

SAFEGUARDING STRATEGY 2022-2025



EFL

FOREWORD BY TREVOR BIRCH

The EFL's new three-year safeguarding strategy demonstrates the League's commitment to promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk.

As the world changes, football must move with it by continually evolving its safeguarding standards and practices. Prevention of risk through the enhancement of skills and regular training of staff at all levels is a key part of the strategy. Education remains the tip of the spear, and it is vital that our Clubs have the appropriate level of information and knowledge to enable them to identify threats and protect people whatever the circumstance moving forward.

As with all strategic areas, our overarching goal is to be leaders in the field. For safeguarding this means it is necessary we demonstrate appropriate and robust governance. It is our view that football is stronger together and through collaboration with stakeholders and working with survivors, the EFL has been able to further develop its policies and procedures that will be fit for the next three years.

The publication of Clive Sheldon QC's report in March 2021 illustrated the devastating impact that child abuse within football has had on survivors and continues to have on their everyday lives.

In the years since these harrowing events took place, the game has collectively developed its safeguarding policies, procedures, and practice into one of the most robust safeguarding regimes in sport.

The crimes of the perpetrators and the findings of the report must serve as a reminder about risks that remain in our game and across society. The courage shown by those abused will help ensure that the EFL, and our game as a whole, can continue to create an environment in which all participants can feel safe and supported.

Trevor Birch
CEO

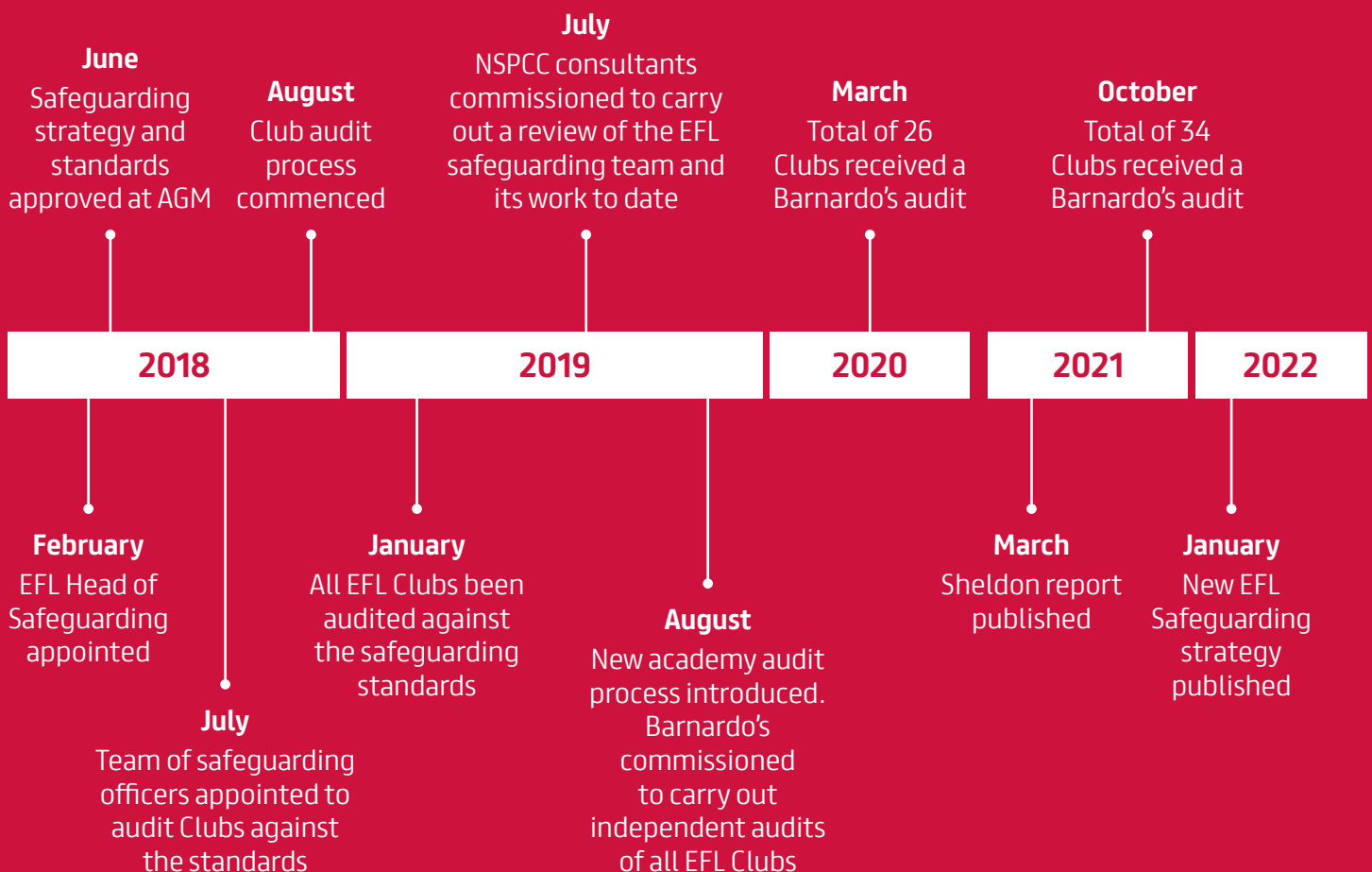


SAFEGUARDING MILESTONES 2018-2021

The oversight of the League in respect of safeguarding was significantly accelerated after the non-recent child sexual abuse disclosures.

The League appointed a new Head of Safeguarding, employed first and foremost to create, and oversee the independent assessment of the EFL Safeguarding standards in all 72 Member Clubs. The safeguarding strategy for 2018-2021 was entitled 'Stronger Together' with a vision to create a culture of constant vigilance with an embedded preventative approach that brought policies and procedures to life. We aimed to reduce risk, learn from case reviews and investigations, and drive change at the highest level.

During the 2018-2021 strategy cycle we have delivered over 60 quality assured courses to more than 500 individuals covering vital subject matter such as Adverse Childhood Experiences, Recognising Domestic Abuse, Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation, Online Safety, Designated Safeguarding Officer Level 3, and Contextual Safeguarding.

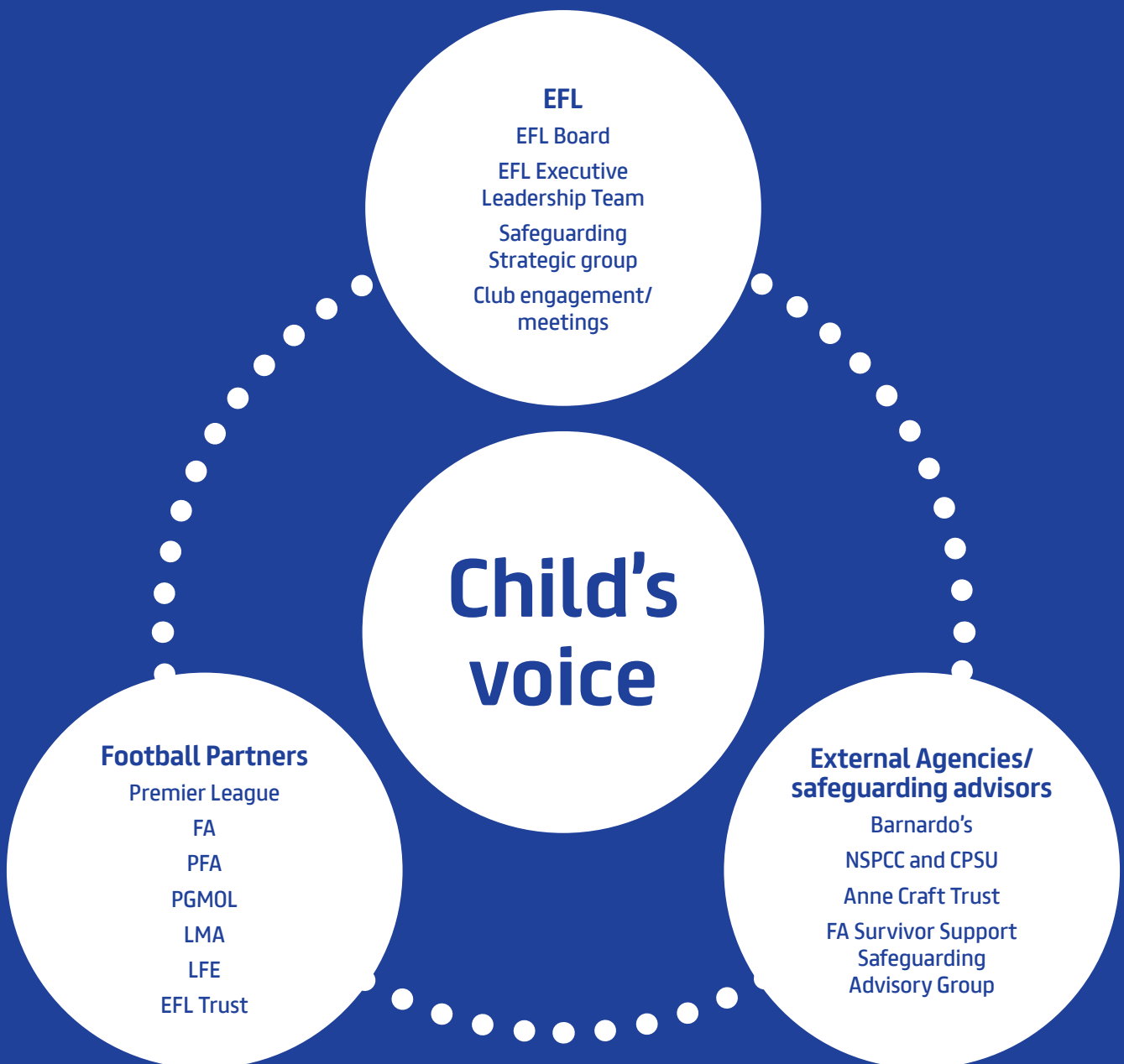




GOVERNANCE

Alongside our footballing partners and external agencies, we will ensure that children's and adults at risk's rights are at the heart of our decision making. We will consistently apply this across the breadth of our activities, building a culture that is a beacon of excellent safeguarding practice.

As the charitable arm of the English Football League, the EFL Trust oversees the work of the Football Club Community Organisations (CCO's). As a key partner it is vital that our safeguarding aims and objectives are aligned and that we continue to work closely together across our network of member Clubs to, develop resources, facilitate learning, and share good practice/lessons learnt.






Our safeguarding work is effectively governed within the EFL and through our stakeholder engagement as outlined above with the child's voice at the heart of everything we do.

STRATEGY OBJECTIVES AND INITIATIVES 2022-2025

In alignment with our safeguarding standards the strategy 2022-2025 has seven pillars:

- Leadership, governance, and culture
- Roles and responsibilities
- Prevention, policies, procedure and practice
- Educating and empowering
- Protection
- Working Together
- Listening Culture





Key

-  Sheldon recommendation
-  Ongoing workstream
-  Continuous improvement cycle

PILLAR ONE:

Leadership, Governance and Culture




'Safeguarding is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture'

Objective	Measure
 All Club Board of Directors to complete mandatory safeguarding training provided by the League on appointment and every three years prior that they remain in post	EFL Board to monitor compliance through monthly safeguarding board reports
 Incorporate lived experience of abuse into all elements of our safeguarding work reminding all the need for constant vigilance and the human impact of abuse	Evidence of lived experience in training materials designed to reach a wider club/football stakeholder audience.
 Continue to maintain independent scrutiny of the work of the League and our Member Clubs safeguarding practice by external appropriate professionals, enhancing our practice, and driving us to continually improve	Audit cycle performed and reported on by independent child protection specialists
 Contribute to the FA's annual safeguarding report, providing robust and insightful data, information on practice and lessons learnt to help drive strategy and positive outcomes across the game	FA annual safeguarding report to be produced and published at the end of 21-22 season

PILLAR TWO:

Roles and Responsibilities




'Everyone takes responsibility for safeguarding'

Objective	Measure
 Ensure compliance with staffing regulation 116.4 requiring specific safeguarding staffing levels within our member Clubs. Review the regulation to ensure it is fit for purpose each season and enhance as and when required	League to retain evidence that all Clubs have met the required regulation by the proposed date
 Continue to invest in the training of our Club Safeguarding staff providing up to date, quality assured courses covering good practice, recognising abuse in all forms, prevention work, and referral methods/support agencies	EFL Board papers to contain quality assurance reports on safeguarding training offered throughout the season
 Widen our reach in respect of Club audience via training sessions/materials to ensure that more people understand the importance of safeguarding, the impact of abuse, and how to recognise signs of abuse	Training resources for Clubs to be provided by the League which facilitate reach to a wider audience, staff, parents/carers, and adult players

PILLAR THREE:

Prevention, policies, procedure and practice




'There are effective safeguarding related policies, procedures and practice in place. These are consistently implemented, regularly reviewed and where necessary reviewed'

Objective	Measure
 Continue to enhance skills development across our network of Clubs in the areas of defensible decision making and child-centred practice	Training and resources to be developed in these areas and delivered to all Clubs as part of mandatory training offer
 Use safeguarding data from across the network to create a more preventative approach to safeguarding, welfare, and player care in our Clubs. Enhance policies, procedures, and practice within member Clubs to prevent exposure to abuse and harm and not just focus on how to deal with issues should they arise	End of season annual report to Board and Clubs to contain information of safeguarding data and how it will inform EFL Safeguarding Team delivery moving forwards each season
 Learn from the Everyone's Invited disclosures in relation to sexual harassment and ensure that Clubs are not only dealing with harmful sexual behaviours should they arise but that we are also working to create environments that discourage the behaviour	Monitored through independent audit cycle

PILLAR FOUR:

Educating and Empowering




'Children and adults at risk are informed about their rights and everyone is equipped with safeguarding knowledge and skills'

Objective	Measure
 Use safeguarding data from across the network to provide more in-depth targeted training and peer mentoring for Clubs dealing with specific safeguarding issues such as bullying and child criminal exploitation.	Training and resources to be developed in these areas and delivered to relevant Clubs as part of mandatory training offer
 Provide a series of train the trainer packages for safeguarding staff to confidently deliver training in Clubs on key safeguarding issues, widening the workforce understanding in relation to recognising abuse and when to raise a concern	Materials to be developed in consultation with Club safeguarding staff
 Work with football stakeholders to develop training materials for the wider football workforce and family, namely parents/carers/ host families, adult players, and younger academy age groups	Materials to go live via football stakeholder and Club communication channels

PILLAR FIVE:

Protection




'Concerns and complaints are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately'

Objective	Measure
 Continue to develop understanding and practice in relation to reporting and recording low level concerns and how the data can be used to prevent harm across the game	Low level concerns continue to be incorporated in to League safeguarding standards and compliance monitored through Club audit cycle and annual data return
 Deliver Mental Health First Aid adult and child training to Safeguarding Officers and the wider football work force	Evidence to be provided in board reports in relation to number of completions
 Work with football stakeholders such as the Premier League, PFA, LFE and PGAAC to develop Club multidisciplinary approach, provision, and delivery in relation to mental health and emotional well being	League attendance and contribution at stakeholder meetings in respect of Player Care and further development of our resources and support to Clubs in this area

PILLAR SIX:

Working Together



'There is a clear commitment to working together to promote and protect the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk'

Objective	Measure
 Continue to raise awareness and promote Safeguarding Campaigns as part of the wider EFL Communications strategy. Support national awareness campaigns for example Parents in Sport Week, Safer Internet Day, the National Day of Safeguarding in Football, and the FA's Play Safe Campaign across our network	Promotion of club work and activity in safeguarding as part of the wider EFL Communications strategy.
 Use safeguarding concerns data to help inform the work of other stakeholders, providing a more targeted approach where necessary through the Life Skills programme and LFE work	Data to be provided to EFL safeguarding strategic group annually to help inform work planning and offer to clubs for the coming season
 EFL Safeguarding Team continue to support Clubs to initiate and maintain strong relationships with key statutory agencies and partners for example, LADO, Police, Local Authority and third sector agencies	EFL Safeguarding Team to provide opportunities for presentations and discussions with key statutory agencies at local and regional Club meetings

PILLAR SEVEN:

Listening Culture

'There is a culture that promotes listening and respecting views and wishes'

Objective	Measure
 Continue to work with Clubs, stakeholders, and wider safeguarding network to find innovative and engaging ways to gain insightful feedback from children and young people that can inform Club strategy, policies, practice and improvements in safeguarding	Monitored through audit cycle and good practice promoted vis regional Club meetings
 Continue to work with FA Survivor Group and others with lived experience of abuse and consult with them on policy, procedure, and practice	Provide meaningful opportunities for those with lived experience to contribute to League policies, procedure, and practice

DELIVERY TIMELINE – SHELDON RECOMMENDATIONS

SEASON 21-22	
Objective	Measure
All Club Board of directors to complete mandatory safeguarding training	Head of Safeguarding EFL to report to Board monthly on numbers completed
Contribute to the FA's annual safeguarding report	Report to be published at end of season
Ensure compliance with regulation 116.4 (Full-time/part-time safeguarding roles requirement)	Clubs to provide evidence to the League that requirement has been met
Online safeguarding training for parents	Training will go live via FA e-learning, Club and League Communication channels
Campaign to all on minimising risk in football alongside National Day of Safeguarding	Campaign launched and promoted by League and Member Clubs

SEASON 22-23	
Objective	Measure
Adult players safeguarding resources	Training will go live via FA e-learning, Club and League Communication channels