

INFORMATION FOR THOSE WHO HAVE HAD A CONCERN RAISED AGAINST THEM

The RFU recognises that having a concern or allegation raised against you regarding your behaviour towards children can be distressing. If a concern or allegation is raised against you, we recommend that you familiarise yourself with the RFU Safeguarding Children Policy, as well as this document, to gain an understanding of the process. The RFU also recognises that circumstances such as these can cause feelings of anxiety, and if you feel your mental health is being affected, please make use of the resources listed on the [mental health and wellbeing section of our website](#).

Most people who work or volunteer with children in rugby provide safe and supportive environments for children. However, sometimes the conduct of an individual might be brought into question or might result in an allegation of harm or abuse of a child being made against them.

The welfare of children in rugby is paramount and all allegations that relate to the welfare of children will be treated seriously, in line with government advice in [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#), [Regulation 21](#), and the [RFU Safeguarding Children Policy](#).

You should also ensure you direct any questions you have to either the RFU Safeguarding Team, via safeguarding@rfu.com or your Club Committee.

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

WHAT IS AN ALLEGATION?

The RFU Safeguarding Team will have oversight of any investigation and/or assessment when there is an allegation that an individual who works or volunteers with children may have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child in a way that indicates the individual would pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children
- breached the RFU Safeguarding Children Policy, or the policy of their club
- An allegation may also be referred to as a concern, and it can refer to non-recent or recent behaviour. Concerns and allegations can arise in relation to:
 - your role in a position of trust with children
 - your own children, or those that live in your household
 - other children living outside your household
 - whether you're adequately safeguarding children from others who pose a risk

Concerns and allegations can be raised by anyone in the club, including children, and are encouraged to be reported to the CSO as soon as possible. They may be raised verbally or in writing and the CSO must pass concerns on to the Constituent Body Safeguarding Manager, the RFU Safeguarding Team, and possibly external bodies such as the Local Authority or Police.

THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER

If you have been involved in an incident that brings into question your suitability to work or volunteer with children, or if an allegation has been made against you, certain procedures will be followed by the RFU, as per Regulation 21 and the RFU Safeguarding Children Policy.

Where certain conditions are met, the RFU must consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and will work in conjunction with them. Every Local Authority has a LADO who is responsible for coordinating the response to any concerns that an adult who works or volunteers with children may have harmed a child.

The LADO will review the information provided and, if necessary, share the information with Children's Social Care Services, schools and/or Police. This could result in a criminal investigation, a joint police/social care investigation, or referral back to the RFU for an internal safeguarding or disciplinary investigation. If passed back to the RFU, the LADO will advise and make recommendations about how the RFU should deal with the alleged concern.

It is **extremely** important to note that the outcome of an investigation managed by either the LADO or the RFU is based on the civil threshold of 'balance of probability', which is different to the criminal threshold of 'beyond all reasonable doubt'. Therefore, the finding of the police may differ from the finding of the LADO or RFU.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

If it is believed that there is a legitimate safeguarding need, the RFU might impose an Interim Bar restricting your involvement in children's rugby on a temporary basis pending the outcome of an investigation. An Interim Bar is a neutral, precautionary measure, intended to safeguard the interests of all parties during a period of investigation. The bar is not a penalty and implies no assumption of guilt.

Safeguarding investigations are handled by the RFU Safeguarding Team and presented to the RFU's Referral Management Group (RMG) for consideration. The RMG is a multi-disciplinary group appointed by the RFU. It includes safeguarding experts from both within and outside the RFU and is charged with assessing the risk that individuals pose to children and adults at risk in rugby.

During the investigation, you can expect the RFU to keep you updated on the investigative process in a timely manner, in writing. However, it must be noted, if the police are handling the investigation, the RFU will not be kept up to date with proceedings until the police have an outcome. Therefore, they will be able to provide little in the way of updates on the investigation.

In the long term, if an allegation is substantiated, the RFU may impose an Indefinite Bar restricting your involvement in rugby. If you are removed from working or volunteering with children indefinitely, the RFU may also refer you to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

CONTACT US

SAFEGUARDING@RFU.COM

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

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