

Activities undertaken at the following locations/departments are encapsulated under the remit of this policy including:

Port Vale Football Club and the Vale Park Stadium

Port Vale First Team

Port Vale Academy and Youth Development

Port Vale Foundation Trust

Port Vale Women

Port Vale Retail Store

Bescura Ltd (Family Hub)

Any location visited by staff/volunteers in an official capacity.

The Club acknowledges and accepts it has a statutory obligation and responsibility for the wellbeing and safety of all Adults at Risk, Children and Young People who are under the care of the Club or are utilising the facilities. Every person working or volunteering at the Club has a 'duty of care' to safeguard the welfare of such individuals by creating an environment that protects them from harmful experiences.

2. Safeguarding

2.1 It is often the case that players, coaches, officials, parents, carers or team followers are the first to identify that the health, safety and welfare of a Child are under threat. However, they may not express their concerns because they believe that speaking out would be too

difficult to handle and may potentially cause 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.

2.2 The Club urges any person to come forward and voice those concerns or suspicions and commits to supporting those who raise matters of concerns, this without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. The Policy is intended to encourage and enable an individual to raise serious concerns within the Club, in the first instance, rather than overlooking a problem or “blowing the whistle” outside of the organisation.

2.3 It is in the interest of all concerned that disclosure of a potential abuse or irregularities are dealt with appropriately, discreetly and expeditiously. This includes the interests of all persons involved with the Club, but especially the person making the complaint, the person who is the subject of the complaint, and more importantly the person(s) who are or may be at risk.

2.4 The Club recognises that raising a concern and reporting an allegation can be a difficult decision to make through fear of reprisals from those responsible for the alleged poor practice or abuse. If an individual believes what they say to be true they should have no reason to fear reporting as a duty of care to the Adult at Risk, Child or Young Person concerned.

2.5 Where concerns are raised in good faith the Club will offer its full support to the whistleblower and will not tolerate any resulting discrimination, harassment or victimisation. Should this occur, any perpetrators will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures of the Club, which may result in possible sanctions or exclusion/expulsion from the Club.

3. Confidentiality

3.1 The Club will do its utmost to protect the confidentiality of the whistleblower if they do not wish for their identity to be disclosed. However, it must be acknowledged that any subsequent investigation into an allegation may require the whistleblower to provide a statement of evidence.

3.2 If the investigation process requires the whistleblower to be identified, or it becomes apparent that the whistleblower will be identified, then notice will be given to them by the Head of Safeguarding (hereafter referred to as the HoS) , as to which person(s) or organisation(s) the identity will be disclosed, this following consultation with the Senior Safeguarding Manager (hereafter referred to as the SSM) who is the current Chief Executive Officer and representative of safeguarding at Club Board level. The individual will be given the opportunity to discuss any likely consequences.

4. Raising a Concern or Making an Allegation



4.1 In the first instance any suspicions or concerns should be brought to the attention of the HoS, either in person or in writing via (E): safeguarding@port-vale.co.uk. The concern needs to be specific as possible, including the reason for the concern, an outline of the issue, the history or background and names, dates and locations where possible. The earlier an individual makes an allegation the easier it is for the matter to be dealt with appropriately.

4.2 Upon receipt of a concern or allegation the HoS will notify the SSM with full details of the matter.

4.3 Although the whistleblower is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, they will need to demonstrate to the HoS that there are sufficient grounds for concern.

4.4 All concerns shall be recorded upon the recording platform “MyConcern” by the HoS that will include the issues raised along with all information provided by the individual making the disclosure. This will ensure transparency of the investigation of the concern raised along with a full written record of the matter, this to assist with audit procedures.

4.5 For list of internal contacts please see [Appendix A](#).

5. Anonymous Allegations

5.1 The Club encourages anyone who becomes a whistleblower to provide their name to a concern or allegation. However, it is recognised that concerns or allegations may originate from individuals who do not provide their details and who wish to remain anonymous.

5.2 Any anonymous concerns or allegations will be recorded and investigated but anonymity may make the investigation more difficult and the concern or allegation considerably harder to prove.

5.3 All concerns and allegations will be considered and an investigation will be undertaken at the discretion of the HoS, in consultation with the SSM, who will assess the seriousness of the concern, the credibility of the concern and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources or factual records.

6. Malicious or Unproven Allegations

6.1 If an investigation finds that the concerns or allegations made by a whistleblower are untrue or have not been substantiated, but were reported in good faith, then no action will be taken against the whistleblower.

6.2 If it is established that a concern or allegation was made with malicious or frivolous intent or for personal gain then this allegation may result in disciplinary action being taken against the whistleblower. In any such cases the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures of the Club will apply.



7. Responses and Outcomes to Concerns and Allegations

7.1 The HoS or other relevant person, body or organisation, will respond accordingly to all concerns and allegations that are raised through clear lines of communication as are deemed appropriate, either in person, telephone or via email. This communication with the whistleblower will continue throughout the process of the investigation and at the conclusion of same.

8. The Investigation Process

8.1 All investigations will be undertaken by the HoS, who will work closely with the SSM to achieve the best outcome for all persons involved in the matter.

8.2 The investigation will consist of all available evidence being obtained through various means including written statements, CCTV evidence (if appropriate), bodycam footage (events only) and any other means appropriate to the circumstance of the concern or allegation.

8.3 Should the whistleblower feel that they have not received a satisfactory response or conclusion to their concern or allegation the following persons/organisations listed at [Appendix B](#) can be approached for further support:



[Appendix A – INTERNAL CONTACT DETAILS](#)

List of Internal Contacts

Senior Safeguarding Manager (SSM)

Matt Hancock (Chief Executive)

(E): matt.hancock@port-vale.co.uk / (M): 07841 669182

Head of Safeguarding & Lead Disclosure Officer

Rich Talbot

(E): rich.talbot@port-vale.co.uk / (M): 07703 753688

Safeguarding Team

Concerns / General Enquiries

(E): safeguarding@port-vale.co.uk / (T): 01782 655830



Appendix B – EXTERNAL CONTACTS & RESOURCES

List of External Contacts and Resources

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (Stoke on Trent)

Mr John Hanlon (T): 0800 561 0015

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (Staffordshire)

Linda Hancock (T): 0300 111 8007

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board (SSASPB)

If the Adult at Risk resides within Stoke on Trent:

(T): 0800 561 0015 ***at any time*** / (Minicom): 01782 236037

If the Adult at Risk resides elsewhere within Staffordshire

(T): 0345 604 2719 (Mon-Thurs 08:30-17:00 & Fri 08:30-16:30 Hours) excluding Bank Holidays

Stoke on Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership (*Stoke on Trent Only*)

Childrens Advice and Duty Service (CHaD)

If you suspect a Child or Young Person is at risk of significant harm.

(T): 01782 235100 (Monday – Friday 08:30 to 18:00 Hours).

Out of Hours

Emergency Duty Team (EDT)

(T): 01782 234234

(W): www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk

Staffordshire Childrens Advice and Support Service (SCAS)(*Not Stoke on Trent*)

If you suspect a Child or Young Person is at risk of significant harm.

(T): 0300 111 8007 (Monday – Thursday – 08:30 to 17:00 Hours & Friday – 08:30 to 16:30 Hours)



[Appendix B – EXTERNAL CONTACT & RESOURCES \(Continued\)](#)

Out of Hours

Emergency Duty Service

(T): 0345 604 2886 / (E) eds.team.manager@staffordshire.gov.uk

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)

(E): cpsu@nspcc.org.uk

Football Association (FA) Safeguarding Team

(T): 0800 169 1863 / (E): safeguarding@TheFA.com

English Football League (EFL) Safeguarding Team

(T): 01772 325490 / (E): safeguarding@efl.com

Staffordshire Football Association

Jan Scott (Safeguarding & Education Officer)

(T): 01785 256994 (Ext: 205) / (M): 07969 294023

(E): Support@StaffordshireFA.com

NSPCC Helpline

(T): 0808 800 5000 / (Text): 88858 / (E): help@nspcc.org.uk / Text phone for Deaf Users:
0800 056 0566



Authority from Port Vale Board and Acceptance of Policy

Board Member:	Claire Halket
Signature:	Claire Halket
Date:	02/02/2024 (Review)

CEO/Senior Safeguarding Manager:	Matt Hancock
Signature:	Matt Hancock
Date:	02/02/2024 (Review)

This policy will be reviewed by the Head of Safeguarding regularly and annually or following learning outcomes as a result of a significant incident or when legislation or statutory guidance changes are implemented.

Port Vale Football Club - Safeguarding Whistleblowing Policy Season 2023/2024
(Review – August 2024) / Classification Status: External