



NEWCASTLE RUGBY LIMITED AND NEWCASTLE RUGBY FOUNDATION

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE 2024/25

CHILD PROTECTION AND VULNERABLE ADULTS
PROCEDURES

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1. BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Our aim is to create a culture where everyone feels confident to safely welcome people from every background and raise legitimate concerns without prejudice to their own position. Staff and volunteers should be positive role models.

While remembering that it is the safety and welfare of children and Vulnerable Adults that is of paramount importance. There will be times when those responsible will need to exercise discretion and common sense to ensure their well-being. This guidance is designed to provide practical information on several different topics which may be useful and will help to create safe, friendly, and welcoming environment for all.

Further guidance is available from a variety of sources detailed at the end of this document. If in doubt, please speak to your DSL or Deputy.

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

- Communication with group leaders and parents prior to the event to understand any needs of the group for example disabilities.
- Communication with participants - messages relating to children sent via telephone, emails, texts, WhatsApp, social media should be through their parents/guardians. However, where appropriate young people (14+) may be contacted by staff. Adults without a DBS check should not be in a group with children unless a risk assessment has taken place with the DSL.
- Risk assessments - carry out a risk assessment and make provision with any concerns arising.
- Ratios - Understand the appropriate adult: participant ratio for each activity considering type of activity, age, location, and any additional needs. A participant and staff member should never be alone unless under extreme medical emergencies. See guidance later in the document.
- Residential camps – any residential camps / overnight stays should be subject to a specific risk assessment ahead of the event and signed off by the DSL.
- Partner responsibilities - When working with partners, ensure you are all clear on the service level agreements and where responsibilities lie .

For example, with school groups at least one member of school staff should be always present during curriculum sessions and are responsible for signing participants in and out of sessions. Out of curriculum sessions a member of school staff should be on the premises and contactable at all times.

- Permissions & emergency contact details – Ensure you have the permission and emergency contact details of those responsible for the participants to take part if the participants are unsupervised.
- Medical responsibilities - Ensure you have medical information of any person left within your care. Participants should always administer their own regulated medication unless a specific request has been sanctioned by the DSL.
- Injuries – Ensure you have appropriate first aid expertise or cover via considerations made in your risk assessment. Do not touch any patient unless it is beneficial to the participant and follow the guidance below in the physical handling section.
- Appropriate relationships & language - An adult in a position of trust must not enter any intimate relationship with a child in their care. Sexual intercourse, sexual activity, or inappropriate touching by an adult with a child under the age of 16 years is a criminal offence. Please see definitions of children and vulnerable adults applicable to this policy. This includes sending or showing children inappropriate or sexually provocative messages or images by text or any electronic media. Making sexually explicit comments to children or vulnerable adults is unacceptable, as is the use of obscene or foul language.
- Indecent Images of Children (IIOC) Taking, making, sharing and possessing indecent images and pseudo-photographs of people under 18 is illegal, this is regardless of the relationship between the parties even if they are in a consensual relationship.. A pseudo-photograph is an image made by computer-graphics or otherwise which appears to be a photograph. This can include:
 - photos
 - videos
 - tracings and derivatives of a photograph
 - data that can be converted into a photograph
- Social Media - Staff and volunteers should also consider their actions on social media which also form a part of the high standards of personal behaviour we expect, this includes posting or commenting on any issues considered to be abusive, racist, homophobic, misogynistic, transphobic, or bullying.
- Changing rooms - Adults and children should never use the same changing facilities. There may be occasions when a young person 16 years (in line with GB guidelines) are allowed to play with the first team and it may be appropriate for them to share changing facilities. However, this should only be allowed with the permission of the Child's parent/guardian.



- Adults must only enter changing rooms of children when necessary due to poor behaviour, injury or illness. Unless in an extreme emergency, adults should never enter a changing room without warning and should be always accompanied by another adult.
- Separate facilities for mixed gender activities are always necessary for under-18s. A child or vulnerable adult should never be pressured into using the changing and/or shower facilities and should be allowed to change at home. However it is noted that the tunnel and medical room are shared facilities and players are reminded to dress appropriately at all times.
- Where a disability requires support from a parent/carer, the person concerned, and their parents/carer should be consulted, and a risk assessment documented. Newcastle Rugby manages the changing facilities and arranges for them to be supervised by two DBS checked adults of the appropriate gender for the players using the facilities.
- Contact training -Teach safe contact skills, bearing in mind the specific circumstances. The activity should always be conducted in an open environment and in the presence of another adult. Adults and children should not play contact versions of the sport together including training games or contact drills. Unless the GB rules apply. (i.e. 16+) They may play either tag or touch rugby together if these games are managed and organised appropriately.
- Physical handling by a coach must only be used for safety reasons or where there is no other way of coaching the technique. The reasons for physical contact should be explained wherever practicable so that children and their parents are comfortable with this approach. In a situation where individuals must consider whether to intervene to prevent a child being injured, injuring themselves or others, physical intervention should always be avoided unless necessary. In these situations, it is imperative to:
 - Consider your own safety.
 - Give verbal instructions first.
 - Use the minimum reasonable force and only when necessary to resolve the incident, the purpose being restraint and reducing risk.
 - Do not strike blows, act with unnecessary force, or retaliate. Avoid contact with intimate parts of the body, the head and neck.
 - Stay in control of your actions.

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

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

Children must never travel alone in this instance. Parental/ school consent must be sought before the event and the adults' details shared. No child should be in a staff member /volunteers' car alone unless in extenuating circumstances (such as a medical emergency). In this scenario the child should sit in the back of the car and be consulted to ensure they are happy with the arrangement. Parents/carers should be informed of this at the earliest opportunity. Any self-hire transport can be used subject to risk assessment and appropriate licence and insurance conditions.

- Insurance – coaches should speak to their line manager / DSL or Deputy regarding appropriate car insurance to carry participants if needed.
- Late collection – if children are not collected, staff should attempt to contact the parents and wait with the child (preferably with another adult present). If there is an extended delay, the staff member should contact the Safeguarding Team for advice. Staff should never depart the school; activity centre or rendezvous point until the safe collection of all children and young people.
- Photographic Images - permission from parents/schools/ clubs must be sought before events where photographs are being taken. Sharing of images on club websites and social media is permitted only following this approval. Any child(ren) who is not permitted in photography should not be excluded in anyway as a result of this.
- Equality & diversity – all staff and volunteers should treat everyone with respect regardless of background. They should be aware that, while we use our best endeavours to ensure we are aware of any adjustments we can make for a person's specific needs, we can never know the full history. We should never use any behaviour that may cause an individual to lose self-esteem by embarrassing, humiliating, or undermining.

- Support to children/young people at risk & vulnerable adult – staff with any concerns should always report to the DSL / deputy and never allow allegations to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon. Risk assessments that specifically review and allow for adjustments to be made to enable the safe and enjoyable participation on specific groups should be undertaken.

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

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



2. SAFER RECRUITMENT AND STAFF TRAINING

Safer Recruitment

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

Staff Training

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

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

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

- An appropriate licence, certification and/or NGB qualification within their sports delivery field prior to starting employment.
- Safeguarding and Protecting children training.
- Appointed person first aid course.
- Diversity, equality, and inclusion training

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

Staff who believe they need additional training should contact their respective DSL to organise. DSL/DSO will review training needs assessments annually.

3. REPORTING AND RECORDING

Newcastle Rugby Foundation and Newcastle Rugby use an online system named Toot Toot which allows staff to report and record safeguarding and injury concerns. The report should be submitted no later than 48 hours after the event. If the event is deemed serious, a phone call should be made to the DSL / deputy at the time of the event. The report is reviewed by the DSL / deputy and recommendations made. The DSL / deputy will make a judgement as to if the report needs to be shared with any other agencies. Cases should not be left open without comment/finalisation for 6 weeks Reports from Toot Toot should be reviewed quarterly to assess any patterns to identify risks or training needs as well as follow up actions for the individual.

The DSL for each organisation should report on safeguarding matters a minimum of twice per year to the Board of Trustees (Newcastle Rugby Foundation) and Club Board (Newcastle Rugby).

4. WHISTLEBLOWING

The Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure is designed to provide a framework within which to deal with cases of whistleblowing in order:

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

For more detail refer to Schedule 6



Protect

(Independent whistleblowing charity)

Helpline: 0203 117 2520

E-mail: whistle@pcaw.co.uk

Website: www.pcaw.co.uk

Reports from members of the public.

Incidents should be directed to

speakup@newcastle-falcons.co.uk / speakup@newcastlethunder.co.uk

newcastlethunder.co.uk.

This group includes the DSL for both Newcastle Rugby Foundation and Newcastle Rugby. The case will be assessed by the appropriate member of staff and recommendations made and actioned. These should be reported via Toot Toot.

5. THE DATA PROTECTION ACT

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

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

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

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

To help staff in their approach to data protection, there are seven golden rules which should be followed and can be found in the Child Protection Procedures.

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information
2. Be open and honest with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so
3. Seek advice if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible
4. Share with consent where appropriate and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your professional judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement of the facts of the case.
5. Consider safety and wellbeing at all times and base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Ensure the information shared is Necessary, Proportionate, Relevant, Accurate, Timely and Secure. This means, ensure the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up to date, is shared in a timely fashion and is shared securely.
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with who and for what purpose.



6. GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

Although the club are committed to doing the utmost to safeguard children and vulnerable adults from harm there may be an occasion when concern is raised over the treatment of a child or vulnerable adult.

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

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

There are complex scenarios associated with the potential for harm. These include:

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

7. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IN 4 STEPS

All members of staff employed by the Club must acknowledge the Club has a Safeguarding responsibility towards protecting all children and vulnerable adults it engages with.

This responsibility can be summarised by the following 4 step process.

RECOGNISE
RESPOND
RECORD
REFER



8. RECOGNISE

- Types, Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Types of Abuse:

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

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

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

'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) defines four main forms of abuse as follows;

Physical Abuse:

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

Emotional Abuse:

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

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

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

Sexual Abuse:

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

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

Neglect:

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

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

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

Should you have any concern that abuse is occurring you should contact the DSO immediately.

Newcastle Rugby Ltd and Newcastle Rugby Foundation also recognise the following as types of abuse that must be acted upon if suspected as taking place.

Bullying:

The government's guidance document titled 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies' (2017) defines bullying as:

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



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

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating. Since September 2014 a greater focus on how well school leaders tackle low-level disruption was included in Ofsted inspections."

Should you have any concern that bullying is occurring you should contact the DSO or deputy immediately.

Online abuse:

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

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens via the internet or web. Most commonly such abuse happens via social networking sites, online games and chat rooms although abuse experienced as a result of using mobile phones may also be considered 'online'. By engaging in such internet-based activities children may experience cyberbullying, grooming, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or emotional abuse.

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

Considering the role and status of the Club within the local community, it is considered that the Club must also maintain a position whereby they stay informed in terms of up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. Examples of such issues are listed below and in support of this, staff are encouraged to access the associated websites in order to gain an understanding of the issues themselves and how they may affect their own job roles and responsibilities.

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

Child missing from education

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

Child missing from home or care

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

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

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

Bullying including cyberbullying

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

Domestic Abuse

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

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

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

Mental health

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

Private fostering

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

Radicalisation

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

Sexting

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

Teenage relationship abuse

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



Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

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

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

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

The recognition of the signs and symptoms associated with either category could act to Safeguard a child and prevent abuse taking place and staff are expected to be aware of such behaviours, signs and symptoms and act accordingly if they have suspicions about a child or adult they work with.

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

- Unexplained bruising and injuries to uncommon injury sites (such as fleshy, meaty parts of the body such as biceps) or in a particular shape or pattern (such as a grasp mark)
- Sudden changes in behaviour such as being withdrawn.
- Loss of weight or changes in hygiene for no apparent reason
- A change observed over a long period of time.
- Use of sexually explicit or inappropriate language
- Something a child or vulnerable adult has said.
- Overly rough play or interactions with other children or vulnerable adults.

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

In terms of behaviours that cause concern, staff must be aware it can be very difficult to identify behaviours that are outright abusive and if in any doubt staff should exercise caution always discuss with their line manager or DSL/deputy.

However, this procedure supports staff fully who, after careful consideration, are concerned about the behaviour of another individual and encourages them to report their concerns with conviction in line with the responding and reporting procedures outlined below.

Behaviours that may cause concern include:

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

As with the signs and symptoms of abuse outlined above, there are other behaviours that would cause concern the list above is not exhaustive. If staff have any concerns about a person's behaviour, they must respond to and report their concerns or suspicions in line with the reporting procedures outlined below.

Additional vulnerabilities in Children

Whilst it is noted that all children you engage with at the Club are vulnerable to abuse. It is important to note that for some children there are additional factors that will make them even more vulnerable. Such additional factors are considered as 'additional vulnerabilities'.

Additional vulnerabilities that those working with children should look out for include:

- Disabilities
- Race
- Young carers
- Looked after children (LAC)
- Children in need
- Children with emotional or mental health issues.
- Children exploring their sexuality and identity.
- Children who take on leadership roles
- Talented children

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



Children with emotional or mental health issues

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

There are multiple factors that will determine the emotional and mental health of children the Club engage with. Generally speaking, the more risk factors children are exposed to the greater the potential impact on their emotional and mental health although wider, external factors may also impact this as well.

Such factors may include:

- Stress
- Desire for greater autonomy and control of decisions
- Pressure to conform with society and/or peers
- Increased access to and use of technology
- Media influence
- Witnessing violence
- Social and economic deprivation
- Parental mental ill-health
- Parental substance abuse
- Domestic violence

Where a child is facing emotional or mental ill-health, they become more vulnerable to abuse because their decision making can be impaired, misguided, or misinformed. It is noted that this includes self-harm.

They may also be unaware of their vulnerability through a lack of clarity in their thoughts and behaviours. This can lead to them exhibiting further risk-taking behaviour which places them at risk of harm.

In sport, the pressure to perform at a certain standard, represent the Club in a particular way and lead an exemplary lifestyle can often act to bring about or heighten some the issues highlighted above and as a result many of the factors discussed can materialise.

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

Children who are exploring their sexuality and identity

Where children are confused about their sexuality and/or identity or indeed where they have identified as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or another type of sexuality or identity (LGBTQ+) they may be additionally vulnerable to abuse.

There are a number of reasons for this:

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

As a result of this vulnerability, it is important the Club effectively supports children exploring their sexuality and identity in order to help keep them safe.

Talented Children:

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

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

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

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

Where staff, parents or carers have concerns about talented children the Club are working with they should contact the safeguarding team to discuss the matter further.



9. RESPOND

- Responding to a Report or Suspicion

Ensuring the individual is in or is moved to a place of safety.

It is essential that, whatever the nature of the abuse, the child or vulnerable adult concerned is separated from the person who is or is thought to be posing the threat. It is important that disruption to the life of the victim is kept to a minimum, therefore, if it is possible for the alleged perpetrator to leave the scene, this should be the preferred option.

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

How to get help urgently

Emergency services should be summoned whenever a situation is felt to be beyond the control of members of staff. In addition staff should have, readily available, the contact numbers of the DSL or deputy who can assist in an emergency or urgent situation.

Where a member of staff or volunteer suspects or witnesses another member of staff behaving in the following circumstances:

Behaving in a way that has or may have harmed a child or vulnerable adult.

Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or vulnerable adult.

Behaved towards a child or vulnerable adult that indicates they may pose a risk of harm. Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children or vulnerable adults.

Or

A report/allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer has been disclosed to them.

In either case then the DSL or deputy should be contacted immediately or as soon as practicable.

However, it is recognised that an individual may need to respond to a situation immediately and prior to contacting the DSL, if the nature of the suspicion or report is putting a child or vulnerable adult in immediate danger.

With this in mind the following guidelines offer help and support in responding to abuse or a suspicion of abuse:

• Staff should stay calm and try not to any signs show of shock.

• Be aware of the possibility that medical or criminal evidence might need to be preserved (i.e. evidence of an physical or sexual assault)

• Treat allegations extremely seriously and reassure the child that they believe what they are saying.

• Listen carefully rather than question the child or young person directly, be sympathetic and offer reassurance.

• Question the child to establish enough detail to understand the nature of the allegation and be able to establish that the child is not at risk of immediate harm, whilst the referral is made to the DSL.

Tell the child or young person or vulnerable adult:

• They are right to disclose the information.

• They are treating the information seriously.

• It was not their fault.

• What they are doing, when and keep them up to date with what is happening

• They must inform the DSL.

• They may also need to tell the child that the Police may be informed depending on circumstances.

You must:

• Take further action – they may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse

• Seek medical attention if necessary.

• If an allegation is made against a volunteer or member of staff, the DSL must be informed immediately or as soon as practicable.

Staff should not:

• Make any promises to the child or young person, they may not be in a position to keep promises due to the nature of the incident or allegation.

• Interrogate the child or young person – it is not their job to carry out an investigation – this will be up to the club/ GB, Police or authorities. Any unnecessary questioning could have an adverse impact on future investigations.

• Cast doubt on what the child or young person has told them – they shouldn't interrupt or change the subject.

• Say anything that makes the child or young person feel responsible for the abuse.

DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION
ALL STAFF HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY
TO ACT



10. RECORD

- Write down the information you have been given at the first opportunity then ensure the information is transferred to the Toot-Toot system within 48 hours of the incident taking place.
- Ensure all written notes are recorded 'verbatim' (in the exact words used) and record what action was taken – accuracy and detail is important.
- Where appropriate, record the location of any bruises, cuts or abrasions.

11. REFER

Role of the member of staff and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Members of staff involved in supporting the alleged victim have a key role to play in making sure the correct procedures are followed and that the victim is properly advised and supported. If a number of staff are involved, it may be convenient for one person to take the lead. This is entirely a matter for the DSL or deputy to decide in the light of the individual circumstances.

The role of the DSL or deputy supporting the alleged victim includes the following:

- Ensuring the continued safety of and support to the abused child
- Liaising with immediate colleagues who have been involved in order to gather all the available information together.
- Ensuring that any evidence has been preserved.
- Collating any written material relating to the incident
- Ensuring all of the information is recorded on Toot Toot.
- Ensure that the member of staff received feedback and is appropriately supported.
- Where appropriate referring the matter to the GB.

Once the DSL or deputy has been informed and a referral recorded on Toot Toot, the DSL will then make a decision on the next course of action. The DSL may request clarity and further information to be included before this decision can be made.

If a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of significant harm or is a child in need then Children's/Adults Social Care along with the Police may be informed.

If the allegation involved a person in a position of trust then the Governing Body will be informed. If the allegation involves a person in a position of trust against a child then the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be informed.

12. HOW THE RFU/RFL WILL RESPOND TO CONCERNS

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

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

Incident Referral Process

Regulation 21 requires all incidents, suspicions and concerns regarding a child to be reported to the RFU/RFL, (this is only in cases of abuse involving a member of staff or other players) Safeguarding Team as soon as possible. Once the RFU/RFL Safeguarding team receives written notification of an incident, allegation or disclosure they will assume management of the case. If the case is being investigated by the Police, the Safeguarding team will liaise with them and discuss whether to delay the RFU/RFL disciplinary action until the conclusion of the Police investigation or are in a position to carry out a dual investigation alongside.

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

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

Those under investigation

Under this Policy the RFU/RFL is committed, first and foremost, to protecting the interests of the child/vulnerable adult. In the course of a referral being made to the RFU/RFL or statutory agencies, individuals who are accused of causing harm will be informed of the procedures by the RFU/RFL. They may also request at any time an update on the progress of the referral. Investigations are concluded as quickly as possible to ensure that those guilty of causing harm are dealt with expeditiously and those falsely or mistakenly accused are able to return to the game with reputation intact.



Suspension from Rugby Union/League

A temporary suspension order or suspension order may be issued by the RFU/RFL Legal Officer in accordance with RFU Regulation 21. Please refer to the Regulations in the RFU/RFL handbook or on the RFU/RFL website for further information.

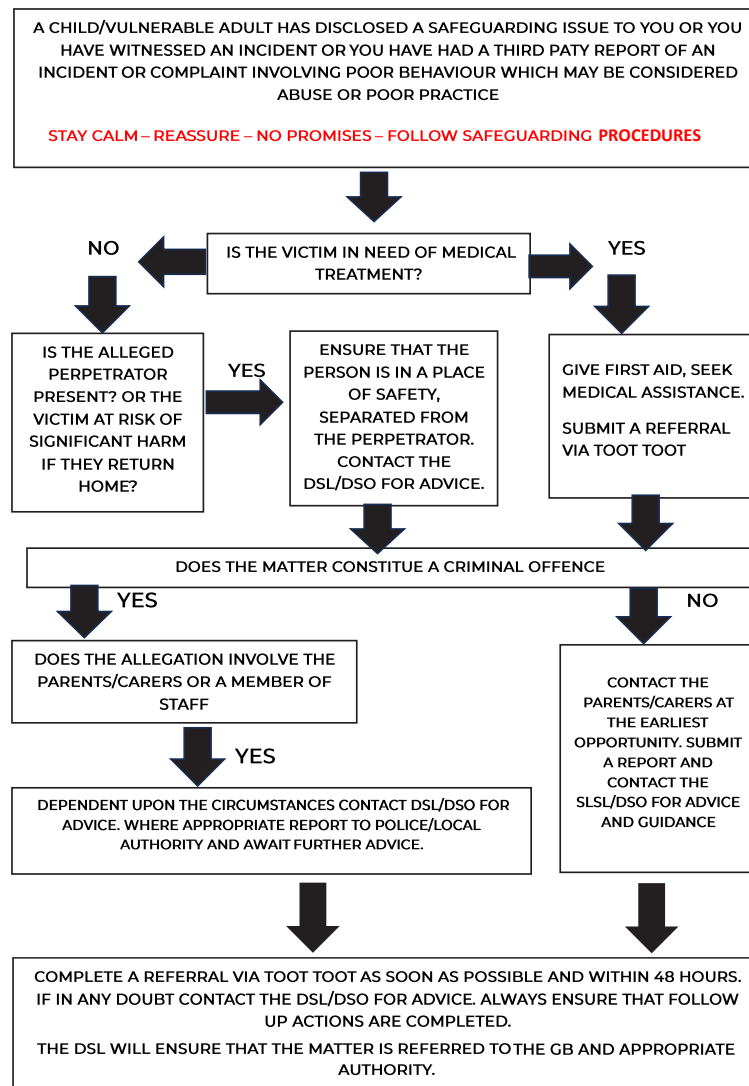
The RFU/RFL procedures establish a clear route through which complaints, incidents, problems and enquiries are handled, as set out within RFU Regulation 21.

13.



SAFEGUARDING REFERRAL PATHWAY

RECOGNISE → RESPOND → RECORD → REFER



SAFEGUARDING IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY
DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION. IF IN DOUBT
CONTACT YOUR DSL/DSO FOR ADVICE





14. MATCH-DAY SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES

Match day safeguarding representatives:

Kate Hindhaugh – Club Safeguarding Lead

Melanie Magee – Foundation Safeguarding Lead

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

Other contacts:

Stadium Safety Officer – Dave Gould

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

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

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

TOILETS/WASHROOMS

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

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

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

Unsupervised children

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

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

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

If they persist and are at least 16 years of age, they may be asked to leave the ground and should be escorted to the nearest exit by the Stadium Safety Officer or appointed individuals.

If they are under 16 years old and there is a concern regarding their welfare or safety then the Police should be contacted and the child handed into their care, particularly in hours of darkness. Children must not, under any circumstances, be manhandled.

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

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



Missing Children

Steward Vigilance and Positive Action

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

Found Child

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

Missing Child

- a)** Any steward who is made aware of a missing child must immediately inform Match Control with a description and the circumstances of the child going missing. The report will be passed on to the Stadium Safety Officer and relevant Safeguarding Lead.
- b)** The steward with the reporting adult (parent, guardian or responsible person) will take this adult's details, including mobile phone number, and ask them to stay with a steward until the incident is resolved. The adult and a steward should stay in the last place that the child was seen for 10 minutes in case the child returns.
- c)** Match Control will ascertain if the child is at the Steward Assembly Point, keeping Stadium Safety Officer and relevant Safeguarding Lead informed.
- d)** If the child is at the Steward Assembly Point, the reporting adult will be taken to that location.
- e)** If the child is not found immediately the Stadium Safety Officer will then alert stewards at, or move stewards to, the east and west exit points of the car parks to try and prevent the child from leaving the site, either on foot or by vehicle.
- f)** The Safety Officer, whilst retaining overall responsibility for the match operation, will appoint a specific supervisor to focus upon finding the child.
- g)** All stewards are to be informed of the description of the child and to be alert for a child of this description moving around site or leaving the site. Staff outside and on perimeters should be vigilant and, until details can be verified, challenge anyone with children. As details become more known, exit from the site should be controlled and children checked to ensure that the child doesn't leave the site. It should be noted that in the interests of the safety of the child, no details of any missing child will be broadcast over the PA System.

Searches

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

Push Chairs and Prams

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

Mascots & Guard of Honour

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

Turnstiles/Entry to the stadium

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

References to Safeguarding Policy includes.

Schedule 6 - Whistleblowing policy and procedures

Schedule 27 - Data Protection Policy

Schedule 30 - Social media policy

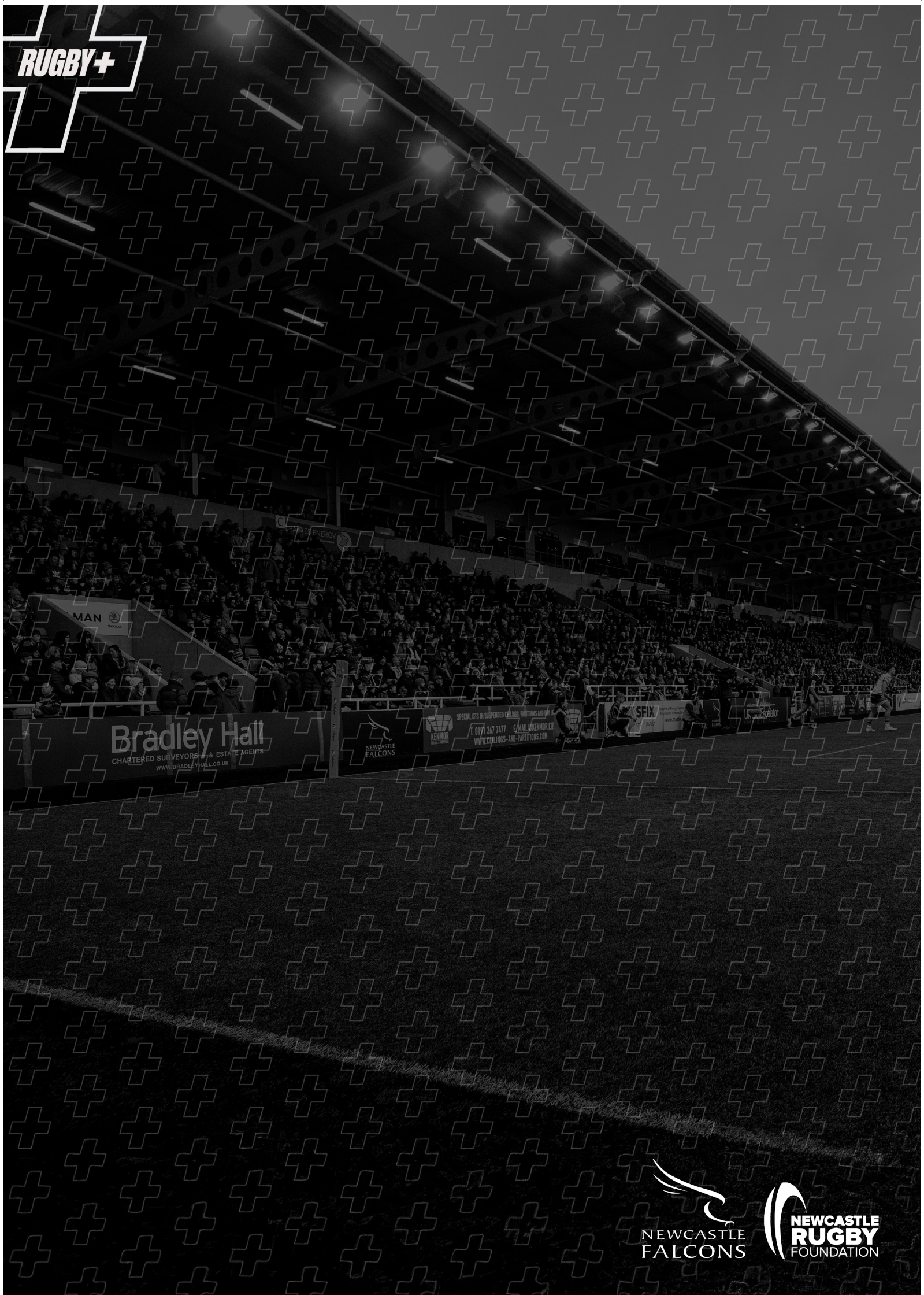
Procedure Review

The responsibility of reviewing and maintaining this procedure is the responsibility of Newcastle Rugby Foundation & Newcastle Rugby's Designated Safeguarding Lead and will take place annually.

Last review date: June 2024

Date of next review: June 2025

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