

Referee Advisory Group

Meeting held on Thursday 23 May 2024
At Birmingham County FA Offices (Boardroom)

Present:

Nicola Belcher (NB), Andrew Cartwright (AC), Scott Chalkley (SC), Ashley Clarke (AshC), Barry Cooke (BC), Keiran Forrest (KF), Yuen Fai Lam (YL), Gerry Larkin (GL), Katrina Pritchard (KP), Lewis Smith (LS), Adam Siniarski (AS).

1. Notice of Meeting

KF opened the meeting and explained and introduced staff present and also Luke Bowles (LB) and Sarah Willis (SW) who would be joining the meeting via Teams later.

2. BCFA Overview and Rationale of RCG Group

KF explained the role and the reason for the group.

3. Election of RCG Chairperson

LB explained the reason behind the need for a Chairperson for future meetings. (KF) will chair today's meeting. The Chairperson Role was distributed to the attendees. Luke explained that Mike Penn (MP) is one of the candidates for the role of Chair, though he was unable to attend tonight. AS, SC and AshC put their names forward for nomination.

The votes were counted, and the result was as follows;

AS – 2
SC – 2
AshC – 2
MP – 3

Mike Penn is voted in as Chairperson.

4. Safeguarding Briefing

SW gave the Safeguarding Briefing for the group. She introduced the members of staff within the Safeguarding team. She then also explained the aspects of Safeguarding that the group need to be aware of. She requested that all attendees sign the Code of Conduct form and familiarise themselves with a number of standards and policies. She advised on the importance of reporting concerns.

Action: KF to scan code of conducts and send to SW and save on OneDrive.

5. Conflict of Interests

Keiran requested that all attendees complete the Conflict of Interest form.

Link: <https://forms.office.com/e/AF3f1Gr95s>

Action: KF to review and identify any conflict of interests.

6. 2021-2024 Refereeing Strategy Update

KF gave a presentation as a review of Refereeing - Recruitment, retention, conversion and progression. He explained that it is a 3-year strategy, and due to the size of our County, the targets we are set are high. He went through each target and how we had done against them. The Diversity of our referee workforce and how we are trying to address this was explained.

7. 2024-2027 Strategy Cycle

LB advised the group on the new strategy for the Referee department. The funding model has changed, which dictates on what we will need to achieve. LB explained how the funding is broken down between Counties across the country.

8. Referee Progression Pathway

KF explained the different pathways and the current requirements for each level. Members of the group asked questions during this, to gain further knowledge. KF showed the group RefSec for how match officials record their games.

A number of comments were raised regarding the number of observers being appointed, and the issues with match officials not getting sufficient observations.

The group were in agreement that splitting the promotion levels between different observers would benefit of further discussion and for us to canvas the views of current referees and observers.

Action: KF+NB to select a sample of RPP candidates and observers for feedback ahead of next meeting.

9. Mentoring

KF advised the group that as a department, we struggle to match the needs of our referees who would benefit from mentoring, due to the numbers involved, and asked for suggestions as to how this could be managed.

Support from local RA's was suggested, also to increase the number of Mentors who are prepared to go out and support referees. The training courses should be used to promote RA attendance. Referee Mentors would need to receive formal training to ensure compliance for safeguarding etc. Some leagues appoint their mentors from their own referee workforce to visit newly qualified match officials.

10. Long Service Awards

To be discussed at the next meeting due to time restrictions.

11. Any Raised Business

Point raised by AS will be discussed at the next meeting.

12. Any Other Business

None.

13. Date of Next Meeting

TBC via email to be distributed by KF.