



SAFEGUARDING & PROTECTING CHILDREN IN RUGBY LEAGUE

Newsletter 11 – April 2008

“The Child’s Welfare is Paramount”

INTRODUCING THE REGIONAL WELFARE OFFICERS (RWOs)

As announced in the January newsletter the RFL has set up a network of Regional Welfare Officers (RWOs) for each of the main playing leagues or regional areas.

The role of the RWO is to:

- Encourage best practice
- Encourage roll out of CRB checking
- Ensure each club in his or her area has a CWO in post
- Promote the RFL's education opportunities
- Act as a point of contact should a member of a club have a concern or query
- Refer concerns or queries to the RFL where appropriate.

RWOs are now in place for all the main Playing Leagues and regions in which the game is played. A RWO list with information about the RWOs and contact details is enclosed with this newsletter.

CWO SURVEY

The results of the CWO Survey are enclosed in this newsletter. Thank you to all of you who took part. A number of you made really useful suggestions which we'll follow up on over the next few months.

As you'll see from the results there was a demand for examples of good practice and in future editions we'd like to share good practice around pre season Parent's Days. We'd welcome some information from clubs who have developed successful Parent's Days to share with other clubs.

YOUTH FORUM

Last month the RFL held its first ever “Youth Forum” at The Grattan Stadium, Odsal - this inaugural event was held as a trial and following its success it is hoped the forum concept will be rolled out to a wider audience over the coming months.

The main purposes of the forums is to allow children's voices to be heard on matters that affect them, whilst also understanding how effective the RFL Safeguarding policies are from the view point of the people the policies are designed to protect.

The feedback received will also play a major part of the drawing up of a Children's Code of Conduct.

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The RFL worked in conjunction with Bradford Bulls who provided a fitting venue and two facilitators for the event, which saw U12 and U13 players from the Bradford area invited to attend. The input from the youngsters was fantastic and will now help to mould the way the RFL develops policies and procedures moving forwards.

The RFL now plan to organise other Youth Forums in different regions of the country, with different aged youngsters being asked to attend. This will ensure that the ideas represent all young players.

John Downes of Bradford Bulls said "The day went really well and the young people enjoyed the sessions. It is great that the RFL are running days like this to ensure that children are at the centre of what we do."

Emma Rosewarne, RFL Lead Safeguarding Officer, said "It is essential that we ensure that all of our policies and procedures are child focussed and we take into account the opinions of young people when producing them.

Youth Forums such as this one will ensure that we maintain a child-focussed approach so that we can make sure that Rugby League remains a safe and fun environment for young people."

**CRB PRESS RELEASE – 1 April 2008 - INDEPENDENT SAFEGUARDING AUTHORITY
ANNOUNCEMENT OF GO-LIVE DATE AND FEE LEVEL**

Today (1.4.08), the Home Office announced that from 12 October 2009 individuals will need to register with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) if they are to work or volunteer with children and/or vulnerable adults in a regulated activity. The cost for an individual to apply to register with the ISA will be a one-off, lifetime fee of £64.00. You will be able to check an individual's ISA-registration status online or as part of an Enhanced CRB check.

The Criminal Records Bureau welcomes the launch of the new ISA service as it will enhance the current level of protection afforded by CRB checks. The ISA will remove the most dangerous people from the children and vulnerable adults' workforce and the CRB will continue to provide you with the person's criminal record and other relevant information through the CRB check.

The CRB will provide you with a one-stop-shop for access to both of these checks. When used together, a CRB and ISA check will provide you with the most comprehensive vetting and checking service on offer in the world today.

We are still at the early stages of development for the new ISA service and as a result we may not be able to answer all of your questions. In the meantime, I have produced a set of questions and answers that I hope will explain what we currently know about the ISA Scheme. For the latest information coming out from the ISA and its new service please visit the ISA's website www.isa-gov.org where you can register to receive regular updates.

We, here at the CRB, will keep you updated through our monthly newsletter and in the coming months will develop a dedicated section of our website relating to the ISA registration and application process.

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SCENARIO

Please find below a scenario which demonstrates some of the principles of Safeguarding. This can be used as a discussion point amongst volunteers at your club to refresh their Safeguarding knowledge. The scenario is followed by possible answers and then reasons why these answers are either good practice or not.

David is a 13 years old and has played at your club for 3 seasons. He attends training regularly & is normally very confident & out-going. David is also quite a promising player. However, in recent weeks he has been very quiet and withdrawn and his performances are not up to his usual standard. He is also hesitant to go home and also looks for opportunities to stay at the club. You are told by other parents that David's parents split up a few months ago and his father's new girlfriend has moved into the family home. The coach has noticed in training that David has the remains of a bruised eye and a large cut on his leg.

Possible Outcomes

- A) Speak to David
- B) Speak to David's father
- C) Report concerns to the RFL or the Regional Welfare Officer
- D) Report concerns to Police or Children's Social Care Service (formerly Social Services)

Best Practice

- A) This is not best practice. This would put both David and yourself into a difficult position
- B) This is not best practice. As well as putting yourself in a difficult position, this could put David in more danger, and also allow David's father to destroy any evidence of poor practice or abuse.
- C) This is good practice. Reporting your concerns to the RFL allows the RFL to consider the information. In these circumstances, the RFL would immediately involve Police or Children's Social Care.
- D) This is best practice. Any concerns where a child is in danger should be reported immediately to the statutory agencies. The RFL should also be notified that a concern has been lodged.

The statutory agencies have the skill, experience and resources to investigate fully any concerns. The RFL and volunteers working in the game do not have this knowledge and could put the child in more danger by proceeding without the statutory agencies. Furthermore, the statutory agencies may already have information regarding this child, and your information may aid their enquires.

The fact that there are a set of circumstances which cause a concern, does not necessarily indicate that poor practice, abuse or neglect, is actually occurring. There may be perfectly reasonable reasons for those circumstances (in this case the change in personality and the injuries) and this is for the statutory agencies to decide after going through the relevant procedures.

Finally, The RFL appreciate that reporting allegations is a very difficult step to make, however, it is essential that the welfare of the child is the paramount factor so any concerns should be notified.

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CWO LOCAL NETWORKING

Feedback from CWO Survey is that CWOs would appreciate the opportunity to have contact numbers of CWOs in their local area for support, advice and somebody to talk to who understands the issues. The RFL is happy to facilitate this but before we share phone numbers we'd like your permission. We've enclosed a form and would ask you to use it to give the RFL permission to circulate your contact details on local lists of CWOs. It is also a useful opportunity to update your details as held by the RFL. If you are no longer the club CWO please let us know so we can update our records.

TOUCH LINE RESPECT BARRIER

Details of how to buy a touch line RESPECT barrier are enclosed. Having a pitch side barrier is a huge help in managing crowd behaviour and preventing spectators encroaching on the playing area.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AND SAFEGUARDING

As a result of the data collected from the CWO questionnaire survey we will be working with the Equality and Diversity Manager to respond to your requests for more information relating to equality and diversity.

Equality and Diversity manager Sarah Williams is looking at working closely with the TUC learning and skills department to develop a training pack for clubs on all 6 strands of equality. We hope to produce an information pack, resources, handouts and activities that will enable club staff to deliver bite size equality and diversity sessions for children and young people as well as their parents. Sarah is also working on providing a general information sheet for clubs on the major world religions as well as providing information on where to go for more detailed information, resources and training on religion and faith. Sarah is also working closely with the safeguarding team to develop good practice guidance for clubs on safeguarding and disabled children, young people and adults. Please bear in mind all these projects are currently being developed, for more information and updates on progress on these initiatives and when they will be available to clubs please read the bi monthly In league Together newsletter produced by Sarah Williams (which will be circulated with this newsletter) or alternatively call Sarah direct on 0113 237 5037 or email sarah.williams@rfl.uk.com

CRBS - CHECKING DOCUMENTATION – INDICATORS OF FRAUD

In order that the RFL can retain its status as a CRB checking organisation it is really important that all those responsible for checking documentation keep their eyes open for fraudulent documentation. Remember if a CRB check is based on forged documents it is meaningless. The following is the advice published by the CRB.

How do I check for indicators of fraud?

Passport

- Check the general quality and condition of the passport. Treat it with suspicion if it is excessively damaged; accidental damage is often used to conceal tampering.
- Photographs should be examined closely for signs of damage to the laminate or for excessive glue or slitting of the laminate; these signs would indicate photo substitution.

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- If the photograph appears excessively large, this might indicate an attempt to hide another photograph underneath. There should also be an embossed strip embedded into the laminate, which will catch a portion of the photograph.
- Check there is no damage to this area. If the passport is from a foreign national, you can still follow the same general procedures as above.

Photo driving licence

- Examine the licence for evidence of photo tampering or any amendment of the printed details.
- Old style driving licence (no photograph) Remove the document from the plastic wallet and check that it is printed on both sides. It should have a watermark visible by holding the licence up to the light and there should be no punctuation marks in the name or address. The 'Valid To' date should be the day before the bearer's 70th birthday (unless the bearer is already over 70). The 'Valid To' date can therefore be cross-referenced with the applicant's date of birth detailed in Section A.

Birth certificate

- Birth certificates are not wholly reliable for confirming identity, since copies are easily obtained. However, certificates issued at the time of birth are more reliable than recently issued duplicates.
- Check the quality of paper used; genuine certificates use a high grade. There should be a watermark visible when the document is held up to the light. Any signs of smoothness on the surface would indicate that original text might have been washed or rubbed away. There should be no signs of tampering, changes using liquid paper, overwriting or spelling mistakes.

EU National Identity Card

- Examine the card for evidence of photo tampering or any amendment of the printed details

HM Forces ID Card

- Examine the card for evidence of photo tampering or any amendment of the printed details.

Firearms licence

- Check the licence is printed on blue security paper with a Royal crest watermark and a faint pattern stating the words 'Home Office'.
- Examine the licence for evidence of photo tampering or any amendment of the printed details, which should include home address and date of birth.
- The licence should be signed by the holder and bear the authorising signature of the chief of police for the area in which they live, or normally a person to whom his authority has been delegated.

Other forms of identification

- Ensure all letters and statements are recent, i.e. within a 3 month period.
- Do not accept documentation printed from the internet.
- Check letter headed paper is used, bank headers are correct and all documentation looks genuine.
- The address should be cross-referenced with that quoted in Section A.

CONFIDENTIALITY

One issue which comes up on a regular basis is confidentiality and what it means in a Safeguarding context. The following is an extract from the RFL's Policy on Safeguarding and Confidentiality.

“Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. **The legal principle that the “welfare of the child is paramount” means that considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations within the**

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organisation should not be allowed to over ride the right of children to be protected from harm.

However every effort must be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained when an allegation has been made and is being investigated. Information should be handled and disseminated on a 'need to know' basis only. This may include the following people:

- The Club Welfare Officer;
- The Regional Welfare Officer;
- The RFL Safeguarding Officer, the RFL Compliance Manager;
- The parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused (only following advice from the Children's Social Care/LSCB or where the abuse does not involve the family);
- The person making the allegation;
- Children's Social Care/LSCB/Police;
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a young person) only following advice from the Children's Social Care/LSCB.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with the data protection laws (e.g. that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure)."

CRB DELAYS

A number of CWOs have asked why CRBs take such a long time to process. First of all RFL deals with them immediately and sends them on to the CRB within 48 hours of receipt at Red Hall. We have quarterly updates with the other major sports with the CRB in Liverpool and their processing performance has improved substantially. However, the CRB's performance is dependent on Police Forces providing the information to them promptly. Unfortunately for us two of the Forces who are seriously failing to meet their targets are Humberside and Greater Manchester. This has a knock on effect and means that CRBs are often taking a considerable time to process. In the short term clubs can also use Self Disclosure Forms which can be completed at the same time as a CRB. A Self Disclosure Form is enclosed in this newsletter and more can be ordered from the Safeguarding team.

OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT & OTHER CONTACT DETAILS

Emma Rosewarne emma.rosewarne@rfl.uk.com	Acting Lead Safeguarding Officer Direct Line 0113-237-5013	Mobile 07850 483736
Dean Hardman dean.hardman@rfl.uk.com	Deputy Safeguarding Officer & Lead Safeguarding Education Strategy Direct Line 0113-237-5041	
Stacey Thompson stacey.thompson@rfl.uk.com	CRB Officer Direct Line 0113-237-5036	

Emma Rosewarne's mobile number can be used as an emergency number to ask for support or to make an initial report of an incident at any time. Anybody who has an issue or a question can email the Operations team on the dedicated email address: safeguarding@rfl.uk.com

The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is 0808 800 5000 - your Local Safeguarding Children Board will also be able to give advice in cases which you think needs statutory agency input.

The RFL would like to thank the CPSU and other sports, particularly the ECB & FA, for sharing their policies and templates and allowing the RFL to adapt materials for its own use.

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