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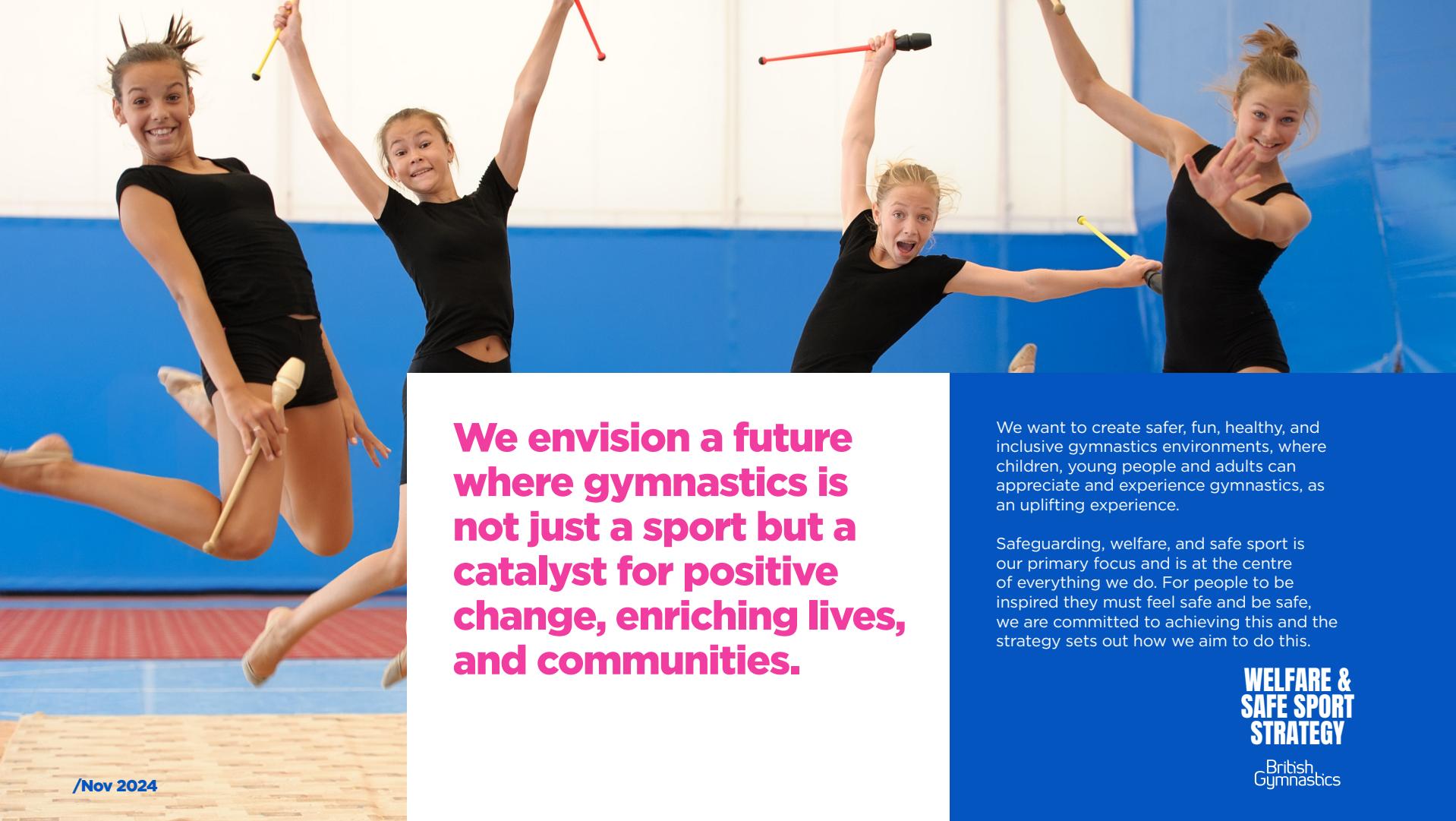
# WELFARE & SAFE SPORT STRATEGY

/Nov 2024





# An Uplifting Gymnastics Experience for All



/Nov 2024

**We envision a future  
where gymnastics is  
not just a sport but a  
catalyst for positive  
change, enriching lives,  
and communities.**

We want to create safer, fun, healthy, and inclusive gymnastics environments, where children, young people and adults can appreciate and experience gymnastics, as an uplifting experience.

Safeguarding, welfare, and safe sport is our primary focus and is at the centre of everything we do. For people to be inspired they must feel safe and be safe, we are committed to achieving this and the strategy sets out how we aim to do this.

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# OUR TEAM

## Welfare & Safe Sport Leadership Team – Working for you and with you:

# hello

**Geraldine Costello**

Director of Welfare and Safe Sport

Ensuring Welfare and Safe Sport Strategic Priorities: Protect, Prevent, Promote, Resolve are embedded across the Gymnastics community

**Aaron Prior**

Head of Welfare and Safe Sport

Leading the Welfare and Safe Sport managers and team to implement efficient, robust and fair working practice to support the gymnastics community

**Jane Bane**

Safeguarding Manager

Responsibilities: Triage & Allocation / Safeguarding investigations / Case Management & Progression / CMT and Case Panel Reports / Statutory Agency referrals and liaison

**Fliss Hall**

Complaints and Disciplinary Manager

Responsibilities: Case Resolution Function (CMT, Panel etc) / DBS Referrals and panel outcomes / Mediation / Complaints and Conduct Concerns / CMT and Case Panel Reports / Safer Recruitment (DBS Process)

**Gemma Wright**

Welfare Manager

Responsibilities: Relationship Management / RWOs, CWOs, SWOs / Post-Outcome SoC, Complainant & Witness Support / Policy Development / Departmental Links / L&D, Community

This strategy has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders to ensure that everything we do and the way we do it has a clear purpose. As such, it sets out the strategic principles that will shape the direction of all our future activity, as well as an outline of what this means for the strategic priorities and main areas of our focus over the next 18 months.

All Information has been gathered and requested from a variety of other sporting organisations regarding safeguarding strategy positions. This has been assembled

with the support of key stakeholders for the initial scoping of the strategy focus and creation. Collaboration between Welfare and Safe Sport team, Strategic Projects & Change Lead, Learning and Development, and the Equity, Diversity and inclusion team has played a vital role in this process.

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## OUR PROGRESS

**The worldwide call for change in gymnastics in 2020 was a watershed moment for the sport, and in the UK, it was the start of a vital path of change.**

After the publication of the Whyte Report, British Gymnastics committed straight away to adopting and actioning all of Anne Whyte KC's recommendations without exception. We went beyond these by listening to our community and collaborating to create our Reform '25 action plan. We are now over halfway through that three-year journey of action and reform to make gymnastics safe, positive, and fair for all.

**Welfare, Safeguarding & Complaints** has been one of the core strands of those reforms, with some examples of progress including:

- **New mandatory policies**, setting the standards around activity including weighing, academic education, hydration, and flexibility. These are the first of their kind across the international gymnastics' community.
- **The introduction of #BeTheChange**, a major long-term safe sport campaign to raise awareness of and support the entire gymnastics community to understand good practice, what is acceptable and not acceptable and how to report concerns.
- **Strengthening and creating relationships with our Club Welfare Officer network** to encourage and empower recognising, responding to and referring concerns, including bringing the network together for the first ever annual National Welfare Officer Conference in November 2023, and a new approach to onward learning and development for Welfare Officers.
- **Multiple new partnerships with organisations** as part of a collaborative approach to improving gymnastics, including working with our Home Nation partners, representatives from other National Federations for Gymnastics, such as the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland. We are also working with other UK Sports Governing Bodies, such as the RFU (Rugby Football Union), the FA, LTA (Lawn Tennis Association) and the ECB (England Cricket Board), to share best practice, guidance, and challenges.
- **We have maintained an increased staffing level and worked hard to improve our triage and allocation process**, to ensure that the people at the centre of concerns, no matter

their role, are considered and treated with care and respect. This is part of an ongoing process of refining and developing our processes, and ensuring every concern is managed to the same high standards.

Delivery of these reforms continues to be a joint effort involving many people and organisations beyond just British Gymnastics, drawing on their expertise and experience. This includes working closely with organisations and individuals within and beyond the sport to help change gymnastics for the better. It has involved members of the community with adverse lived experience, abuse survivors and their parents, listening to their experiences to learn lessons from the past and shape our work moving forward. This has been central to the progress made so far, and it will continue to be integral to the delivery of this strategic plan moving forward.

We recognise that we still have much further to go and reform of this scale takes time, but through Reform '25 we now have the foundations in place upon which this strategic plan will build so that we ensure that abuse, mistreatment, harm, and a culture of fear have absolutely no place in gymnastics.

## OUR APPROACH



### / Leadership

We will lead responsibility, accountability, and a relentless drive to ensure everyone can have an uplifting experience in gymnastics, one free from harm or abuse.

### / Culture

We will support and cultivate a safe culture which empowers children, young people, and adults to participate safely in gymnastics through effective leadership and governance.

### / Operations

We will create safe operations to ensure gymnastics members, parents/carers and community have the right policies, procedures, processes, and practices to keep children, young people and adults safe.

### / Environment

We will create safe environments at British Gymnastics which empower children and young people to thrive.

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# OUR PRINCIPLES

These principles form the backbone of our strategy, guiding our actions and decisions. They ensure our work is:

## / Consistent

Across all levels, ensuring fairness, accessibility, and reliability.

## / Clear

Transparent and reasonable for all.

## / Connected

Inclusive and engaging, ensuring that all members feel part of the community and its safeguarding purpose.

## / Compassionate

Treat people with respect and kindness



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# OUR FOCUS

Our strategy focuses on creating an open, fair, and healthy culture of safeguarding that underpins everything we do. To do this we need to create a robust framework to achieve the following priorities.

## / Prevent

harm and abuse.

## / Protect

participants.

## / Promote

welfare and safe practice in sport.

## / Resolve

and manage concerns effectively.



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# OUR FOCUS

## /PREVENT HARM AND ABUSE



### Our Why

To provide, create and support safe environments, where we can ensure practices, standards and cultures align to prevent harm and abuse.

### Our What

- Connecting & Communicating with our community to develop, strengthen and embed safe practice.
- Improving Reporting of all concerns.
- Providing professional expert advice and guidance.
- Building welfare and safe sport Confidence, Competence, and capacity at all levels.
- Using Data & Insight to direct resource to support and make safe susceptible environments.

### Our How

- Promoting and listening to the voice of the child
- Specific Club Welfare Officer support to empower individuals to foster safe & supportive environments in their clubs.
- Utilise and promote the regional allocation of Welfare and Safe Sport team as that point of contact, sharing of knowledge, support, and expertise.
- Publish refreshed or new guidance on roles and responsibilities to keeping our participants safe.
- Provide expert advice, guidance, and support to all British Gymnastics members through regular communications and collaboration.

### Our Impact

Creating an environment where behaviour, actions, inaction or conduct that cause abuse and harm is recognised, responded to appropriately, challenged and not accepted or tolerated in a gymnastics environment.

# OUR FOCUS

## / PROTECT PARTICIPANTS



### Our Why

Everyone in gymnastics, regardless of their role, has a fundamental right to feel safe, and protected when engaged in the sport.

### Our What

- Adhere to Standards and Frameworks.
- Work with statutory authorities to fulfil our regulatory responsibilities.
- Working in Partnerships CPSU, Sport England.
- Work in partnership with Learning and Development.
- Promotion & Awareness with our gymnastics community.

### Our How

- The Safe and Fair Sport Campaign - Ensuring that the campaign speaks to all members and is applicable to their role.
- Establishing a survivor's consultative group to learn from past mistakes and improve the environment now and in the future.
- Ensuring that the latest updates and legislation are effectively communicated to the wider community, empowering them to understand and put into action anything that will keep members safe.
- Developing a range of safeguarding learning and development modules to support the gymnastics community.
- Focus work on creating safe environments and positive culture.

### Our Impact

Our gymnastics community is protected from harmful and abusive behaviours or conduct.

# OUR FOCUS

## / PROMOTE AWARENESS, AND SUPPORT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



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### Our Why

We are dedicated to empowering every individual to actively participate in safeguarding.

### Our What

- Convening & facilitating a collaborative space to co-produce resources
- Consulting and listening to our community.
- Recognising and showcasing best practice and ongoing learning

### Our How

- Redesigning the policies and procedures within the W&SS space to include guidance, information, and advice, tailored to the audience.
- Working with the Learning and Development Department to embed elements of the Welfare and Safe Sport (W&SS) agenda into all areas of coach development and continued personal and professional development (CPD)

(e.g. #BeTheChange campaign, CPD modules).

- Encourage member participation in safety initiatives and decision-making processes (e.g. consulting Advisory Panels/Groups).
- Child Voice and Participation: Actively listening to and involving children in decisions that affect them, ensuring their perspectives shape our practices.
- Deliver an annual Welfare Symposium, Newsletter, networking opportunities and continued personal and professional development for regional welfare officers.
- Bimonthly 'drop in sessions' or 'Ask your Safeguarding Officer sessions' to ensure Club Welfare Officers' and Clubs know who we are and have the opportunity to ask questions/knowledge check
- Link clubs in with Sports Welfare Officer network for local support and training opportunities.

### Our Impact

An engaged community where members contribute to a safe and positive environment.

# OUR FOCUS

## / RESOLVE AND MANAGE CONCERNs EFFECTIVELY



/Nov 2024

### Our Why

To be responsive to complaints, concerns, and value everyone's voice, to bring swift and robust actions for timely and fair resolution.

### Our What

- Systems and process to be clear and fit for purpose.
- Practices to be person centred and in line with statutory and regulatory frameworks.
- Policies to be written collaboratively and communicated frequently.
- Resolutions – mediation and support to transition from complaints and concerns

### Our How

- Better identifying and simplifying what is meant by a complaint or a concern and ensuring that the appropriate process is followed.
- Streamlining the processes through the redesign of the policy and procedures underpinning the work.

Ensuring that there is a focus on the timescales and wellbeing of all parties involved in a concern.

- Establish accessible reporting channels for raising all concerns.
- To establish a new and clear process for complaints and concerns to be managed.
- Develop a responsive system for handling reports, ensuring timely and compassionate action.
- Ensure safeguarding, child and adult protection matters are investigated efficiently and robustly alongside statutory agencies – and with evident outcomes.

### Our Impact

A community where complaints and concerns are addressed promptly and empathetically, enhancing trust and resilience.

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# OUR FOCUS HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS TOGETHER

## / Support

the gymnastics community to understand welfare, safe sport and safeguarding responsibilities, accountability, and expectations.

## / Ensure

everyone feels supported and confident that they can seek guidance from the welfare and safe sport team at British Gymnastics with openness and transparency.

## / Learn

and be informed by the past (Whyte Review and Reform '25 backdrop, Leap Without Limits), to take clear and considered action, whilst also challenge the status quo.

## / Develop

and embed safe practice and strive for excellence.



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## OUR COMMITMENT

Through our dedicated welfare and safe sport strategy, we are committed to implementing, strengthening, and developing robust safeguarding standards across gymnastics. We all have the right to be cared for, protected from harm and abuse, and this strategy demonstrates our ongoing commitment to ensuring all participants in a gymnastics environment which is safe and enjoyable.

We will listen, learn, and implement updates and improvements iteratively. We will monitor, review, and reflect on the desired outcomes and impact of our actions as a part of our delivery of our welfare and safe sport provision. We will report back to the board and subcommittees on a quarterly basis, and to our community in our annual report.

Our commitment to action is driven by our responsibility, vision, and desire for a bright, optimistic future where gymnastics is the sport and catalyst for positive, healthy change, enriching lives, communities, and society.

This strategy will be promoted via various channels, including British Gymnastics website, email communications, welfare officer networks and learning and development. This strategy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if there are changes in legislation, government guidance or because of any other significant change or event.

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/Nov 2024

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