

SHARING CONCERNS

The RFU want to ensure that everyone in rugby feels confident to raise concerns without worry or fear of reprisal. Anyone with concerns about the behaviour or conduct of anyone in rugby that may be harmful to a child or adult at risk must disclose their concerns as soon as possible and report to either their Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO) Constituent Body Safeguarding Manager (CBSM) or the RFU Safeguarding Team via safeguarding@rfu.com.

The RFU Safeguarding Referral Form can be used by anyone who wishes to make a referral and is an important document for CSOs to familiarise themselves with. It is not your responsibility to investigate any concerns or worries that are shared with you.

The below guidance takes mandatory expectations from the RFU Safeguarding Policy, and supplements this with additional information that clubs might find useful.

WHAT DO I DO WHEN SOMEONE SHARES A CONCERN WITH ME?

If a safeguarding concern is shared with you, please:

- Listen carefully and keep an open mind. You should not make a decision as to whether the abuse has taken place or express your views or feelings about the concern. If you appear shocked or as if you don't believe them, the person sharing the concern may stop talking and retract
- Do not ask leading questions. You should not ask a question that suggests its answer. Do not interrupt to ask them questions. Allow the person to finish anything they have to say and to explain to you the information in their own way. You must be patient during this process
- Do not make promises of confidentiality or outcome. You must explain that you need to pass on the information following the RFU Safeguarding Children (or Adult at Risk) Policy so that the correct action can be taken
- Make sure you keep a sufficient written record. The record should include: the date and time, the place of the conversation, and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. Try to use their words and language as much as possible and try to take notes once they have finished talking to you. Otherwise, they may think you're not paying attention or taking them seriously. The RFU Safeguarding Referral Form offers prompts regarding appropriate information to record
- Explain what you'll do next. Explain that you'll have to pass this information on so you can help them. If they do not consent to you passing information on, explain to them that you must if there is a legitimate interest in safeguarding wellbeing

- Report what you have been told as soon as possible. Do this so the details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly. It is helpful to take notes as soon as you can and try to ensure these notes are as accurate as possible and add a date so that you can confirm when they were taken at a later date if necessary. Seek advice from the RFU Safeguarding Team or statutory agencies immediately if other physical evidence is available
- Do not dissuade someone from sharing concerns with external agencies. If someone has a concern that they wish to share with the police, Children's Services or any other statutory agency, the club should make sure that they offer the appropriate support where possible

Gathering information regarding the concern should never delay your referral to the RFU. If you are ever unsure of how to handle a situation, or are unsure of what steps to take, contact the RFU Safeguarding Team at the earliest opportunity and ask for help.

WHO DO I PASS THE INFORMATION TO?

You must share any concern you receive as soon as possible and in line with the reporting procedures described in the RFU Safeguarding Children Policy, or if the concern regards an adult, the RFU Safeguarding Adults Policy.

Information on the reporting procedures can also be found in the Sharing Concerns section of our website.

If you are ever unsure of who to report a concern to, contact the RFU Safeguarding Team as soon as possible, via safeguarding@rfu.com , or you can call the NSPCC hotline on 0808 800 5000, or in the event of an emergency, call 999.

It is important to deal with safeguarding concerns sensitively and confidentially. The RFU Safeguarding Team will take responsibility or offer advice regarding sharing information with others that may need to know.

CONTACT US

SAFEGUARDING@RFU.COM

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

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