



Press Release

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LTA PUBLISHES REPORT FROM INDEPENDENT REVIEW INTO EVENTS AT WREXHAM TENNIS CENTRE

- Independent Review into safeguarding was commissioned by the LTA Board following the conviction and subsequent imprisonment of the former Head Coach at WTC.
- Report concludes that parties failed to properly recognise safeguarding concerns.
- Review Chair Christopher Quinlan QC states he is confident that if a similar situation arose today it would be handled differently and more effectively by the LTA safeguarding team.

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) has today published a report following a wide-ranging Independent Review led by Christopher Quinlan QC and administered by Sport Resolutions (UK) into events at Wrexham Tennis Centre (WTC) between 2012 and 2017. The Review was commissioned by the LTA Board in December 2017, following the conviction and subsequent imprisonment of the former Head Coach at WTC in July 2017.

The Review set out to learn from the facts surrounding the events: to ensure that any failings at the relevant time are brought to light and that lessons are learned, and similar failings are not repeated in the future. The Review was also tasked with providing recommendations to the LTA and, where appropriate, Tennis Wales and WTC, to improve and strengthen safeguarding arrangements in tennis.

In summary the report concludes that WTC failed properly to address a number of historic complaints made about the behaviour of coaches at the Centre, including the former Head Coach. The WTC internal investigation carried out in 2012 was found to be insufficient and serious concerns raised by parents and coaches were not adequately addressed at the time or subsequently. Tennis Wales and the LTA are both found to have failed properly to recognise the safeguarding concerns that should have been evident and to have acted inadequately in failing to initiate proper proceedings against the Head Coach prior to his arrest in 2017.

The LTA is grateful to Christopher Quinlan QC and the expert Review Panel for carrying out the Independent Review and for producing their comprehensive report and recommendations.

Scott Lloyd, CEO at the LTA said:

"Everyone should be able to enjoy tennis in a safe and inclusive environment and as the governing body of tennis we have a responsibility to keep children and vulnerable adults safe from harm. The LTA is committed to having the best safeguarding procedures possible at every level of the game, but in this case the actions taken were clearly not enough. I am concerned that opportunities to act were missed and we apologise sincerely to all those affected regarding this case.

"Over the last two years, the LTA has undertaken a root and branch review of safeguarding in tennis, which included commissioning this Independent Review. As a result we have launched a new safeguarding strategy, led by newly recruited safeguarding experts. The Review states that many positive changes have already been made by the LTA, but we recognise there is more to be done. We will ensure that the LTA, together with Tennis Wales and Wrexham Tennis Centre takes all necessary action required to implement the review recommendations in full. The LTA will redouble our efforts to raise safeguarding standards in tennis and ensure that clubs nationwide set and uphold the highest standards possible in this area."

Simon Johnson, CEO, Tennis Wales said:

"We welcome the findings in this Review and accept the recommendations. Strong safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures benefit everyone involved in our sport. We will work in partnership with tennis venues, coaches, children, their parents, carers and the LTA and other agencies in promoting and protecting the welfare of children and adults at risk, to make sure we collectively do everything we can to prevent any future failings."

Jon Ainge, Wrexham Tennis Club Trustee said:

"We acknowledge that Wrexham Tennis Centre missed opportunities to act and we are sincerely sorry for that. We recognise that our internal investigations were not sufficiently comprehensive, and later complaints were subsequently not dealt with adequately. We accept that we could and should have done more to prioritise safeguarding and we want to reassure our members and the wider community that lessons have been learnt and new safeguarding processes are now in place. We will continue to work closely with the LTA and Tennis Wales to implement all the recommendations."

The full report can be read here <https://www.lta.org.uk/globalassets/about-lta/safeguarding/independent-review-report.pdf>, including the terms of reference.

Specialised support and assistance for any children who were coached at Wrexham Tennis Centre between 2012 and 2017 has been available throughout the review process and will continue. Anyone who wishes to make use of this support is urged to contact the LTA Safeguarding Team.

The LTA had begun work to update and improve its safeguarding strategy prior to February 2017 when the police investigation into the Wrexham case began. While this Review has been ongoing, the LTA has acted to:

- Employ a new team of safeguarding experts led by a former member of the Met Police.
- Devise a sports industry-leading safeguarding strategy, with new policies and processes.
- Recruit Regional Safeguarding Officers and implementing a national audit process and a reporting standards document which sets clear direction for the reporting of cases, investigatory standards and information sharing protocols.
- Deliver the new strategy on the ground with registered clubs, enforcing higher safeguarding standards nationwide. Clubs must now all appoint a trained safeguarding officer and adhere to new safeguarding policies as a prerequisite to their annual registration with the LTA.

We can reassure those affected that lessons have been learnt from this case. The Independent Review Panel recognises that following the changes already implemented by the LTA, they are

confident that if a similar situation arose today it would be handled differently and more effectively by the LTA Safeguarding Team. The Review notes that new LTA processes, including a new case management system, mean the LTA is already much better placed to deal with such cases.

The LTA's safeguarding system is audited by the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) every year, and in each of the last three years we have received the green light standard. We continue to work closely with the CPSU to make sure we have best in class procedures in place.

The LTA has also set out a clear vision for safeguarding - by 2020, we are determined to put tennis at the forefront of safeguarding in sport. Our safeguarding strategy is built on four key pillars:

1. Places to Play: to ensure that tennis venues are safe spaces to play our sport, with safeguarding at the heart of what tennis venues do.
2. People: to ensure coaching and officiating is safe by implementing the highest standards for our Accreditation scheme, and mandating this at our registered venues, and making it clearer to players and parents what safe coaching looks like so that safe choices can be made.
3. Awareness: to improve safeguarding awareness across our sport to prevent issues from occurring, and to ensure concerns are identified quickly and the correct action is taken.
4. Case Management: best in class processes to robustly manage incidents and discipline those who seek to bring harm to our sport

Further information about the LTA safeguarding procedures can be found here:
www.lta.org.uk/safeguarding

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Notes for editors:

Christopher Quinlan QC is a Barrister, Recorder and a member of the Sport Resolutions Panel of Arbitrators. In June 2016, Christopher was appointed to lead a review of the structure, composition and operation of the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) Disciplinary Panel, Appeal Board and Licensing Committee. Christopher is World Rugby's Judicial Panel Chairman, the most senior judicial role within the sport. Amongst other things, Christopher is responsible for the worldwide appointment and management of World Rugby's Judicial Committees, including the Rugby World Cup, for which he has served as a judicial officer at the last three tournaments. Christopher sits on and chairs Football Association Appeal Boards and is a Specialist Member of the FA Judicial Panel. He is a legal member of both the National Anti-Doping Panel (NADP) and National Safeguarding Panel (NSP).

Sport Resolutions (UK) is an independent, not-for-profit, dispute resolution service for sport based in the United Kingdom, established by the main stakeholder groups in sport. It provides sport specific arbitration and mediation services and operates the National Anti-Doping Panel (NADP) and National Safeguarding Panel (NSP).

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is the National Governing Body for tennis in Great Britain, responsible for developing and promoting the sport. The LTA's vision is "Tennis Opened Up" and the mission for all those working to deliver the vision is to make tennis relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable. It does this by working with a broad range of partners and over 25,000 volunteers, to grow the game in communities, clubs and schools. The LTA represents the interests of over 590,000 British Tennis Members, men and women, girls and boys across the country, playing on more than 23,000 courts. The LTA runs and supports a network of 11,500 approved tournaments for players of all ages, the corner-stones of which are the premier grass court events leading up to Wimbledon: the Nature Valley Open (at Nottingham), the Nature Valley Classic (at Birmingham), the Fever-Tree Championships (at Queen's Club-London) and the Nature Valley International (at Eastbourne). The LTA works with many delivery partners to grow the sport across the country. For further information about the LTA and British Tennis, visit www.lta.org.uk or follow us on Twitter @BritishTennis.

Tennis Wales is the National Governing Body for tennis in Wales. Our mission is to grow the game of tennis in Wales, and in partnership with the LTA we have a vision of "Tennis Opened Up", to make tennis relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable for everyone. We support the growth of tennis throughout Wales with key partners through clubs, education and communities and through courses for potential new tennis leaders, teachers, competition coordinators, community tennis activators, and professional tennis coaches. We play an important role in *supporting talented players to reach their full potential, and to compete at national and international levels. For further information about Tennis Wales visit www.lta.org.uk/in-your-area/wales or follow us on Twitter @TennisWales.*