

# RFU SAFEGUARDING POLICY

## ADULTS AT RISK IN RUGBY UNION

Guidance and Procedures



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# Policy statement

1.1 - The Rugby Football Union (RFU) is the national governing body for rugby union in England. The RFU is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for everyone to play and enjoy rugby union. We accept our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all adults involved in the game, particularly those deemed to be at risk.

1.2 - The RFU Safeguarding Adults at Risk in Rugby Union Policy and Procedures (this Policy) applies to all individuals involved in rugby union, whether employees or volunteers. Adults are people over the age of eighteen years of age.

# Principles

2 - The guidance given in the Policy is based on the following principles:

- All adults, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or transgender status have the right to be protected from abuse and poor practice and to play rugby union in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- The RFU will seek to ensure that the sport is inclusive and make reasonable adjustments for any ability, disability or impairment, and also commit to continuous development, monitoring and review.
- The rights, dignity and worth of all adults will always be respected.
- The RFU recognises that ability and disability can change over time, such that some adults may be additionally vulnerable to abuse, for example those who have a dependency on others or have different communication needs.
- The RFU recognises that disabled adults may or may not identify themselves or be identified as an adult 'at risk'.
- Everyone involved in rugby union has a shared responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all adults and should act appropriately and report concerns whether these concerns arise within rugby union (e.g inappropriate behaviour of a coach) or outside (e.g in the wider community).
- All allegations will be taken seriously and responded to quickly, in line with this Policy.
- All Constituent Bodies of the RFU and affiliated clubs are asked to appoint an appropriate named person to ensure that best practice is promoted and that implementation of this Policy is supported at each level of the sport.
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# Guidance and legislation

3.1 - The practices and procedures within this Policy are based on the principles contained within UK and international legislation and current Government Guidance. It has been developed to complement the Safeguarding Adults Boards policy & procedures, and take the following into consideration:

- Data Protection Acts 1994 and 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Care Act 2014
- No Secrets Guidance 2000
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2014

# Definitions

4.1 - To assist working through and understanding this Policy a number of key definitions need to be explained:

4.2 - An adult at risk has previously been referred to as a vulnerable adult; this is now considered to be inappropriate terminology. The adults referred to in this document are adults at risk using the definition from the Safeguarding Adults in Sport Steering Group (2013):

*‘When we are speaking about adults at risk we are referring to those who have health or social care needs (irrespective of whether or not those needs are being met by social services) and who are unable to safeguard themselves as a result. While we recognise that some people will be vulnerable due to their learning disability or mental health needs, there are also those adults who are at risk due to a specific circumstance they may find themselves in, for example: domestic abuse; forced marriage; and sexual or commercial exploitation (this is not an exhaustive list).’*

4.3 - Abuse is a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by another person or persons. See section 5 for further explanations.

4.4 - At risk is a term meaning that someone may be more vulnerable to abuse than someone else. For example, an adult with a learning disability may well be more at risk of financial abuse as they may struggle with managing their finances, this could leave them at risk from an unscrupulous person.

4.5 - Capacity refers to the ability to make a decision at a particular time, for example when under considerable stress. The starting assumption must always be that a person has the capacity to make a decision, unless it can be established that they lack capacity.

# Types of abuse

5.1 - **Neglect** – including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and hearing.

5.2 - **Sexual Abuse** – this includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult at risk has not consented or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.

5.3 - **Physical Abuse** – includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions.

5.4 - **Emotional Abuse / Psychological** – this includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

5.5 - **Financial Abuse** – including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

5.6 - **Institutional Abuse** – this is abuse which centres around routines and schedules which have been designed for the benefit of the institution and not the individual.

5.7 - **Discrimination** – discrimination is abuse which centres on a difference or perceived difference particularly with respect to race, gender or disability or any of the Protected Characteristics of the Equality Act 2010. Research tells us that bullying of vulnerable groups can be an issue in sport.

5.8 - **Exploitation** – either opportunistically or premeditated, unfairly manipulating someone for profit or personal gain.

# Signs and indicators of abuse

6.1 - Abuse can take place in any context and by all manner of perpetrator. There are many signs and indicators that may suggest someone is being abused, these include but are not limited to:

- Unexplained bruises or injuries – or lack of medical attention when an injury is present
- Person has belongings or money going missing
- Person is not attending / no longer enjoying their rugby sessions
- Someone losing or gaining weight / an unkempt appearance
- A change in the behaviour or confidence of a person
- They may self-harm
- They may have a fear of a particular group or individual
- They may tell you / another person they are being abused – ie a disclosure



# What to do if you have a concern or someone raises concerns with you

7.1 - You may become aware that abuse or poor practice is taking place, suspect abuse or poor practice may be occurring, or be told about something that may be abuse or poor practice and you must report this.

7.2 - It is recognised that it is not always easy to identify the best person to share your concerns with, therefore the following may help:

- Every club should have an appropriate named person and you should report the matter to them in the first instance.
- If you are concerned someone is in immediate danger please contact the police.
- Contact the RFU Safeguarding Team for further advice and support.

7.3 - The RFU has an Initial Concern/Issue Reporting Form which may be used to record the concern. This should be completed accordingly and sent to the RFU Safeguarding Team to consider. They will provide support and guidance for anyone reporting this type of information.

7.4 - It is important when considering your concern that you also consider the needs and wishes of the person at risk, taking into account the nature of the issue or concern.

# Roles and responsibilities of those within rugby union

8 - The RFU will take seriously all allegations and concerns raised. The information provided will be referred to the Local Safeguarding Adults Board. The LSAB is responsible for ensuring the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures are effective and prevent adults from experiencing significant harm.

# Safer recruitment of people working with adults and adults at risk

9.1 - Those involved with adults at risk must ensure that appropriate recruitment procedures are followed when recruiting new volunteers and employees. It is always useful to have full and clear job descriptions and to carry out an interview, even when filling a volunteer position. In general, coaches working with adults will not be required or eligible for a DBS check as they are not in Regulated Activity.

9.2 - If a coach is working with adults at risk they may be in Regulated Activity as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 they will need a DBS disclosure checking the Adults barred lists.

9.3 - Regulated Activity with adults at risk includes providing health care, personal care, social work and assistance with people's personal affairs, whether household or financial, and driving.

# Whistle blowing

10.1 - The RFU is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. In line with that commitment, all members are encouraged to come forward and voice any concerns. It is recognised that certain cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis

10.2 - All suspicions and allegations of abuse or poor practice must be taken seriously, appropriately reported and managed accordingly. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused, particularly in cases where any form of abuse or poor practice is suspected or where there is loyalty, sometimes misplaced, to a colleague or someone who is known to you. Where an individual feels unable to report concerns internally they should contact the police, adult social care or any of the additional contacts given at the end of this document.

10.3 - Individuals may be reluctant to express concerns because they fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it is important to understand these feelings but not to allow them to interfere with the need to ensure that concerns are reported appropriately. Individuals reporting concerns will be supported by the RFU.

10.4 - All information received will be treated in confidence and only shared on a need to know basis with those individuals who will be able to manage the situation. On occasion it may be necessary to seek advice, or inform the statutory agencies e.g. the Police or Local Authority Adult Services.

# Further information

**Policies, procedures and supporting information relating to this Policy are available on the England Rugby website:**

**[www.englandrugby.com/governance/safeguarding](http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/safeguarding)**

**The RFU Safeguarding team's contact details are:**

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Read this policy in conjunction with the following documents:

RFU Core Values

RFU Equity Policy

RFU Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance (Children)

RFU Regulations