

****2026 Pre-Season Safeguarding Network Meeting**

12 March 2026 – Meeting Notes**

Attendees

Safeguarding Officers from clubs across Lancashire;
Adele Williams (County Safeguarding Lead),
Catherine (Kath) Knowles (GMCL Safeguarding Officer),
John Taylor (Northern Premier/Palace Shield Safeguarding Officer),
plus numerous club representatives.

1. Buddying System for Safeguarding Officers

Discussion Summary

- Proposal from **Kath Knowles** for a county-wide *buddying system* to reduce the isolation safeguarding officers often experience.
 - Strong support from new and experienced CSOs.
 - Purpose: *non-governance, peer support, system advice, sense-checking, bouncing ideas, informal mentoring.*
 - Emphasis: not a replacement for formal referrals, league SGO advice, or Adele's oversight.
 - Suggestions:
 - Cross-league buddying (not restricted to GMCL or local area).
 - Governance needed: clear framework, boundaries, terms of reference.
 - Local matching where possible for those who want face-to-face meetups.
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2. Deputy Safeguarding Officers & Safeguarding Teams

Key Points

- Not mandated by ECB but *strongly encouraged*.
- Many clubs shared successful models:
 - Splitting admin vs. on-the-ground roles.
 - Junior-parent deputies.
 - Co-Safeguarding Officer models.

- Mini safeguarding teams covering **junior, senior, social**, or **EDI** strands.
- Benefits: reduces workload, improves coverage, prevents officer burnout, ensures presence at matches.

Challenges Acknowledged

- Small clubs with few volunteers struggle; need nurturing and “hand-holding” approaches.
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3. Speak Out Champion (Youth Voice) Update

What Clubs Are Doing

- **Leyland CC:** Young Leaders Programme (coaching, first aid, feedback activities).
- **Greenfield CC:** Forming a *Junior Cults Committee* to lead ideas, events, budgeting, DofE credit.
- **Other clubs:**
 - Anonymous surveys,
 - Junior steering groups,
 - Meetings with players,
 - Junior-led fundraising (e.g., sponsored walk),
 - “You said / We did” communication.

Key Themes

- Listen → Respond → Publicise outcomes.
 - Introduce “bronze / silver / gold” youth engagement levels.
 - Plan for a **county-wide mascot competition** to visually brand all junior safeguarding/youth voice materials.
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4. EDI Officer Requirements

- ECB has now **mandated** clubs to appoint an **EDI Officer**.
- Training/Workshops will be rolled out nationally.
- If clubs cannot recruit, the safeguarding officer may temporarily hold the role (common this year).

- EDI concerns can be reported through the same reporting mechanisms as safeguarding.
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5. League Safeguarding Support

Message from League Officers

- League SGOs (GMCL, NPCL, Palace Shield, LCCL, NWCL, Liverpool Comp) are active, supportive, and should be your *first line of contact* unless:
 - A child is at immediate risk, or
 - The concern involves someone at league level.

Adele's Reflections

- Lancashire's league safeguarding structure is strong compared with other counties.
 - SGOs are in regular contact to ensure visibility of issues and consistent support.
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6. WhatsApp Group – Improvements & Future Structure

Current Situation

- Hugely valuable resource, but very high message traffic.
- Some officers feeling overwhelmed; some have left the group.

New Improvements

- **Quick-access links** added (by John) at the top of the group for:
 - Report a concern
 - Templates & policies
 - DBS/Safe Hands info
 - Kit bag
 - Training links
 - Play Cricket guidance

Proposed Future Structure

- Keep the **main WhatsApp group**.
- Add **league-specific subgroups**:

- GMCL
- Northern Premier / Palace Shield
- Lancashire League
- NWCL
- Liverpool Comp
- Others as needed

Purpose: reduce noise, allow league-specific support while preserving main group for county-wide info.

7. Play Cricket

Play Cricket

- Issues found with newsletters only going to chairs.
- Technical fix applied; should now reach *all* relevant club roles.
- Clubs *must* keep roles up to date manually in Play Cricket.

ClubMark Transition

- Anxiety acknowledged.
 - Proposal to create a dedicated link/resource area to centralise updates.
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8. Safeguarding Training (ECB Level 2)

- Two pathways now on the ECB website:
 1. **New Account Registration**
 2. **Renewal Pathway**
 - Some users still receiving “Access Denied” or “Not Assigned to Client Application”.
 - **Action:** Errors must be sent to **ECB e-learning team**, as county cannot fix system-level issues.
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9. Risk Assessments for Scorers (Especially U18)

Concerns Raised

- New scoreboard rules require young scorers to be risk assessed at ANY ground they score at.
- Concern that:
 - Quality of assessments will vary.
 - Responsibility unclear when scorer travels to another club.
 - Practicality issues for volunteer-run clubs.

Interim Advice

- Young scorers should not enter any scoreboard where they feel unsafe.
- Captains/scorers empowered to stop and assess.
- Club SGO may request another club's RA before fixtures.

Longer-Term Plan

- Adele & league SGOs to meet separately and create a **county-wide approach** for consistency.
 - Concerns will be formally escalated to the **ECB Cricket Regulator**.
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10. Other Topics

- PowerPoint templates for start-of-season coach/parent briefings will be shared.
 - Safe Hands does not currently track coach training expiries → ECB to be chased.
 - Registration emails should be triple-checked for accuracy.
 - All clubs invited to submit agenda ideas or request guest speakers.
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ACTION POINTS

Buddying System

- **Adele** to create a county-wide online sign-up form
 - Option A: volunteer as a “senior buddy”
 - Option B: request support
- **Adele + Kath + John** to design governance framework, boundaries & terms of reference.
- **League SGOs** to assist matching buddies locally or cross-league.

- **Pilot** the buddying scheme ahead of season start.
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Deputy / Team Safeguarding

- **All clubs** to review possibility of appointing:
 - Deputy Safeguarding Officer(s)
 - A Safeguarding Team (junior, social, EDI split)
 - **Adele** to run optional 20–30 min clinic for clubs needing help recruiting deputies.
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Speak Out Champion / Youth Voice

- **All clubs** encouraged to adopt a youth engagement model (survey/captains forum/committee).
 - **Adele** to continue Speak Out working group meetings.
 - **County group** to design:
 - Mascot competition
 - Bronze/Silver/Gold framework
 - **Kath** to share Greenfield's youth committee framework.
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WhatsApp Group Structure

- **Adele & John** to:
 - Finalise league-specific subgroups.
 - Publish guidance on what to post where.
 - Circulate screenshots showing how to access new quick links.
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Play Cricket

- **Clubs** must ensure Play Cricket roles are fully updated.
- **Adele & John** to explore adding:
 - ClubMark updates
 - Play Cricket updates to the WhatsApp quick links hub.

Safeguarding Course Access

- **Clubs** to direct anyone receiving errors to **ECB e-learning support**.
- **Adele** to publish the correct links for:
 - New learner pathway
 - Renewal pathway

Risk Assessment for Scorers

- **Adele + League SGOs** to meet and propose:
 - A consistent county-wide approach.
 - Clear expectations for clubs hosting U18 scorers.
 - Standard QA process.
- **Adele** to escalate collective concerns to ECB regulator.

Resources & Sharing

- **Michael** to share safeguarding briefing PowerPoint with Nicky (and group).
- **Adele** to compile shared templates (PowerPoints, junior surveys, RA examples) into a resource pack.