

# Independent Safeguarding Review of Scottish Gymnastics Performance Programmes

November 2020 – February 2021

## Brief overview at time of publication

The review identified areas where improvements are required, not least in terms of culture, and the need for more to be done to embed safeguarding throughout the organisation. The culture change should be driven from the top with clear codes of conduct, clear reporting systems with published outcomes, a whistleblowing hotline, safeguarding standards in clubs and monitoring at each level. The recommendations when taken as a whole will help support the change in culture.

The report addressed the terms of reference to ensure that athlete welfare is central to the performance programmes with a platform for athletes to raise concerns, recommending better support, information, and safeguarding training to ensure the well-being of gymnasts and a life sport balance.

It expanded on this with recommendations on governance, strategy, and case management in Scottish Gymnastics, with clear information on the process and support for all those involved when allegations are raised. It also covered safeguarding, coach recruitment and support in clubs, to help embed a culture change so gymnasts and parents are aware of safeguarding at every level of the sport.

The report's author, Chris Smart, said: "On behalf of the review team, I would like to thank everyone who provided written submissions, completed surveys, were interviewed, and attended webinars as part of this review.

"Gymnasts and parents, coaches, support staff and Scottish Gymnastics staff have taken part with respect and with the well-being of gymnasts at the forefront of their thinking and contributions. I would also like to acknowledge the immense contribution from the review team in conducting the review and producing this report.

"It is clear that Scottish Gymnastics has made improvements in gymnast well-being and safety over the years and has a desire to improve further.

"They would benefit from greater strategic direction and planning to embed good safeguarding practice into culture so that it runs through and is at the forefront of everything that Scottish Gymnastics does. The recommendations in this report will help them implement the necessary changes in culture and processes so that everyone in the sport ensures gymnast well-being comes first."

Scottish Gymnastics CEO Doc McKelvey welcomed the recommendations of the review. He said:

"We thank Chris and the review team for their work in producing their report and recommendations, and everyone who made submissions to the review.

We want to assure all Scottish Gymnastics members and parents, that we will be adopting these recommendations through an action plan for areas we can progress quickly and then through the development of a safeguarding strategy as recommended in the review. We are fully committed to developing the culture and safeguarding standards required to protect and support gymnasts, coaches, parents, and all involved in Scottish Gymnastics.

“The recommendations will help us prioritise new actions with work we have previously identified or started, so we can focus on taking the best approach to embedding safeguarding in performance programmes, throughout the organisation, and in member clubs and activities across Scotland. We believe the well-being of children and young people is everyone’s responsibility and it starts with us putting gymnasts’ welfare at the heart of everything we do. We will also implement any recommendations which may come from the ongoing Whyte Review.

“This is not a short-term fix. This is a long-term, ongoing approach to changing the culture in the sport. Scottish Gymnastics will lead the change, but it is only achievable through everyone working together. We want all our members, parents, and future members to know what safeguards and support are in place to allow them to feel safe and have fun in gymnastics.

“Many sports around the world have had different cause to focus and self-reflect following complaints on varying issues. Everyone involved in gymnastics in Scotland deserves the best possible environment to enjoy our sport. We are committed, now more than ever, to continue to improve our sport, as a priority. All stakeholders will be involved in helping to shape the necessary improvements to ensure we do as much as we can, for everyone’s benefit.”

## Review team members

### Reviewer – Christopher Smart (Safeguarding Consultant, PVP Consulting)

Chris began his career with the Metropolitan Police in 1985 working across South East London and heading up the Intelligence Team within royalty protection at Buckingham Palace before moving into crime management, working as a senior officer responsible for public protection including child and adult safeguarding and domestic violence. Becoming a Detective Chief Inspector, he took on the role of regional manager of child abuse teams at New Scotland Yard with responsibility for one of largest child abuse investigation teams in the UK and was a member of eight children’s safeguarding boards. Latterly, he set up and was in overall charge of the pan London Child Exploitation investigation team working directly with those involved in current and historic abuse cases. Chris is now a safeguarding consultant and has worked on investigations and reviews in several organisations including the England and Wales Cricket Board where he led a review of 250 historic safeguarding concerns, and the Lawn Tennis Association, investigating the historic handling of an abuse allegation. He is also an authorised listener for the Church of England London Diocese, working with victims of abuse to support and guide them when disclosing abuse.

## Performance Advisor – Gavin Scott (Rugby Operations Director, Scottish Rugby Union)

Gavin was a professional rugby player and on retiring from playing, completed a masters in performance psychology as well as becoming the technical analyst for Scottish Rugby in 2002. He was promoted to head of performance analysis with responsibility for the analysis programmes at Scotland's professional clubs, Glasgow and Edinburgh, as well as the national age grade teams and senior men's and women's national teams. In 2012, he took on the role of team manager for the men's national team responsible for all non-coaching aspects of the national programme. In January 2020, Gavin was promoted to the role of rugby operations director where oversees all aspects of Scottish Rugby's analysis and strength and conditioning departments as well as performance administration for the Scotland national and age grade teams.

## Athlete Advisor – Sally Conway (Scottish Judo)

Sally is a Scottish judoka who trains at Judo Scotland's headquarters at Ratho having previously trained at Bisham Abbey. She has been involved in judo since she was young and won a silver medal at the world junior championships in 2006. Since then, Sally has competed for Scotland in the 2014 Commonwealth Games, winning a bronze medal in the 70kg category. She was part of team GB for the 2012 Summer Olympics and won a bronze medal in the 2016 Summer Olympics in the 70kg category. She was the only Scot to be part of the British team for the 2016 Judo World Championships and was selected for the 2016 European Championships. In May 2019, Sally was selected to compete at the 2019 European Games where she was the flag bearer for Team GB before going on to win a bronze medal at the World Championships in Tokyo 2019.