Director of Governance – Mark Reade

I have been in law enforcement for the past 37 years and more recently within safeguarding. Since I retired as a police officer in 2017, I have been employed as a member of police staff identifying and safeguarding children who are victims of online sexual exploitation.

I became a Safeguarding Officer at Northern FC in 2016 and followed in Alan Heinzman's footsteps as Constituent Body Safeguarding Manager in 2019. This is a challenging but rewarding role and one that I intend to continue whilst performing the role of Director of Governance. I will hand the reigns over at Northern to a someone else.

My intention is to continue the great work carried out by Gary Robson. His support and vision has been inspirational to my desire to apply for the role of Director of Governance. I wish him well and appreciate the continued support he constantly offers me.

Safeguarding is in a good place, the support and dedication offered by my Club Safeguarding Officers is greatly appreciated. I have a great professional relationship with the RFU safeguarding team and one that I intend to continue to safeguard our children.

Cathryn Clark has control of Rugby Safe and CB Medical and her contribution and dedication to County Rugby is invaluable.

I would like to recognise and champion the work done by Kingsley Hyland as Discipline Secretary for Constituent Body. His dedication and professionalism are a credit to the organisation. Going forward I am conscious that there needs to be a close relationship between safeguarding and age grade discipline and I will always have a child centric approach to these matters.

Clare Sharpe has taken the lead on Injured Player Welfare and I am happy to support her good work although going forward I will be seeking a potential lead on this. (Claire has covered this role in the absence of a volunteer lead.)

Neurodiversity and inclusion have become a serious issue over the last 12 months and the formation of the neurodiverse working party has become an invaluable tool in keeping everyone involved in the sport we love. I am passionate in promoting inclusivity and diversity within rugby whether as a 9yr old child with ADHD or an adult with learning difficulties. Rugby Union is a sport for everyone. I strongly believe this section of business needs to be a portfolio of its own and I will strive to make this a success.

I will ensure compliance is undertaken across the portfolio. Working closely with Claire, Dave Challenger and James from Aspire Digital Marketing, I will continue to support the great work done by Claire, Dave and James this season in creating and populating the new NRU website with regulatory and compliance information and regulation forms. The new digital sign off and storage system has changed how we manage regulatory forms this season as we have gone paperless with all forms available on the website. Forms are now completed and submitted digitally, allowing for due diligence checks before being signed off through the digital system. The new way of managing and checking on these forms allows a full audit trail to be available on any given form, either on a two or a three tier sign off (depending on the form), with signed off forms then dropping into club folders which are hosted on the digital platform of the website. Club folders are secure with only certain roles within a club having access to the paperwork given the nature and content of some of the forms as they include player welfare as well as the forms we use for tours, playing up/down etc.

I look forward to working with you all over the next three years and with your invaluable support I am sure we can make Northumberland County Rugby a success.

Mark Reade