



An introduction to Sport Welfare Officers



Sport Welfare Officers (SWOs)

- Part of [Sport England's](#) response to the [Whyte Review](#) into allegations of abuse in gymnastics.
- The response contains **19 commitments** including 'the funding of a national network of welfare officers to promote good practice and safe sport at a local level'.
- Sport Welfare Officers are also mentioned in the recent [Heart of Aquatics](#) report within the recommendations for positive change.
- Funded by Sport England and the National Lottery for the next **three years**.



Sport Welfare Officers (SWOs)

- **Recruitment** started in Autumn 2023.
- **63 Sport Welfare Officers** will be in post across the 43 Active Partnerships. More than 50% are in post already, with others to follow shortly.
- The Sport Welfare Officers are working with National Governing Bodies and **key partners** such as the [Child Protection in Sport Unit](#) and [Ann Craft Trust](#) to develop a new, local approach to assisting and supporting club welfare officers to create safe, inclusive environments for children and adults.



Yorkshire Sport Foundation's SWOs



Douglas Blackwood
Sport Welfare Officer
South Yorkshire



Measha Harris
Sport Welfare Officer
West Yorkshire
excluding Leeds



Nicola Holmes
Senior Sport Welfare Officer
Leeds
South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire

Yorkshire Sport Foundation's SWOs



Douglas Blackwood
Sport Welfare Officer
South Yorkshire

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douglas.blackwood@yorkshiresport.org

Background

- Health Coach within NHS primary care, supporting physical and mental health
- Promoting and developing networks of service providers
- Performance support within professional and elite sport
- Experience of running public health programmes for multiple football club foundations

Yorkshire Sport Foundation's SWOs



Measha Harris
Sport Welfare Officer
West Yorkshire

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Background

- Child Protection and Wellbeing in education
- Community development, working to eliminate barriers to social inclusion
- Safeguarding within cricket

Yorkshire Sport Foundation's SWOs



Nicola Holmes

Senior Sport Welfare Officer
Leeds

South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire

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Background

- Secondary school Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Senior Mental Health Lead within education
- Knowledge and experience of a variety of safeguarding topics including exploitation, Prevent, forced marriage, and online safety

What SWOs offer to NGBs and clubs

- **Support** – Help for club welfare officers to create a safer culture within their organisation.
- **Training** – Providing, or signposting to, training for staff/volunteers in person or via Teams on a variety of sport-specific and safeguarding topics.
- **Auditing** – Help for clubs with self-assessments to ensure they are meeting the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out by National Governing Bodies.
- **Signposting** – Directing clubs to appropriate services and sources of support.
- **Networks** – Making connections for people to share news, information and best practice.
- **Events** – Attending events to raise awareness of safeguarding and wellbeing amongst participants, parents and carers.

SWOs work together with NGBs as an add on to existing safeguarding practices and procedures.

If there's something else that you would like SWOs to support with, please don't hesitate to ask.



What SWOs don't do

- **Respond to concerns** – SWOs can't give advice on current cases of concern. All concerns must be referred without delay in accordance with National Governing Body and club safeguarding policies.
- **Make assessments or judgements** – SWOs are a free, independent and impartial service that has been put in place to support club welfare officers. SWOs are not here to report back on, or criticise, the situation within specific clubs.



What SWOs offer to safeguarding partners

- SWOs can be a **link** between local safeguarding partners, such as Safeguarding Children Partnerships, LADOs, early help and family support services, community groups and organisations, and sports clubs.
- Safeguarding partners can advise clubs to contact their local SWO to support with **improving their practice** or changing their culture.
- SWOs can participate in **networks and forums** where a representative from sport would be beneficial.
- SWOs can share **news and information** from safeguarding partners with clubs.



For more information

Contact your local Sport Welfare Officer:

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Other Sport Welfare contacts:

Name	Role	Email
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Laura Harris	Sport Welfare Manager – North Yorkshire Sport	l.harris@northyorkshiresport.co.uk
Mary Smith	Sport Welfare Officer – Active Humber	msmith@activehumber.co.uk

Visit www.activepartnerships.org/services/programmes/sport-welfare-officer-network