

PROUD
TO BE
TOWN



ACADEMY

Mental, Emotional and Wellbeing Policy

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1.0 Introduction

For the purposes of this document an “Academy Player” is defined as a male player, other than an Amateur Player, Non-Contract Player (in The Football League) or a Trialist, who is enrolled on the SEPA, in an age group between 16 to 19, and who is registered for and who is coached by, or plays football for or at Harrogate Town AFC (HTAFC).

HTAFC defines welfare as the health, happiness, and comfort of a person or group.

As an English Football League (EFL) club we work closely and adhere to the Football Association (FA) and League Football Education (LFE) welfare guidelines and policies. These guidelines reflect statutory responsibilities, government guidance, leads best practice within sport and delivers excellent outcomes for Academy Players. This document has taken these guidelines into consideration during creation, and complements the aims and values of the organisations associated with the provision of football and education for all Academy Players at HTAFC.

Although the club is held within a framework within the education provider - the LFE - the apprentices primary point of contact for welfare and safeguarding are through HTAFC. The persons accountable for such roles and responsibilities are stated below.

Welfare, although separate to safeguarding, will be associated partially (and sometimes fully) with the responsibility of safeguarding at HTAFC. The posts made by the FA and HTAFC (stated below) have a strong relationship and on occasions influence one another for purposes of best practice. The aim of a stringent and positive Academy Player Welfare structure in HTAFC is to, where possible, reduce the number of incidents relating to safeguarding issues acting as a role of a preventer.

Head of Education and Player Welfare: To ensure that HTAFC can undertake its duty of care for each and every Academy Player that engages with the organisation, a senior member of the education team has been appointed.

The Head of Education and Player Welfare employed by HTAFC has an up-to-date Criminal Record Check (CRC) / Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) check, and is required to undertake mandatory appropriate Welfare Officer and Safeguarding training a minimum of every two years. In addition, continuous professional development training and Information and Guidance (IAG) is provided by the LFE and designated Regional Officer - **Gabriel Mellor** - GMellor@lfe.org.uk. The Head of Education and Player Welfare at HTAFC is qualified at a Post-Graduate level and holds a relevant teaching qualification (Post-Graduate Certificate of Education).

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO): To support all staff members and volunteers - as well as taking the lead for the day to day safeguarding responsibilities of the organisation. The DSO is responsible for HTAFC having the appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place; and for processes related to reporting concerns, allegations or disclosures related to the welfare of a child.

HTAFC’s DSO will meet with the FA Welfare Officer on a quarterly basis to review any incidents, share information and best practice in accordance with **Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2015** (updated February 2018). Minutes of these meetings will be made and stored in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018 and will be reported to HTAFC’s SSM on a regular

basis.

The DSO is required to undertake mandatory appropriate safeguarding training a minimum of every 12 months. In addition, HTAFC's SSM receives annual safeguarding updates on development and best practice in the safeguarding of children.

The core responsibilities of HTAFC Academy Player Welfare and CWO/LDO/DSO are to:

Richard Jones - richardjones@harrogatetownafc.com

Senior Safeguarding Manager (SSM): To ensure that HTAFC can undertake its duty of care for every child that engages with the organisation, a senior member of the management team has been appointed. The SSM takes operational leadership responsibility for our safeguarding arrangements.

The SSM is required to undertake mandatory appropriate safeguarding training a minimum of every two years. In addition, the SSM receives annual safeguarding updates on development and best practice in the safeguarding of children.

The core responsibilities of HTAFC SSM are to:

Dave Riley - daveriley@harrogatetownafc.com

Other staff members responsible for the Academy Player Welfare include (but are not exclusive to):-

Welfare Officer – Becky Wilson

Email: beckywilson@harrogatetownafc.com

Phone: **07468426387**

Academy Doctor - Dr David Eastwood

Email: dr.david.eastwood@gmail.com

Phone: **07858220542**

Chief Executive Officer - Hannah Simpson

Email: info@westridingfa.com

Phone: **0113 282 1222**

Designated Safeguarding Officer - Paul Ratcliffe

Email: safeguarding@westridingfa.com

Phone: **0113 282 1222**

2.0 Club Commitment Statement to Welfare

The Sporting Excellence Professional Apprenticeship (SEPA) programme opens up opportunities for aspiring young people to fulfil their childhood dreams of becoming a professional football player. At HTAFC we are committed to providing a safe, enjoyable, and challenging learning experience for all people involved in our programme whilst doing so.

We understand that although securing a place on the HTAFC SEPA Programme is an excellent achievement, this may cause mixed emotions such as excitement and anxiety due to taking on additional responsibilities and independence - first experiences of living away from home, cooking for oneself, managing a financial budget, additional training alongside education commitments, and meeting the demands and expectations of being in a professional environment are some of the demands that may be challenging. These will be very new experiences to most young people which is why HTAFC provides a supportive and friendly environment to allow apprentices to thrive and grow in every possible way, not just on the football field.

At HTAFC, working alongside the LFE, we ensure each Academy Player receives a unique learning experience designed to their individual needs.

Our proactive approach to implementing positive strategies promotes the welfare of each and every Academy Player. We acknowledge that we have a duty of care to ensure that in all our activities and choices, the Academy Players' welfare and safety are number one.

Richard Jones

Head of Education and Player Welfare



3.0 Player, Parent, Carer and Host-Family Voice

HTAFC extends their responsibilities, not just to the players but everyone involved in the SEPA programme - this includes parents, carers and host-families. The club takes huge pride in promoting the family-orientated approach it has created from the very beginning. It is important to us that we provide the best experience possible for all involved, therefore (as well as operating an “open-door” policy as support) the club will regularly make contact to players, parents, carers and host-families to discuss:-

- player transfers and progressions (this includes transition-strategies)
- conduct in and around the club
- individual and team performance
- academic progress
- behaviour and conduct with host-families
- quality of accommodation and player satisfaction (if applicable)

The above will be agreed during the recruitment process and communications will be delivered and received via the following methods:-

- Parent/carers progression events - arranged twice a year
- Group Accommodation meetings - fortnightly (between House Mistress and Academy DSO)
- Regular phone calls - termly phone calls between HTAFC Head of Education and Player Welfare, and parents/carers
- Regular anonymous questionnaires
- Player focus groups
- Player drop-in sessions
- Match reporting - these will be sent directly to parents and carers

During the Academy Players’ 2-year programme HTAFC ensures the protection of the player’s right to equality, diversity through regular review and creation of confidential routes to raise any concerns. We will promote the involvement of Academy Players in decisions made about them.

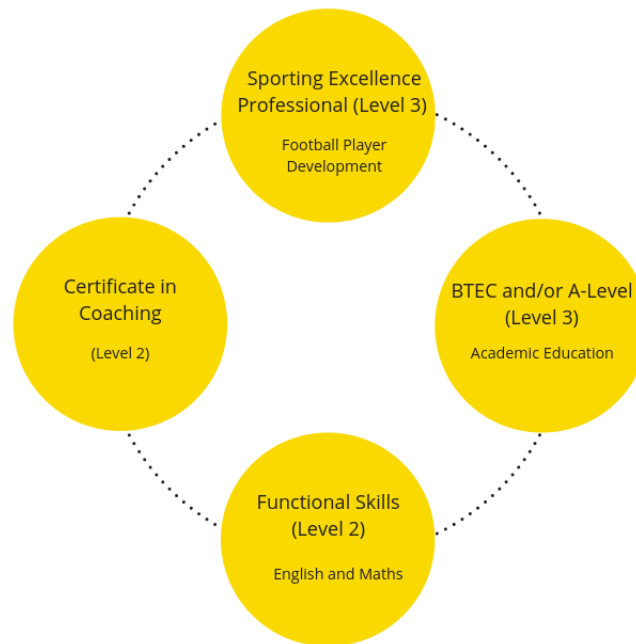
There are regular (termly) reviews with the players to ensure they are not discriminated against, or disadvantaged, and they feel 100% able to participate in the Academy programme.

There is a clear and confidential route signposted and made available for players to raise any concerns they have on the programme or any of its elements - please refer to the HTAFC Safeguarding Policy.

4.0 Tutorial Programme for Academy Players

As part of the SEPA each Academy Player will work towards a number of qualifications including the core framework below shown in the diagram (provided by the LFE). These consist of:-

1. Sporting Excellence Professional (Level 3)
2. BTEC and/or A-Level (Level 3)
3. Level 2 Functional Skills in English and/or Maths (if applicable)
4. Level 2 Certificate in Coaching



During the 2-year SEPA course the Academy Players will complete a termly tutorial with the Head of Education and Player Welfare. This will cover the following aspects of their course:-

- Discussion of progress with football performance
- Attendance/punctuality
- Academic progress and target grade/s
- Engagement in the programme
- IAG for careers/progressions
- Duties or complementary studies
- SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely) targets

It is important that the Head of Education and Player Welfare will act as a mutual representative within the tutorial process, to work with the Academy Players to overcome any challenges and set SMART targets to stay on-track with both academic and practical engagement. These will be reviewed throughout the 2 years on programme and the following targets will be agreed by each Academy Player at the beginning of the course - these are also in the *Academy Performance Plan*:-

- >97% Attendance (including authorised absences)

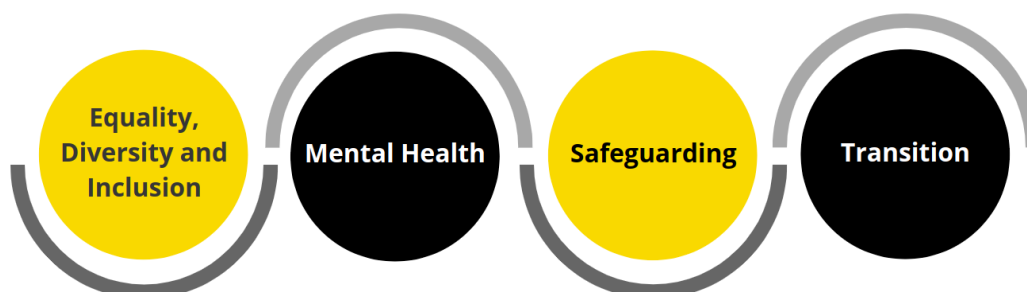


- >90% Presence (excluding authorised absences)
- >85% Retention to the 2nd year of the course
- >80% Achievement for positive progression after year 2
- >80% Achieve BTEC target grade - provided by LFE

These targets will be reviewed by the Academy Staff on a termly basis (where applicable). If these are not being met by an individual or group of apprentices there will be a full performance review for staff, followed by a 1-2-1 with the apprentice/s this concerns. If this becomes an ongoing issue then intervention/s will need to be put in place by the Head of Education and/or the Academy Manager.

5.0 Personal Development and Life Skills Plan

Harrogate Town AFC will be supported by the LFE with providing a thorough Personal Development programme for the apprentices that runs alongside with their timetable, with the main aim to develop Life Skills. The club will follow the LFE model supporting the promotion of 4 key areas:-



Within the 4 key areas each apprentice will experience a number of funded activities, resources, and workshops to educate and develop seven aspects of well-being:-



Life Skills enable people to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Life skills-based education addresses specific content to achieve specific goals. The LFE provides a funded Personal Development programme, which will be available throughout the season. Harrogate Town AFC Head of Education will make a preferred choice from the following three options:

PROVIDE

Access to LFE's Personal Development module, plan and resources, e.g. activities, posters, quizzes, videos. These can be found within LFE's Online Content and Library on EMS. See page 25.

PREPARE

1x Awareness workshop for first and second-year apprentices, delivered by a Personal Development Mentor. The workshop comprises three activities exploring the concept of personal development,



why it is important and how characteristics and skills can be developed. This is delivered once every two seasons. Between delivery years, football clubs are encouraged to take part in a community engagement opportunity.

PLAN

7x Mentoring programme workshops for first-year apprentices delivered by a Personal Development Mentor. Sessions 1-4 will focus on concept and understanding, with 5-7 facilitating specific skill development and the goal setting process. Workshops will be delivered every three weeks and can be agreed on an individual club basis.

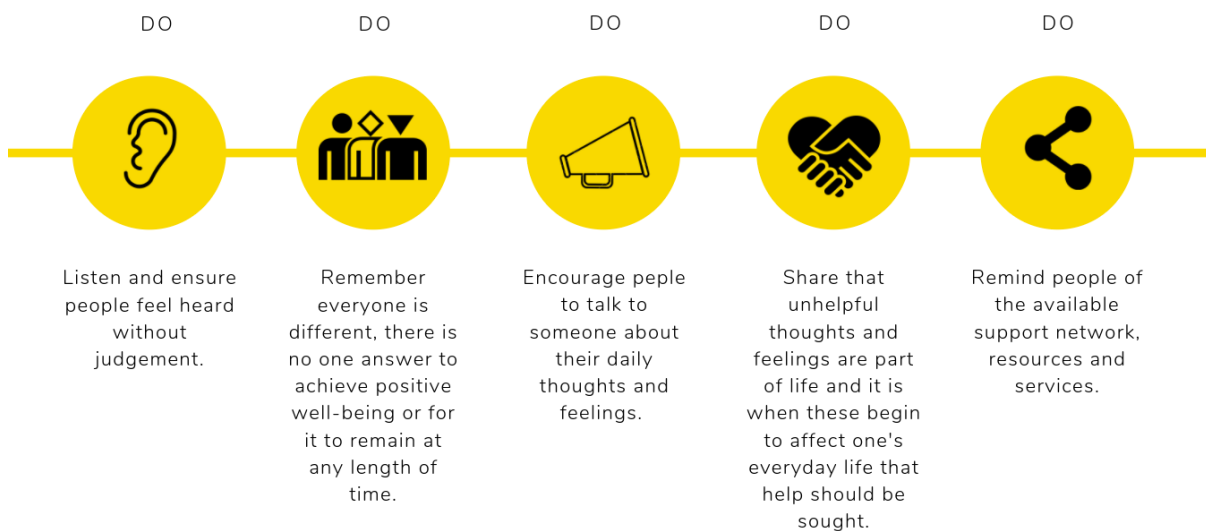
6.0 Mental Health and Wellbeing - Raising Concerns Procedure

The mental and emotional well-being of adults and young people is affected by the challenges of competitive sport, the ongoing pandemic and life in general.

In response, please find this information and support relating to the management of an - Raising Concerns Procedure, including referral and support service signposting. Evidence shows strong possibilities that throughout a player’s journey within an academy, there will be a need for action in support of mental and emotional well-being. The *Harrogate Town AFC Player Welfare - Raising Concerns Procedure 2021/22* Flowchart can be found in *Appendix 1*.

There are a variety of ways and depths as to how this may be presented, and this makes it difficult to know what to expect or how to deal with it.

An - Raising Concerns Procedure will ensure that an academy is prepared to appropriately support those within its care both proactively and reactively. Please find these considerations as guidance for the creation and management of a mental and emotional well-being plan. Harrogate Town AFC will promote the following advice supporting apprentices through their learning journey.



Below you will find the 6 pillars of consideration, information and support the club will use to protect the apprentices involved before, during and after the programme.



There is a full safeguarding - Raising Concerns Procedure in place regarding awareness and reporting procedures for safeguarding - please refer to section 13.0 in *Harrogate Town AFC Academy and Youth Safeguarding Framework*. Below are contact details for HTAFC's Player Welfare Responsibilities:-

- **HTAFC Senior Safeguarding Manager – Dave Riley**
Email: daveriley@harrogatetownafc.com
- **HTAFC Lead Disclosure Officer / Club Welfare Officer / Designated Safeguarding Officer - Richard Jones**
Email: richardjones@harrogatetownafc.com
- **Club Doctor - Dr Guy Stevenson**
- **Designated Safeguarding Officer - Paul Ratcliffe**
Email: safeguarding@westridingfa.com
Phone: **0113 282 1222**



- **North Yorkshire County Council Social Care**
Telephone: 01609 780780
Email: social.care@northyorks.gov.uk.
- **Local Police: Harrogate Main Police Station - Telephone Number: 101 Non-Emergency & 999 Emergency**
- **NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 or help@nspcc.org.uk**
- **ChildLine: 0800 1111 or text phone 0800 400 222) or www.childline.org.uk**

In addition to the above designated safeguarding personnel and statutory bodies, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will also liaise with the following Safeguarding Leads from the Football Club and/or the FA whenever there is a safeguarding concern, plus any other bodies that may need to be informed (such as the EFL).

The below list is a number of support services that are available, and will be used for referral by either the DSO or SSM for the Academy Players at HTAFC regarding their welfare.

Support Services

1. GP Referral or self-referral (via link) to talking therapies - Every Mind Matters - www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters
2. PFA Members' 24hr confidential support, provided by Sporting Chance - 07500000777 and wellbeing@pfa.co.uk, Safety Net - www.thepfa-safetynet.com
3. Shout (24/7 free text service for anyone in crisis) - Text: 85258 or www.giveusashout.org
4. Mind (free advice for mental health problems) - www.mind.org.uk
5. Childline (whatever the worry) - 08000684141 and www.childline.org.uk
6. Samaritans (free emotional support, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide) - 116123 and www.samaritans.org
7. Papyrus (young people struggling with the thoughts of suicide, and anyone worried about a young person) - 08000684141 and www.papyrus-uk.org
8. IUCS (emotional and practical support - prevention, intervention and support for those bereaved by suicide) - www.ifyoucareshare.co.uk



7.0 External Agencies and Healthcare provider plan

In accordance with the Care and Accommodation Arrangements for Academy Player guidelines provided by the EFL, clubs will identify a range of situations in which decisions need to be made, and in which circumstances, they wish to delegate authority to the care of the Academy Player.

HTAFC creates links with local General Practitioner (GP) and dental services to ensure that each Academy Player has access to essential medical services. If the parent/carer provides consent, the club will work with the Academy Player and parent/carer to ensure this is completed and the Academy Player is registered with the relevant practices at the earliest opportunity. (Please see *Appendix 2* for The Parent Consent Form)

The parent/carer will also make the decision who they give permission to administer prescribed and over-the-counter medication for the Academy Player.

In conjunction with the above information in 6.0, the club will also include the Academy Player in all discussions of this matter regarding delegated authority. If over 16, or under and mature, he can consent in his own right. For example, an Academy Player aged 16 (or under that age and is considered by medical staff to have sufficient understanding of the implications of treatment) can consent to their own medical treatment.

As a Category 4 club HTAFC have access to their own GP to tend to footballing duties such as training, fixtures and other urgent matters. Details of HTAFC GP are as follows:-

Dr David Eastwood

Mobile number: 07858220542

dr.david.eastwood@gmail.com

The above contact should not be used for general enquiries.



8.0 Player Transition

It is essential that the club provides a transition for existing players from the academy and other educational programmes affiliated with HTAFC. The transition plan starts as soon as a prospective apprentice is identified and follows all the way through to post 2 years of the apprentice end date.

There is a synchronised, comprehensive and smooth process to ensure the players achieve the best possible outcome, that is relevant and desired for their individual needs of the player - see *Appendix 3 - Harrogate Town AFC Transition Timeline*.

To support this HTAFC:-

1. follows an age-appropriate and documented transition strategy
2. promotes a proactive approach to assist players to find alternative opportunities and career progressions (regardless whether this is in professional football or other education/career opportunities).
3. ensures the member/s of staff are informed at the earliest opportunity if a player (or group of players) are expected to be leaving the Academy, through release or transfer.
4. has a transition plan that identifies key transition needs at each stage, including the emotional practical and how they may vary by age.
5. has an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) followed for every player of the Academy, including a specific medical transition procedure.
6. works in parallel with all league and association welfare department programmes.
7. ensures all administration is completed in a timely manner, such as the provision of information to the league, information and data records of the player to player, parent and new club (if appropriate).

There are different pathways that an Academy Player may take during the SEPA programme. These options are:-

- senior contract
- transfer to another club
- progression onto a different apprenticeship or Further Education (FE) course
- university
- scholarship to the US
- attain a job

The club and more directly the Head of Education and Player Welfare will support the transition to one of the above pathways. Where applicable this will be completed on-course and the Head of Education and Player Welfare will be responsible for the communication between the player, parents, carers and host-families. A thorough transition plan has been implemented utilising internal and external resources (supported and funded by HTAFC, EFL and LFE).



A list of some external support and player access are as follows:-

- Online careers guidance tool (Start)
- USA Guide / HE Guide
- LFE career opportunities page
- Transition Officer - Information and Guidance (IAG)
- LFE Electronic Management System (EMS) resources
- LFE Regional Officer reviews involving IAG
- FirstPoint USA consultancy support

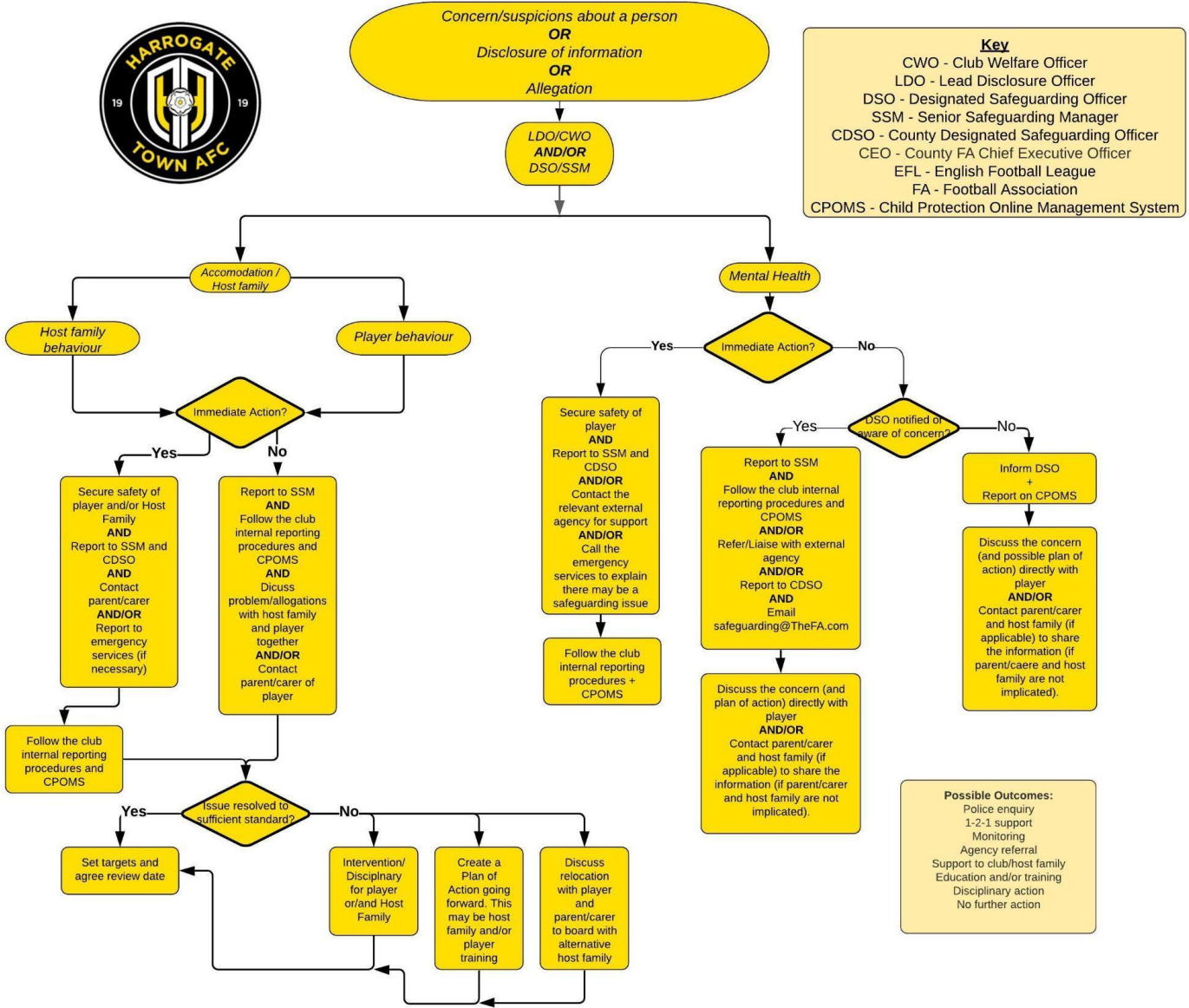
The communication from HTAFC will be continued for at least a further 2 years after the Academy Player has left the club to ensure reliable information and support is given during and after the Academy Player transitions from the SEPA programme.



9.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Harrogate Town AFC Player Welfare - Raising Concerns Procedure

Harrogate Town AFC Player Welfare - Raising Concerns Procedure





Appendix 2 - Parental Consent Form

Parent Consent Form

For permission of Harrogate Town AFC to register your son (as an residential apprentice of the club) at the Local GP surgery

Contact 1 (who permits the registration of their son at the Local GP Surgery)	
Surname	
First Names	
Address	
Date of Birth	
Relation to apprentice	
Telephone Number	

(If more than one person has parental responsibilities to the Apprentice named above please list the additional details below.)

Contact 2 (who permits the registration of their son at the Local GP Surgery)	
Surname	
First Names	
Address (if different to above)	
Date of Birth	
Relation to apprentice	
Telephone Number	

Please continue (overleaf).



Detail of Apprentice (who will be registered at the Local GP Surgery)	
Surname	
First Names	
Permanent Address (if different to above)	
Date of Birth	
Telephone Number	

Everyone aged 16 or more is presumed to be competent to give consent for themselves regarding medical advice, unless the opposite is demonstrated. Young people aged 16 and 17, may therefore sign this Consent Form for themselves, but may wish a parent to countersign (as well as it being good practice).

I confirm that I give permission for Harrogate Town AFC to communicate and support the registration of me (the apprentice) at the Local GP Surgery.			
Apprentice (Name)			
Apprentice (Signature)		Date	

I confirm that I give permission for Harrogate Town AFC to communicate and support the registration of my son (identified above) at the Local GP Surgery.			
Contact 1 (Name)			
Contact 1 (Signature)		Date	
Contact 2 (Name)			
Contact 2 (Signature)		Date	

Appendix 3 - Harrogate Town AFC Transition Timeline



Harrogate Town AFC Transition Timeline

Transition and Careers Support

Education

- Learning and assessment plan
- Functional Skills (if applicable)
- Wellbeing / Progress review point 1
- Personal Development workshop 2 / Life Skills workshop 2
- Transition module and plan

Review

- Student Support Services
- Careers Advisor
- Transition review and signposting
- Supporting document/s workshop
- Personal Development workshop 4 / Life Skills workshop 4

End-Point-Assessment

- Finalise transition plan
- End-Point-Assessment
 - Knowledge Test
 - Practical Observation
 - Interview
- Personal Development workshop 6 / Life Skills workshop 6

1

Stage 1

(Jun/Jul/Aug/Sept/Oct/Nov/Dec)

2

Stage 2

(Jan/Feb/Mar/Apr/May)

3

Stage 3

(Jun/July/Aug/Sept/Oct/Nov/Dec)

4

Stage 4

(Jan/Feb/Mar/Apr/May)

Induction

- Welcome presentation and transition
- Meet the team
- Accomodation (if applicable)
- Enrolment
- Diagnostics
- Erasmus+ trips
- Personal Development workshop 1 / Life Skills Workshop 1

Careers

- Career development workshop
- Support services and careers advisor
- Personal Development workshop 3 / Life Skills workshop 3
- "Ahead of the game" careers events

Preparation

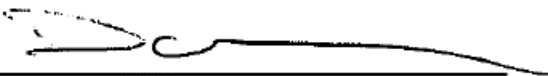
- Final year apprentice
- Educational goal-setting
- UCAS Deadline
- Careers Support
- Personal Development workshop / Life Skills workshop 5

Transition

- Assessment trials
- Professional Contract
- Erasmus+ placement (abroad)
- University
- Career in Sport
- Tracking and mentoring
- Personal Development workshop 7 / Life Skills workshop 7

Sign-off

By signing below I can confirm that I have carefully read, understood and accepted the Harrogate Town AFC – Mental, Emotional and Wellbeing Policy, Document Version 1.2 - to be implemented for us from the date stated below.

X 

01/07/2023

Dave Riley
Board Member (Operations Director)

X 

01/07/2023

Richard Jones
Designated Safeguarding Officer