



FIRST AID AND IMMEDIATE CARE PROVISION TO PLAYERS IN RFU COMMUNITY CLUBS

With effect from start of 2014/15 Season

INTRODUCTION

Clubs have a responsibility towards the health and safety of those people who use the club facilities. During rugby activities, in common with all sports, players, officials or spectators may suffer injury or sudden illness. While the arrangements for spectators and officials are likely to be the same as for any other sport, because rugby is a full contact sport, the arrangements for players will need to reflect this. It is the club's or organiser's responsibility to ensure that arrangements are in place so that participants receive appropriate immediate attention if they are injured or taken ill, until the emergency services arrive.

While there is a general requirement, it should be recognised that there is variation in the level of care that that would be considered appropriate and this will depend on the individual circumstances at the club or venue. It will also depend on what is reasonably practicable for the club or organiser to provide; it is not reasonably practicable to expect a Level 11 club to provide the same level of care as that provided in the Premiership.

In order to provide a safe environment in which the game can be enjoyed by all, clubs should encourage members, coaches and volunteers to attend a first aid training course so that they can respond to basic first aid situations with confidence.

This document provides information on all aspects of first aid and will be of interest to rugby administrators, club administrators, players, parents, volunteers, first aiders and health care professionals involved in rugby, specifically those playing at level 3 and below, as well as in CB representative sides. Premiership and Championship clubs have their own set of minimum criteria in relation to medical matters.

Clubs which have employees (including any paid players as they are 'deployed' or 'employed' by the club) may fall under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 (SI 1982 No 917). These require employers to provide suitable first-aid equipment, facilities and personnel to enable immediate assistance to be given to employees if they are injured or become ill at work. Detailed information can be found in [First aid at work. The Health and Safety \(First-Aid\) Regulations 1981](#)

Schools, Universities and Further Education Colleges have their own regulations on first aid provision, which will inform their risk assessment and thus their level of provision.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLUB MANAGEMENT

Clubs and other bodies who organise activities such as sport, have the following responsibilities with respect to safety and first aid:

- Complete a risk assessment to determine the appropriate level of first aid provision.
- Ensure that providers are appropriately trained and undertake recertification in accordance with their qualification
- Ensure that the procedures for the recording and reporting of incidents are followed.
- Ensure that suitable first aid facilities and equipment are available.
- Ensure that there is adequate cover to allow for absences.

RISK ASSESSMENT

During any activity, the number and type of first aid personnel and facilities should be based on a risk assessment. This process is no different from other risk assessments carried out for Health and Safety purposes. Guidance on this is provided on the RFU web site

www.rfu.com/ManagingRugby/ClubDevelopment/LegalAndAdmin

In assessing the need, the club/organiser should consider the following:

- Playing and non-playing hazards and risks.
- The club's history of injuries and accidents, including any relevant research (See Annex A)
- The number of people involved (players and spectators).
- The needs of players at away matches
- The nature (adult/child) and distribution of the players (size of site or more than one site).
- The remoteness of the site from emergency medical services.
- Use of shared facilities and first aid resources
- Holiday and other absences of first aid trained personnel.
- Additional requirements for special groups i.e. children, disabled players.

Once the risk assessment is complete and the level of first aid cover has been decided, additional risk management measures should be considered:

- Emergency procedures should be developed and readily available (for further guidance on emergency procedures visit www.rfu.com/ManagingRugby/FirstAid)
- Emergency services contact details must be readily available;
- Ambulance access to the pitch/training ground must be maintained at all times.
- Establish contacts with the local NHS Ambulance Trust and Hospital Emergency Department. Maintain a good level of communication with them on the clubs activities, especially festivals.
- Appropriate first aid facilities and equipment based on their risk assessment and level of training of personnel.
- Regular training of personnel in assisting first aiders should be carried out.
- First aid equipment must be appropriately, stored, maintained, and cleaned.

FIRST AID & IMMEDIATE CARE PROVIDERS AND TRAINING

Clubs should also be aware that there are different levels of training required in order to provide first aid and immediate care cover. These are outlined below.

Emergency or Sports First Aider

The Emergency or Sports First Aider is the entry level first aid qualification and is a Level 2 qualification on the National Qualifications Framework. This course takes a minimum of 6 hours training and a certificate will be issued by a recognised awarding body. The course content must be appropriate for the activities to be covered.

They are trained to:

- Take charge when someone is injured or ill, including calling an ambulance if required;
- Provide emergency first aid to injured or ill persons until more expert help arrives;
- Look after the first aid equipment, e.g. restocking the first aid box.

They should not attempt to give first aid for which they have not been trained.

Every squad/team should have a nominated Emergency or Sports First Aider to provide help to any injured or ill player until more expert help arrives. This training is suitable for any member of the team management, coaching staff, a player or a volunteer. Having a number of individuals trained to this level will ensure that this basic level of cover is available at all matches and training sessions.

In HSE Regulations, the Appointed Person role remains and there will continue to be no regulatory requirement for such personnel to undertake first aid training. Although appointed persons may undertake basic first aid training they would not be formally recognised as "First Aiders" in HSE regulatory terms.

The RFU course has been developed to meet the needs of the manager, coach player or volunteer providing first aid on the pitch side in rugby and is accredited on the National Qualifications Framework funding may be available from Local Authorities/ Community Sports Partnerships.

Examples of other suitable courses:

- St John Ambulance Sports First Aid course
- Red Cross Basic First Aid Course

If selecting an alternative course, clubs should ensure that it meets their needs. Issues to consider:

- Any courses should have a quality assurance process (shown by an accreditation mark from a body such as Ofqual) and a refresher training programme.
- The course should cover both common rugby injuries (such as concussion) and rare but serious injuries (such as spinal injury) in sufficient detail.
- What experience and qualifications does the trainer have? E.g. medical background, years of tutor experience, knowledge of rugby.
- How many people will be in the training session? Suggested maximum: 16 per trainer.
- What insurance does the trainer have? E.g. personal liability cover.
- What resources are provided for out of course learning? E.g. training manual.

Club/School First Aider

A First Aider holds a current First Aid certificate issued by a recognised awarding body i.e. Ofqual approved training organisation, HSE First Aid at Work approved training organisation, Red Cross or St John Ambulance.

A First Aider may be any of the following:

- Lay volunteer
- Allied Health Professional e.g. Sports Therapist, Sports Massage Therapist
- Health Care Professional e.g. Physiotherapist

Allied Health Professionals:

- **Sports Therapist.** He/she should be registered as a full member with the Society of Sports Therapists, and have appropriate experience and training in first aid or immediate care. First Aid training is mandatory in Sports Therapy degree programmes recognised by the Society. For more information visit www.society-of-sports-therapists.org
- **Sports Massage Therapist** He/she should be registered as a full member with the Sports Massage Association at Level 3 or 4 membership, and have appropriate experience and training in first aid or immediate care. For more information visit www.sportsmassageassociation.org

Clubs which have employees may actually fall under the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 (SI 1982 No 917) and will need to refer to these. Guidance is available at www.hse.gov.uk/firstaid/

The first aid landscape is not clearly defined (except for those subject to the Health & Safety at Work (H&SAW) Act) and there are a range of courses, training organisations and individual trainers. The HSE regulations do however provide a benchmark, and a club First Aider should undergo training to the same level as First Aid at Work (FAW), which is a three day course.

Clubs may consider it appropriate to have a small number of club officials and/or volunteers trained to this level. Alternatively they may decide to engage the services of trained first aiders from outside the club. When using external providers, it is the club's responsibility to check that the individuals are appropriately trained and experienced.

Examples of suitable courses:

- HSE First Aid at Work
- St John Ambulance Activity First Aid course
- Red Cross Standard Certificate in First Aid course.

Holders of an HSE First Aid at Work certificate must undergo re-certification every 3 years and it is strongly advised that they undertake refresher training on an annual basis.

Immediate Care Practitioner

There are a number of different therapists and Health Care Professionals (HCP) involved in sport, examples are set out below. Clubs should ensure that the individual therapist/HCP has the relevant qualifications, experience and insurance for the role. Preferably there should be a formal agreement which covers roles and responsibilities. These individuals will 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.

Therapists/HCPs must be able to provide evidence of registration with or membership of their relevant regulatory body or society to help clubs in this process:

Allied Health Professionals:

- **Sports Rehabilitators.** He/she should be registered as a full member with BASRaT (British Association of Sports (pending BASRaT's application for inclusion of members on Health Professions Council) and have appropriate experience and training in first aid or immediate care. For more information visit www.basrat.org
- **Sports Therapist.** He/she should be registered as a full member with the Society of Sports Therapists, and have appropriate experience and training in first aid or immediate care. First Aid training is mandatory in Sports Therapy degree programmes recognised by the Society. For more information visit www.society-of-sports-therapists.org

Health Care Professionals:

- **Paramedic.** He/she should be registered with the Health Professions Council (HPC) as a State Registered Paramedic, and have appropriate experience in providing cover for rugby or other contact sports. If working outside the NHS they will require their own indemnity insurance. Registration status can be checked at www.hpc-uk.org/
- **Nurse.** He/she should be registered with the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (UKCC), and have appropriate experience and training in immediate care. A nurses registration status can be checked at www.nmc-uk.org/
- **Physiotherapist.** He/she should be registered with the Health Professions Council (HPC) as a Physiotherapist, and have appropriate experience and training in immediate care. Registration status can be checked at www.hpc-uk.org/. More information on physiotherapists is available at www.csp.org.uk
- **Doctor.** He/she should be registered with the General Medical Council (GMC), and have appropriate experience and training in immediate care. A doctors registration status can be checked at www.gmc-uk.org
- **Osteopath.** He/she should be registered with the General Osteopathy Council (HPC) as an Osteopath, and have appropriate experience and training in immediate care. For more information visit www.osteopathy.org.uk
- **Chiropractor.** He/she should be registered with the (HPC) as a Chiropractor, and have appropriate experience and training in immediate care. For more information visit www.gcc-uk.org

Examples of immediate care courses approved or accredited by the Faculty of Pre-hospital Care (Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh) available include:

- RFU Immediate Care in Sport Course (ICIS). There are two levels; Level 2 (one day) and Level 3 (two day). Booking via: www.rfu.com/managingrugby/firstaid/coursesandguidelines/icis
- Rugby Football League Course
- Jockey Club Course
- Resuscitation and Emergency Medicine On-field Course (REMO)
- AREA Course (Football Association)
- Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Course

- BASICS Immediate Care Course
- Advanced Trauma Life Support Course (orientated towards hospital based care)

LEVELS OF PROVISION

The level of cover that it is reasonable and practicable to provide will depend on the individual circumstances of the club or event organiser.

Clubs which have the resources, and where it is reasonable to do so would need to consider engaging the services of health care professionals and providing appropriate equipment and facilities.

Details of the likely appropriate level of provision are provided at Annex B, although the actual level of provision will depend on each individual club's risk assessment. Teams should usually provide their own cover, even when playing away fixtures. The following situations may occur, however:

- Where it is appropriate for a single provider to cover the home and away teams, it will usually be the home team that is responsible for provision although this must be agreed in advance to avoid confusion, as the visiting team has a shared responsibility to ensure provision.
- Where a game is arranged at a neutral venue, the organiser is responsible for ensuring the appropriate level of provision. This could be provided by the venue but again, this must be agreed in advance to avoid confusion.

FIRST AID EQUIPMENT

Once an assessment of first aid provider needs has been carried out, the findings can be used to decide what first aid equipment should be provided. The minimum level of first aid equipment is likely to be a suitably stocked first aid box for the club house and first aid bags for pitch-side trained personnel. A suggested contents list for a basic pitch side first aid bag is available from the RFU website (www.rfu.com/FirstAid).

First aid equipment should only be provided appropriate to the level of training of the first aider or immediate care provider.

Although there is no specified review timetable, many items, particularly sterile ones, are marked with expiry dates. They should be replaced by the dates given and expired items disposed of safely. In cases where sterile items have no dates, it would be advisable to check with the manufacturers to find out how long they can be kept. For non-sterile items without dates, it is a matter of judgement, based on whether they are fit for purpose.

FIRST AID FACILITIES

Where their assessment identifies this as necessary and reasonably practicable, clubs should provide a suitable first aid room or rooms. The room should be warm, have good lighting, and contain essential first aid facilities and equipment. Suggested specification includes the following:

- A sink with hot and cold running water;
- Drinking water and disposable cups;
- Soap and paper towels;
- A refuse container;
- A store for first aid materials;
- A container for the safe disposal of clinical waste;
- A couch with waterproof protection, clean pillows and blankets;
- A chair;
- A telephone or other communication equipment;
- A record book for recording incidents where first aid has been given.

Wherever possible, the room should be reserved specifically for providing first aid and your designated person (first aider or appointed person) should be given responsibility for the room. It should be easily accessible to stretchers and be clearly signposted and identified.

FIRST AID SIGNS

All First Aid at Work first aid boxes must have a white cross on a green background. Similarly, first aid rooms should be easily identifiable by white lettering or a white cross on a green background. The signs should be placed where they can be seen and easily identified.

RECORD KEEPING

It is good practice to provide your First Aiders with a book in which to record incidents that required their attendance. The information kept can help you identify injury and accident trends and possible areas for improvement in the control of health and safety risks. It can also be used for reference in future risk assessments. This record book is not the same as the statutory accident book required under the H&SAW Regulations, though the two could be combined.

Useful information to record will include:

- Date, time and place of incident;
- Name and job of the injured or ill person;
- Details of the injury/illness and what first aid was given;
- What happened to the person immediately afterwards (for example went home, went back to work, went to hospital);
- Name and signature of the first aider or person dealing with the incident.

It is usual for the first aider or appointed person to be responsible for the book. However, clubs retain overall responsibility for ensuring that records are maintained.

REPORTING OF INJURIES

Certain clubs with employees will be subject to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995. For those there is a legal requirement to report accidents

and ill health at work. Information on this is given by the HSE. The RFU's injury reporting requirements are detailed on the RFU website (www.rfu.com/ManagingRugby/FirstAid/Injuries.aspx) and in the RFU Handbook. RFU 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 6 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 Sports Injuries Administrator Helpline 0800 298 0102, as soon as the seriousness of the player's condition is confirmed and certainly within 48 hours of the game or training session.
2. Please have a pen and paper ready, and the details of the incident to provide. Out of working hours there will be a recorded message that provides contact details of the Injured Player Welfare Officer (IPWO). You will be asked to email or fax a Reportable Injury Event report form, which can be downloaded or printed off from the RFU website (rfu.com/firstaid).
3. The IPWO will then establish contact with the club and player or their family in order to confirm the injury, initiate the support provided by the Injured Players Foundation, and collect additional information about the injury.
4. The club/school must notify their insurers. The RFU insurers are
Marsh Sports Group (Claims)
Tel: 0131 311 4254
Fax: 0131 343 6667
Email: Susan.J.Thomson@marsh.com
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 or hearsay, or apportion or infer blame. They must be signed and dated by the person making them.

Details of this protocol, the necessary forms and additional information are available on the RFU web site (www.rfu.com/firstaid). If you have any queries, you can also contact either the Sports Injuries Administrator or the Injured Player Welfare Officer as follows:

Sports Injuries Administrator (SIA):

Rugby House, Twickenham Stadium,
200 Whitton Road,
Twickenham, TW2 7BA
Tel: 0800 298 0102
Fax: 0208 831 7684
email: sportsinjuriesadmin@therfu.com

RFU IPF - Injured Player Welfare Officer:

David Phillips,

Tel: 07894 489 716

email: davephillips@rfu.com

DISCIPLINE

RFU Regulation 9.2 states that:

The safety of all players is of paramount importance and therefore all clubs must ensure that, wherever the game is played or training is conducted:

- (a) there is appropriate first aid cover and equipment provided, determined by an appropriate and properly conducted risk assessment;
- (b) there is access to a telephone to ensure emergency services can be called immediately; and
- (c) there is clear vehicular access for an ambulance or other emergency vehicle.

Failure to comply with this regulation could result in disciplinary action being taken against clubs.

LEGAL LIABILITY

It is very unlikely that any action would be taken against a first aider who was using the first aid training they have received. The RFU Compulsory Insurance provides cover for first aiders carrying out their duties for the club (clubs should however, check their insurance policies and satisfy themselves that they have adequate cover).

Clubs/organisers should check that any healthcare professionals, who are engaged to provide services, have their own indemnity. Clubs/organisers who engage such personnel may have a vicarious liability for their actions and should ensure that their insurance cover is appropriate. For clubs below level 4, the RFU Public Liability insurance does provide a level of cover for non-health care professionals. Failure to comply with RFU Regulation 9 may invalidate any public liability.

SUMMARY

Clubs and organisers of rugby activities are responsible for providing an appropriate level of care to the players, members and spectators using their facilities. There is considerable variation in level of care that that would be considered appropriate and this will depend on the individual circumstances at the club or venue. It will also depend on what is reasonably practicable for the club or organiser to provide. An individual risk based approach is therefore the most appropriate to take, in determining the requirement. Additional information and guidance can be obtained from the RFU Community Rugby Medical Dept, email health@rfu.com

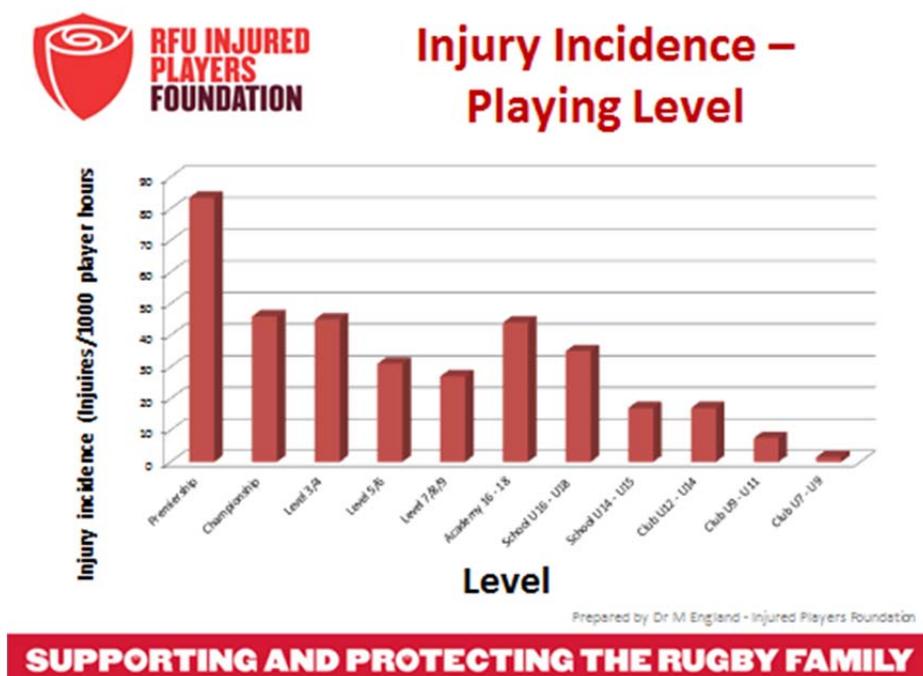
**Approved by RFU Game Development Medical and Sport Science Technical Advisory Group
for implementation from season 2014/2015**

ANNEX A

Information to Support Risk Assessments

Information from RFU and IPF research is available to help inform risk assessments. Various reports and articles can be accessed at www.rfu.com/takingpart/playerhealth.

1. **Risk by Age.** The chart below demonstrates why U16-U18 is a focus area and why the minimum levels have been adjusted as a result of research.



2. **Number of Practitioners.** This is based on the following:
 - a. **Management of severe/catastrophic injuries.** Suspected, severe and catastrophic injuries require a minimum of two practitioners to provide adequate care i.e. first to stabilise the neck and the second to assess and manage other injuries. The minimum levels below provide a minimum of 2 trained practitioners at every game, with opposition medical staff providing mutual support in such circumstances. If a practitioner is required to accompany a player to hospital, this enables cover to be continued to be provided.
 - b. **Frequency of injuries.** The CRISP data shows that there are on average around 5 injuries per team per game. To ensure safe assessments and on-going off-field management of this number of injuries per game requires each team to have its own practitioner.
 - c. **Avoidance of conflict.** There have been examples of coaches/players refusing to accept the opinion/advice of opposition practitioners, with accusations of bias. Individual team provision avoids such situations arising.

ANNEX B

Minimum Levels of Immediate Care and/or First Aid Cover for Rugby Union Matches

Below are the MINIMUM levels of cover and the actual provision MUST be based on a formal RISK ASSESSMENT, especially for festivals

Adult Men	Immediate Care Practitioner	First Aid Trained Therapist/HCP	Sports First Aider	Club/School First Aider
Level 3 & 4	1 per team			
Level 5 – 7		1 per team	+ 1 per team	
Level 8 & below			1 per team	+ 1 per venue
2 nd and Lower XVs (see note 3 below)				
FE and HE establishments outside club leagues			1 per team	+ 1 per venue
7s/10s Tournament/Festival (see note 5 below)	1 per venue		+ 1 per team	
Touch/Tag			1 per pitch	
Adult Women				
Premiership/Championship/Divisions	1 per team			
Leagues, 2 nd and Lower XVs			1 per team	
FE and HE establishments outside club leagues			1 per team	+ 1 per venue
7s/10s Tournament/Festival (see note 5 below)	1 per venue		+ 1 per team	
Touch/Tag			1 per pitch	
Age Grade				
Club/FE College/School U18			1 per team	1 per venue
Club/School U14 - U16			1 per team	1 per venue
Club/School U7 – U13			1 per team	1 per venue
7s/10s Tournament/Festival (see note 5 below)	1 per venue		1 per team	
Tag/Touch			1 per venue	
Other Tournament/Festival	1 per venue		1 per team	

Representative - CB/County/Division	Immediate Care Practitioner	First Aid Trained Therapist/HCP	Sports First Aider	Club/School First Aider
Adult	1 per team		+ 1 per team	
U18	1 per team		+ 1 per team	
U16	1 per team		+ 1 per team	
U15 and below		1 per team		
England Rugby DPP (Matches only)	1 per team			

Notes:

1. Where matches or training are on more than one site then each site will require the appropriate level of cover
2. Where the guidelines indicate that a Club/School First Aider may cover more than one pitch, Emergency First Aiders provide pitch side cover, with the Club/School First Aider available and easily contactable by radio or mobile telephone.
3. Club 2nd XVs to adopt minimum criteria of 2 League Levels below their 1st XV. Club 3rd & subsequent XVs adopt one level lower respectively
4. Schools, FE Colleges and Universities have their own regulations provided by local/national Government, which they must comply with if it is of a higher level.
5. Such tournaments and festivals should have a dedicated First Aid Room or Tent.

The table below shows the type of practitioner and the qualification required to fulfil the requirement in the table above.

Types of Practitioner	Immediate Care Practitioner	First Aid Therapist/Health Care Professional	Sports First Aid	Club/School First Aider
Doctor	RFU ICIS Level 2	NQF Level 3 First Aid	RFU NQF Level 2 Sports First Aid	NQF Level 3 First Aid
Physiotherapist	RFU ICIS Level 2	NQF Level 3 First Aid	RFU NQF Level 2 Sports First Aid	NQF Level 3 First Aid
Graduate Sport Rehabilitator	RFU ICIS Level 2	NQF Level 3 First Aid	RFU NQF Level 2 Sports First Aid	NQF Level 3 First Aid
Sports Therapist	RFU ICIS Level 2	NQF Level 3 First Aid	RFU NQF Level 2 Sports First Aid	NQF Level 3 First Aid
Sports Massage Therapist		NQF Level 3 First Aid	RFU NQF Level 2 Sports First Aid	NQF Level 3 First Aid

Types of Practitioner	Immediate Care Practitioner	First Aid Therapist/Health Care Professional	Sports First Aid	Club/School First Aider
Osteopath	RFU ICIS Level 2	NQF Level 3 First Aid	RFU NQF Level 2 Sports First Aid	NQF Level 3 First Aid
Chiropractor	RFU ICIS Level 2	NQF Level 3 First Aid	RFU NQF Level 2 Sports First Aid	NQF Level 3 First Aid
State Registered Paramedic	RFU ICIS Level 2	NQF Level 3 First Aid	RFU NQF Level 2 Sports First Aid	NQF Level 3 First Aid
Registered Nurse	RFU ICIS Level 2	NQF Level 3 First Aid	RFU NQF Level 2 Sports First Aid	NQF Level 3 First Aid
St John Ambulance/Red Cross First Aider			RFU NQF Level 2 Sports First Aid	NQF Level 3 First Aid
Coach/Referee/Volunteer			RFU NQF Level 2 Sports First Aid	NQF Level 3 First Aid

Notes:

1. **RFU Immediate Care in Sport (ICIS) Level 2** – equivalent Faculty of Pre-hospital Care courses accredited courses are also acceptable as long as the content is appropriate for rugby.
2. **NQF Level 3 First Aid** – many courses are available and are usually conducted over 2 days. Schools, FE Colleges and Universities usually provide these courses for their staff.
3. **RFU NQF Level 2 Sports First Aid** – equivalent courses are acceptable as long as the content is appropriate for rugby. They are usually conducted in 1 day.

Minimum Levels of Immediate Care and/or First Aid Cover for Rugby Union Training

Type of Training	Minimum Level of Cover	Notes
Non-Contact	RFU NQF Level 2 Sports First Aid	Or equivalent
Contact	As for match cover	Any session where >50% involves full contact, and any session with live scrummaging