



Fylde Coast Inclusive FC - WELFARE & SAFEGUARDING POLICY

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1. Policy Statement and Binding Commitment

- **1.1 Purpose:** In alignment with Section 2 and Section 10.1 of the Club Constitution, Fylde Coast Inclusive FC is explicitly committed to prioritizing member welfare and safeguarding the physical safety and mental well-being of every member involved in our football community.
- **1.2 Statutory and Governing Body Compliance:** The Club recognizes and accepts its responsibilities under The FA's Safeguarding Adults at Risk Regulations. We guarantee strict compliance with all Lancashire County Football Association safeguarding policies.
- **1.3 Cross-Document Authority:** This policy directly supports Section 7.2 of the Constitution and Section 7.3 of the Standalone Player Code of Conduct. Upholding the welfare principles outlined is a condition of membership and play.

2. Core Safeguarding Principles

Everything the Welfare Team does is governed by the Club's Core Values (Section 4 of the Constitution). We operate under three definitive principles:

- **2.1 Protection of Mental Health:** In line with Core Value 4.4, we use our sessions to actively lift people up, reduce isolation, and improve overall well-being. We cultivate an absolute safe, non-judgmental space where player mental health is actively supported.
- **2.2 Elimination of Abuse and Negativity:** In line with Core Value 4.5, blame, harsh criticism, cliques, shouting, and abusive behavior of any kind are strictly forbidden. The Welfare Team has the authority to intervene immediately to protect players from negative conduct.
- **2.3 Inclusion Over Performance:** In line with Core Value 4.8, we safeguard a player's absolute right to participate and belong, placing their want to be part of the team far above their footballing or physical skill level.

3. The Designated Welfare & Inclusion Team

In accordance with Section 8.3.6 of the Club Constitution, the governing body includes our designated officers who manage the welfare registry:

- **3.1 Designated Officers:**
 - 3.1.1 Welfare & Inclusion Officer: Luke Smith
 - 3.1.2 Welfare & Inclusion Officer: Connor Miller
 - 3.1.3 Welfare & Inclusion Officer: Chris Walkden
 - 3.1.4 Welfare & Inclusion Officer: Steph Booth-Isherwood
- **3.2 Mandated Duties of the Welfare Team:**
 - *3.2.1 Operational Presence:* Under Section 9.2.4, the Welfare Team is responsible for safeguarding all members during active recreation. At least one officer will be present at every session to monitor pitch atmosphere.
 - *3.2.2 Case Management:* Officers are responsible for receiving confidential disclosures, documenting incidents safely, supporting vulnerable adults, and advising the Committee on necessary actions.
 - *3.2.3 External Escalation:* If an incident violates statutory laws or FA regulations, the Welfare Team is authorized to handle formal reporting directly to the Lancashire County FA Safeguarding Team.

4. Specific Safeguarding Mandates and Boundaries

- **4.1 On-Pitch Safety and Intensity:**
 - 4.1.1 Under Code of Conduct Section 3.4 (*Fair Pressure on the Pitch*), experienced players must ease off physical pressure against less confident teammates. The Welfare Team will strictly enforce the ban on booting or blasting the ball "full pelt" near players who do not want that intensity.
 - 4.1.2 In accordance with Code of Conduct Section 4.5, the club enforces a zero-tolerance policy toward physical violence, verbal threats, intimidation, or bullying. Any breach results in immediate removal from the session.
- **4.2 Digital and Social Media Safety:**
 - 4.2.1 In line with Constitution Section 6.3 and Code of Conduct Section 5.1, our safe space applies to all club-managed digital networks, including WhatsApp groups and social media channels.
 - 4.2.2 Under Code of Conduct Section 5.2, members are prohibited from airing grievances or criticizing peers online. The Welfare Team has the authority to moderate chats to protect members' mental peace.
- **4.3 Financial Safeguarding:**
 - 4.3.1 In accordance with Code of Conduct Section 6.3 (*Financial Boundaries and Lending*), members must not engage in financial abuse, pressure others for money, or lend/borrow money within the club.
 - 4.3.2 The Welfare Team is trained to watch for signs of financial coercion. Any member experiencing financial difficulty regarding club fees must be safely directed to the Committee for private support, protecting them from peer awkwardness.
- **4.4 Health Data and Confidentiality:**
 - 4.4.1 In accordance with Code of Conduct Section 6.4, players must report pre-existing medical conditions, allergies, or injuries to the Welfare Team.
 - 4.4.2 The Welfare Team mandates that all health data is securely stored, treated with absolute confidentiality, and shared with session leads strictly on a "need-to-know" basis for emergency response purposes only.

5. Reporting, Investigation, and Disciplinary Flow

- **5.1 The Reporting Process:** As established in Code of Conduct Section 7.3, any member who experiences or witnesses behavior violating the club's culture is strongly encouraged to report it immediately. Reports can be delivered verbally or via private message to Steph, Luke, Connor, or Chris, via formal email, via the website welfare and safeguarding page or direct message to the Club Committee.
- **5.2 Confidential Investigation:** Upon receiving a complaint, the Welfare Team will conduct a private, highly discreet review. In accordance with Section 9.3 of the Constitution, all details will be handled with complete empathy, strict confidentiality, and absolute discretion to protect the privacy and mental well-being of those involved.
- **5.3 Enforcing Compliance and Sanctions:** If a breach of welfare is confirmed, the Welfare Team will present the facts to the Executive Committee. In strict accordance with Constitution Section 7.3 and Code of Conduct Section 7.2, the Committee retains full authority to enforce disciplinary actions to protect the club's culture, including formal verbal/written warnings, temporary suspension, or permanent termination of membership without refund. Under Code of Conduct Section 4.5, any instance of violence or bullying results in immediate permanent termination without a warning.

6. External Health, Wellbeing, and Safety Networks

If a member is struggling with their mental health, safety, addiction, or identity outside of our sessions, the Welfare Team can safely connect them to professional networks. The club promotes the following dedicated resources:

- **6.1 General Adult Safeguarding and Football Governance:**
 - *6.1.1 Blackpool Council Adult Safeguarding:* Direct 24-hour reporting portal for local adult harm risks via the Blackpool Council Safeguarding Hub.
 - *6.1.2 Lancashire FA Safeguarding Department:* Direct reporting for football regulations via the Lancashire County FA Safeguarding Team.
- **6.2 General Mental Health Support Helplines:**
 - *6.2.1 Blackpool Initial Response Service (IRS):* Call **0800 0130 709** (Available 24/7). Direct NHS phone line for urgent mental health care, advice, and treatment in Blackpool, Fylde, and Wyre.
 - *6.2.2 The Light Lounge (Blackpool):* Call **01253 477745** (Open 4:00 PM – 10:00 PM daily). Located at 259 Whitegate Drive. A safe, welcoming, non-clinical drop-in space for adults experiencing mental health distress.
 - *6.2.3 Samaritans (Blackpool Branch):* Call **116 123** (Available 24/7). Free, anonymous crisis support for anyone struggling to cope. Visit [The Samaritans Portal](#).
 - *6.2.4 Shout Crisis Text Line:* Text "**SHOUT**" to **85258** (Available 24/7). Free, confidential text support messaging service.
 - *6.2.5 Lancashire Mind:* Local mental health support resources, support groups, and peer connection networks across our county via [Lancashire Mind](#).
- **6.3 Local Addiction and Substance Misuse Support:**
 - *6.3.1 Horizon Blackpool:* Call **0800 652 2206**. Blackpool's primary, free, and completely confidential service for adults struggling with alcohol, drugs, or substance misuse. Access their support online at [Horizon Blackpool](#).
 - *6.3.2 Red Rose Recovery (Lancashire):* Specialized peer support network providing recovery groups, community activities, and mentorship across Lancashire via [Red Rose Recovery](#)

6.4 Dedicated LGBTQ+ and Transgender Helplines:

- *6.4.1 Switchboard LGBT+ Helpline:* Call **0800 0119 100** (Open 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM daily). Confidential space to discuss sexuality, gender identity, or mental health with trained LGBTQ+ volunteers via [The Switchboard LGBT+ Site](#).
- *6.4.2 MindLine Trans+ Support:* Call **0300 330 5468** (Open Mondays and Fridays, 8:00 PM – Midnight). Confidential hotline offering emotional support run by and for trans, non-binary, or gender-fluid individuals via [MindLine Trans+ Guidance](#).
- *6.4.3 LGBT Foundation Helpline:* Call **0345 3 30 30 30** (Open Monday – Friday, 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM). Mental health guidance, advice, and wellbeing services tailored to the LGBTQ+ community via [The LGBT Foundation Support Hub](#).
- *6.4.4 Galop (LGBT+ Anti-Violence Helpline):* Call **0800 999 5428**. Dedicated support for any LGBTQ+ person who has experienced hate crime, targeted bullying, or domestic abuse via [The Galop Platform](#).

7. Policy Review and Maintenance

- **7.1 Mandated Review:** This policy is a living document. It will be reviewed annually by the Committee and updated immediately in response to any changes in legislation or Lancashire County FA safeguarding mandates.