



SCOTTISH RUGBY

Safeguarding Everyone Policy

Foreword

As outlined later in this document, Scottish Rugby's 'Safeguarding Everyone' Policy reflects our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for all individuals involved in our programmes and activities. Be it children, adults at risk, or adults more generally, our intention is to ensure that everyone feels safe – whether you are a player, coach, volunteer, match official, employee or spectator. Wellbeing matters.

We are committed to providing a safe and enjoyable sport through our programmes, clubs, teams and events. I would also ask that each of you plays your part, as safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every individual must be protected from harm. It is equally important that Scottish Rugby continues to provide a sport recognised not only for its health benefits, but also for building confidence, lifelong friendships, teamwork, a sense of belonging and a strong community across the country. Our aim is that everyone associated with rugby has a positive experience and is supported to achieve their full potential, both within the game and, just as importantly, in the rest of their lives.

ALEX WILLIAMSON

Chief Executive Officer
Scottish Rugby

September 2025



CONTENTS

| | |
|----|--|
| 4 | Policy Statement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose• Scope |
| 5 | Commitments |
| 6 | Legal and Regulatory Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key Legislation• National Guidance• Sport Specific Expectations• Interagency Responsibilities• Safeguarding Everyone |
| 8 | Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key Shared Principles (Children and Adults at Risk)• Children Principles• Adults at Risk Principles |
| 9 | Reporting |
| 10 | Roles and Responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scottish Rugby• Scottish Rugby Safeguarding Team• Member/Affiliated Clubs |
| 13 | Role of the Club Safeguarding Officer |
| 14 | Safeguarding Contacts <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scottish Rugby• Club |
| 15 | Training and Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safer Environments• Code of Conduct and Behaviour• Whistleblowing• Equality, Diversity and Inclusion• Empowerment and Participation• Social Media, Online Safety and Communication• Safer Recruitment |
| 16 | Media Enquires |



| | |
|----|--|
| 17 | Appendix <ul style="list-style-type: none">Policy DefinitionsBackground on Safeguarding Children and Adults at RiskConsent and Capacity (Adults at Risk)Types of Abuse (Children)Types of Harm (Adults at Risk)Contacts (internal and external)List of procedures and safeguarding topics |
|----|--|

POLICY STATEMENT

Scottish Rugby is committed to safeguarding, child protection and the wellbeing of children in our sport. All children are entitled to protection from harm and to take part in rugby in a safe and enjoyable environment. We embrace difference and diversity and respect the rights of all children. Everyone within Scottish Rugby will be made aware of the policies and procedures in place to protect children in our care and to promote their wellbeing.

Scottish Rugby is equally committed to safeguarding the welfare of adults involved in the game, particularly those who may be at increased risk due to their circumstances. Everyone has the right to feel safe, respected and supported, regardless of age, ability, background or role in the sport.

Scottish Rugby recognises that an individual's resilience may be influenced by a range of factors, including health, wellbeing, ability, disability. These factors are not fixed and may change over the course of a person's life.

This policy, titled 'Safeguarding Everyone', reflects our commitment to creating an inclusive and safe environment for all Scottish Rugby programmes and activities. It recognises the responsibilities placed on us by the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations among all those involved in Scottish Rugby.

Scottish Rugby will continue to lead on safeguarding practice nationally and to support and guide clubs, referee societies, and affiliated bodies to do the same ensuring consistent, proportionate, and player-centred approaches are in place across the game.

This Policy has been developed with reference to the Standards of Child Wellbeing in Sport and the Children First Guidance for Child Protection and Wellbeing in Sport, alongside key principles of adult safeguarding legislation in Scotland.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Scottish Rugby to safeguarding children and adults and to ensure Scottish Rugby and its member / affiliated clubs are aware of:

- The legislation, policy and principles for safeguarding children and adults
- Their role and responsibility
- Where to find the information on the reporting and other safeguarding procedures
- How to enable safe and encouraging environments

Scope

This safeguarding policy and associated procedures applies to all Scottish Rugby programmes and activities along with member / affiliated clubs. This includes Scottish Rugby Board Members, Employees, Coaches, Volunteers, Players, and Supporters.

The policy covers all safeguarding concerns relating to children and adults at risk, whether these arise during Scottish Rugby activities or in situations that affect participation in our programmes.

This includes incidents Scottish Rugby become aware of that occur in the wider community where there is a potential impact on the safety or wellbeing of club members or those participating in Scottish Rugby programmes.

We encourage our partner organisations, including for example schools, suppliers and sponsors to demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practice as set out in this Safeguarding Everyone Policy and associated procedures.

Commitments

To uphold this policy, Scottish Rugby is committed to creating a safe, inclusive and responsive safeguarding culture. To do so, Scottish Rugby will ensure:

- Everyone involved in Scottish Rugby is made aware of safeguarding procedures and receives appropriate training or guidance to know what to do and who to contact if they have a concern relating to the safety or wellbeing of a child or adult at risk.
- Any concern that a person is not safe, whether within or outside of rugby activity, is taken seriously, responded to promptly, and followed up in line with Scottish Rugby Safeguarding Everyone Policy and Safeguarding Procedures.
- The wellbeing of adults at risk will be safeguarded, and they will be actively supported to express their views and the outcomes they wish to achieve. These views and preferences will be respected and upheld wherever possible, unless there are overriding reasons for taking a different course of action (see the Capacity Section in this Policy).
- Any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm.
- Confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored in line with Scottish Rugby data policy.
- We act in accordance with best practice, for example, from SportsScotland, UK Sport, National Governing Bodies, NSPCC, Ann Craft Trust and Children First.
- We will cooperate fully and promptly with the Police, relevant Local Authorities, and other statutory agencies in taking action to safeguard a child and adult at risk.
- All Board members, employees, officials and volunteers understand their role and responsibility for safeguarding and have completed and are up to date with safeguarding training and learning opportunities appropriate for their role.
- We will not knowingly allow any person barred from working, or volunteering, with children or adults at risk to engage in a regulated role. We will assess the PVG suitability of employees and volunteers to prevent the employment/deployment of unsuitable individuals in Scottish Rugby and our clubs.
- We support our member clubs to implement safer recruitment practices.
- We provide guidance throughout the PVG application process and make the PVG Suitability Decision where conviction information or other disclosure information appear on a certificate.
- We share information about any individual considered to pose a risk to children or adults at risk with the appropriate authorities. This may include Disclosure Scotland, Police Scotland, the Local Authority, Social Work Services, or other relevant safeguarding bodies.
- Anyone raising a safeguarding concern in good faith is supported and protected from retaliation.
- We will support and monitor clubs' implementation of safeguarding procedures and provide advice and guidance where needed.
- All Scottish Rugby activities and events are planned with safeguarding in mind, including a risk assessment and the designation of an on-site safeguarding lead.
- Actions and decisions taken under this policy are reviewed annually by the relevant Board and senior management team, and learning is used to improve safeguarding practice across the organisation and the game.
- This policy and its associated procedures will be reviewed at least every two years, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, national guidance, or as a result of significant incidents or learning.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

Scottish Rugby is committed to fulfilling its legal and ethical responsibilities to safeguard the wellbeing of children and adults at risk. This policy is informed by, and aligns with, relevant Scottish legislation, national guidance, and sport-specific safeguarding standards. The framework below outlines the key statutory and regulatory obligations that underpin our approach:

Key Legislation

- [**Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014**](#) - establishes duties for public bodies and partners to promote, support, and safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people.
- [**Children \(Scotland\) Act 2020**](#) – strengthened children’s participation in family proceedings, capacity presumption reforms, and protections around parental separation/domestic abuse. Aligning closely with the UNCRC and promotes the voice, safety and best interests of the child.
- [**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024**](#) - incorporated progressively into Scots law, reinforcing the rights and voice of children in all matters affecting them.
- [**Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Act 2007**](#) - provides a legal framework for identifying and supporting adults at risk of harm.
- [**The Protection of Vulnerable Groups \(Scotland\) Act 2007**](#) - establishes the PVG Scheme for vetting individuals working with vulnerable groups.
- [**Disclosure \(Scotland\) Act 2020**](#) - introduces a new framework for disclosure and regulated roles, placing safeguarding at its core.
- [**Equality Act 2010**](#) - provides protection from discrimination for individuals with protected characteristics, relevant to inclusive safeguarding practices.

National Guidance

- [**National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland \(2021\)**](#) - outlines how all agencies should work together to protect children from harm.
- [**Adult Support and Protection \(Scotland\) Code of Practice**](#) - supports implementation of adult protection duties at local and national level.
- [**Standards for Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport \(Children First / sportscotland\)**](#) - sets out minimum safeguarding standards for sports organisations in Scotland.
- [**Getting it Right for Every Child \(GIRFEC\) Practice Guidance \(2022-2023\)**](#) – national framework promoting coordinated, rights-based support for children’s wellbeing.

Sport-Specific Expectations

- Scottish Rugby adheres to the requirements set out by sportscotland, Children First, and other governing bodies to ensure our safeguarding approach reflects best practice in sport.
- Where relevant, Scottish Rugby complies with requirements set by international rugby federations and competitions in which Scottish Rugby teams participate

Interagency Responsibilities

Scottish Rugby recognises its role as a partner organisation within Scotland's safeguarding system and will work collaboratively with:

- Police Scotland
- Local Authority Child Protection and Adult Protection Committees
- Disclosure Scotland
- Health services
- Education services
- MAPPA
- Other national and local safeguarding agencies

Safeguarding Everyone

Scottish Rugby recognises that adults at risk are not limited to players. They may also include employees, volunteers, officials, spectators, or other stakeholders involved in the game. We acknowledge that being at risk or vulnerable is not always permanent, predictable, or visible. An individual's vulnerability may arise due to life circumstances, mental or physical health, isolation, or situational pressures and may fluctuate over time.

That is why we have chosen to title this document the **Safeguarding Everyone Policy**. It reflects our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all individuals involved with Scottish Rugby programmes and activities, recognising that safeguarding responsibilities extend beyond traditional player-coach dynamics and across all aspects of participation.



PRINCIPLES

Key Shared Principles (Children and Adults at Risk):

- The safety of children and adults at risk is paramount
- All participants, regardless of age, sex, gender identity, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, size, or any other personal characteristic, have the right to protection from harm.
- Everyone has the right to participate in rugby in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility- from grassroots to the professional game
- Everyone will work in partnership to promote the health and development of all participants
- Scottish Rugby is committed to equality, inclusion, and promoting wellbeing in line with the Equality Act 2010 and relevant safeguarding legislation
- It is the responsibility of all involved in the delivery or planning of rugby to report any concerns
- All suspicions and reports of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- Employees and volunteers working with children and adults at risk are provided with opportunities for education and training to ensure best practice becomes the norm
- All Clubs have a duty of care to all children and adults at risk
- Everyone should be encouraged to reach their full potential in an environment they can thrive in and any inequalities should be challenged.
- Safeguarding isn't just about reacting when something goes wrong. It's about preventing abuse before it happens.

Children Principles:

- Scottish Rugby recognises the specific legal and moral duties to protect children under the age of 18, in line with child protection legislation, national guidance and the United Nation Convention on the Rights of a Child
- All children have the right to be heard, to be taken seriously, and to be involved in decisions that affect them.
- Scottish Rugby will ensure age-appropriate safeguards are in place, including parental consent, safer recruitment, supervision ratios, and tailored codes of conduct.

Adults at Risk Principles

- Scottish Rugby acknowledges the evolving needs and rights of adults at risk, who may require additional protection due to disability, mental health, illness, or life circumstances.
- Safeguarding of adults at risk will follow the principles of empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership, and accountability.
- Consent, capacity, and the right to make decisions will be central considerations when supporting adults at risk.

REPORTING

You must pass on your concern to the appropriate person. This starts the process of ensuring Scottish Rugby / your club are meeting their safeguarding responsibilities.

- Speak to your Safeguarding Officer.
- If you are the Safeguarding Officer, contact Scottish Rugby's Safeguarding Team for advice.
- Complete "Report a Concern Form" and submit to safeguarding@sru.org.uk
- **If Scottish Rugby Safeguarding Team not available, you can also contact:**
 - **CHILDREN FIRST:** 0808 800 5000 / 0141 419 1156 (For children only concerns)
 - **NSPCC:** 0808 800 5000 (For children only concerns)

For children and adults, in emergency, or immediate risk of harm **call 101 / 999**.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To ensure a safe and inclusive environment in which children and adults at risk can enjoy their rugby, everyone involved in the sport must work together. It is **EVERYONE'S** responsibility to contribute to the wellbeing and protection of those who may be at risk of harm.

Scottish Rugby will:

- Appoint a Safeguarding Team to manage its safeguarding and child protection programme.
- Undertake risk assessments and appoint a Safeguarding Lead for all Scottish Rugby activities and events to ensure these are planned with safeguarding in mind
- Require that each Member/Affiliated Member club with a youth section or mixed ability team appoints a Safeguarding Officer and has a Club Safeguarding Policy in place.
- Outline to Member/Affiliated Member clubs the PVG process, PVG legislation and provide advice and guidance on safer recruitment processes
- Require that Clubs comply with PVG checks, where necessary, as part of club funding and membership of the union.
- Ensure that Safeguarding Policies and Best Practice guidelines are reviewed and amended as required by changes in legislation or as a result of any other significant change or event.
- Provide training programmes for Scottish Rugby employees and the volunteer workforce within clubs.
- Take Disciplinary Action against those who breach Scottish Rugby Policies.
- Promote a culture of safeguarding and inclusion across all levels of the game, ensuring that wellbeing is embedded in decision-making, leadership, and governance.
- Support affiliated clubs and regions to implement safeguarding responsibilities, including promoting awareness of Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010 and Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.
- Monitor and evaluate safeguarding activity across the rugby community, including the collection of anonymised data (e.g. number of referrals, types of concerns, training uptake) to inform continuous improvement.
- Ensure 16- and 17-year-olds participating in youth activity are supported by the safeguarding policy, recognising their inclusion under both adult safeguarding law and child wellbeing frameworks.
- Facilitate learning from safeguarding cases and incidents, using internal reviews and lessons learned to strengthen policies, training, and practice across the organisation and clubs.
- Ensure that safeguarding concerns relating to adults at risk are managed in line with the principles of consent, proportionality, and empowerment, as outlined in adult protection legislation and guidance.

Roles & Responsibilities Scottish Rugby Safeguarding Team:

- Promote a culture where safeguarding is embedded across all areas of rugby
- Develop, review, and enforce safeguarding policies, procedures, and risk assessments
- Ensure compliance with the PVG scheme and safer recruitment practices
- Undertake the PVG suitability decision making process and communicate outcomes to the club's Safeguarding Officer.
- Be notified by Disclosure Scotland if an individual undertaking regulated work has been placed under consideration for listing or barred from working, or volunteering, with vulnerable groups.
- Support and train club volunteers and Safeguarding Officers
- Manage and respond to referrals and/or concerns in an efficient and fair manner, including convening the Safeguarding Case Management Panel ("CMP") where appropriate
- Liaise with statutory and partner agencies, including Police Scotland, Disclosure Scotland, local authorities, sportscotland, and Children First, to ensure effective multi-agency working.
- Deliver safeguarding education and scenario-based training across Scottish Rugby
- Monitor safeguarding standards through audits and compliance checks
- Triage, assess, and manage safeguarding concerns and incidents
- Maintain accurate and confidential safeguarding case records
- Advise clubs and Scottish Rugby people on safeguarding incidents and appropriate actions
- Track safeguarding trends to inform prevention and reduction of risk
- Use case outcomes to improve training, policies, and practice
- Provide safeguarding reports and updates to Scottish Rugby senior leaders and boards
- Represent Scottish Rugby in external safeguarding forums and with national partners
- Support cultural change by embedding safeguarding values throughout the sport
- Develop and disseminate accessible safeguarding resources, including template policies, Codes of Conduct, guidance documents, and reporting procedures tailored to both children and adults at risk.

Member/Affiliated Clubs with youth sections and / or mixed ability rugby will:

- Appoint a Safeguarding Officer, along with a recommended second Safeguarding Officer as best practice, to act as the first point of contact for any child protection or adult safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure Safeguarding Officers are provided with the Safeguarding Officer Handbook and attend relevant safeguarding training (covering both child and adult protection) as instructed by Scottish Rugby, as soon as possible and, at the latest, within three (3) months of their appointment.
- Promptly notify Scottish Rugby's Safeguarding Team of all changes in Safeguarding Officer appointments.
- Ensure that all volunteers and people at the club who work with children and / or adults at risk have the necessary PVG in place and complete appropriate safeguarding training.
- Ensure a Safeguarding Policy is in place that reflects responsibilities for both children and adults at risk, and is easily accessible to club members, parents, players, and others.

As guidance only, a template safeguarding policy is available on Scottish Rugby website <https://scottishrugby.org/advice-for-clubs/guidance-and-policy-updates/>. The club's safeguarding policy should be properly implemented and regularly reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose.

- Ensure their Safeguarding Officer is easily contactable to respond to any concerns about a child or adult's wellbeing, and make referrals to the appropriate agency or Scottish Rugby's Safeguarding Team at the earliest opportunity.
- Undertake risk assessments and appoint a Safeguarding Lead for activities and events to ensure these are planned with safeguarding in mind
- Adhere to the **Standards for Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport**, and act in accordance with the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 and relevant safeguarding principles for adults at risk.

Role of the Club Safeguarding Officer

Each member club with a youth or mixed ability section must appoint a Safeguarding Officer. This person should be the main point of contact within the club for any support, concerns, advice, and training relating to child protection and adult safeguarding.

The Safeguarding Officer should lead on good practice and be known in their role accessible and visible to other volunteers, children, adults at risk, and families. They should be friendly and approachable, able to communicate well with both children and adults, and understand the importance of confidentiality and impartiality. The role also requires the ability to deal with sensitive situations with empathy and integrity, a willingness to challenge opinion, and the confidence to manage concerns while knowing when to ask for support.

Scottish Rugby will provide each Safeguarding Officer with regular safeguarding training and is available to provide ongoing support and guidance.

Roles & Responsibilities for the Club Safeguarding Officer:

- Report all child and adult wellbeing and protection concerns as soon as possible and within 24 hours of an incident arising to Scottish Rugby's Safeguarding Team, regardless of whether they relate to the rugby environment.
- Read and familiarise themselves with the Safeguarding Officer Handbook and agree to adhere to all policies and procedures within it.
- Promote and champion safeguarding and protection of children and adults at risk at the club and encourage good practice.
- Ensure the club has a Safeguarding Policy that covers both children and adults at risk and is available on the club website and / or social media platforms.
- Ensure good practice is used in the recruitment of all volunteers, coaches, and others working with children and/or adults at risk.
- Ensure that everyone at the club in a regulated role has PVG Membership, keep records of these, and keep those records up to date.
- Report to the Club Committee or equivalent on any issues or concerns.
- Maintain records of any reported cases and action taken, on a confidential basis.
- Cooperate fully with Scottish Rugby's Safeguarding Team and implement any actions recommended by them.
- Signpost other members of the club to relevant safeguarding training or advice.

Volunteers and Employees will:

- Agree to work together to provide a safe, friendly, and accessible environment for all children and adults at risk to experience and enjoy rugby.
- Read and agree to comply with the Safeguarding Policy.
- Agree to complete safeguarding training appropriate to their role (covering both child protection and adult safeguarding).
- Agree to become a PVG Scheme Member if their role is in a regulated role with children and/or adults at risk.

Safeguarding Contacts

Scottish Rugby has designated safeguarding contacts, centrally and in clubs to ensure concerns relating to children and adults at risk are handled effectively, consistently, and in line with Scottish legislation and best practice.

Scottish Rugby Contacts:

Safeguarding at a national level is coordinated by a specialist team within Scottish Rugby. The key designated contacts are:

- **Head of Safeguarding** (Faye.Henderson@sru.org.uk): strategic lead for safeguarding across Scottish Rugby.
- **Compliance Advisor**: (Elaine.McLean@sru.org.uk) supports the implementation of safeguarding standards, policy compliance, and safer recruitment practices.
- **Case Management Advisor** (Amanda.Boyle@sru.org.uk): provides expert oversight of case management, training and quality and supports clubs in responding to concerns appropriately.

These individuals are responsible for receiving, assessing, and advising on safeguarding concerns from across the rugby community in Scotland. They can also be contacted on safeguarding@sru.org.uk

In addition:

- **Chief People and Engagement Officer**: holds overarching executive responsibility for safeguarding within Scottish Rugby.
- **Board Champion for Safeguarding**: a designated **Non-Executive Director** who provides strategic oversight and promotes safeguarding at Board level.

Where there is immediate risk of harm, individuals should contact Police Scotland or the relevant local authority social work service without delay.

Club Contacts:

Every Scottish Rugby affiliated club that works with children or adults at risk (e.g. mixed ability or inclusive) must appoint a Club Safeguarding Officer (previously referred to as a Child Protection Officer). This person is the primary contact for safeguarding matters within the club and is responsible for liaising with the Scottish Rugby Safeguarding Team when concerns arise.

Each club must:

- Ensure the Safeguarding Officer's contact details are clearly displayed on club premises and communications.
- Inform all members, players, parents/carers, and volunteers of whom to speak to if they have a concern.
- Ensure the Safeguarding Officer is appropriately vetted, trained, and supported in their role.

If a concern cannot be raised with the Club Safeguarding Officer, for example, if they are unavailable or implicated, the concern should be escalated directly to Scottish Rugby Safeguarding Team.

Training and Development

Safeguarding training is mandatory for all individuals working with children or adults at risk within Scottish Rugby. Training requirements vary by role and will be outlined to you by Scottish Rugby. Ongoing development ensures everyone understands their responsibilities and responds appropriately to concerns.

Safer Environments:

Code of Conduct and Behaviour

Scottish Rugby expects all employees, volunteers, coaches, players, and officials to uphold the highest standards of behaviour when working with children and adults at risk. Expectations are outlined in Scottish Rugby's Code of Conduct, which promotes respectful, inclusive, and safe environments across all levels of rugby. Breaches of the Code may result in disciplinary action and must be reported in line with safeguarding procedures.

Whistleblowing

Scottish Rugby is committed to fostering a culture where individuals feel safe to raise concerns about wrongdoing, poor practice, or failures in safeguarding without fear of retaliation. Anyone can report concerns internally or externally in line with Scottish Rugby's Whistleblowing Policy, which provides clear guidance and protection for whistleblowers acting in good faith. Clubs can escalate any concerns regarding the Scottish Rugby Safeguarding Team via Tell Us (tellus@sru.org.uk) which is monitored by our Head of Regulation.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Scottish Rugby is committed to creating a culture of safety, respect, and belonging for everyone involved in rugby, regardless of age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Safeguarding must be inclusive, recognising how discrimination, bias, and inequality can increase vulnerability to harm. This approach aligns with the Scottish Rugby's Inclusion and Diversity Approach, which all members are expected to uphold.

Empowerment and Participation

Scottish Rugby is committed to listening to the voices of children and adults at risk and involving them in decisions that affect their safety and wellbeing. We promote a culture where individuals feel respected, heard, and supported to speak up without fear. Empowering people through participation is central to creating environments where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Social Media, Online Safety and Communication

Scottish Rugby recognises the safeguarding risks associated with the use of social media, digital communication, and the capture or sharing of images. Guidelines are set out in Scottish Rugby's Social Media, Online Safety and Communication Policy, which aims to protect the safety of children and adults at risk from inappropriate use, misuse, or exploitation. Consent, privacy, and safe practice must be prioritised at all times.

Safer Recruitment

Scottish Rugby is committed to safer recruitment practices to ensure that only suitable individuals are appointed to roles involving children or adults at risk. This includes robust vetting, PVG (or equivalent) membership checks, and references.

Anyone in a regulated role will have a PVG in place prior to starting their role. Anyone who is placed under consideration for listing by Disclosure Scotland, will be suspended as a precautionary measure, from working with vulnerable groups.

The full process for employees is detailed in Scottish Rugby's Safer Recruitment Policy. Clubs are supported with PVG and Safer Recruitment Guidance.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed at least every two years, or sooner if there are changes in legislation, guidance, or learning from safeguarding practice. The review is led by the Head of Safeguarding and approved by the Chief People and Engagement Officer and the Scottish Rugby Limited Board via the Environment Social and Governance Committee. Feedback from clubs, employees, and safeguarding partners will inform updates to ensure the policy remains effective and relevant.

Media Enquiries

Events of reports involving safeguarding concerns or abuse may attract media attention.

Scottish Rugby has a dedicated Media Department who will handle any media enquiries and work closely with the Safeguarding Team to ensure that responses are accurate, appropriate, and in line with legal and confidentiality requirements.

Guidance and support can also be provided to any club in managing media enquiries in the event of a safeguarding-related incident or concern.

MATT HORLER

0131 346 5144

matt.horler@sru.org.uk

media@sru.org.uk



Appendix

Definitions:

Who is a Child?

In Scotland, a child is legally an adult when they turn 16, however this can be extended to 18 under certain circumstances but it is important to know that Scottish Rugby policy covers all players to the age of 18 due to the position of trust that coaches and volunteers are in.

Who is an Adult at Risk?

An adult at risk, as defined in Scottish legislation, is a person aged 16 or over who:

- Is unable to safeguard their own wellbeing, property, rights, or other interests,
- Is at risk of harm, and
- Because of disability, mental disorder, illness, or physical or mental infirmity, they are more vulnerable to being harmed than others who are not so affected.

It is important to remember that not all adults with disabilities or support needs are at risk, and that harm is often linked to circumstances rather than personal characteristics. Safeguarding adults requires a person-led approach, respecting their autonomy and choices while ensuring safety.

Capacity

Adults are presumed to have capacity to make their own decisions unless assessed otherwise. Capacity means understanding the information relevant to a decision, retaining that information, and using it to make and communicate a choice.

GIRFEC

Getting It Right For Every Child

Harm

In the context of safeguarding adults, harm refers to any conduct that causes physical, emotional, sexual, financial, or psychological damage. Harm may be deliberate or unintentional and may occur through neglect, abuse, or exploitation.

Position of Trust

A position of trust refers to any role where an adult has responsibility for, or influence over, a child or adult at risk. This includes coaches, referees, managers, volunteers, and medical workforce. Abuse of trust includes any behaviour that exploits this relationship, such as inappropriate relationships, favouritism, or manipulation.

PVG Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG Act 2007)

A membership scheme that provides information on a person's criminal records and suitability to work with children or vulnerable groups.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the proactive approach to protecting people's right to safety, wellbeing, and participation. It involves preventing harm, responding to concerns, and creating safe environments for all.

Safeguarding Officer (SO)

A designated individual responsible for overseeing safeguarding in a club (previously known as Child Protection Officer)

Welfare

Welfare is the overall wellbeing, health, happiness and development of an individual. It includes physical health, emotional wellbeing, education, living conditions and general quality of life. Welfare is about promoting wellbeing and creating conditions for people to thrive.

(Rugby related welfare matters include mental wellbeing, injury prevention and management, concussion education and policies, age-banding, gender participation eligibility, illicit drugs and any other rugby welfare related matters both on and off the field.)
scottishrugby.org/rules-and-regulations/player-welfare/

Wellbeing

In Scotland, a child's wellbeing is assessed using the SHANARRI indicators: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, and Included. These indicators help identify when a child may need support or early intervention, even if no abuse has occurred.



Background on Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

Safeguarding Children

Legislation

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 is about improving the wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland. The Act is wide-ranging and includes key parts of the Getting It Right For Every Child approach, commonly known as GIRFEC.

Wellbeing sits at the heart of the GIRFEC approach and reflects the need to tailor the support and help that children and their parents are offered to support their wellbeing. A child's wellbeing is influenced by everything around them and the different experiences and needs they have at different times in their lives.

Wellbeing is broader than child protection and how we tend to think about welfare.

To help make sure everyone – children, parents, and the services that support them – has a common understanding of what wellbeing means, we describe it in terms of eight indicators.

The eight wellbeing indicators are commonly referred to by their initial letters – SHANARRI.

Child protection services will continue to protect children at risk of significant harm.

Eight Indicators of Wellbeing

Safe

Protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community.

Healthy

Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare and support in learning to make healthy, safe choices.

Achieving

Being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem, at home, in school and in the community.

Nurtured

Having a nurturing place to live in a family setting, with additional help if needed, or, where possible, in a suitable care setting.

Active

Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community.

Respected

Having the opportunity, along with carers, to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them.

Responsible

Having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision, and being involved in decisions that affect them.

Included

Having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities, and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn.

Safeguarding Adults at Risk

Scottish Rugby is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for everyone involved in the game. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of adults at risk across all levels of rugby in Scotland.

An *adult at risk* is a person aged 16 or over who, as a result of health conditions, disability, or personal circumstances, may be unable to safeguard themselves from harm, abuse or exploitation. We acknowledge that not all disabled people are adults at risk, and not all adults at risk have an impairment. The context and circumstances surrounding an individual's situation must always be considered.

NB: 16 and 17 year olds participating in youth rugby activity are also provided for in the Child Section of this Policy recognising their continued developmental needs and heightened vulnerability.

Scottish Rugby recognises that more clubs are now proudly offering mixed ability and inclusive rugby opportunities for adults with a range of support needs. This progress in making the game accessible brings added safeguarding responsibilities, as players participating in adult formats may be classed as adults at risk. Safeguarding within these teams must be proactive, respectful, and embedded in day-to-day practice, ensuring players are supported both on and off the field.

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 provides the legal framework for identifying and supporting adults who may be at risk of harm. The core principles of this Act are:

- Adults have the right to live their lives as independently as possible and make informed choices
- Interventions must benefit the adult and be the least restrictive option available
- Agencies must work together to share information and respond in a timely, proportionate and person-led way

Scottish Rugby is committed to working in partnership with local authorities, Police Scotland, Disclosure Scotland, and other safeguarding agencies to uphold these principles and promote a culture where adults at risk are protected, respected and empowered.

Consent and Capacity (Adults at Risk)

Adults at risk have the right to make their own decisions and to be supported in doing so wherever possible. In line with Scottish law, adults are presumed to have capacity unless it is clearly established otherwise. Capacity means the individual is able to understand information relevant to a decision, weigh up the options, and communicate their choice. Having a mental illness, learning disability, or communication difficulty does not automatically mean a person lacks capacity.

When an adult at risk discloses harm or a safeguarding concern, their consent must be obtained before sharing information or taking further action, unless there are clear legal or ethical reasons to act without it. These exceptions include:

- The adult is at immediate or significant risk of serious harm
- There is a risk of harm to others, including children
- A crime has been or is likely to be committed
- The adult is unable to give informed consent due to impaired capacity
- There is a legal duty to share information (e.g. in response to a court order)

Safeguarding adults at risk must balance protection with autonomy. An adult has the right to make choices including ones others may view as unsafe unless they lack capacity or others are at risk.

If there is uncertainty about capacity or the need to act without consent, advice should be sought from Scottish Rugby Safeguarding Team or statutory services. In all cases, professionals should explain what action they are taking and why, unless doing so would increase the risk of harm.

Supporting adults to be involved in decisions about their own safety is a core part of adult protection. Wherever possible, safeguarding should be done with the person, not to the person.

Types of Abuse - Children

There are four main categories of abuse: **PHYSICAL**, **SEXUAL**, **NEGLECT**, and **EMOTIONAL**, which are outlined below. However, a child's overall wellbeing is equally important, and any concerns relating to this should also be raised with the appropriate person or authority.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the causing of physical harm to a child. This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm. It can also include situations where a parent or carer fabricates or induces illness in a child.

In rugby:

Physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the physical capacity of a child's immature and developing body.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves any activity that is carried out for the sexual gratification of another person, regardless of whether the child appears to consent or understand what is happening. It includes both contact and non-contact activities — from physical acts to exposing children to sexual imagery or language.

In rugby:

Activities involving physical contact could be misused to mask abusive behaviour. It is important to recognise, however, that appropriate and positive touch in a sporting context helps children understand and identify inappropriate contact.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, which may seriously impair their health or development. This could involve inadequate food, shelter, supervision, clothing, access to medical care, or emotional support.

In rugby:

Neglect might include exposing a child to unnecessary risk of injury, allowing them to train or play in unsafe conditions, ignoring injuries, or failing to provide adequate rest, hydration, or supervision.

*If you have concerns that a child may be neglected, you are not expected to investigate. However, it is vital that you speak to the **Safeguarding Officer** or Scottish Rugby's Safeguarding Team so appropriate action can be taken.*

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional ill-treatment or neglect that has a severe and lasting negative effect on a child's emotional development. It may involve making a child feel worthless, unloved, frightened, or only valued for meeting the needs of others. It can occur alone or alongside other types of abuse.

In rugby:

Examples include excessive criticism, unrealistic expectations, verbal humiliation, or placing pressure on children to perform at levels beyond their capability.

Types of Harm - Adults at Risk

Adults at risk may experience a range of harm, which can be intentional or unintentional. Harm may occur in a single incident or over time and can take place within or outside of rugby settings.

The main categories of harm affecting adults at risk are:

Physical Harm

This includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

In rugby:

This may occur if someone is physically aggressive, uses unnecessary force, or fails to consider a participant's medical needs or physical limitations during activities.

Psychological or Emotional Harm

This involves threats, humiliation, intimidation, verbal abuse, controlling behaviour, isolation, or coercion. It also includes denial of choice, privacy, or dignity.

In rugby:

Emotional harm may involve bullying, constant criticism, ignoring an adult's opinions or preferences, or undermining their confidence in a team or club environment.

Sexual Harm

This includes any sexual activity or behaviour that the adult does not or cannot consent to. It also includes indecent exposure, sexual assault, or exposure to inappropriate material.

In rugby:

Sexual harm may be disguised as 'banter,' contact during training, or misuse of trust in a coach-player relationship. Consent must always be informed, voluntary, and capable of being withdrawn.

Financial or Material Harm

This includes theft, fraud, misuse of someone's property or finances, pressure around wills or assets, or denying access to funds or resources.

In rugby:

This may involve mishandling club funds on behalf of an adult with support needs, or pressuring someone to pay fees, expenses, or donations.

Neglect and Acts of Omission

Failing to provide necessary care or support, ignoring medical or physical needs, or withholding access to services or essentials.

In rugby:

Neglect might involve not ensuring a safe environment, failing to act on an injury or health concern, or excluding someone from participation without consideration of their needs.

Self-Harm and Self-Neglect

Adults at risk may harm themselves or neglect their own care. While self-neglect does not always require intervention, it may signal a wider safeguarding concern, especially if others are affected.

Domestic Abuse

Adults at risk may experience domestic abuse in personal relationships. This can involve physical, emotional, sexual, or financial abuse and coercive control.

Discriminatory Harm

Harm based on a person's protected characteristics (e.g. disability, age, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion). This includes harassment, slurs, unequal treatment, or exclusion.

In rugby:

This includes inappropriate comments, lack of inclusion, or failure to make reasonable adjustments for an adult's needs.

Contacts

Scottish Rugby Contacts

Email: safeguarding@sru.org.uk

Faye Henderson

Head of Safeguarding
07976 279473
faye.henderson@sru.org.uk

Elaine McLean

Safeguarding Compliance Advisor
07811 065463
Elaine.McLean@sru.org.uk

Amanda Boyle

Safeguarding Case Management and Training Advisor
07966 902246
amanda.boyle@sru.org.uk

Media Enquiries

Email: media@sru.org.uk

Matt Horler

0131 346 5144
Matt.horler@sru.org.uk

External Contacts (For out of hours advice)

Children First

08000 28 22 33
children1st.org
(Includes info on Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport)

ChildLine

0800 1111
childline.org.uk
(24/7 helpline)

NSPCC

0808 800 500
nspcc.co.uk
(10am–8pm helpline, Mon–Fri)

CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)

ceop.police.co.uk
(Online concerns/protection/reporting)

Samaritans

116 123
samaritans.org
(24/7 emotional support for anyone in distress)

Mental Health Scotland (via SAMH)

0344 800 0550
samh.org.uk
(9am–6pm helpline, Mon–Fri)

Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline

0800 027 1234
sdafmh.org.uk
(24/7 helpline)

Ann Craft Trust

0115 951 5400
anncrafttrust.org
(9am–5pm helpline, Mon–Fri)

Local Adult Support and Protection Team

You can also report concerns to the **local council's Adult Protection team**.

Find contact details via: actagainststarm.org

Police Scotland

101 (non-emergency) / 999 (emergency)

More information on the following topics can be found on [scottishrugby.org](https://www.scottishrugby.org):

- *Accommodation*
- *Alcohol and drugs*
- *Anti-bullying and harassment Policy*
- *Barriers to report, pathways, overtraining, discipline*
- *Bullying and hazing*
- *Challenging bystander/behaviour*
- *Changing rooms*
- *Child friendly reporting*
- *Code of Conduct*
- *Data Protection*
- *Disciplinary*
- *Discriminatory Language and behaviour*
- *Employee/Volunteer Allegation Procedures*
- *Information sharing and confidentiality*
- *Late collection/collection*
- *Low Level Concerns*
- *Mixed ability rugby*
- *Neurodiversity*
- *Parent behaviour/conduct*
- *Permission to tour*
- *Physical intervention*
- *Player Welfare (concussion, anti-doping)*
- *Position of trust*
- *Prevent and Radicalisation*
- *PVG and referrals*
- *Recognise, Respond, Report, Record, Refer (Child and Adult)*
- *Relationships*
- *Review serious cases*
- *Risk Assessments*
- *Safer Recruitment*
- *Sexual activity and underage activity*
- *Social Media and Online Safety*
- *Supervision*
- *Tell Us*
- *Training*
- *Travel Procedures for local and abroad*
- *Wellbeing of players*
- *Whistleblowing*



**SCOTTISH
RUGBY**

SCOTTISH RUGBY

Scottish Gas Murrayfield Edinburgh EH12 5PJ

0131 346 5000 | scottishrugby.org