

A photograph of rugby players in action, with a player in the foreground wearing a dark jersey with 'HAMPTONS' and the number '7' on the back. Other players are jumping in the background, one holding a rugby ball. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter.

BEING RUGBYSAFE

RUGBYSAFE TOOLKIT 2021- 22
AUGUST 2021 (VERSION 1)



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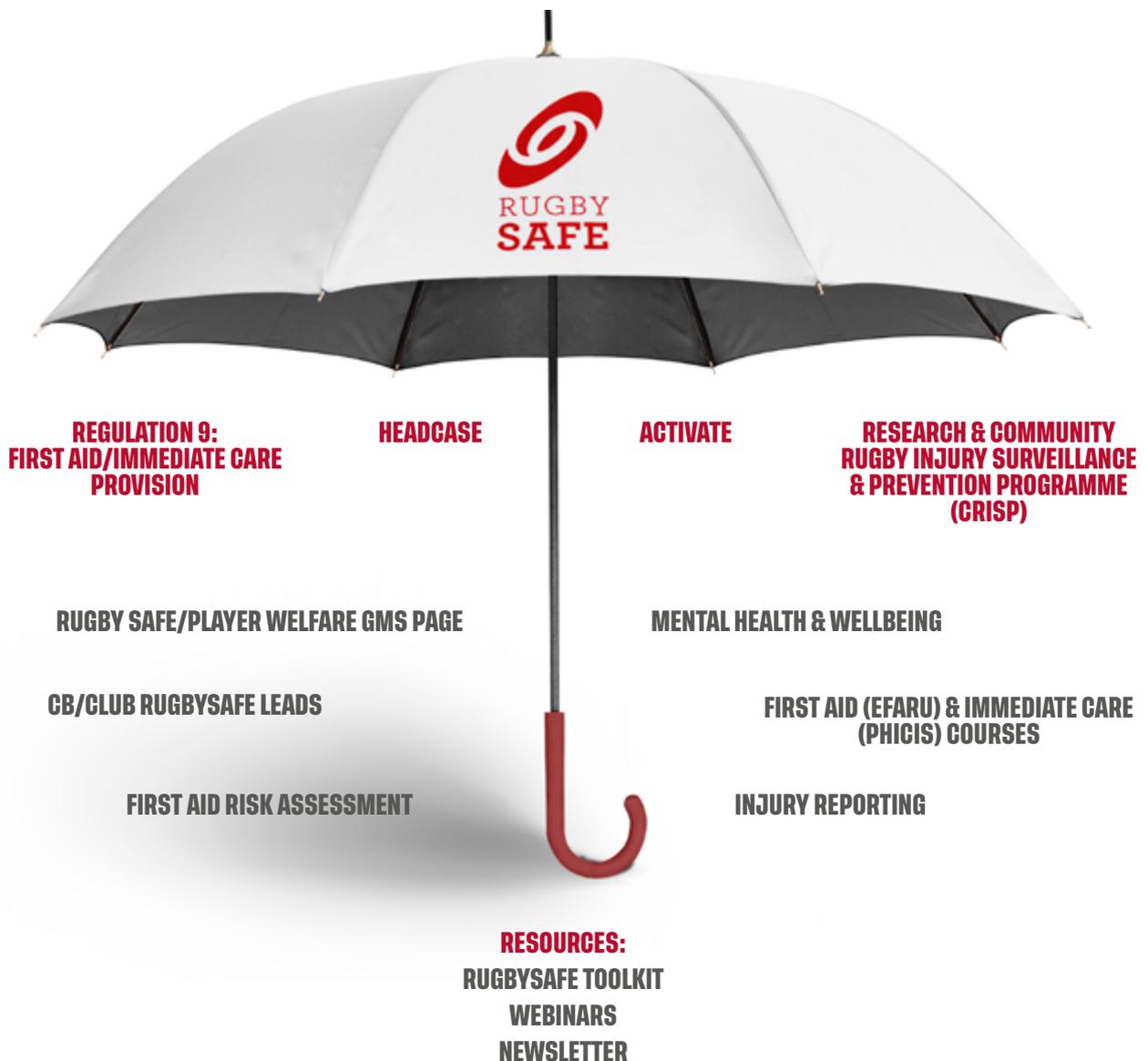
THIS IS AN INTERACTIVE PDF.

Many of the references and guidelines in this document will take you to a website page or PDF. The items on this contents page are hyperlinks to the relevant section.

INTRODUCTION TO RUGBYSAFE

RugbySafe, supported by Simplyhealth, is the RFU's overarching player safety and wellbeing programme, putting player welfare at the heart of the game and covering how the game should be organised and managed to provide a safe and enjoyable playing environment.

Within the RugbySafe 'umbrella' there are a number of different initiatives and programmes, all of which play a part in improving and developing awareness of player welfare.



GENERAL INFORMATION

RUGBYSAFE TOOLKIT

This document is part of the RugbySafe Toolkit, a series of digital resources designed to provide information and guidance on the different topics and programmes covering player welfare in rugby union.

- > RugbySafe Essential Guides & Resources
- > Community Rugby Pitch-side First Aid and Immediate Care Provision Guidelines
- > Emergency First Aid and Immediate Care Training
- > HEADCASE
- > Activate
- > Mental Wellbeing Guidance
- > Research

To access the different sections in the Toolkit please visit the [RugbySafe home page](#).

RUGBYSAFE RESPONSIBILITIES

Clubs and all organisers of rugby activities have a responsibility towards the health and safety of players, staff and volunteers. Measures should be in place to include at least training and first aid provision. Equipment should be in place to ensure that rugby union is delivered to the highest standards in a safe and enjoyable environment.

This document provides information on the role and responsibilities of clubs to ensure they provide a safe and enjoyable playing environment.

This guidance is deemed as best practice and recommends that clubs aim to implement the practices and policies where possible and appropriate.

Schools, colleges, universities and other rugby activity organisers are responsible for their own regulation and they may have different requirements and needs compared to affiliated rugby clubs.

PROCEDURES AND BEST PRACTICE.

The implementation of procedures and best practice is highly recommended. This document should be used to provide guiding principles and inform best practice.



RUGBYSAFE BEST PRACTICE

This is a summary of other practices/ideas that clubs, schools, colleges, universities and other rugby activity organisers should consider as part of 'Being RugbySafe' best practice and providing a safe and enjoyable playing environment.

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR COACHES AND REFEREES

High quality coaching and officiating can contribute to reduce the risk of injury occurring. Therefore, it is important that individuals in such roles keep up to date with training and information on safe practice both on and off the pitch.

All those involved with coaching or refereeing in clubs should complete regular training, be up to date with current methods and be confident in their knowledge of the rules and laws.

The England Rugby Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses provide an understanding of safe techniques and practices for coaches and match officials.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

For more information on recommended standards and training for coaches in the age grade game see the **Age Grade Code of Practice**.

For more information on training courses, please see the **England Rugby Training Course Booklet**.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/CARERS

Clubs and coaches should communicate regularly with parents/carer(s) and work closely to support any children with pre-existing medical conditions, injuries and specific requirements. Parents/carers should be encouraged to communicate with the child's school and coaches/contacts from other sports/activities that the child participates in. It is important everyone is clear about what actions (if any) should be taken to consider safety and to ensure that the experience is a positive one for all involved.

Clubs should consider providing information which outlines any measures that the club has put in place to protect the safety and welfare of players, especially providing information to parents on good practice for age grade players (e.g. **HEADCASE** online module training, first aid training).

In the case of a suspected concussion and a U19 player having to follow a **Return to Play** programme, it is essential that clubs engage with parents/carers to ensure they are aware of and support the child through an appropriate graduated return to play. Parents/Carers should also be responsible for communicating the details of the RTP with the child's school and coaches/contacts from other sports/activities that the child participates in.

COACH AND VOLUNTEER MEETINGS

Clubs are encouraged to host regular meetings (e.g. 2 or 3 per season, potentially delivered by the Club RugbySafe Lead) with all coaches and volunteers to ensure they are kept up to date with relevant player welfare topics and good practice. This includes first aid provision standards and the club's **Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP)**.

PLAYERS WITH SPECIFIC MEDICAL NEEDS

It is recommended that anyone with a medical condition that may be affected by strenuous exercise, or the physical nature of rugby, seeks medical advice before participating in any rugby union activity. The decision on whether an individual can play and in what format (e.g. contact, touch rugby) needs to be based on medical advice by an appropriate expert.

A club may request that a player or parent/carer (for age grade players) confirms in writing that they/their child has been medically assessed. The club must then record/store this information appropriately. See **Incident & Injury Recording** section.

If it is considered appropriate for an individual to participate, good communication between the player, parent/carer(s), coaches, referees and other key personnel is important. Everyone is then clear of what (if any) accommodations to take.

The club and coaches should consider using different methods and approaches that meet the needs of the individual and the group of players they work with. Team managers/coaches should always ensure the match official is appropriately briefed.

SIMPLY HEALTH

A MESSAGE FROM SIMPLYHEALTH

As the trusted healthcare partner to England Rugby and the supporting partner of the RugbySafe programme, we will put player welfare at the heart of the game and strive to keep the whole rugby community healthy.

Working together with England Rugby we will explore how to utilise our joint knowledge base to develop and expand RugbySafe, promoting physical and mental health, enhancing wellbeing in rugby, as well as everyday life.



At **Simplyhealth**, we know that prevention is better than cure. We want to help you stay healthy, now and in the future. We are improving the UK's access to healthcare, helping our communities, customers, and colleagues to thrive.

Through our health plans we make sure you can access – and afford – dental treatments, visits to the optician, physio, podiatry and much more.

Simplyhealth also has a free app to track and improve your emotional wellbeing and more called **SimplyMe**. SimplyMe provides gentle nudges in the right direction helping you make the small steps that build lifelong healthy habits.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

For more information, visit the England Rugby page on the **Simplyhealth website**.

RUGBYSAFE CHECKLIST

All clubs, schools, colleges, universities and other rugby activity organisers, should work towards the following **10 Steps to Being RugbySafe**:



1

Have a **Club RugbySafe Lead** in place, who is in contact with the CB RugbySafe Lead.



2

Take a club's **RugbySafe responsibilities** seriously and meet the **Regulation 9** requirements



3

Complete and regularly update the **RugbySafe & Player Welfare GMS Page**.



4

Complete and record a **first aid specific risk assessment** to determine the appropriate level first aid provision required for training, matches and other rugby activity.



5

Complete and share a **Medical Emergency Action Plan**.



6

Ensure suitable First Aid and/or Immediate Care **provision, facilities and equipment** are in place for all Training & Matches.



7

Integrate **Activate** into all training sessions and match preparations.



8

Have procedures in place for the **recording and reporting** of injuries and incidents and know what an RFU Reportable Event is.



9

Have a process in place for coaches, referees, players and parents to complete the **HEADCASE** concussion online module.



10

Create a **kinder culture and promote positive wellbeing** within the club.

CLUB RUGBYSAFE LEAD

Clubs should identify a Club RugbySafe Lead to help ensure that the club is meeting its responsibilities for the welfare of players and that it is compliant with Regulation 9.

Everyone has a responsibility to promote and support best practice in player welfare and it is important that clubs take their responsibilities seriously, with the Club RugbySafe Lead(s) receiving support and buy-in from the club Executive Committee/ Board and all sections of the club.

Clubs may take a variety of approaches to cover the role and tasks depending on their size and structure. For example, an individual (or small team of individuals) is appointed the Club RugbySafe Lead(s).

There is also a lead first aider for each section and/or age group communicator. Welfare messages to different sections of the club may need a small team of volunteers.

Clubs should ensure their Club RugbySafe Lead's details are listed on the club Game Management System (GMS) profile. This will enable the CB RugbySafe Lead and/or RFU to contact them directly with any relevant information.

INFORMATION & SUPPORT FOR CLUB RUGBYSAFE LEADS

A **CB RugbySafe Lead** is appointed in each Constituent Body to provide local support and guidance. Club RugbySafe Leads should know who their CB RugbySafe Lead is and be in contact them. Many CB RugbySafe Leads run local meetings and initiatives for their clubs. A joined-up approach locally with clubs and CBs working together will help to achieve best player welfare and better engagement and awareness across the game.

The RugbySafe Newsletter is sent out every other month to those Club Rugby Safe Leads listed on GMS, it provides updates on the latest RugbySafe and Player Welfare related news.

RugbySafe Webinars are held every other month, they cover various RugbySafe and player welfare topics and aim to provide information and guidance to increase awareness of good practice and improve player welfare standards across the community game.

CLUB RUGBYSAFE LEAD ROLE DESCRIPTOR

PLEASE NOTE:

All role descriptions are for guidance only. Clubs should adapt/add to this information to ensure it is relevant to the club's needs and requirements.

PURPOSE

Player Welfare is the joint responsibility of all involved in the game. It is important that good practice is embedded across the game to promote a proactive approach to player welfare and safety.

The Club RugbySafe Lead role should be an integral part of the clubs volunteer structure. With the support and buy-in from the club Executive Committee/Board and all sections of the club, the Club RugbySafe Lead will be an individual (or a team of individuals) who leads on improving Regulation 9 (Player Safety) standards and promoting awareness and good practice of other player welfare initiatives.

A crucial part of this role is liaising with any Health Care Professional/medical cover e.g. physiotherapist for the club and volunteers such as team managers, safe guarding officer and coaches and work as a wider team to promote a positive player welfare culture across the whole of the club.

Good practice in player welfare in club is a team effort!

KEY TASKS INCLUDE:

FIRST AID RISK ASSESSMENT AND FIRST AID / IMMEDIATE CARE PITCH-SIDE PROVISION

Carry out an annual review and first aid specific risk assessment to ensure that every training session and match have the appropriate first aid (FA) and immediate care (IC) provision and are compliant with the RFU's Regulation 9 (Player Safety) and provision standards.

RUGBYSAFE AND FA/IC PROVISION MANAGEMENT

Ensure the RugbySafe & Player Welfare section on the RFU Game Management System (GMS) is kept up to date, including number of first aiders, qualifications and equipment.

It is recommended that Club RugbySafe Leads are given Level 2 or 4 permissions to access GMS to enable completion of the RugbySafe & Player Welfare section, which can be found in a club's GMS profile under 'Organisational Details'.

TRAINING & EQUIPMENT

Organise training to ensure all appointed first aiders and immediate care practitioners are trained and up-to-date with an appropriate level of qualification, in line with RFU guidelines (e.g. Emergency First Aid in Rugby Union).

Have a process in place for the management of FA/IC supplies and equipment.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Work with other key personnel in your club to ensure there is a clear process in the event of an incident/injury.

Develop a process to ensure that these procedures are communicated and understood amongst all appropriate individuals in the club.

REPORTING

Ensure there is a process in place to keep records of player medical conditions, monitor injuries and report incidents/injuries in line with RFU guidelines.

RUGBYSAFE CHAMPION

Act as a RugbySafe Champion, utilising the RFU's RugbySafe resources and guidelines to work with other key personnel (e.g. CB RugbySafe Lead, club coaches and volunteers) to promote best practice in your club.

Inspire and engage volunteers and parents and increase awareness of everyone's responsibility in supporting player welfare.



RFU REGULATION 9 (PLAYER SAFETY)

RFU regulations are in place to ensure that the administration, organisation and manner in which the game is played is appropriate, fair and safe. Clubs are responsible for ensuring they are operating within all **RFU regulations**.

Not adhering to and/or acting outside of RFU regulations may invalidate a club's cover of the RFUs or their own additional liability insurance.

The guidelines set out in this document are the minimum FA/IC pitch-side provision guidelines required as part of Regulation 9 (Player Safety)

REGULATION 9.3:

ALL CLUBS AND THOSE INVOLVED IN ARRANGING ANY RUGBY ACTIVITY:

A: MUST COMPLETE A RISK ASSESSMENT AND ENSURE THAT THERE IS AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF IMMEDIATE CARE AND/OR FIRST AID COVER, AND EQUIPMENT PROVIDED FOR THAT RUGBY ACTIVITY AS DETERMINED BY SUCH RISK ASSESSMENT.

B: MUST HAVE ACCESS TO A TELEPHONE TO ENSURE THAT THE EMERGENCY SERVICES CAN BE CONTACTED IMMEDIATELY WHEN NEEDED AND THERE IS CLEAR VEHICULAR ACCESS FOR AN AMBULANCE OR OTHER EMERGENCY VEHICLE; AND

C: ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO COMPLY WITH THE RUGBYSAFE FIRST AID AND IMMEDIATE CARE PROVISION GUIDELINES

The full version of **Regulation 9 (Player Safety)** is available on the RFU Regulations page.

RUGBYSAFE GMS PAGE

Within each club's RFU Game Management System (GMS) profile there is a RugbySafe & Player Welfare section.

This section has been set up to provide clubs with a space to record and audit the first aid/immediate care provision in the club, including confirming completion of a first aid risk assessment, number of first aiders, qualifications and equipment.

The RugbySafe & Player Welfare section can be found in a club's GMS profile under 'Organisational Details'.

It is recommended that the Club RugbySafe Lead is given Level 2 or 4 GMS permissions to allow them to update to appoint/upload first aiders and complete the RugbySafe /Player Welfare page.

To access visit the [GMS login page](#).

Any issues with log in or other GMS issues please contact gms@rfu.com.



RISK ASSESSMENT

Clubs and rugby activity providers must consider the emergency first aid provision as part of a first aid specific risk assessment, this should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis and/or updated if there are significant changes to the circumstances.

When completing the risk assessment, clubs should refer and comply with the **RugbySafe First Aid/ Immediate Care Provision Guidelines**.

The risk assessment should consider any specific individual club requirements, the type of activity and number of participants, facility and pitch locations etc. to determine if any additional provision is required.

The risk assessment is particularly important for:

- > Matches or training which are simultaneously occurring on more than one site, whereby each site will require the appropriate level of cover.
- > Tournaments and festivals, where simultaneous matches are occurring on different pitches, there are large numbers of players and multiple matches and high levels of activity happening in a short period, e.g. back-to-back games in one day.
- > Age Grade Rugby Camps where there may be varying number of players across multiple age groups.

The first aid risk assessment has been incorporated into a wider online risk assessment programme developed in conjunction with Howden, the RFU's broker for club liability insurance. This includes considering the risks related to the clubhouse, club grounds, changing rooms and car parks as well as reviewing the first aid provision for training, playing and general club activity.

The **Risk Assessment Tool** has been designed to guide users, who may be untrained or inexperienced with regard to risk management, through a series of questions relating to areas they should be considering. Many of the risk management measures highlighted will already be in place and these will be recorded in the risk assessment. The tool will highlight other areas where the club could consider implementing additional measures to manage the risk in areas it may not have considered previously.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

Visit the **Howden/RugbySafe web page** to use the free Risk Assessment Tool.

INSURANCE

A club should do all it reasonably can to create a safe environment and reduce or eliminate loss, damage or injury to others. If someone is injured at a club, or whilst taking part in club activities, or if property is damaged, the club could be held legally liable to pay compensation.

The RFU has arranged liability cover for RFU Affiliated clubs at Level 3 and below, which includes:

Public Liability insurance – protects the club and its committee or board against a claim made following loss, damage or injury to someone else or their property.

Employers Liability insurance – covers the club, or committee if held liable for an injury that an employee suffers during the course of employment. The policy includes injuries to volunteers. This is a legal requirement.

INSURED ACTIVITIES

Insurance provided by the RFU covers all rugby activity as well as a wide range of social, fundraising and commercial ventures for affiliate clubs at level 3 and below.

Before undertaking any activity, clubs should check it is covered by the RFU policy.

PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE

All players are covered by the RFU's **Personal Accident Insurance**. The policy, arranged with RSA, provides fixed benefit payments for death and permanently disabling or catastrophic injuries. This includes traumatic brain injury or spinal injury caused as a result of an accident that occurs whilst taking part in the sport.

Cover is not included for sickness or injuries resulting from a medical condition. If the club, player or parent/carer(s) feel that such cover is required, it is recommended that an additional policy is taken out that is appropriate to the added need.

FIRST AIDER / HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL INSURANCE

It is very unlikely that any action would be taken against a first aider who appropriately uses their first aid training. The RFU Insurance provides liability cover for clubs at level 3 and below in respect of first aiders carrying out their duties for the club.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

For more information on insurance visit the **Howden's England Rugby Insurance Centre page**.



Where any healthcare professionals (HCPs), are providing services beyond emergency first aider, club/organisers should check that the HCP has their own indemnity insurance in place. Clubs/organisers who engage such personnel, or deploy volunteers in this capacity, may have a vicarious liability for their actions. Such liability is covered under the insurance for clubs at Level 3 and below.

HCPs providing services other an emergency first aid should have their own insurance arrangements as a requirement of their regulating body. Below the elite level of sport, such insurance will usually be provided at no additional cost to them, as long as they have the appropriate training and experience. HCPs should be able to provide evidence of registration with their relevant regulatory body.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

For more please visit the **England Rugby Insurance website**.

Visit the **Howden Group website** for more information about medical personnel / HCP insurance.



FIRST AID & IMMEDIATE CARE PROVISION

The **RugbySafe First Aid/ Immediate Care Provision Guidelines (PDF)** set out the recommended first aid and immediate care provision for all training sessions and matches.

The recommended levels of first aid/immediate care provision are set using an evidenced-based approach, with information and data collated through RFU's injury surveillance data and other related research.

All other medical support or provision such as therapist led prehabilitation and rehabilitation, strapping, soft tissue massage and the treatment of potential non-life and limb threatening and musculoskeletal injuries is outside the scope of this document and should be determined by the club, school, college, university and rugby activity providers based on circumstances, availability of personnel and capacity.

Any organisation and/or practitioner providing additional provision should be appropriately qualified and insured.

The **RugbySafe First Aid/ Immediate Care Provision Guidelines (PDF)** also include information on:

- > **First Aid and Immediate Care Provision Principles and Guidelines** for different levels of the community game
- > **Roles and Responsibilities** for Clubs and other rugby activity providers
- > The role of **Emergency First Aider**
- > The role of **Immediate Care Practitioners**
- > Other **Health Care Professionals** in Rugby

FIRST AID & IMMEDIATE CARE FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT

Clubs and rugby activity providers should:

- > Provide each EFA with a fully stocked first aid kit, as well as a separate club/central fully stocked first aid/immediate care kit.
- > Consider the need and practicalities of an allocated first aid room that is set up/used specifically for FA/IC treatment.
- > Consider the need and practicalities for any other additional equipment e.g. Automated External Defibrillator(s) (AED) and where appropriate have a process in place for the storage, usage and maintenance as appropriate.

FACILITIES

Where possible and practicable, clubs should have a suitable first aid room (or rooms) for use during rugby and other sporting activities. The room should be easily accessible to stretchers and be clearly signposted. Wherever possible, the room should be reserved specifically for providing first aid and with a designated individual (e.g. first aid lead or appointed first aider) being responsible for the room.

EQUIPMENT

Every club should assess what equipment is required when completing their first aid/immediate care risk assessment. It is important to have appropriate first aid equipment readily accessible whenever any rugby activity is taking place.

Emergency first aid should only be given by appropriately trained persons. First aid equipment should only be provided appropriate to the level of training of the first aider or immediate care provider.

AUTOMATED EQUIPMENT EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS (AEDS)

London Hearts is the leading heart charity across England and are specialists in placing defibrillators in communities and delivering CPR and defibrillator training. Clubs need to consider the requirements of owning an AED including storage and on-going maintenance. London Hearts have funding opportunities available for rugby clubs looking to purchase an AED.

For more information please visit the [London Hearts website](#).

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

More information can be found by visiting the [London Hearts website](#).

For more information on FA/IC equipment, including recommended first aid kit contents visit the [RugbySafe Essential Guides & Resources document](#).



FIRST AID & IMMEDIATE CARE TRAINING

EMERGENCY FIRST AID IN RUGBY UNION COURSE

The Emergency First Aid in Rugby Union (EFARU) course is a rugby specific first aid course developed by the RFU. The course is designed for coaches and other volunteers designated as a first-aider and responsible for providing pitch-side cover at both training and matches.

WHAT DOES THIS QUALIFICATION COVER?

The **Emergency First aid in Rugby Union (EFARU)** course will provide learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding required to give care, manage life-threatening conditions, minor injuries and illness, specifically focusing on those occurring in a rugby environment. Learners will be able to assess an incident, recognise the signs and symptoms of the injury or illness, and, in a safe and effective manner, assist a casualty who is suffering from injury or illness.

The **EFARU** course covers conducting a Primary Survey, Basic Life Support skills and injury reporting as well other First Aid skills including:

- > Cardiopulmonary resuscitation [CPR]
- > Concussion and head injuries
- > External bleeding
- > Minor injuries
- > Shock
- > Spinal injuries

WHY CHOOSE THIS COURSE?

The EFARU sits on the Regulations Qualifications Framework (RQF) and is awarded by **1st4sport Qualifications**, providing a nationally-recognised qualification that is transferable to the workplace and other sports.

Like other equivalent First Aid courses the EFARU qualification is valid for three years.

COURSE DETAILS FOR 2021-22 SEASON

Duration: One Day Course (8 Learning Hours) = £50 per person

Minimum Learner Age: 16 years old

HOW TO ORGANISE AN EFARU FOR A CLUB

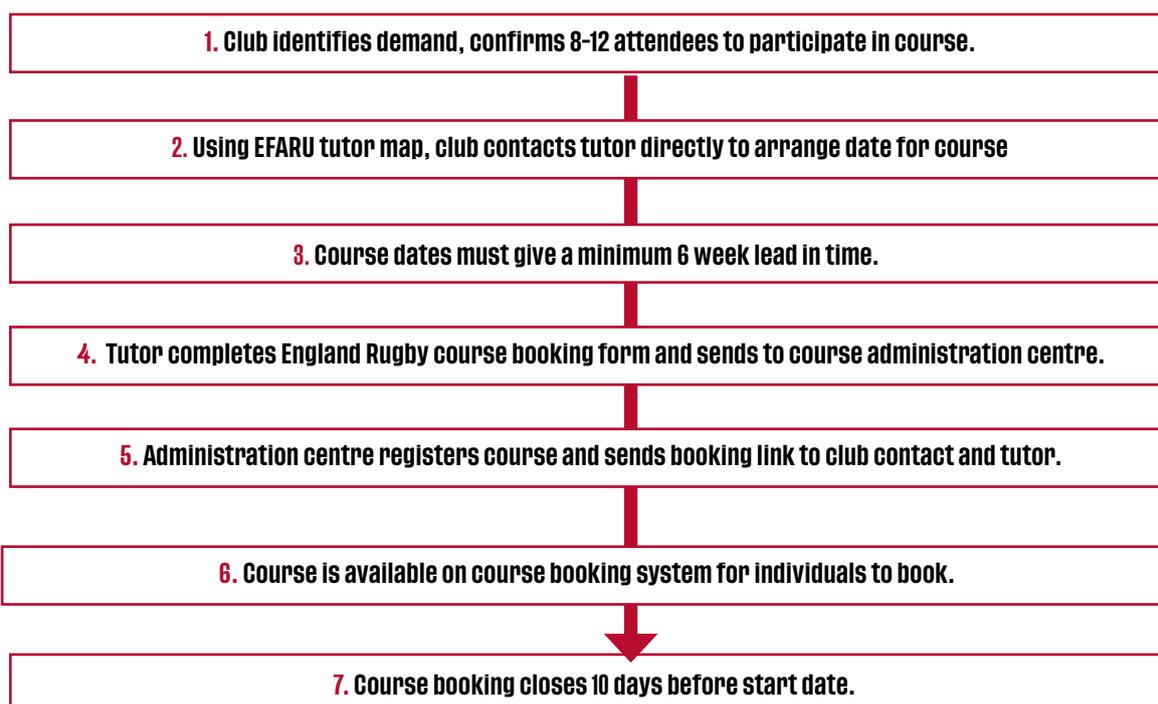
A club, school, college or university can organise an EFARU course, to train their volunteers to ensure they have appropriate provision across the club's age groups and teams by using the **EFARU tutor map** and follow the process within the diagram below.

A minimum of 8 learners is required for a course to run, with a maximum of 12 learners per course.

Where clubs don't have the minimum numbers, the course can be opened up to other clubs/members of the public (see 'other ways to get on an EFARU course', point 2 below).

Where clubs have more than 12 learners, the course will have to be split into multiple courses.

EFARU BOOKING PROCESS



VENUE SPECIFICATION

In order to host a course the club/venue must ensure availability of:

- > Exclusive use of a room with tables and chairs set up for 12 learners plus adequate space for indoor practical activity
- > Access to projector, screen/TV and flipchart
- > Access to toilet facilities.

OTHER WAYS TO GET ON AN EFARU COURSE

1. Some CBs schedule in courses throughout the season, please contact your CB RugbySafe Lead or go to the RFU Course Search to find other courses already running in your local area.
2. Where a club has organised a course (see point 1) and there are spare places available, these will be advertised on the RFU Course Search.

EFARU TRAINING RESOURCES

The Emergency First Aid in Rugby Union (EFARU) Training video series has been produced to support the First Aid in Rugby Union face to face course. The EFARU video series covers the main emergency first aid topics and demonstrates how to carry out key first aid skills.

PLEASE NOTE:

The EFARU training videos are NOT a replacement for the face to face EFARU course.

It is essential that anyone who is going to take on the role as a first aider in rugby is appropriately qualified to a minimum of Level 3 Emergency First Aid or equivalent. Clubs, schools, colleges and universities are recommended to organise six monthly or annual refresher training for first aiders in between the 3-year qualification renewal.

The EFARU videos can also be used as part of this refresher training to ensure first aiders remain able and competent at carrying out key first aid skills.

OTHER FIRST AID COURSES – GENERAL INFORMATION

Clubs, schools, colleges and universities should ensure they have the minimum first aid provision operating standards in place. A first aid specific risk assessment should be used to determine the number of people trained and the level of training that is required.

There are different levels of first aid training available, the minimum level of training for any appointed First Aider covering rugby activity should at least be a Level 3 Emergency First Aid qualification, that is recognized on the national regulation qualification framework (RQF). Whilst the RFU's Emergency First Aid in Rugby Union (EFARU) course is recommended other qualifications that meet the minimum standard are acceptable.

Individuals with external first aid qualifications (i.e. not the EFARU) are able to self-certify and add such qualifications to their RFU GMS profile, using the self-service tool in the qualifications section.

PLEASE NOTE:

The RFU does not endorse or approve any other first aid courses. Other course providers do not have permission to use the EFARU or any other RFU content/branding.





When considering other first aid course providers, the following questions should be asked to determine if a particular course is suitable:

- 1.** What qualification is awarded? The recommended minimum level is equivalent to Level 3 Emergency First Aid at Work / Sports First Aider. These courses are generally a minimum of one day or 7 learning hours.
- 2.** Who is the recognised awarding body for the qualification?
- 3.** Is the course accredited and recognised on the national Regulations Qualifications Framework (RQF)?
- 4.** Is there a quality assurance process (shown by an accreditation mark from a body such as the Health and Safety Executive)?
- 5.** Does the course cover basic first aid and life support skills along with both common rugby injuries (such as concussion) and rare but serious injuries (such as spinal injury) in sufficient detail?
- 6.** What experience and qualifications does the trainer have? (e.g. medical background, years of tutor experience, knowledge of rugby)
- 7.** How many people will be in the training session? (suggested maximum: 16 per trainer)
- 8.** What insurance does the trainer have? (e.g. personal liability cover)
- 9.** What resources are provided as part of the course learning? (E.g. training manual, online support etc.)
- 10.** What is the assessment process, how are learners recognised as competent?

PRE-HOSPITAL IMMEDIATE CARE IN SPORT COURSE (PHICIS) LEVEL 2

The RFU's Pre-Hospital Immediate Care in Sport Level 2 course is a rugby union specific course that covers the immediate care training needs of healthcare professionals working within rugby.

The PHICIS Level 2 is a one-day course, aimed at those HCPs/Allied HCPs working in the community game (Level 3 league teams and below and CB representative rugby).

The accreditation for the Level 2 lasts for two years.

For available PHICIS Level 2 course dates, venues and costs please visit the [England Rugby Course Booking Page](#).

The PHICIS Level 2 course includes:

- > Access to online textbook and interactive learning modules
- > Practical workshops
- > Simulation training
- > Certification on successful completion
- > Endorsement by the Royal College of Surgeons – Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care.

The interactive learning module is an essential part of the preparation for the PHICIS course. When enrolled candidates must work through and complete all the chapters and questions 48 hours prior to attending the face to face training. It is advised candidates spend approximately 15 hours in completing the online interactive modules.

Please send any enquiries or questions regarding the PHICIS Level 2 to:
phicis@rfu.com

PRE-HOSPITAL IMMEDIATE CARE IN SPORT COURSE (PHICIS) LEVEL 3

The RFU's Pre-Hospital Immediate Care in Sport Level 3 course is a requirement for those HCPs/Allied HCP working within professional rugby, including the Premiership, the Championship and with national teams.

The standard cycle of accreditation and recertification is typically achieved by successfully completing the first two-day PHICIS course in season one, a re-accreditation course in seasons two and three, a re-certification course in season four with a re-accreditation course again in season five.

For available PHICIS Level 3 course dates and more information please contact:
phicis@rfu.com



MEDICAL EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Clubs and rugby activity providers should have a Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP) in place to identify needs and protocols in an emergency situation.

Along with appropriate levels of first aid cover, a MEAP should be an integral part of the player welfare provision across all sports and recreational activities.

A MEAP should consider all those involved, including players, coaches, officials, first aiders, volunteers, parents and spectators. It should provide a simple, safe and systematic approach to ensure that any emergencies can be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

It is important that the MEAP is effectively communicated to coaches, first aiders and any others who would be involved in the incident management during an emergency.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

A MEAP template is available in the **RugbySafe Essential Guides & Resources document**.

DEVELOPING A MEDICAL EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Preparation is the key to responding to unexpected emergencies, therefore a MEAP should include all relevant categories and emergencies (both on and off the pitch).

The plan should outline the roles and responsibility of different personnel and include clearly set out procedures, a different plan may be required for different events e.g. adult matches and age grade rugby on a Sunday morning. In all cases, the following should be considered when developing a MEAP:

FACILITY

1. What is the address, exact location (e.g. what3words) and correct post code for the venue? For multiple sites, is this information available for each one?
2. Where will the emergency services access the pitch? Is the marked out and kept clear?
3. Is there a designated place for all keys that open gates or doors to the facilities?
4. On bigger sites (campuses) is there a map of the grounds and buildings available for emergency services?
5. Where is the nearest A&E? Where is the nearest minor injuries hospital?



EQUIPMENT



1. Where is first aid equipment located? Is it clearly marked and accessible?
2. Are all first aid kits regularly checked and fully stocked?
3. What other equipment is available and where is it located e.g. Automated External Defibrillator, stretcher etc.?
4. Are there allocated phones readily accessible both pitch-side and in the clubhouse/facilities?
5. Are player medical history forms available if required? Are these stored correctly in normal circumstances?

PERSONNEL

1. What roles and responsibilities will different individuals have?
2. Specific people should be allocated to;
 - > Provide care to the injured person
 - > Control bystanders, concerned players or family members
 - > Meet/guide emergency medical personnel
 - > Travel with the injured athlete to hospital when appropriate
 - > Contact the injured player's family or carer(s).



COMMUNICATION



1. Where is the MEAP information located?
2. How does everyone know about the MEAP and what to do?
3. Provide players/parents with information of key contacts e.g. team manager, coaches on match days.

CHAIN OF COMMAND & PROCEDURES

1. Exactly what will the procedure in an emergency be?
2. Who will be in charge?
3. Who will call the ambulance?
4. What is the key information required for the emergency services?
5. Who will meet the ambulance?
6. How will everyone know who is in charge?
7. Who will have the responsibility of informing parents, next of kin etc.?
8. Who will record information about the incident and where will it be stored?



TRANSPORTATION



1. When the emergency services aren't required, what are the arrangements for taking an injured player to hospital? What arrangements need to be made for both home and away matches?
2. Who will transport the injured players to the local hospital? In age grade rugby, will there still be appropriate levels of supervision for the other players? Children should not travel alone with an adult unless it is their parent/carer(s).

FOLLOW-UP

1. Who will be responsible for completing the appropriate documentation, e.g. the incident/injury report form?
2. If it is a RFU reportable event, who is responsible for completing and submitting the form?
3. Who needs to be contacted post incident, e.g. checking in with an injured player?
4. Who will be responsible for restocking the first aid kits?
5. Is an incident debrief and review of the MEAP required? Was it as effectiveness as possible?



INCIDENT & INJURY RECORDING

Clubs and rugby activity providers should have a process for recording incidents and injuries that require first aid attention (both on and off the pitch).

Every first aider should be made aware of the process/ have access to ensure all applicable incidents /injuries are recorded appropriately. The process must be General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant, with all records stored appropriately and securely.

The RFU have collaborated with Howden and Proactive to provide an affordable incident report app that provides a quick and efficient system to ensure injuries and incidents both on and off the pitch are recorded and maintained in a secure and appropriate manner.

The Proactive Reporting system includes the following reporting options:



- ✓ Incident Reporting
- ✓ Dynamic Risk Assessment
- ✓ Pre-Session Checks
- ✓ Covid-19 Checker
- ✓ Rugby Safe Resources

Visit the [Rugby Proactive App](#).

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN YOUR PROACTIVE LICENCE:

When your club signs up to Proactive, the club gets 12 months full access to the system which includes:

- ✓ 60 Licences for use across the club
- ✓ Central dashboard for club officers (Chair, Doctor, Grounds Staff etc.)
- ✓ Individual dashboards available for each team - with unlimited team “groups”
- ✓ Unlimited reporting using the report options above.

All of the above costs just £50 + vat.

Clubs can sign up easily by clicking [here](#).



Clubs should also have a policy in place for communicating any injuries with parent/carer(s) and school staff (if relevant) to ensure the appropriate action is taken.

Information recorded on injuries/incidents can also:

- > Help identify injury and incident trends
- > Inform future risk assessments
- > Make recommendations to improve coaching practice and health and safety procedures.

The incident/injury report form is not the same as the Statutory Accident Book required under the **Health and Safety at Work Act**, although the two can be combined.

If there is any suggestion that the injury is not an accident the RFU recommends that a record is kept. This is in case a claim is ever brought against the club, coach or referee. Records of injuries to a child should be kept for 15 years.

It is essential that any information and all records are stored appropriately and securely. The **RFU's GDPR toolkit and FAQs** provide important guidance on how clubs should do this.

More information on a club's general Health & Safety requirements including the **Health and Safety at Work Act** can be found on the **RFU's Health and Safety webpages**.

Clubs with employees may be subject to the **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013**. For those where there is a legal requirement to report accidents and ill health at work. Information on this is provided by the **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**.



RFU REPORTABLE INJURY EVENTS

Clubs and rugby activity providers need to be aware of what injuries should be reported to the RFU. It is crucial that all reportable injury events are submitted to the RFU in order for the appropriate support to be put in place.

Reportable injury events are defined as:

- > An injury which results in the player being admitted to a hospital (this does not include those that attend an Accident or Emergency Department and are allowed home from there).
- > Deaths which occur during or within six hours of a game finishing.
- > Clubs and schools are also required to report injuries in which artificial grass pitches or equipment such as sports goggles are involved.

REPORTABLE INJURY EVENT PROTOCOL

In the event of a serious injury occurring, which fulfils one of the above definitions, after providing immediate first aid and arranging transport by ambulance to hospital, the following protocol is to be followed:

1. A club or school representative must phone the RFU Injury Reporting Helpline **0800 298 0102**, or email **SportsInjuriesAdmin@rfu.com** as soon as the seriousness of the player's condition is confirmed and certainly within 48 hours of the game or training session.
2. In the event of a potentially catastrophic injury or fatality the RFU Injured Players Foundation (IPF) will be notified and will get in touch with the club and/or player or next of kin to confirm the injury and any immediate welfare needs.
3. You will be asked to complete and return an **Injury Report Form**.
4. The club/school must notify their insurance provider.
5. Record witness statements. Where a potential insurance or personal injury claim may arise, clubs and schools are advised to retain on file witness statements. These statements must confine themselves to the facts and not include opinion, hearsay or apportion or infer blame. They must be signed and dated by the person making them.

The RFU Reportable Injury Event forms are available via the **RugbySafe Essential Guides & Resources document**.

Following a reportable injury, the referee should also complete Referee Injury Event Form. The RFU Referee Reportable Injury Event forms are available via the **RugbySafe Essential Guides & Resources document**.

SPORTS INJURIES ADMINISTRATOR (SIA)

T: 0800 298 0102

E: **SportsInjuriesAdmin@rfu.com**

HEADCASE: CONCUSSION AWARENESS

Clubs and rugby activity providers should ensure that all coaches, match officials, players and parents are aware of the **RFU's HEADCASE concussion guidelines**.

The **HEADCASE module** is a free online training module that takes approx. 30 minutes to complete and provides some key information on what to look out for and how to manage a potential concussion.

Any player with a suspected concussion must be removed from play immediately and not return to the game. **"If in doubt, sit them out"**. They must then undertake a minimum rest period as stated and follow the appropriate Return to Play Programme.

This must be adhered to irrespective of the qualification/profession of the individual providing the pitch-side first aid and/or immediate care provision.

Clubs should have a process in place to ensure that parents are informed if their child is suspected of suffering from concussion. Parents should be asked to inform the school/college if their child has a suspected concussion as the Return to Play Programme may affect their academic studies and other activities.

REMEMBER:

There is NO Head Injury Assessment (HIA) process in the community game. This includes all age grade and adult games and competitions.

More information, including the concussion management guidelines, resources and the online awareness modules is available on the **HEADCASE** webpage.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

Visit the **Howden/RugbySafe web page** to use the free Risk Assessment Tool.

RECOGNISE & REMOVE

A PLAYER SHOULD STOP PLAYING/TRAINING AND NOT RETURN IF:

One or more of the following symptoms are present:

- > Headache
- > Seizure or convulsion
- > Dizziness or balance problems
- > Confusion
- > Difficulty concentrating
- > Nausea or vomiting
- > Drowsiness / fatigue
- > More emotional or sadness
- > Blurred vision, sensitivity to light
- > Irritable
- > Difficulty remembering or amnesia
- > Neck Pain
- > "Don't feel right"

They have one or more of the following observable signs:

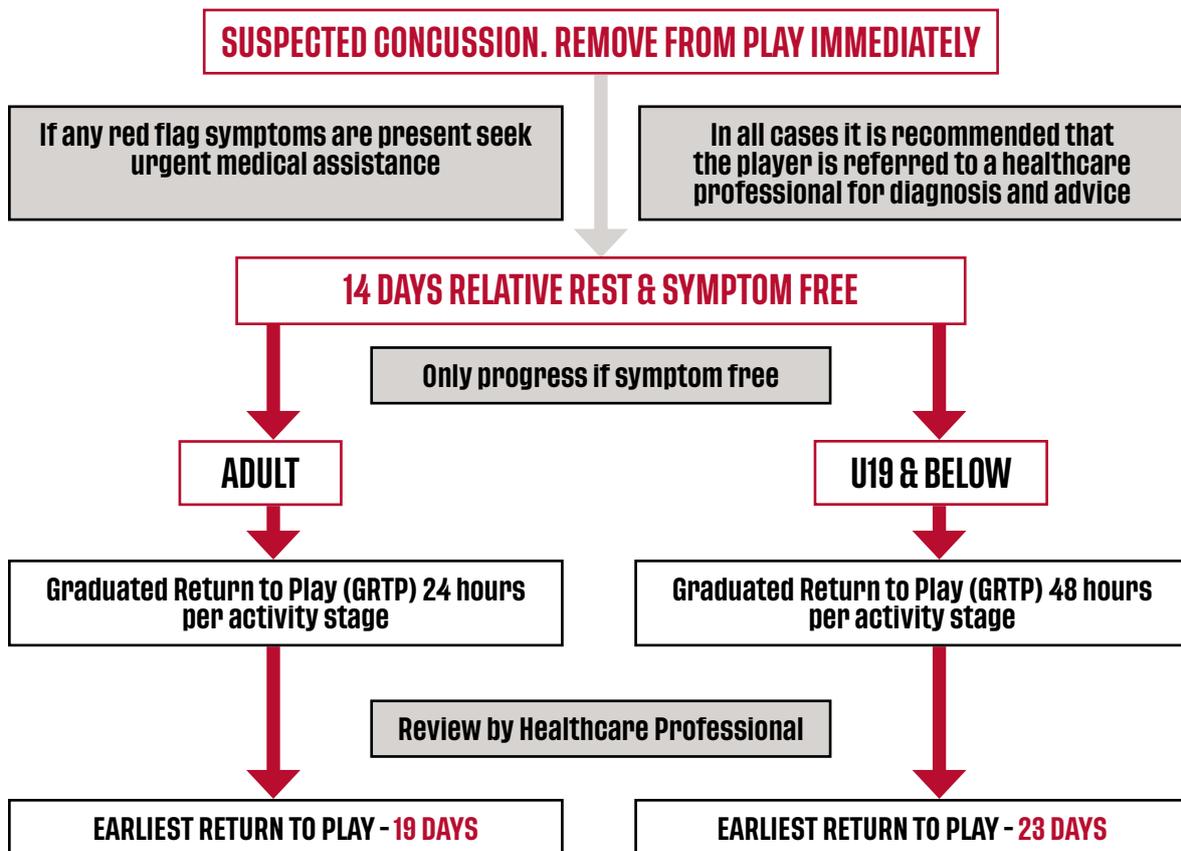
- > Loss of consciousness
- > or responsiveness
- > Slow to get up
- > Unsteady on feet
- > Incoordination
- > Clutching of head
- > Blank or vacant look
- > Dazed/ Confused



REMEMBER
IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!

RECOVER & RETURN

RETURN TO PLAY GUIDE



ACTIVATE

Activate is an evidenced-based injury prevention exercise programme that can be integrated into training and pre-match sessions. The exercises included in the programme are designed to improve functional strength, balance and agility and have been shown to reduce the risk of injury.

Activate should be integrated into all training sessions and match-day warm-ups to help prepare players in dealing with the physical demands of the game.

There are Activate programmes available for all players:

- > **Activate Kids:** U7-U8, U9-10 & U11-12
- > **Activate Youth:** U13-U14, U15-U16 & U17-18
- > **Activate Adult.**

In the age grade game, coaches can add an extra 15 minutes to the allowed training session time limits, this extra time should specifically focus on Activate.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

Research has shown that developing a player's ability in these areas has the potential to reduce the risk of injury.

SCHOOL BOY STUDY

72%
IN OVERALL MATCH INJURIES*

ADULT MALE COMMUNITY STUDY

40%
IN LOWER LIMB INJURIES*

59%
IN CONCUSSION*

59%
IN CONCUSSION*

* When players used the programme 3 times a week.

THE BENEFITS OF USING ACTIVATE

Activate helps players to develop and improve **four** key areas.

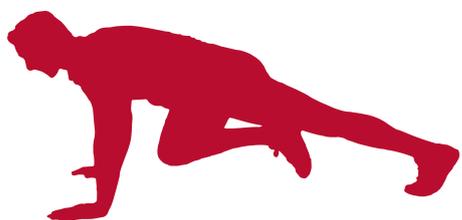
1. GENERAL MOVEMENT CONTROL

Develops adaptability allowing for better 'physical' decisions and reaction around the contact areas.



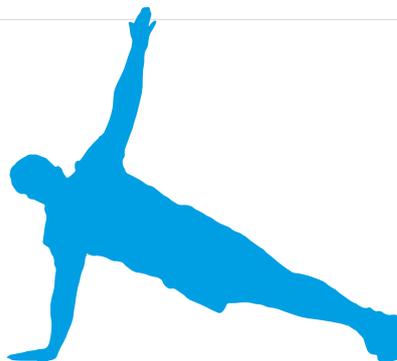
2. PRE-ACTIVATION

The progressive nature of the programme improves muscle activation and enables them to respond better to the demands of exercise.



3. FUNCTIONAL CONDITIONING

Over time functional power and strength develops which increases flexibility and range of movement.



4. PHYSICAL ROBUSTNESS

Develops the muscles, tendons and ligaments ability to endure physical demands and forces placed on them during exercise.



USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

To find out more about the different programmes visit **Activate**.



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Well run rugby clubs are support hubs for their local communities. Through RugbySafe, there is additional advice and assistance for rugby clubs which are so often support hubs for their local communities. A dedicated RugbySafe mental health resource for the community game is now available.

The resource has been developed in partnership with Simplyhealth and was researched and prepared by the Mental Health Foundation to provide help to rugby communities and recognise symptoms of poor mental health, allowing them to direct members towards professionals if needed.

There are a number of resources available including on demand webinars and club posters.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

Visit the **RugbySafe Mental Health and Wellbeing page** for more information and to access the resources.



RESEARCH & INJURY SURVEILLANCE

As part of the RugbySafe commitment, the RFU is constantly engaged with research into player safety. It conducts its own research, commissions independent studies and collaborates closely with other sports and rugby unions.

The RFU commissions an annual Injury Surveillance Report and Prevention Project in the professional, amateur, women's and youth formats of the game.

These reports form one of the largest and longest running injury surveillance projects in the world.

They are freely available to the general public and allow for the targeted investigation of specific areas of injury risk and the development of evidence-based strategies to reduce injury risk.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

For more information and how your club/school can get involved please visit the [Research](#) page.

OTHER RELATED INFORMATION

Clubsupport The Club Support Centre is the RFU's online hub to help clubs access guidance and support easily and quickly, it includes the Helpdesk FAQs that cover topics on many different areas of community rugby.

RFU Training Course Booklet (PDF) provides an overview of all the courses available for coaches, match officials, First Aiders, Health Care Professionals and other volunteers.

The Age Grade Rugby Code of Practice provide practical support and best practice to those delivering the Age Grade game. The Codes give practical advice on how to adopt a safe, player-centred and holistic approach to rugby and support the application of Regulation 15.

Safeguarding The RFU Safeguarding guidance and policy provides information for clubs and the importance of creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for everyone to play and enjoy rugby union.

The **RFU Injured Players Foundation (IPF)** provides support and information to rugby players in England who sustain catastrophic injuries. They also help prevent future injuries through research and education.

The **Anti-doping and Illicit drugs** guidance provides information relevant for both elite and grassroots players.

Food for Rugby provides information and guidance on the use of supplements and nutrition awareness.



[ENGLANDRUGBY.COM/RUGBYSAFE](https://www.englandrugby.com/rugbysafe)



[FACEBOOK.COM/RUGBYSAFERFU](https://www.facebook.com/rugbysaferfu)



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