



Newcastle Rugby Limited & Newcastle Rugby Foundation

## **Child Protection Safeguarding Procedures 2025/2026**

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## 1. BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Newcastle Rugby Limited, including Newcastle Falcon's Academy and Newcastle Rugby Foundation is committed to being a place where everyone is safe, heard, valued and able to thrive. We will constantly strive to develop excellence in Safeguarding and Welfare through enhanced awareness and continuous learning.

This means the Club considers Safeguarding to be everyone's responsibility and therefore expects all adults engaging with children and/or adults at risk to proactively work to ensure these environments are safe and enjoyable. The club considers this responsibility to amount to a duty of care.

Our aim is to create a culture where everyone feels confident to safely welcome people from every background and raise legitimate concerns without prejudice to their own position. All our staff and volunteers are in positions of trust and we expect the highest standards of professional behaviour both on and off the pitch. There will be times when our staff need to exercise discretion and take a common-sense approach.

This guidance is designed to provide practical information on several different topics which may be useful and will help to create a safe, friendly and welcoming environment for all. Further guidance is available from a variety of sources detailed at the end of this document. If in doubt, please speak to your DSL or deputy.

There may be circumstances where staff or volunteers need to deviate from the below guidance. If this is a planned activity, then a risk assessment must be documented and signed off beforehand by the DSL or deputy in their absence.

**Permissions and emergency contact details** – Ensure that you have the permission and emergency contact details of those responsible for the participants.

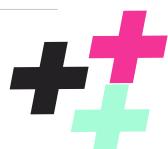
**Medical responsibilities** – Ensure you have the medical information of any person left within your care. Participants should always administer their own regulated medication unless a specific request has been sanctioned by the DSL.

**Injuries** – Ensure you have appropriate first aid expertise or cover via the considerations made in your risk assessment. Do not touch any patient unless without permission unless in a medical emergency.

**Appropriate relationships and language** – An adult in a position of trust must not enter any intimate relationship with a child in their care. Sexual intercourse, sexual activity or inappropriate touching with a child under the age of 16 years is a criminal offence. Please see definitions of children and vulnerable adults applicable to this policy. This includes sending a showing children inappropriate or sexually provocative messages or images by text or any electronic media. Making sexually explicit comments to children is unacceptable, as is the use of obscene or foul language.

**Indecent Images of Children (IIOC)** – Taking, making, sharing and possessing indecent images and pseudo-photographs of children under 18 is illegal, this is regardless of the relationship between the parties even if they are in a consensual relationship. A pseudo-photograph is an image made by computer-graphics or otherwise which appears to be a photograph. This can include:

- Photos
- Videos



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- Tracings and derivatives of a photograph
- Data that can be converted into a photograph.

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**Social media** – Staff and volunteers should also consider their actions on social media which also form a part of the high standards of personal behaviour we expect, this includes posting or commenting on any issues considered to be abusive, racist, homophobic, misogynistic, transphobic or bullying.

**Changing rooms** – Adults and children should never use the same changing facilities.

There may be occasions when a young person 17 years (in line with GB guidelines) are allowed to play with the first team and it may be appropriate for them to share changing facilities. However, this should only be allowed with the permission of the child's parent/guardian.

Adults must only enter changing rooms of children when necessary due to poor behaviour, injury or illness. Unless in an extreme emergency, adults should never enter a changing room without warning and should always be accompanied by another adult.

Separate facilities for mixed gender activities are always necessary. A child or vulnerable adult should never be pressured into using the changing and/or shower facilities and should be allowed to change at home. However, it is noted that the tunnel and medical room are shared facilities and players are reminded to always dress appropriately.

When a disability requires support from a parent/carer, the person concerned, and their parent/carer should be consulted and a risk assessment documented. Newcastle Rugby manages the changing facilities and arranges for them to be supervised by two DBS checked adults of the appropriate gender for the players using the facilities.

**Communication with participants** – Messages relating to children sent via telephone, emails, texts, WhatsApp and social media should be through their parents/guardians. However, where appropriate young people (14+) may be contacted by staff directly with prior agreement from the parent.

**Risk assessments** – All organised activities should have an appropriate up to date risk assessment which has been approved by the DSL/DSO.

**Ratios** – Staff should understand the appropriate adult to participant ratio for each activity. This should take into consideration the type of activity, age, location and any additional needs.

**Residential camps** – Any residential camp/overnight stays should be subject to a specific risk assessment ahead of the event and signed off by the DSL.

**Partner responsibilities** – When working with partners, ensure you are clear on the service level agreements and where the responsibilities lie. For example, with school groups at least one member of the school staff should be always present during curriculum sessions and are responsible for signing participants in and out of sessions. Out of curriculum sessions a member of school staff should always be on the premises and contactable.

**Contact training** – Teach safe contact skills, bearing in mind the specific circumstances.

The activity should always be conducted in an open environment and in the presence of another adult. Adults and children should not play contact versions of the sport together



including training games or contact drills, unless the GB rules apply. They may play either tag or touch rugby together if these games are managed and organised appropriately.

**Physical handling by a coach** – Must only be used for safety reasons or where there is no other way of coaching the technique. The reasons for physical contact should be explained wherever practicable so that the children and their parents are comfortable with this approach. In a situation where individuals must consider whether to intervene to prevent a child being injured, injuring themselves or others, physical intervention should always be avoided or kept to an absolute minimum. In these situations, it is imperative to:

- Consider your own safety
- Give verbal instructions first
- Use the minimum reasonable force and only when necessary to resolve the incident
- Do not strike blows, act with unnecessary force or retaliate. Avoid contact with intimate parts of the body, head and neck
- Stay in control of your actions

Report the incident to the DSL/DSO

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For further guidance please see RFU (Regulation 15) and RFL age grade regulations.

**Transportation** – Where possible transportation of participants should be the responsibility of the individual or organisation. Any sharing of travel arrangements should be made directly by parents/carers/organisations at their own discretion. Where required and agreed by the DSL/DSO a coach may be hired from a reputable commercial coach company.

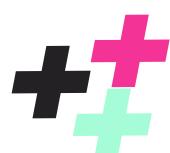
If attending a Foundation event/camp, parental/school consent must be sought beforehand and the adults' details shared. No child should be in a staff member/volunteers vehicle alone, unless in extenuating circumstances (such as a medical emergency) In this scenario the child should sit in the back of the car and be consulted to ensure they are happy with this arrangement. Parent/carers should be informed of this at the earliest opportunity.

**Insurance** – Staff should speak to their line manager/DSL regarding appropriate car insurance to carry participants if needed.

**Late collection** – If children are not collected, staff should attempt to contact the parents and wait with the child (preferably with another adult present) If there is an extended delay, advice should be sought from the DSL/DSO. Staff should never depart the location until the safe collection of all children.

**Photographic images** – Permission from parents/schools/clubs must be sought before events where photographs are being taken. Sharing of images on club websites and social media is permitted only following this approval. Any child who is not permitted in photography should not be excluded in any way because of this.

**Equality, diversity and inclusion** – All staff and volunteers should treat everyone with dignity and respect regardless of their background and protected characteristics such as sex, age, disability, gender reassignment, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation or religion. Risk assessments that specifically review and allow for adjustments to be made to enable the safe and enjoyable participation on specific groups should be undertaken.



**Additional information and advice, including information around specific regulations, can be found in the RFU Safeguarding toolkit accessible here:**

<https://www.englandrugby.com//dxdam/47/47825ee0-5ca7-449f-baad401e2ef78ae7/safeguardingtoolkit.pdf>

## **2. SAFER RECRUITMENT AND STAFF TRAINING**

All staff who have a role working or coming into contact with children or vulnerable adults must have undergone an appropriate RFL/RFU processed criminal history check (currently referred to as DBS) in accordance with current government legislation and RFU/RFL regulations. This clearance must be received prior to working with children without supervision and renewed at least every three years. In addition, two satisfactory references will be obtained for all staff prior to an offer of employment.

All staff who have a role working closely with children and/or vulnerable adults in Rugby Union must have the following as a bare minimum.

- An appropriate licence, certification and/or NGB qualification within their sports delivery field prior to starting employment.
- Premiership Rugby working in community sport level 2 or 3 (as deemed appropriate by the Safeguarding manager) training.
- Introduction to Safeguarding.
- Play it Safe training.
- Appointed person first aid course.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion training.

All staff who have a role working closely with children and/or vulnerable adults in Rugby league must have the following as a bare minimum:

- An appropriate licence, certification and/or NGB qualification within their sports delivery field prior to starting employment.
- Safeguarding and child protection training.
- Appointed person first aid course.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion training.

In addition, staff are given training arranged by the clubs health and safety manager on how to write, review and implement risk assessments. This is a part of a wider CPD programme implemented by the organisations.

## **3. REPORTING AND RECORDING**

Newcastle Rugby Ltd, including Falcons Academy and Newcastle Ruby Foundation use an online system named Tootoot which allows staff to report and record all Safeguarding and



some injury concerns. The report should be submitted no later than 48 hours after the event.

If the event is deemed serious, a phone call should be made to the DSL/DSO at the time of the event.

The report is reviewed by the DSL/DSO who will make a judgement what, if any further action needs to be taken and if the information should be shared with any other partners. Cases should not be left open without comment/finalisation for 6 weeks. Reports are reviewed quarterly for quality assurance purposes and to identify any patterns to inform learning or additional training needs.

The DSL reports to Club Board of Directors and the Board of Trustees on Safeguarding matters (as a minimum) twice per year.

#### **4. WHISTLEBLOWING**

The Whistleblowing policy and associated procedure is designed to provide a framework within which to deal with cases of whistleblowing in order:

- To encourage staff to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate and that their confidentiality will be respected.
- To provide staff with guidance as to how to raise those concerns.
- To reassure staff that they should be able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals or victimisation, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

**For more detail refer to schedule 6**

**Protect (independent whistleblowing charity)**

Helpline: 02031172520

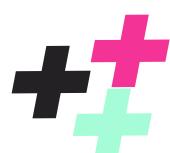
Email: [whistle@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:whistle@pcaw.co.uk)

Website: [www.pcau.co.uk](http://www.pcau.co.uk)

Any concerns from any member of the public should be directed to:

[speakup@newcastle-falcons.co.uk](mailto:speakup@newcastle-falcons.co.uk)

#### **5. THE DATA PROTECTION ACT**



The Data Protection Act (1998) is a Parliamentary act that was passed to protect people's personal information and the GDPR gives strict guidance as to how the data of individuals should be processed and handled by organisations throughout Europe. It is important to remember there can also be significant consequences to sharing information inappropriately.

That said, staff should also remember that sharing information is essential in enabling early intervention and preventative work within Safeguarding and there can also be significant consequences to not sharing information appropriately.

To help with this, staff should remember that the Data Protection Act (1998/2018) and the GDPR rules are not necessarily barriers to sharing information but instead provide a framework to ensure that personal information is not misused.

Staff must be vigilant when it comes to data processing and where they feel safeguarding related information should be shared externally, they should use their professional judgement to decide when they should seek further advice. Such advice can be discussed directly with the DSL.

**To help staff in their approach to data protection, there are seven golden rules which should be followed:**

- a) Remember that the DPA is not a barrier to sharing information.
- b) Be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, could be shared and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
- c) Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
- d) Share with consent where appropriate and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent, if, in your professional judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
- e) Always consider safety and wellbeing and base your information sharing decisions on considerations by their actions.
- f) Ensure the information shared is necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure. This means, ensure the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up to date, is shared in a timely fashion and shared securely.
- g) Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with who and for what purpose.

## **6. YOUR SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITES IN 4 STEPS**

Newcastle Rugby Ltd, including Falcons Academy and Newcastle Rugby Foundation are committed to doing the utmost to Safeguard all children and vulnerable adults from harm and there may be occasions when concerns are raised or suspected and intervention is necessary.



Child abuse and neglect are generic terms encompassing all ill treatment of children or young people, as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the child or young persons health or development.

Children or young people may be abused or suffer neglect through the infliction of harm, or through the failure to act and prevent harm. Harm may occur anywhere and can be reported to the DSL whether it has taken place within club activity or outside the club.

**There are complex scenarios with the potential for harm, these include:**

- Children or vulnerable adults playing within or spectating at a variety of activities at the club.
- Children may be at risk of harm or abuse from other children or adults who may be involved in the Club activity or elsewhere within their own network/communities.
- Children may be at risk of abuse and neglect from staff or volunteers both inside and outside of club activities.
- Harm may be deliberate or result from not understanding the child's needs or feelings.
- Children may be at risk of harming others in Club activities either by deliberate behaviours or by failing to understand their responsibilities to others.
- On these occasions the child may need help and support to manage their behaviour in a suitable way or may need to have certain responsibilities removed from them. It may be necessary to have additional safeguarding measures or risk assessments put in place to protect others.
- Coaches/parent/teachers/guardians may also risk harming children or young people through failing to highlight information about or provide support for children who have additional or different support needs to those of their peers when participating.

## **YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN 4 STEPS**

All members of staff employed by the Club must acknowledge the club has a safeguarding responsibility towards protecting all children it engages with. This responsibility can be summarised by the following 4 step procedure.

**RECOGNISE**

**RESPOND**

**RECORD**

**REFER**

### **RECOGNISE**

Types, signs and symptoms of abuse.



Abusive behaviour can be assessed on a scale from poor practice to bad practice to abuse. Abuse cannot be easily measured as an action alone. Its severity will partly be defined by the:

- Vulnerability of the victim and the power differential.
- Nature and extent of the abuse.
- Supportive factors that the child has.
- The length of time it has been occurring.
- The impact on the individual or group.
- Risk of it being repeated or becoming increasingly serious.

At one end of the scale, there may be obvious signs and symptoms of abuse, but at the opposite end, the indicators may be very difficult to detect. Combinations of factors which individually might not give cause for concern could be much more worrying when considered together. The abuse may be committed by one individual against another or be institutional in that the whole organisation colludes in abusive practices either through ignorance or choice.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) defines the four main forms of abuse as follows:

### **Physical Abuse**

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

### **Emotional Abuse**

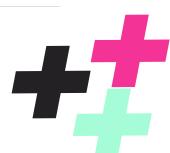
The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or making fun of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber-bullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, regardless of whether the child is aware of what is happening.



The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape including vaginal, anal or oral) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching inside/outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

## **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **Other forms of abuse**

### **Bullying**

The governments guidance document titled "Preventing and Tackling bullying" defines bullying as:

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is in care, adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; adults in a position of trust have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Low level disruption and the use of offensive language can have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and is not acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

Should you have any concern that bullying is occurring you should contact the DSL/DSO.



### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. It happens when a child or young person is coerced, manipulated or deceived into sexual activity in exchange for things that they may need or want like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they're in a loving and consensual relationship so the sexual activity may appear consensual. This is called grooming and is a type of abuse. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they're being abused. CSE does not always involve physical contact and can also occur through the use of technology.

Children and young people can be trafficked into or within the UK for sexual exploitation. They're moved around the country and abused by being forced to take part in sexual activities, often with more than one person. Young people in gangs can also be sexually exploited.

Sometimes abusers use violence and intimidation to frighten or force a child or young person, making them feel as if they've no choice. They may lend them large sums of money they know can't be repaid or use financial abuse or blackmail to control them.

Anybody can be a perpetrator of CSE, no matter their age, gender or race. The relationship could be framed or viewed as friendship, someone to look up to or romantic. Children and young people who are exploited may also be made to 'find' or coerce others to join groups.

Like all forms of child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- Can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex.  
Can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual.  
Can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity.
- Can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both.
- Can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.
- May occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (through others copying videos or images they have created and posting on social media, for example).
- Can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and
- Is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can



also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

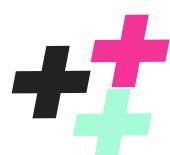
## Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child criminal exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines and includes, for instance, children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft. However, many of the characteristics of county lines exploitation will be present in other forms of child criminal exploitation. Likewise, victims of county lines may also experience other overlapping forms of exploitation, such as sexual, in addition to criminal

County lines exploitation can be perpetrated by individuals or groups of any gender or nationality and can appear unsophisticated or organised. It is typified by some form of power imbalance, which perpetrators use to force, coerce, groom and/or entice victims into county lines activity. They can employ several methods to do so, such as:

- offering an exchange – carrying drugs in return for something, such as money, clothes, drugs, status, protection or perceived friendship, a sense of belonging or identity, or affection.
- physical violence or threats of violence – used to intimidate and punish victims and their families and can involve weapons, including knives and firearms.
- abduction or kidnapping – sometimes victims are forcibly moved and held in a location away from home.
- emotional abuse or psychological coercive control – by manipulating, threatening, controlling or monitoring the movements of the victim.
- sexual abuse and exploitation – this can be experienced by all genders.
- blackmail – by forcing victims to commit a crime so they can hold it over them and threaten to report it if they do not comply.
- the use of social media, messaging apps, gaming sites and other online platforms – including marketplace websites and smart TVs to target and communicate with victims. These modes are used by exploiters to falsely build online trusted relationships, or to post fraudulent job adverts which seem legitimate, or to cyberstalk victims in order to groom, entrap and coerce them into county lines activity.
- “cuckooing” (also known as “forced home invasion”) – a tactic used by criminals, typically drug dealers, to take over the homes of vulnerable individuals, such as care leavers or those with addiction, physical or mental health issues, and use the property as a base for criminal activity. This is a common characteristic of the county lines business model and can occur in a range of settings such as rental and private properties, student accommodation, prisons, and commercial properties.
- coerced internal concealment (also known as “plugging”) – the practice whereby a child or vulnerable adult is controlled or coerced into concealing drugs internally as a method of transportation to avoid detection. Drugs or sim cards are usually



- concealed within a condom or similar packaging and inserted into a bodily orifice (rectum or vagina) using lubricant or swallowed.
- debt bondage – a form of entrapment when a victim owes money to their exploiters and is made to repay their debt, either financially or through another means such as transporting drugs. The exploiter may groom the victim by initially providing money or goods which the victim will then be made to pay back. The exploiter may also deliberately manufacture a debt, for example by staging a robbery of drugs or cash in the victim's possession in order to extort money from families or to ensure the victim will continue to perform tasks for them. The debt may also be inherited from parents and siblings; and
- financial exploitation – financial exploitation can take many forms. In this context, we use the term to describe exploitation which takes place for the purpose of money laundering. This is when criminals target children and adults at risk and take advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate, or deceive them into facilitating the movement of illicit funds. This can include physical cash and/or payments through financial products, such as bank and cryptocurrency accounts.

## Online Abuse

In modern society the internet and the World Wide Web plays an integral part in children's lives. Whilst this can be hugely positive for children, it can also pose serious risks to them.

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens via the internet or web. Most commonly such abuse happens via social networking sites, online games and chat rooms although abuse experienced as a result of using mobile phones may also be considered "online"

By engaging in such internet-based activities children may experience cyberbullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse.

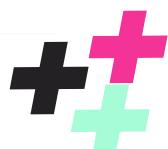
As with other types of abuse, children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know as well as from strangers and online abuse may be part of abuse that is taking place in the real world (for example bullying or grooming). It may also be the case that the abuse only happens online.

## Radicalisation

Radicalisation is a process in which individuals, often the vulnerable or young, are persuaded to adopt extreme ideological views as opposed to mainstream opinions and values. Sometimes called 'brainwashing', 'training', or 'indoctrination', now that the internet is widely accessible across the globe, it's become much easier for people to become exposed to extreme ideological propaganda.

The radicalisation process often begins with online communications. However, there is also a multitude of offline extremist networks that prey on youths and adolescents by vocalising their extreme views of social, religious, or political ideals. Extremist aspirations often undermine or reject the status quo, encouraging the vulnerable to support and engage in acts of terrorism or extremism.

Knowing the indicators that a child is at risk of or is being radicalised could give a voice to children and prevent acts of extremist violence taking place. Anybody can be radicalised, but being more impressionable makes children and young people more vulnerable.



Children and young people at risk of radicalisation may:

- Have low self-esteem
- Be confused about their faith, sense of belonging, or identity
- Be victims of bullying or discrimination
- Feel isolated or lonely
- Be experiencing stress or depression
- Be going through a transitional period in their life
- Be angry at other people or the government  
Feel angry about how they are treated or seen by society

It is very difficult to know at what stage certain views can become dangerous, or if a child or young person is being exploited and manipulated into becoming a part of an extremist group. Signs aren't always obvious, but indicators that a child or young person is being radicalised may include:

- Withdrawal from family and friends, or changing circle of friends
- Hostility towards others
- Talking as if from a script
- Being unwilling to discuss their views
- Increased levels of anger
- Being secretive, particularly around what they are doing on the internet
- Using extremist terms to exclude people or incite violence
- Expressing the values of extremist or terrorist organisations (including political or religious based grievances)
- Supporting violence and terrorism towards other cultures, nationalities, or religions
- Writing or creating artwork that promotes extremist values
- Talking about being a 'martyr'
- Possession of extremist literature or other material, or trying to access extremist websites
- Possession of any material about weapons, explosives, or military training

These signs don't necessarily mean that a child is being radicalised. Sometimes this can be normal teenage behaviour, or an indicator that something else is going on.

**Considering the role and status of the Club and Foundation within the local community, it is considered that all staff must maintain a personal and professional responsibility for their own learning and stay informed in terms of up to date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. This learning will be supported by the Club and Foundation as part of ongoing CPD which staff will be allowed to access during working hours.**

**Examples of such issues are listed below and in support of this, staff are encouraged to access the associated websites in order to gain an understanding of the issues themselves and how they may affect their own job roles and responsibilities.**

**Further information in relation to other types of abuse can be found in the attached hyperlinks.**

#### **Child missing from education**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>



### **Child missing from home or care**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care>

### **Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-you-suspect-a-child-is-being-sexually-exploited>

### **Bullying including cyberbullying**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

### **Domestic Abuse**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/domestic-violence-and-abuse>

### **Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/violence-against-women-and-girls>

### **Mental health**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-mental-health-strategy-for-england>

### **Private fostering**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-act-1989-private-fostering>

### **Radicalisation**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-guidance>

### **Sexting**

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/Media-Centre/Press-releases/2009/What-does-sexting-mean/>

### **Teenage relationship abuse**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/this-is-abuse-campaign>

## **Signs and symptoms of abuse**

In many cases, the signs and symptoms of abuse can be very difficult to spot. Abusers by nature, often act to conceal their actions which makes abuse difficult to identify and victims of abuse are often too ashamed, embarrassed, frightened or intimidated to disclose abuse is taking place.

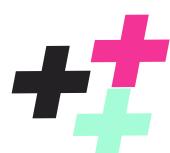
People are also sometimes unaware that the abuse is taking place. However that said, there are still signs and symptoms that, if witnessed or acknowledged, are a cause for concern.

Typically, there are two categories of signs and symptoms of abuse that staff should be aware of, behaviour of adults that causes concern and signs and symptoms of abuse by victims.

The recognition of the signs and symptoms associated with either category could act to Safeguard a child and prevent abuse taking place. Staff are expected not only to be aware, but to actively look for behaviours, signs and symptoms of abuse. If they have any concerns about a child or suspicions about an adult they meet or work with, they should act accordingly in line with these procedures and their training.

The most identifiable signs and symptoms of abuse in children are:

- **Changes in behaviour.** Abuse can lead to many changes in behaviour. Abused children often appear scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn or more aggressive.



- **Returning to earlier behaviours.** Abused children may display behaviours shown at earlier ages, such as thumb sucking, bedwetting, fear of the dark, or fear of strangers. For some children, even loss of acquired language or memory problems may be an issue.
- **Fear of going home.** Abused children may express apprehension or anxiety about leaving the activity or about going places with the person who is abusing them or exhibit an unusual fear of a familiar person or place.
- **Changes in eating.** The stress, fear, and anxiety caused by abuse can lead to changes in a child's eating behaviour, which may result in weight gain or weight loss.
- **Changes in sleeping.** Abused children may have frequent nightmares or have difficulty falling asleep and as a result may appear tired or fatigued.
- **Changes in performance and attendance.** Abused children may have difficulty concentrating or have excessive absences.
- **Lack of personal care or hygiene.** Abused and neglected children may appear uncared for. They may present as consistently dirty and have severe body odor, or they may lack sufficient clothing for the weather.
- **Risk-taking behaviours.** Young people who are being abused may engage in high-risk activities such as using drugs or alcohol or carrying a weapon.
- **Inappropriate sexual behaviours.** Children who have been sexually abused may exhibit overly sexualised behaviour or use explicit sexual language and may exhibit symptoms of a genital infection.
- **Unexplained injuries.** Children who have been physically abused may exhibit unexplained burns or bruises in the shape of objects. You may also hear unconvincing explanations of a child's injuries.

Of course, there are other signs and symptoms of abuse, and the list above is not exhaustive. If staff have any concerns about a child, they must respond and report their concerns or suspicions.

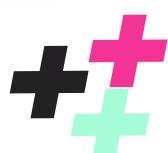
In terms of behaviours of adults that cause concern, staff must be aware it can be very difficult to identify behaviours that are abusive and if in doubt staff should exercise professional curiosity and if they have any concern discuss with their DSL/DSO

Behaviours that may cause concern include:

- Excessive contact with or over friendliness or familiarity towards a child.
- Persistent and unnecessary creation of opportunities to spend time alone with a child or children.
- Cagey suspicious behaviour and an unwillingness to share information about themselves that is consistent with everyday interactions.  
Something a person says regarding the person whose behaviour is questionable.  
Persistent disregarding of rules, particularly safeguarding rules and regulations.

### **Additional vulnerabilities in children**

Abuse and neglect can happen to any child. But research shows that some children who have experienced abuse and/or neglect share similar risk factors which may increase their vulnerability. Having one or more of these risk factors doesn't automatically mean a child will experience abuse or neglect – and not having any of them doesn't guarantee that a child will never be harmed. Understanding risk and vulnerability factors, and their individual and combined impact on children's lives, can help professionals identify which children may need extra support.



- Race
- Disabilities
- Young carers
- Looked after children (LAC)
- Children who have SEND
- Children in need
- Children with emotional or mental ill health issues
- Children exploring their sexuality and identity, in particular children from the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Children who take on leadership roles
- Gifted and talented children.

It is important for all adults working with children to recognise and in turn be mindful of the implications of these additional vulnerabilities.

### **Children with emotional or mental ill health issues**

Many children who engage in our activities are likely to have good emotional and mental health. However, it is important to recognise that this is not the case for every child and that the state of a child's emotional and mental wellbeing can change over time.

There are multiple factors that will determine the emotional and mental wellbeing of children. Generally, the more risk factors children are exposed to, the greater the potential impact on their emotional and mental wellbeing.

Such factors may include:

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- Stress
- Parental mental ill-health
- Parental substance abuse
- Substance abuse
- Domestic violence
- Increased access to and use of technology
- Witnessing trauma
- Social and economic deprivation
- Family breakdown
- Death of a loved one.

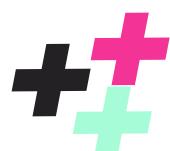
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When a child is facing emotional or mental ill-health, they become more vulnerable to abuse because they may become isolated and withdrawn from peers and family.

They may be unaware of their vulnerability through a lack of clarity in their thoughts and decision-making process. This can lead to engaging in risk taking behaviours placing them at an increased risk of harm.

In sport, the pressure to perform at a certain standard, maintain and improve physical strength and fitness, represent the club and lead an exemplary lifestyle can often act to bring about or heighten some of the aforementioned issues.

It is therefore important that staff, and parents, acknowledge the potential for fluctuations in emotional and mental health to occur and the impact this can have on children.



### **Children who are exploring their sexuality and identity.**

Where children are confused about their sexuality and/identity or indeed where they have identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA+) they may be additionally vulnerable to abuse.

There are a number of reasons for this:

- Their sexuality and/or identity may not be accepted by their parent, carers, peers or support network.
- Their sexuality and/or identity may not be accepted by their own community, and
- they may be more at risk of bullying, abuse and violence.
- They may be placing themselves in an isolated situation by making choices about
- their sexuality and identity.
- They may be afraid or unable to make decisions to protect themselves.
- They may be more susceptible to risk taking behaviour as part of exploring their sexuality or identity.

As a result of this vulnerability, it is important that all staff effectively supports children exploring their sexuality/identity to help keep them safe.

### **Talented children**

Children who are talented can often find themselves additionally vulnerable to abuse than their peers or siblings. By nature of being talented, children may find themselves in unique scenarios to other children and/or find themselves being treated differently.

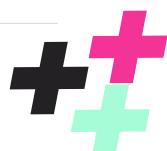
The Club acknowledges that professional is an elite sporting environment and as a result the Club will work with talented children a lot.

There are a number of scenarios that would cause concern for talented children in rugby including but not limited to:

- Parents pushing their children too hard to achieve success and demanding attainment or high performance from them at all costs.
- Parents living their own personal dreams through their children.
- Children placing unreasonably high levels of pressure on themselves.
- Intense coach-child relationships.
- Children being coerced into inappropriate behaviours and abuse because they believe it will help them achieve their dreams.
- A fear of speaking out against abuse for fear of repercussion.
- A win at all costs approach to sporting life.
- Children playing sport in a primarily adult environment.
- Children being away from home and support networks.
- Peer to peer jealousy and bullying.

Where staff, parents or carers have concerns about talented children, they should contact the DSL/DSO to discuss the matter further.

### **RESPOND**



### **Ensure the individual is in or is moved to a place of safety.**

It is essential that, whatever the nature of the abuse, the child concerned is separated from the perpetrator. It is important that disruption to the life of the victim is kept to a minimum, therefore if it is possible for the alleged perpetrator to leave the scene, this is the preferred option.

However, if it is not achievable, an alternative place of safety should be sought as the immediate safety of the victim is the highest priority.

### **How to get help urgently**

Call 999 in an emergency - Emergency services should be summoned whenever a situation is felt to be beyond the control of members of staff, or where allowing a child or adult to leave could place the child or someone else at additional risk.

In these circumstances contact should be made with the DSL/DSO immediately or as soon as practicable.

### **Where a member of staff suspects or witnesses another member of staff or adult behaving in the following circumstances:**

- Behaving in a way that has or may have harmed a child Possibly committed a
- criminal offence against or related to a child. Behaved in a way that indicates
- they may pose a risk of harm to a child. Behaved in a way that indicates they
- may not be suitable to work with children. A report or allegation of abuse against
- a member of staff or volunteer has been disclosed to them.

### **Once any immediate response has taken place, the DSL/DSO should be contacted immediately by phone or as soon as practicable. This should be followed up by a referral into Tootoot.**

The following guidelines offer help and support in responding to abuse or a suspicion of abuse:

- Staff should stay calm and try not to show any signs of shock.
- Be aware of the possibility that medical or criminal evidence might need to be preserved (i.e. evidence of physical or sexual assault)
- Treat allegations extremely seriously and reassure the child that they believe what they are saying.  
Listen carefully rather than question the child directly.  
Be sympathetic and offer reassurance.  
Question the child to establish enough detail to understand the basic nature of the allegation and to establish that the child or another person is not a risk of immediate harm, whilst the referral is made to the DSL.

### **Tell the child:**

- That they are right to disclose the information.
- They are treating the information seriously.
- That it was not their fault.
- What they are doing, when and keep them up to date with what is happening.



- That they must inform the DSL.

### You must:

- Take further action, you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse.
- Seek medical attention if necessary.
- If an allegation is made against a volunteer or member of staff, the DSL must be informed immediately or as soon as practicable.

### You should NOT

- Make promises to a child about what may or may not happen, you may not be able to keep promises due to the nature of the incident or allegation.
- Interrogate the child. It is not your job to carry out an investigation as this is the role of the DSL/DSO, GB, Police or authorities. Any unnecessary questioning may have an adverse impact upon future investigations.
- Cast doubt or change the subject.
- Say anything that make the child feel responsible for the abuse.

### RECORD

- Write down the information you have been given at the first opportunity and ensure that the information is transferred to the Tootoot system within 48 hours of the incident taking place.
- Ensure all written notes are recorded “verbatim” (in the exact words used) including any questions that have been asked and any action taken. Accuracy and detail is important.
  - Where appropriate record the location of any bruises, cuts or abrasions.

When making a referral on Tootoot ensure that you record the following details:

- The name and age of the child.
- The date and time of the disclosure or when the abuse occurred.
- The location of the disclosure.
- The location of where any abuse took place.
- The name of the suspect.
- Any other persons present
- The details of the referral.

Including such details prevents any delay in actions taken by the DSL/DSO.

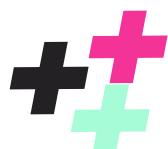
### REFER

#### Role of the DSL/DSO

Members of staff involved in supporting the victim have a key role to play in making sure the correct procedures are followed and that the victim is properly advised and supported. Once the referral has been made the DSL/DSO will decide who take the supporting lead.

The role of the DSL/DSO is:

- Ensuring the continued safety of, and support to the child



- Liaising with immediate colleagues who have been involved to gather all available information.
- Ensuring that any evidence has been preserved.
- Collating any written material relating to the incident.
- Ensuring all the information is recorded on Tootoot and finalising any reports.
- Ensuring that the member of staff receive feedback and is appropriately supported.
- Where appropriate refer the matter to the Governing Body.

Once the DSL/DSO has been informed they will then decide on the next course of action. They may request clarity and further information before this decision can be made. If a child is at risk of significant harm or a child in need then Children's Social Care and the Police may be informed. The DSL will also liaise with any other agencies as appropriate. If the allegation involves a person in a position of trust then the Governing Body along with the Local Authority Designated officer (LADO) will be informed.

## **7. HOW THE RFU/RFL WILL RESPOND TO CONCERNS**

The RFU/RFL encourages and supports “whistleblowing” and will, where appropriate, notify the statutory agencies of any allegation and work in partnership with them. RFU investigation will usually commence once the statutory agencies have completed their investigations and refer the case back to the RFU/RFL.

The wellbeing of the child must be central to any procedures involving them. The RFU will work in partnership with local children's services and rugby clubs to support the victim and witnesses.

### **Incident Referral Process**

Regulation 21 requires all incidents, suspicions and concerns regarding a child to be reported to the RFU/RFL, (this is only in cases of abuse involving a member of staff or other players) Safeguarding Team as soon as possible.

Once the RFU/RFL Safeguarding team receives written notification of an incident, allegation or disclosure they will assume management of the case. If the case is being investigated by the Police, the Safeguarding team will liaise with them and discuss whether to delay the RFU/RFL disciplinary action until the conclusion of the Police Investigation or are in a position to carry out a dual investigation alongside.

Once the RFU/RFL assumes management of the case the club should take no further action until advised to do so by the RFU or relevant authority. The RFU/RFL will ensure that the club and Constituent Body are kept informed of procedure and progress.

Safeguarding investigations are handled by the RFU/RFL Safeguarding team and presented to the RFU's Referral Management Group (RMG) or it's Sub-Group for consideration. The RMG is a cross-departmental group charged by the RFU with assessing the risk that individuals pose to children. The RMG is supported by an independent safeguarding advisor. Incidents may be referred by the RMG or it's Sub-Group to the RFU Discipline department.



### **Those under investigation**

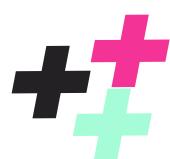
Under this Policy the RFU/RFL is committed, first and foremost, to protecting the interests of the child/vulnerable adult. In the course of a referral being made to the RFU/RFL or statutory agencies, individuals who are accused of causing harm will be informed of the procedures by the RFU/RFL. They may also request at any time an update on the progress of the referral.

Investigations are concluded as quickly as possible to ensure that those guilty of causing harm are dealt with expeditiously and those falsely or mistakenly accused are able to return to the game with reputation intact

### **Suspension from Rugby Union/League**

A temporary suspension order or suspension order may be issued by the RFU/RFL Legal Officer in accordance with RFU Regulation 21. Please refer to the Regulations in the RFU/RFL handbook or on the RFU/RFL website for further information. The RFU/RFL procedures establish a clear route through which complaints, incidents, problems and enquiries are handled, as set out within RFU Regulation 21.

## **8. SAFEGUARDING REFERRAL PATHWAY**

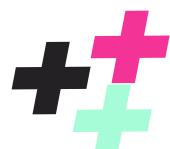
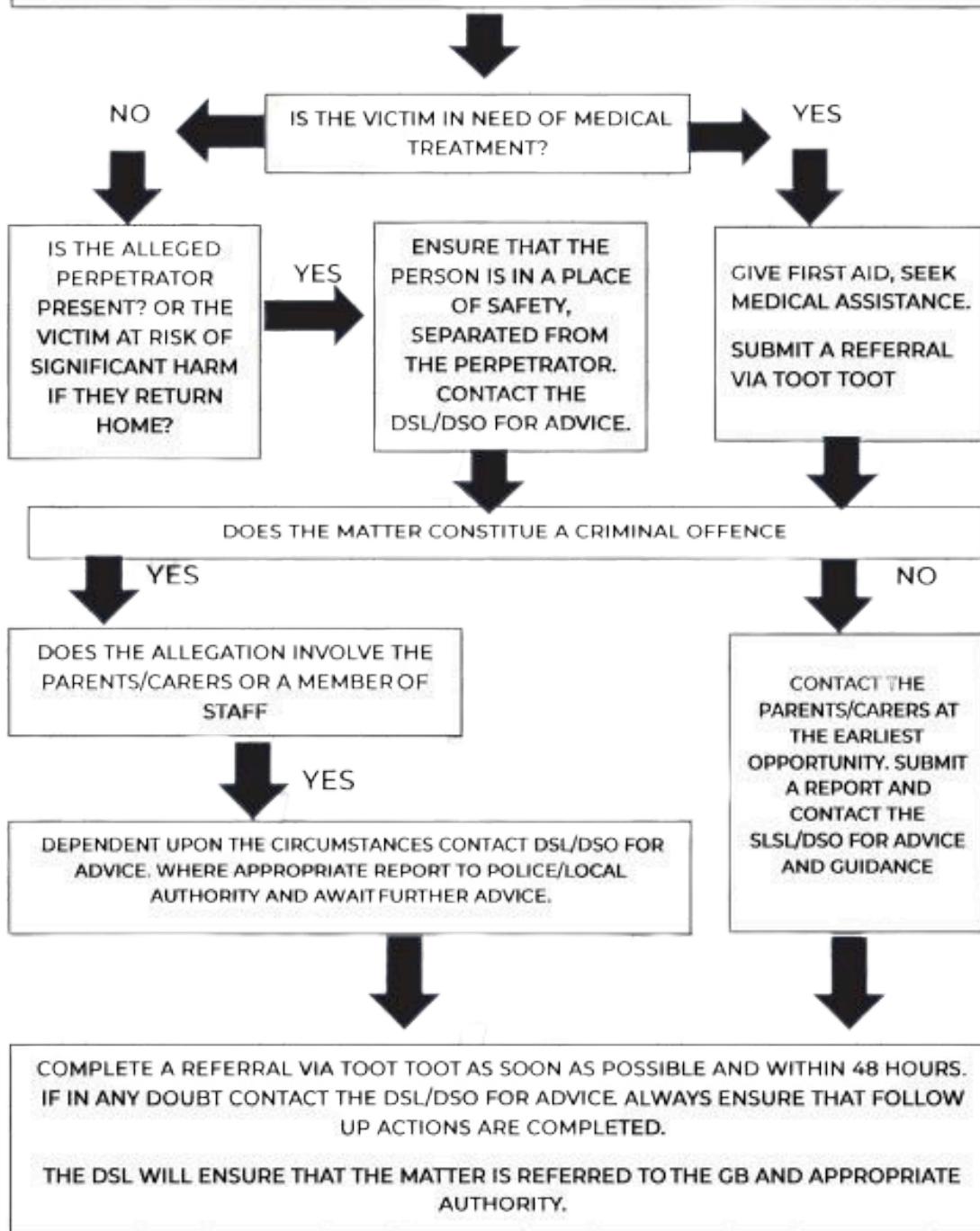


# SAFEGUARDING REFERRAL PATHWAY

RECOGNISE → RESPOND → RECORD → REFER

A CHILD/VULNERABLE ADULT HAS DISCLOSED A SAFEGUARDING ISSUE TO YOU OR YOU HAVE WITNESSED AN INCIDENT OR YOU HAVE HAD A THIRD PARTY REPORT OF AN INCIDENT OR COMPLAINT INVOLVING POOR BEHAVIOUR WHICH MAY BE CONSIDERED ABUSE OR POOR PRACTICE

STAY CALM - REASSURE - NO PROMISES - FOLLOW SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES



## **9. MATCH-DAY SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES**

### **Newcastle Falcons match day safeguarding representatives:**

If neither are available a nominated deputy will attend.

**Shelley Hudson** – Newcastle Rugby Club & Academy Safeguarding Lead

**Melanie Magee** – Newcastle Rugby Foundation CEO

### **Newcastle Falcons Foundation match day safeguarding representative:**

**James Ponton** – Newcastle Falcons Academy Manager

### **Newcastle United Women's match day safeguarding representatives:**

**Angela Alderson** – Newcastle Falcons General Manager

**Channtel Evans** – Conference and Events Manager

**Alastair Waugh** – Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager – Newcastle United Women

**Additional club safeguarding contacts can be found in the contact information contained in the Safeguarding policy.**

### **Other contacts:**

**Stadium Safety Officer – Dave Gould**

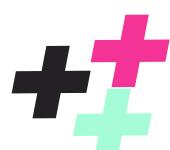
**N.B. Occasionally on match-day an alternative safety lead will be appointed. This will either Tim Robson or Tracy Walker.**

Newcastle Falcons Ltd fully acknowledges its responsibility to guarantee the safeguarding and the welfare of all children and adults at risk involved with the Club from any form of harm.

This section of the document refers specifically around match days which is based on the RFU's Safeguarding Policy and the Procedures, Practices and Guidelines. This Policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors and other people working with the RFU. Although the guidance refers to employees, this should be taken to also include these other groups and everyone working for the Club.

The key principles of the RFU and Club Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk Policy are that:

- a. The welfare of the Child or Adult at Risk (as appropriate) is, and must always be, paramount to any other considerations.
- b. All participants and spectators regardless of age, gender, ability or disability, race, faith, culture, size, shape, language or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse or harm.



- c. All allegations or suspicions of abuse, neglect, harm and poor practice will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly, fairly and appropriately.
- d. Working in partnership with other organisations, statutory agencies, parents, carers, children and young people is essential for the safety and welfare of all.
- e. Children have a right to expect support and have their personal and social development needs met. These will be delivered by an appropriately recruited, vetted member of staff.

Newcastle Falcons Ltd recognises that all Children have the right to participate and view sport in a safe, positive and enjoyable environment whilst at the same time being protected from abuse, neglect, harm and poor practice. We recognise that this is the responsibility of everyone involved, in whatever capacity, at the Club.

If any member of staff witnesses or is made aware of an incident where the welfare of a Child or Adult at Risk has been put at risk, they must in the first instance inform the Club Safeguarding Officer. If a situation occurs on a match day a member of the senior venue's staff is to be notified.

All members of Newcastle Falcons, including event day staff who have a regular supervisory contact with Children or a management responsibility for those working with Children, must undertake an RFU enhanced disclosure check by the RFU Disclosure and Barring Service.

Newcastle Rugby Ltd manages the changing facilities and arranges for them to be supervised by two adults (RFU DBS checked) of the appropriate gender for the players using the facilities.

Newcastle Rugby Ltd will ensure that its coaches and event day staff will receive the support and training considered appropriate to their position and role. Any events held at Kingston Park premises must comply with this Policy and if appropriate a Safeguarding Plan should be discussed and circulated to those affected.

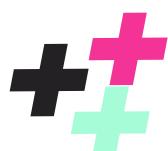
The Club actively promotes the attendance of younger supporters and recognises that this comes with responsibilities; therefore, the appointed Safeguarding Leads for Newcastle Rugby and Newcastle Rugby Foundation will work alongside the Stadium Safety Officer (or appointed Match Day Safety Officer where appropriate) to ensure a safe and secure environment for children and vulnerable adults.

On Newcastle United Women's match days, any Safeguarding concerns should be reported and dealt with by Newcastle Rugby Ltd staff, who will report any incidents to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity. The DSL will investigate and deal with the incident in line with Newcastle Rugby Ltd safeguarding policy and procedures.

If there are any safeguarding concerns in relation to members of Newcastle United Women's team, ballboys/girls or mascot, then NUW Safeguarding and Wellbeing manager will be informed and will liaise with the DSL for Newcastle Rugby Ltd and between them they will decide primacy for any subsequent investigation in line with their own organisations policies and procedures.

The Club has a reasonable expectation that children under 16 years of age are accompanied by a responsible adult inside the ground.

Spectators entering the club may be subject to bag checks at the discretion of the safety stewards.



## **TOILETS/WASHROOMS**

The Club recognises that toilets/washrooms are a particular danger area for younger spectators – the signs for stewards and club officials to watch out for are:

- A young child going to toilets/washrooms unescorted.
- An adult, who does not seem to have a connection with a child, going to the toilets/washrooms on several occasions right behind that child.
- An unescorted child not using the correct toilets/washrooms (male\female).
- An upset child after visiting the toilets/washrooms.

If a steward or club official becomes suspicious of an adult, they should both report their concerns and keep an eye on the situation. Any suspicions should be passed to the Stadium Safety Officer or Club/Foundation Safeguarding Leads so appropriate action may be taken.

## **Unsupervised children**

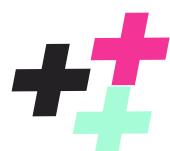
If a child appears to be in some distress, a steward or club official should approach them, try to find out what is wrong and arrange for them to be escorted with at least one other individual to the First Aid Room. Inform the appointed Ground Safety Officer immediately of your actions who will then notify the Stadium Safety Officer and the relevant Safeguarding Lead.

If a child climbs or stands inappropriately on equipment, chairs, barriers or fences, they should be politely asked to get down and have the reason explained to them. Stewards or club officials should never place a hand on them or shout at them so they cannot be startled or scared, which could cause them to fall and injure themselves. Any child playing or misbehaving (such that they are endangering their own safety, or the safety of others, or being a nuisance to other spectators) should be asked to go back to their responsible adult in attendance. If necessary, the responsible adult should be asked to keep the child closely supervised while in the ground.

If a child appears to be on his/her own (i.e. with no adult supervision) and is causing problems, they should be politely asked to behave themselves (do not behave threateningly or aggressively, and refrain from the use of any language that could be perceived to be foul or abusive). A steward should be sited to keep watch of the situation and the Stadium Safety Officer and relevant Safeguarding Lead informed. The Stadium Safety Officer and relevant Safeguarding Lead will then decide on the appropriate action should a responsible adult not be located.

If they persist and are at least 16 years of age, they may be asked to leave the ground and should be escorted to the nearest exit by the Stadium Safety Officer or appointed individuals. If they are under 16 years old and there is a concern regarding their welfare or safety then the Police should be contacted and the child handed into their care, particularly in hours of darkness. Children must not, under any circumstances, be manhandled.

If the child becomes violent towards a steward or club official, the adult may use reasonable non-aggressive actions to protect himself or herself prior to a decision being made as to next steps. Stewards and club officials must never let themselves be alone when dealing with an unruly child or when escorting an under 18 from the ground. Any incident must be recorded by the individuals involved, a written report should be passed to the Stadium Safety Officer and the relevant Safeguarding Lead who will record on the company's Tootoot reporting system.



If a child or young person under the age of 18 is seen drinking alcohol or is visibly under the influence of alcohol, a steward should deal with this in the same way as if they are causing problems, as per the paragraph above, remove the alcohol from their possession and contact the Ground Safety Officer so that he can consider whether to eject the child and/or involve the police and relevant club officials. Alcohol is not permitted to be sold to anyone under the age of 18 whether for their consumption or not, in line with this, under 18s are also not permitted to use the cup return at the bars.

If any child under 18 attempts to enter the ground in possession of alcohol then they will be refused entry.

### **Missing Children**

#### **Steward Vigilance and Positive Action**

- a. Stewards must be vigilant at all times for any child who does not appear to be under adult supervision.
- b. Stewards should approach any children who appear to be unsupervised, particularly if they seem to be worried or distressed, and ask where the parents or guardians are.

#### **Found Child**

- a. Any steward who finds a child should immediately contact Match Control, who will inform the Stadium Safety Officer and the relevant Safeguarding Lead.
- b. Initially, a steward will wait with the child in the location they first found the child, as parents are likely to be in that location.
- c. After 10 minutes the child will be taken to the Steward Assembly Point on the ground floor at the south end of the West Stand.
- d. A steward must remain with any found child until reunited with their parent or guardian.

#### **Missing Child**

- a. Any steward who is made aware of a missing child must immediately inform Match Control with a description and the circumstances of the child going missing. The report will be passed on to the Stadium Safety Officer and relevant Safeguarding Lead.
- b. The steward with the reporting adult (parent, guardian or responsible person) will take this adult's details, including mobile phone number, and ask them to stay with a steward until the incident is resolved. The adult and a steward should stay in the last place that the child was seen for 10 minutes in case the child returns.
- c. Match Control will ascertain if the child is at the Steward Assembly Point, keeping Stadium Safety Officer and relevant Safeguarding Lead informed.
- d. If the child is at the Steward Assembly Point, the reporting adult will be taken to that location.
- e. If the child is not found immediately the Stadium Safety Officer will then alert stewards at, or move stewards to, the east and west exit points of the car parks to try and prevent the child from leaving the site, either on foot or by vehicle.
- f. The Safety Officer, whilst retaining overall responsibility for the match operation, will appoint a specific supervisor to focus upon finding the child.
- g. All stewards are to be informed of the description of the child and to be alert for a child of this description moving around site or leaving the site. Staff outside and on perimeters should be vigilant and, until details can be verified, challenge anyone with



children. As details become more known, exit from the site should be controlled and children checked to ensure that the child doesn't leave the site. It should be noted that in the interests of the safety of the child, no details of any missing child will be broadcast over the PA System.

## **Searches**

- a. The Safety Officer should consider whether a focussed search should be conducted.
- b. Stewards should be deployed in pairs to conduct searches. At least one of the pair should have a radio.
- c. Where a search is implemented, the Stadium Search Zones shown at Appendix K will be used. Which areas are to be searched and which areas are priorities will be determined by the Stadium Safety Officer.
- d. If the child remains missing after 20 minutes from the initial report, this will be reported to the police.
- e. Staff should be satisfied of the identity of the adult and their relationship to the child before the child is released into their care.
- f. Where a search has been necessary to find a child, or the child was missing for a substantial period, all details of the child and parent or guardian should be recorded on the match log and by the relevant Safeguarding Lead on Tootoot.
- g. Where there are any concerns about the nature of the relationship or the circumstances of the incident the club should consider reporting the matter to the relevant authority.
- h. This procedure may be applied to other vulnerable people, including vulnerable adults.

## **Push Chairs and Prams**

Push chairs and prams may be used in the ground. When not in use and folded, Stewards may be able to store them for later collection, subject to available space; however, the owner must be advised that they are left in storage at the owner's risk.

## **Mascots & Guard of Honour**

Children will be accompanied by their parents or club/school official/s. Official photographs will be taken by the club of those children where a consent form has been signed. The Club's Community Team will distribute photographs after the match, where necessary. No other staff members will take photographs on their phones or cameras.

## **Turnstiles/Entry to the stadium**

Unaccompanied children under 16 or vulnerable adults without their carer (where appropriate) will not be allowed into the ground in line with this policy and to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

## **References to Safeguarding Policy includes.**

**Schedule 6** Whistleblowing policy and procedures

**Schedule 27** - Data Protection Policy

**Schedule 30** - Social media policy

**DATE REVIEWED JUNE 2025**

**NEXT REVIEW JUNE 2026**

