

**Wycombe Wanderers Football Club**

**Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Safeguarding**

**End of Term Report**

**June 2022**

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    1. **Background**

During the course of 2021, it was decided to combine the Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committees into the EDIS Committee. By ensuring membership at senior levels within the Club, WWSGL (the Trust) and Wycombe Wanderers Sports & Education (WWSET) the Club has recognised the importance of such initiatives, not only in respect of its staff, but equally importantly, in respect of everyone, home and away supporters, who attend matches at Adams Park. An EDIS report is submitted at all WWFC Board Meetings

The Club has followed EFL guidelines, training and compliance reporting requirements and has supported the EDIS committee in progress and achievements to date.

It is important to recognise the contributions made over the past year and in the compilation of this report, by the following committee members (in alphabetic order):

Phil Catchpole, David Cook, Stephen Copp, Paul Foley (WWSET), Tom Holder, Nigel Kingston (Trust Chairman), Peter Lerner, Benedict Mwendwa Musola, Liam O’Rourke, Gordon Reilly, David Steel, Trevor Stroud (WWFC Director).

Whilst progress has been made in all areas, it is worth noting that there is always scope for improvement and the EDIS Committee will continue to operate to ensure that Wycombe Wanderers is as safe and inclusive a venue to visit as we can possibly make it.

* 1. **Executive Summary**

Significant progress has been made in the following areas:

* **Safeguarding**: the Club has satisfied several EFL audits, is awaiting the Barnardos’ audit report and has already taken steps to further strengthen its management structure.
* **EFL Code of Practice**: The Club successfully completed the EFL’s Code of Practice when the EFL reported that “The Club has demonstrated clear commitment to inclusion, equality, and anti-discrimination within the organisation and this is driven through all sections of the Football Club. The Club have developed a well-constructed, high quality and robust submission that meets the criteria for the Code of Practice”
* **EFL Equal Opportunities Survey Results:** In an analysis of Club staff responses to the survey across the five characteristics of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion / faith and sexual orientation, the Club compared well with both local and national demographics. Resulting actions, whilst continuing with its non-discriminatory recruitment practice and actively engaging with the diverse local ethnic community also included the need for a Multi-faith Reflection Room and provision of ethnically diverse food offerings on matchdays.
* **Disabled Supporters Association:** The DSA has, amongst other things, conducted an access audit, leading to improved facilities, including upgraded toilet facilities, affiliated to Level Playing Field (LPF), the Charity for Disabled Football Supporters, worked with the Club to make available commentary radios for home and away supporters, participated in the All-Quarters initiative, sourced one of its members as a trainer for the Club’s EDI and Mental Health / Wellbeing training sessions, ensured that ramps have been made available for wheelchair users and provided coaches for supporters with disabilities to several away games
* **Communication:** The Head of Audio & Broadcast, appointed by the Club mid-season, has joined the EDIS Committee in order to ensure that its successes and initiatives were represented on the Club’s channels.
* **Training:** Club staff have completed the EFL’s Playing for Inclusion on-line course and have attended Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, Safeguarding and Mental Health Awareness training courses.
* **Wycombe Wanderers Women Football Club:** All coaches and Team managers have either all got up to date Disclosure and Barring Service ( DBS ) checks or are in the process of being completed. They have all signed the EFL self-declaration form and the WWWFC code of conduct. In addition, of the nine strong management team at WWWFC, two are women and one of the team managers is also a woman.
* **WWSET & All- Quarters:** The Club and Trust are represented at WWSET’s monthly All-Quarters initiative and have benefited from the support of WWSET in developing multi-faith and ethnically diverse facilities on matchdays. In addition, a presentation by David McArdle, Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at EFL, provided clear guidance on the importance of communicating EDIS’ successes.

1. **Safeguarding - Tom Holder, Stephen Copp & David Cook**
   1. **EFL Audit**

Audits, In relation to the EFL’s seven standards and their 25 sub standards, were conducted in February 2020 (A1), October 2020 (A2) and May 2021 (A3).

The following table summarises the progress made between the first and third audits towards fully meeting the standard. Ambers which appear in the third audit, result from the standard not having been assessed during that audit visit with responsibility for compliance being assigned to the Safeguarding Committee. **Overall, the EFL Auditor considered WWFC to have fully met the EFL’s seven safeguarding standards.**

**Green** - Standard fully met, **Amber** - Standard partially met, **Red** -Standard not met

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| Audit | **A1** | **A2** | **A3** | **A1** | **A2** | **A3** | **A1** | **A2** | **A3** |
| Leadership & Accountability | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Policies & Procedures | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Recruitment & Selection | 5 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Staff Induction, Training & Development | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Complaints, Allegations & Whistleblowing | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Information Sharing & Confidentiality | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Children & Young People | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | **14** | **11** | **16** | **9** | **13** | **9** | **0** | **1** | **0** |

* 1. **Barnardos Audit**

The Barnardos audit, undertaken by two experienced auditors and managed by WWFC’s Senior Safeguarding Manager, was conducted over two days, 4th and 5th April and involved senior staff within WWFC and WWWFC and included a visit to the Training Ground to interview members of the Playing Squad. Whilst their report is still awaited, the following areas are those likely to require attention:

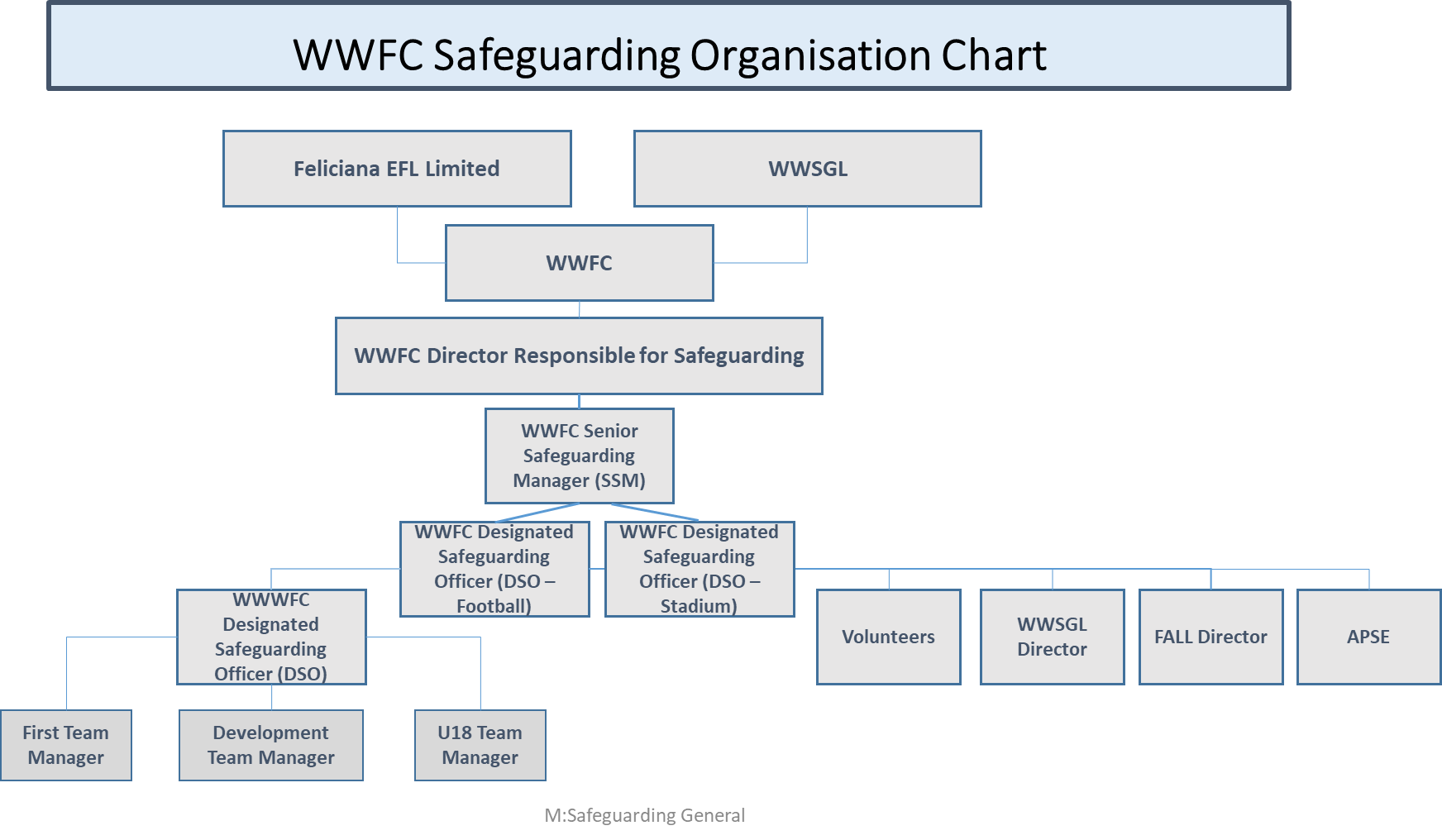
* HR responsibilities and protocols, particularly in respect of recruitment and retention of records.
* Management of Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks.
* Safeguarding Incident record maintenance
* Policy updates to reflect changes of terminology.

A working group, consisting of members of the EDIS Committee, has been created to address the above and any other issues that may arise from the report.

* 1. **Recent Initiatives**

The Safeguarding management structure has been further strengthened by the formal appointment of a Board Director having Safeguarding responsibilities, the appointment of a new Senior Safeguarding Manager and the separation of Designated Safeguarding Officer roles between the football playing and stadium functions as shown below.

The SSM and DSO’s will manage the implementation and ongoing completion of the required DBS checks in each respective area, allowing the SSM to focus more attention on training and education of staff, new staff inductions and attending regional meetings, along with case management for referrals.



In addition, the Club Secretary (DSO- Football) and the WWWFC DSO have been registered as DBS Verifiers and mandatory safeguarding and EDI elements have been added to every job description and recruitment advert and employment contract for roles at the Club.

1. **EFL Code of Practice – Tom Holder & David Cook**

The EFL introduced a mandatory requirement on all EFL Clubs to provide essential evidence demonstrating the Club’s commitment to the EFL’s Code of Practice. Six separate submissions, each building on progress made in the previous submission, were made in the second half of 2021, leading to the final submission in late December.

* 1. **Final Assessment**

The Club successfully completed the EFL’s Code of Practice which required the provision of essential evidence, demonstrating compliance across the following 5 categories

* Accountability and Commitment
* Reporting and Tackling Discrimination
* Data Capture and Insight
* Policy and Legal Compliance
* Education and Training

The EFL’s Final Assessment Report, of 31st March 2022, stated in its executive Summary

“The Club is to be congratulated, this is an excellent submission, which clearly demonstrates honest and constructive self-assessment, commitment to achieve the Code of Practice, and vision to strive for best practice around equality, diversity, and inclusion.

The Club has demonstrated clear commitment to inclusion, equality, and anti-discrimination within the organisation and this is driven through all sections of the Football Club. The Club have developed a well-constructed, high quality and robust submission that meets the criteria for the Code of Practice.”

The report identified two areas which require action which are being addressed by the EDIS Committee:

* The National Register of Access Consultants (NRAC) accredited Disability Access Audit.
* To continue to ensure that all staff and new starters undertake either EFL Playing for Inclusion Training or alternative EFL approved EDI training.
  1. **Equality Statement**

The Club has published the following statement on its website:

**Vision:** Wycombe Wanderers Football Club is committed to ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion amongst all players, management, staff, fans and the wider public who have contact with the Club, thus seeking to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

**Values:** Wycombe Wanderers Football Club will not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying of or by its players, management, staff, fans and the wider public.

**Aim:** To create an environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, where individual differences and the contributions of all players, management, staff and volunteers are recognised and valued.

1. **EFL Equal Opportunities Survey Results– David Cook**

Between April and May 2021, the Club performed an on-line, anonymous, voluntary survey of its permanent staff, including Stewards, Stadium & Security Staff, Office Staff, Cleaning Staff, Management, Football Management Support Staff and the WWFC Board, receiving 80 responses from 85 surveys issued, a 94% response rate, against the following EFL’s criteria:

Sex, Age, Sexual Orientation, Gender Reassignment, Disability, Nature of Disability, Ethnic Group, Religion / Faith, Marital Status, Pregnancy / Maternity Leave

* 1. **Comparisons of survey results with national and local demographics**

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|  | **WWFC Board**  (total of 5, see note below) | **Management & Staff**  (total of 12) | **Security & Stewards**  (total of 61) | **National Population Statistics**  (Plan4Sport) | **Local Demographics**  (Bucks Council & Wycombe Local Area Forum) |
| Sex (Female) | 20% | 50% | 21% | 51% | 51% |
| Disability | 0% | 0% | 15% | 8.3% | Not available |
| Ethnic Minority | 20% | 8.5% | 20% | 9% | 34% |
| Religion (other than Christianity) | 40% | 75% | 56% | 59% | 48% |
| LGBTQ+ | 0% | 0% | 3% | 7% | Not available |
| Majority are aged over : | 45 | 34 | 34 | N/A | Not available |

The above Board %’s are based on 5 directors (The Special Advisor and Legal Counsel are excluded from the comparison, but were included in the Equality survey)

* 1. **Conclusions and Recommendations for Improvement**

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|  | **Conclusions** | **Recommendations for Improvement** |
| Sex (Female) | Females within the Office are representative of the National and local demographic statistics. The Board, being small in number, and the nature of the Stewarding role result in a smaller percentage of females in those functions. | The Club will continue to recruit based on experience, qualification and suitability with sex not being a determining factor. |
| Disability | Disability amongst Stewards is not a barrier to employment, providing it is declared and suitable roles identified. | Ensure that recruitment in general actively encourages people with disabilities to apply and that facilities are appropriate to their needs. |
| Ethnic Minority | This is an area where ethnic staff at all levels within the Club are at least as good as the national statistics, but not as representative of local demographics. | In a locality with high levels of ethnic diversity, the Club needs to actively engage with these ethnic groups in the wider community, via WWSET and the Club Chaplain, to attract a broader recruited and support base. |
| Religion (other than Christianity) | The above figures hide the fact that at least 50% of Office Staff and Stewards declared their religion as ‘none’. | Introduction of multi-faith room  Media messages around multi-faith religious events |
| LGBTQ+ | Level is lower than the already small national level. | Work with WWSET to improve inclusiveness |

1. **Disabled Supporters Association – Peter Lerner**

**5.1 Formation of Disabled Supporters Association**

The Wycombe Wanderers Disabled Supporters Association (DSA) was formed in early 2021 as an initiative of Wycombe Wanderers Trust, as part of the Trust’s Community Plan.

The DSA currently has in the region of 70 members, and a large number of Friends, who have expertise, experience or interest in matters relating to disability. The DSA is aware that among its membership there are people with a wide range of disabilities, both physical and mental and has been concerned to act as spokesperson for all of these, equally.

During the close season in 2021, its’ first action was to organise a tour of the Club’s facilities attended by some 30 DSA members, including Club and Trust Directors and WWFC officials when those facilities were inspected from the viewpoint of all disabilities. As a result, a “to do” list was compiled and presented to the Club. This has formed an agenda for the first year of the DSA’s life, recognising that some works may not be instantly financially or physically achievable. A second review is scheduled for 18th July 2022.

The DSA were invited, soon after their formation, to join the Club’s Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Safeguarding (EDIS) Group, and are currently represented on it by Peter Lerner and Liam O’Rourke.

**5.2 Disability Access Audit**

There are two mandatory actions arising from the Club’s submission for the EFL’s Code of Practice as described in 3.1 above. In respect of the audit, the EFL advised that the Club should notify the EFL once the audit has been conducted has been undertaken and a subsequent summary of actions is produced.

The EDIS Group requested the DSA to consider looking for a properly qualified Auditor or body to undertake this audit. The DSA has been in contact with Level Playing Field (LPF), the charity supporting disabled football supporters, who can provide this service using qualified auditors with a working knowledge of how football clubs and stadiums operate. It is anticipated that LPF will be engaged to undertake this audit during the early part of Season 2022/2023, which will be undertaken with the full support of the DSA.

**5.3 Coach Provision for Supporters with Disabilities**

Early in the life of the DSA, it was noted that there are many WWFC supporters with disabilities, who have been either unwilling or unable to attend away football matches. The idea of a special DSA-organised coach, to selected away fixtures, received a great deal of support.

5 away coach trips have been organised during season 2021/2022, to Manchester City, Sheffield Wednesday, AFC Wimbledon, MK Dons, and Wembley (Play Off Final). All of the trips have been enthusiastically supported by DSA members, their families and friends, in addition to Club and Trust Directors, whose presence has been appreciated.

The DSA has been able to make use of a specially adapted, wheelchair accessible coach, provided by Motts Coaches. The role of the Official Wycombe Wanderers Supporters Association (OWWSA) in procuring the coach and assisting with the booking process cannot be underestimated, and their role will continue to be key, going forward.

The trips have been very largely successful and, continued support, will continue to be run for selected matches in the coming season. It is important to note, however, that facilities for disabled supporters show great variation in quality and customer care at the various opposition clubs. The DSA will not knowingly expose its members to less-than-satisfactory facilities or care, and this is an ongoing learning process.

**5.4 Upgrade of Toilet Facilities**

One of the first outcomes of the Disability Access Audit was a commitment from the Club to improve the disabled toilet facilities at the Stadium. During the past season, works have been carried out to greatly improve the disabled toilets in the South (Family) Stand, and Radar Locks have been provided for the disabled toilet doors throughout the Stadium. These improvements have been well received by DSA members.

**5.5. Other Achievements in the DSA’s First Year**

The DSA has:

* affiliated to Level Playing Field (LPF), the Charity for Disabled Football Supporters, and hosted LPF’s Chief Executive Owain Davies at a home match during LPF’s annual Weeks of Action.
* secured excellent relationships with other Football Clubs’ DSAs and was invited to join the Championship DSA’s Group.
* worked with the Football Club to make available commentary radios for home and away supporters with limited visibility, at matches.
* established a “DSA Table” in the Caledonian Bar where disabled supporters can meet before matches.
* fully participated in the All-Quarters initiative hosted jointly by WWFC, WW Trust and WWSET, to improve accessibility and participation equally for people from all parts of the community.
* sourced one of its members as a trainer for the Club’s EDI and Mental Health / Wellbeing training sessions.
* ensured that ramps have been made available to allow access to various parts of the Stadium for wheelchairs.
* set up its own email contact address ([dsa@wwfc.com](mailto:dsa@wwfc.com)) and established a Facebook Group for its members and friends.

**5.6 Future initiatives**

The DSA intends to work with WWFC to:

* ensure that the Disability Access Audit is successful and that it leads to successful outcomes for the benefit of supporters with disabilities.
* provide a Sensory Room at Adams Park for the benefit of supporters with autism or who are in any way vulnerable.
* provide an alternative accessible, safe and weather-shielded location for supporters with wheelchairs, and their carers.
* Subscribe to, and promote, the PicturePath App, designed for supporters with autism.

1. **Communications – Phil Catchpole**

Having formally joined the Club as its Head of Audio & Broadcast mid-season, I was invited to join the EDIS Committee in order to ensure that its successes and initiatives were represented on the clubs channels, and that ideas for further actions were developed. From a communications viewpoint, being aware of future EDIS-related activities has allowed there to be a proactive, as opposed to reactive, approach to communication.  An example of such an approach, recognising the ‘equality’ aspect of EDIS, is the intention of bringing reporting of Wycombe Wanderers Women’s Football (WWWFC) up to the standard that we achieve with the Men’s game. As safeguarding, ethnic diversity, racial equality and other elements are addressed, membership of the Committee will present opportunities to inform and highlight the Club’s fanbase of the work done in these areas.

1. **Training – David Cook**
   1. **EFL Playing for Inclusion**

The EFL’s Playing for Inclusion (PfI) e-learning course, designed to help in the understanding of what equality, diversity and inclusion really mean as well as the negative impact of discrimination, bullying, harassment and banter was completed by 83 staff across the Club and include staff in WWSET. Of the 83 staff, all WWFC Board members, Senior Stewards, Stadium Security team members and Office Staff had completed the course by June 2021.

* 1. **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

Face to face EDI Training, delivered by Bucks Adult Learning was delivered to 17 members of staff over two interactive sessions in August and September 2021

* 1. **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding training sessions, delivered in December 2021 by an in-house trainer, was well received by a total of 34 attendees, including players and team management.

46% of respondees found the course to have been satisfactory and a further 50% found it to have been very satisfactory.

* 1. **Mental Health Awareness**

Face to face Mental Health Awareness Training, delivered to 28 staff by Bucks Adult Learning in January 2022, was well received.

* 1. **Safeguarding for Committee Members**

Members of the EDIS Committee were offered the opportunity to enrol for the FA’s Safeguarding for Committee Members course. Whilst the course was aimed specifically at those having either direct contact with or responsibility for young or vulnerable individuals, the principles were relevant and a number of the EDIS Committee completed the course in 2022

* 1. **Board of Directors Mandatory Safeguarding Course**

The WWFC Board is in the process of completing the recently advised, mandatory on-line course.

1. **WWWFC – David Steel & Nigel Kingston**
   1. **Management Summary**

* WWWFC completed a successful season in 21/22, with the first team maintaining their position in Tier 5, the Reserves ending 3rd in their league and the U18s ending second in theirs and winning the Bucks and Berks U18s cup.
* We have recently strengthened the coaching team as a result of Carl Simon joining as Head Coach with assistants Dan Webber and Jamie Baylie. Andrew Robinson has also just joined us to help coach the U18s.
* The U 18s will be applying to join the JPL league this coming season
  1. **Safeguarding**
* All the coaches and Team managers of WWWFC have either all got up to date DBS or these are in the process of being completed.
* They have all signed the EFL self-declaration form and the WWWFC code of conduct.
  1. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**
* Of the nine strong management team at WWWFC, two of them are women and one of our team managers is also a woman.
* The WWWFC monthly report is published on the Trust website to enable all Trust members to be aware of what the Club is doing.
* We aim to build a positive relationship between first and reserve teams where all players are part of a bigger squad and to develop the U18s to play high quality adult female football. The objective is to create an atmosphere where all players feel welcome and part of the Club and to make their development a key part of what we do.
  1. **Funding**
* In order to enable WWWFC to develop successfully in 2022/23 season, we need to increase funding for the teams. Getting support from WWFC and bringing new sponsors on board will be an integral part of this aim.

1. **WWSET & All- Quarters – Paul Foley**

WWSET, the official charitable partner of Wycombe Wanderers Football Club uses the power and the brand of the Chairboys to bring about long-lasting change in our diverse local communities.

Working with the Club, the Sports and Education Trust has made valuable input into the Club’s  formulation of its’ Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policies and practices, using its’ hands-on experience to guide and advise on best practice in these important areas of compliance.

The Club and Wycombe Wanderers Supporters Group are both represented at Board level on WWSET’s monthly All Quarters meeting, a collaborative partnership designed to engage with people from traditionally underrepresented local groups in order to improve the match day experience at Adams Park for existing and new supporters.

WWSET has hosted twelve ‘consultation & learning events’ at Adams Park over the 2021-22 season and, in the process, has gathered feedback on people’s views of the Adams Park match day environment, is it inclusive, does it cater for particular needs depending on individual circumstances, how could the stadium be more welcoming or enjoyable, for instance. Whilst there is still much work to be done, WWSET, through the All-Quarters initiative, has assisted the Club in delivering important change, particularly in the provision of a range of ethnic food offerings and the creation of the multi-faith reflection room, both of which have been well received on matchdays.