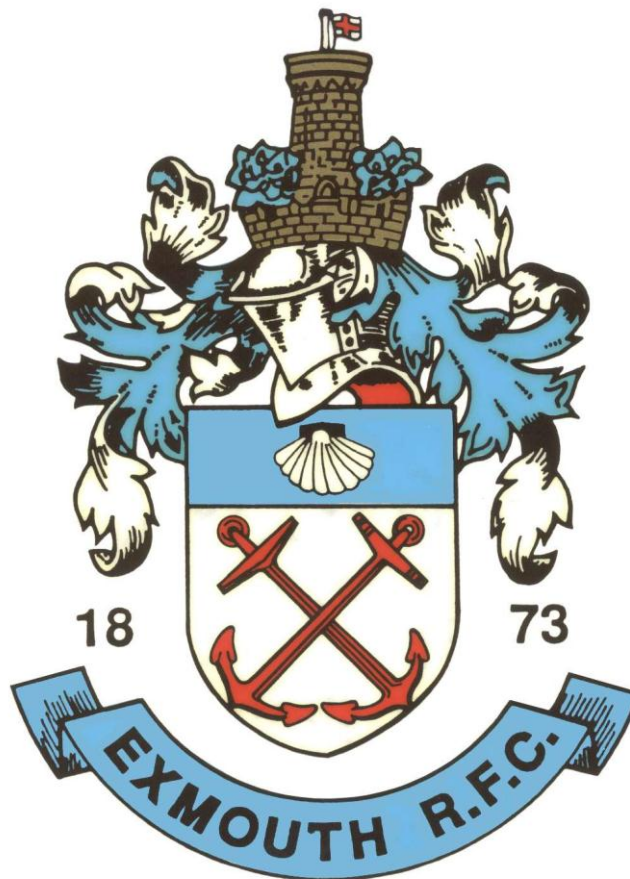


## Exmouth Rugby Football Club

Imperial Recreation Ground, The Royal Avenue, Exmouth, Devon. EX8 1DG



# Welfare and Vulnerable Persons Policy

# Exmouth Rugby Football Club

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## CONTENTS

	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Recognising Abuse and Poor Practice	6
3. Bullying	7
4. Roles and Responsibilities	8
5. Taking Appropriate Action	9
6. Recruitment and Selection of Coaches	12
7. Useful Contact Details	14

# Exmouth Rugby Football Club

Imperial Recreation Ground, The Royal Avenue, Exmouth, Devon. EX8 1DG

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Exmouth RFC (ERFC) recognises its moral and legal obligation to ensure that, the coaches and volunteers who have a responsibility for young people within the club provide them with the highest possible standard of care.
- 1.2 Through the implementation of this Child Protection Policy, and the support of its' coaches and volunteers, ERFC will maintain the professionalism and safeguards of good practice which are associated with the game.

The policy outlines the following key areas:

- It recognises the responsibility of all those involved in the club to safeguard and promote the interests and well being of the young people with whom they are working.
  - It provides a framework on the recruitment, selection, suitability and deployment of individuals working with young people.
  - It emphasises the value of working closely in partnership with coaches, parents, professionals and volunteers to protect children and young players from harm and discrimination.
  - It acknowledges that abuse does take place in sport and that raising awareness and understanding of the main forms of abuse and establishing communication and reporting procedures if abuse is suspected will further safeguard the young players, coaches and all others working within the club.
- 1.3 The key principles reflected in the policy are:
    - The welfare of all young people is paramount.
    - All young people, whatever their age gender, culture, ability, language, religious belief, racial origin, and/or sexual identity should be able to enjoy the game in a fun, environment safe from abuse of any kind.
    - All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
    - All individuals within the club who work with young people will be made aware of good practice in order to ensure that they are not placed in situations where unmerited allegations are made.
    - ERFC will work with parents/carers to ensure that all youngsters within the club enjoy the game in a safe environment.

## Exmouth Rugby Football Club

Imperial Recreation Ground, The Royal Avenue, Exmouth, Devon. EX8 1DG

- ERFC recognises the statutory responsibilities of Social Services Departments and the Police to ensure the welfare of young people and is committed to complying with Local Safeguarding Children's Board.
- 1.4 Exmouth RFC endorses the RFU guidance on prohibited practices that individuals involved with the Club should never;
  - Take young people to their home or other secluded places where they will be alone.
  - Engage in rough, physical games, sexually provocative games or horseplay with young people.
  - Take part as a player in any dynamic contact games or training sessions with young people. If there is a need for an adult to facilitate learning within a coaching session through the use of coaching aids e.g. contact pads, this should be done with the utmost care and with due regard to the safety and well being of the young players.\*
  - Share a room with a young person unless the individual is the parent/guardian of that young person.
  - Allow any form of inappropriate touching. (not specifically related to the coaching of the game).
  - Make sexually suggestive remarks to a young person even in fun.
  - Use inappropriate language or allow young players to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
  - Allow allegations by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded, or not acted upon.
  - Do things of a personal nature for a young person that they can do for themselves unless you have been requested to do so by the parents/carers (it is recognised that some young people will always need help with things such as lace tying, adjustment of Tag belts, fitting head guards).
  - Depart the Rugby Club until the safe dispersal of all young people is complete.
  - Cause an individual to lose self esteem by embarrassing, humiliating or undermining the individual.
  - Supervise changing rooms alone.
  - Change in the same place and at the same time as young players\*

## Exmouth Rugby Football Club

Imperial Recreation Ground, The Royal Avenue, Exmouth, Devon. EX8 1DG

If it should arise that such situations are unavoidable they should only take place with the full knowledge and consent of someone in charge in the club/governing body and/or a person with parental responsibility for the player.

### 1.5 The Club has developed Codes of Conduct for;

- Administrators
- Junior Players
- Coaches
- Match Officials
- Parents and Guardians
- Spectators

These Codes of Conduct form an integral part of the Club's approach to Child Protection. All members of the Club are expected to adhere to these Codes of Conduct at all times.

### 1.6 All adults who work with young people are in a position of trust, which has been invested in them by the parents, the sport and the young person. Exmouth Rugby Club endorses the RFU Code of Conduct on the Abuse of Trust that states;

- Any behaviour, which encourages a physical, or emotionally dependant relationship to develop between the person in a position of trust and the young person in their care must be avoided.
- All those within the club have a duty to raise concerns about the behaviour by coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators which may harmful to the young people in the club, without prejudice to their own position.

Allegations relating to a breach of this code of conduct will be investigated according to the Club's disciplinary procedures.

### 1.7 Anyone under the age of 18 within the club should be considered as a young person for the purposes of this document. ERFC acknowledges that within RFU regulations a male player is permitted to play in the adult game on reaching his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. In these circumstances those prohibited practices marked \* above cannot practically be applied. However, the club recognises its responsibility to be mindful of the safety and well being of the player.

## Exmouth Rugby Football Club

Imperial Recreation Ground, The Royal Avenue, Exmouth, Devon. EX8 1DG

### 2. RECOGNISING ABUSE AND POOR PRACTICE

- 2.1 In order to provide young people in the club with the best possible experiences and opportunities in Rugby Union, it is imperative that all club members operate within an accepted ethical framework and demonstrate exemplary behaviour. This not only ensures that Rugby Union makes a positive contribution to the development of young people and safeguards their welfare, but also protects all club personnel from false allegations of abuse or poor practice.

It is not always easy to differentiate poor practice from abuse. It is not, therefore, the responsibility of adults within the club to determine whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and to act if they have a concern about the welfare of a young person/s.

- 2.2 The four main types of abuse are:

#### 2.2.1 Emotional abuse

In a rugby situation, emotional abuse may occur when coaches:

- Provide repeated negative feedback.
- Repeatedly ignore a young player's efforts to progress.
- Repeatedly demand performance levels above those of which the young player is capable

#### 2.2.2 Abuse by neglect

In a rugby situation neglect may occur when:

- Young players are left alone without proper supervision.
- A young player is exposed to unnecessary heat or cold without fluids or protection.
- A young player is exposed to an unacceptable risk of injury.

#### 2.2.3 Physical abuse

In a rugby situation physical abuse may occur when:

- Coaches, Managers or helpers expose young players to exercise/training, which disregards the capacity of the player's immature and growing body.
- Coaches, Managers or helpers expose young players to overplaying, over training or fatigue.
- Coaches, Managers or helpers expose young players to alcohol, or give them the opportunity to drink alcohol below the legal age.
- Coaches, Managers or helpers expose young players to performance enhancing drugs and recommend that they take them.

## **Exmouth Rugby Football Club**

Imperial Recreation Ground, The Royal Avenue, Exmouth, Devon. EX8 1DG

### **2.2.4 Sexual abuse**

The close proximity of coaches and others, to young people provides opportunities for potential abusers to exploit their position of trust to sexually abuse.

### **2.3 Poor practice**

Poor practice constitutes any behaviour that:

- Contravenes the club's Codes of Conduct which infringes on an individual's rights.
- Is a failure to fulfil the highest standards of care

## **3. Bullying**

- 3.1 The competitive nature of Rugby Union makes it a potential environment for the bully. Bullying is not always easy to define and will not always be an adult abusing a young person. It is often the case that the bully is a young person.

There are three main types of bullying:

- Physical e.g. hitting, kicking, theft.
- Verbal e.g. racist or homophobic remarks.
- Emotional e.g. persistent negative feedback.

All are characterised by:

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards a victim
- A victim who is weaker and less powerful than the bully or bullies.
- An outcome that is always painful and distressing for the individual.

Bullying behaviour may also include.

- Other forms of violence.
- Sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing.
- Tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation.
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Unwanted physical contact or abusive offensive comments of sexual nature.

- 3.2 All cases of possible bullying should be reported to the appropriate coach, or Club Safeguarding Officer. ERFC will:

- Take the problem seriously
- Ensure all alleged incidents are reported to the Club Safeguarding Officer
- Ensure the Safeguarding Officer investigates all incidents by talking to the bully(ies) and victim(s) separately

## Exmouth Rugby Football Club

Imperial Recreation Ground, The Royal Avenue, Exmouth, Devon. EX8 1DG

- Decide on appropriate action, such as:
- Obtain apology from the bully(ies) to the victim
- Inform parents of the bully(ies)
- Insist on the return of items “borrowed” or stolen
- Insist bullies compensate the victim

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

#### 4.1 The role of the Rugby Club

- To adopt, publicise and implement the Child Protection Policy and associated Codes of Conduct to provide a safe environment for young players and identify procedures for dealing with concerns about abuse.
- To accept that all officials and committee members have a responsibility in this area and be prepared to respond to any indication of poor practice or abuse and to put in place structures and systems to ensure that this is followed in practice.
- To appoint a Safeguarding Officer(s) who will act as the first point of contact for concerns about the welfare of young people.
- To ensure that all relevant members who have regular supervisory contact with children or a management responsibility for those working with young people undertake a Criminal Records Bureau enhanced disclosure.
- To ensure that relevant training is available for all those working with young people.
- To adopt, publicise and implement the Disciplinary Procedures for dealing with complaints and concerns about poor practice.
- To ensure written records of player attendance and parent contact details are kept.

#### 4.2 The Role of the Safeguarding Officers

- To ensure the Club has an up to date Child Protection Policy.
- To ensure the Policy and Codes of Conduct are well publicised and adhered to.
- To ensure, in consultation with the Devon RFU Safeguarding Manager and nominated Safeguarding Advisor that all reported incidents are managed at the appropriate level in line with this Policy and RFU procedures.
- To ensure all relevant club members are aware of Child Protection training opportunities.
- To ensure all parents/guardians are aware of this Policy and the correct protocols for voicing concerns.

#### 4.3 Coaches' Responsibility

- To be familiar with and adhere to the club Welfare and Vulnerable Persons Policy and Coaches' Code of Conduct.
- To undertake any relevant training provided by the Club.
- To undertake an enhanced CRB Disclosure.



## Exmouth Rugby Football Club

Imperial Recreation Ground, The Royal Avenue, Exmouth, Devon. EX8 1DG

### 4.3 Parents' Responsibility

- To be familiar with and adhere to the Parents/Guardians Code of Conduct.
- To ensure the club has all relevant details relating to their son or daughter.
- To share any concerns initially with the club Safeguarding Officer.
- To be involved in Club Activities.
- To assist in the supervision of the young player where able and when appropriate.

### 5. **Taking appropriate action where there are concerns about poor practice and possible abuse within the rugby club**

Concerns may be raised about anyone working with young people within the Rugby Club. Including volunteers, coaches, club helpers, and administrators. The club will take all allegations seriously and appropriate action will be pursued.

#### 5.1 ERFC will always take the following action when concern is expressed about the behaviour of someone involved with the Club towards a young person.

- The person hearing the concern will compile full written record of what has been said, heard or seen as soon as possible.
- The Club Safeguarding Officer will be informed immediately.
- Club Safeguarding Officer and Junior Chairman will consider the severity of the report.
- A report on the matter will be sent to the Devon RFU Safeguarding Manager, with a copy to the RFU Equity, Inclusion and Safeguarding Manager and the Safeguarding Executive.
- If the young person requires immediate medical attention this will be arranged and the doctor should be informed of the nature of the concern.

If the Devon RFU Safeguarding Manager or the RFU Equity, Inclusion and Safeguarding Manager advise that the issue is Poor practice then the Club Safeguarding Officer will;

- Follow club disciplinary procedures for a first report of poor practice.
- Forward a written report on action taken to Devon RFU Safeguarding Manager and RFU Equity, Inclusion and Safeguarding Manager

If an individual is identified by the club as being guilty of poor practice on subsequent occasions then the Devon RFU Safeguarding Manager in consultation with the RFU Equity, Inclusion and Safeguarding Manager may conclude that the issue constitutes abuse and should be referred to the RFU Disciplinary Manager.

If the Devon RFU Safeguarding Manager or the RFU Equity, Inclusion and Safeguarding Manager advise that the issue is Abuse then the club Safeguarding Officer will:

## Exmouth Rugby Football Club

Imperial Recreation Ground, The Royal Avenue, Exmouth, Devon. EX8 1DG

- Refer the allegation to Police or Social Services. They will give advice relating to the contacting of parents/guardians.

Possible outcomes include;

- Inform the Devon RFU Safeguarding Manager and the RFU Equity, Inclusion and Safeguarding Manager of the outcome of the advice from the police and forward a written report utilising the Incident Referral Form

### 5.2 Exmouth RFC will always take the following action if the Club becomes aware of possible abuse occurring in any setting outside the Club

- The safety of the young person is paramount. If he/she requires immediate treatment, call an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure they are aware that this is a Child Protection issue.

The following procedures will then be followed:

- Report concerns to a Club Safeguarding Officer.
- Club Safeguarding Officer may seek advice from RFU Equity, Inclusion and Safeguarding Manager, Devon RFU Safeguarding Manager, RFU Safeguarding Executive, RFU Child Protection Helpline or NSPCC. If there is any delay in receiving advice contact must be made with Social Services.
- Parents/carers will be informed of the concern unless they have been implicated. In these circumstances advice will be sought from Social Services or the Police.
- If a formal referral is made it will be made clear to Social Services/Police that this is a Child Protection referral.

### 5.3 In all cases Exmouth RFC recognises that:

- It is often more difficult for some young people to disclose abuse than others. Young people from ethnic minorities may have regularly experienced racism that may lead them to believe that certain groups including those in authority roles do not really care about their well being. They may well feel they have good reason to question whether the response may be different.
- Disabled young people may have to overcome additional barriers before feeling that that they can disclose abuse. They may rely on the abuser for their daily care and not know of alternative sources of care. The abuse may be the only attention/affection they have experienced. There may be communication difficulties and they will almost certainly have to overcome prejudices that block our willingness to believe they may be abused or to use their medical condition to explain away indicators, which in an able bodied young person, would concern us.

### 5.4 In all cases every effort will be made by the club to ensure that confidentiality is maintained. Information will be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis to;

## Exmouth Rugby Football Club

Imperial Recreation Ground, The Royal Avenue, Exmouth, Devon. EX8 1DG

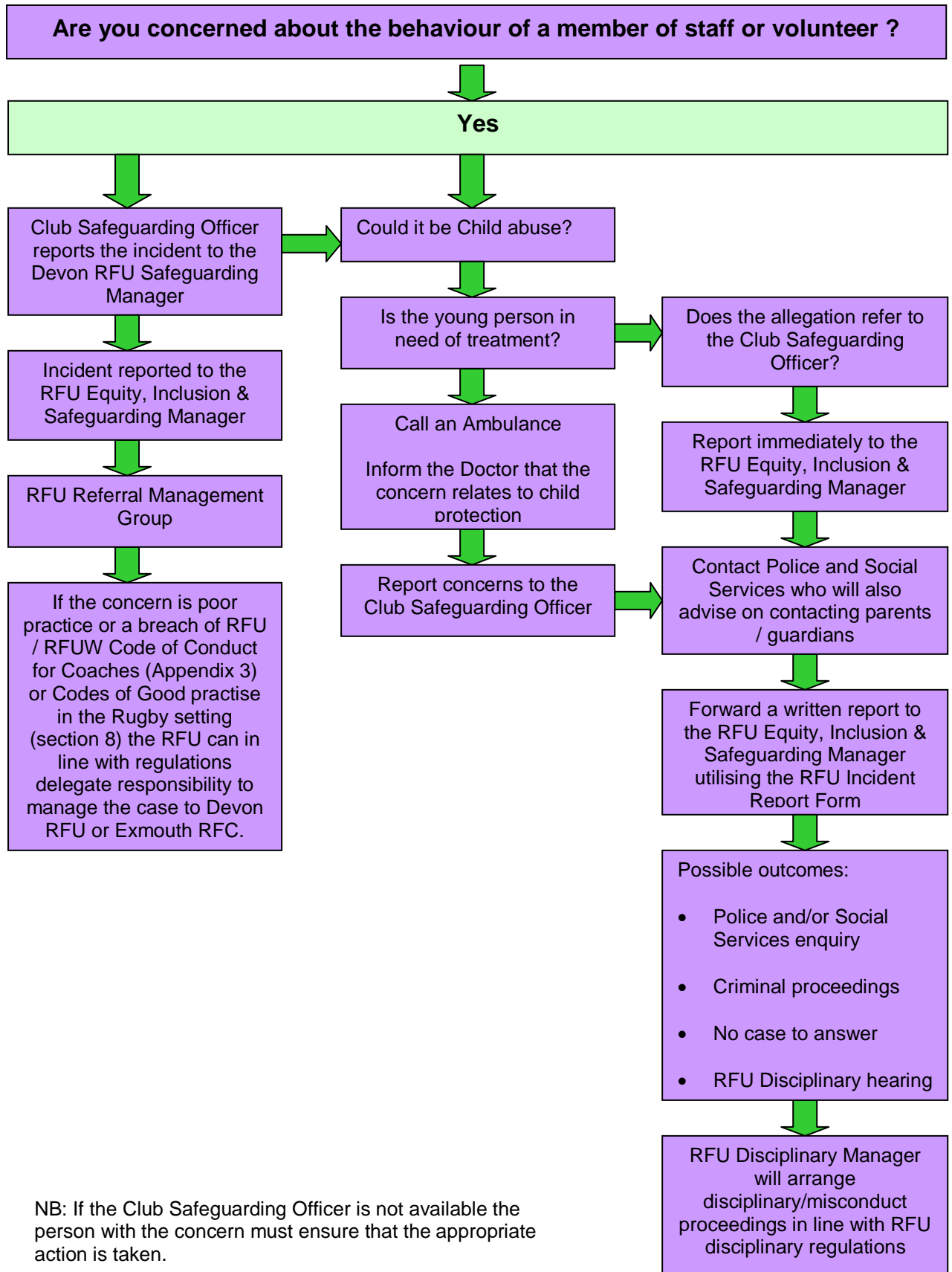
- The Club/CB Safeguarding Officers
- Designated Officers within the RFU
- Person making the allegation
- Social Services and police
- Parents of the young person alleged to have been abused

- 5.5 If an adult involved with the Club accidentally hurts a player, or causes distress in any manner, or the player appears to respond in a sexual manner; or misunderstands, or misinterprets the actions of a coach something you have done, report the incident to a colleague supported by a written report of the incident as soon as possible. Parents/carers should also be informed of the occurrence.

### **DEALING WITH CONCERNS ABOUT DISCLOSURE OR ALLEGATIONS ABOUT STAFF OR VOLUNTEERS WITHING RUGBY UNION.**

# Exmouth Rugby Football Club

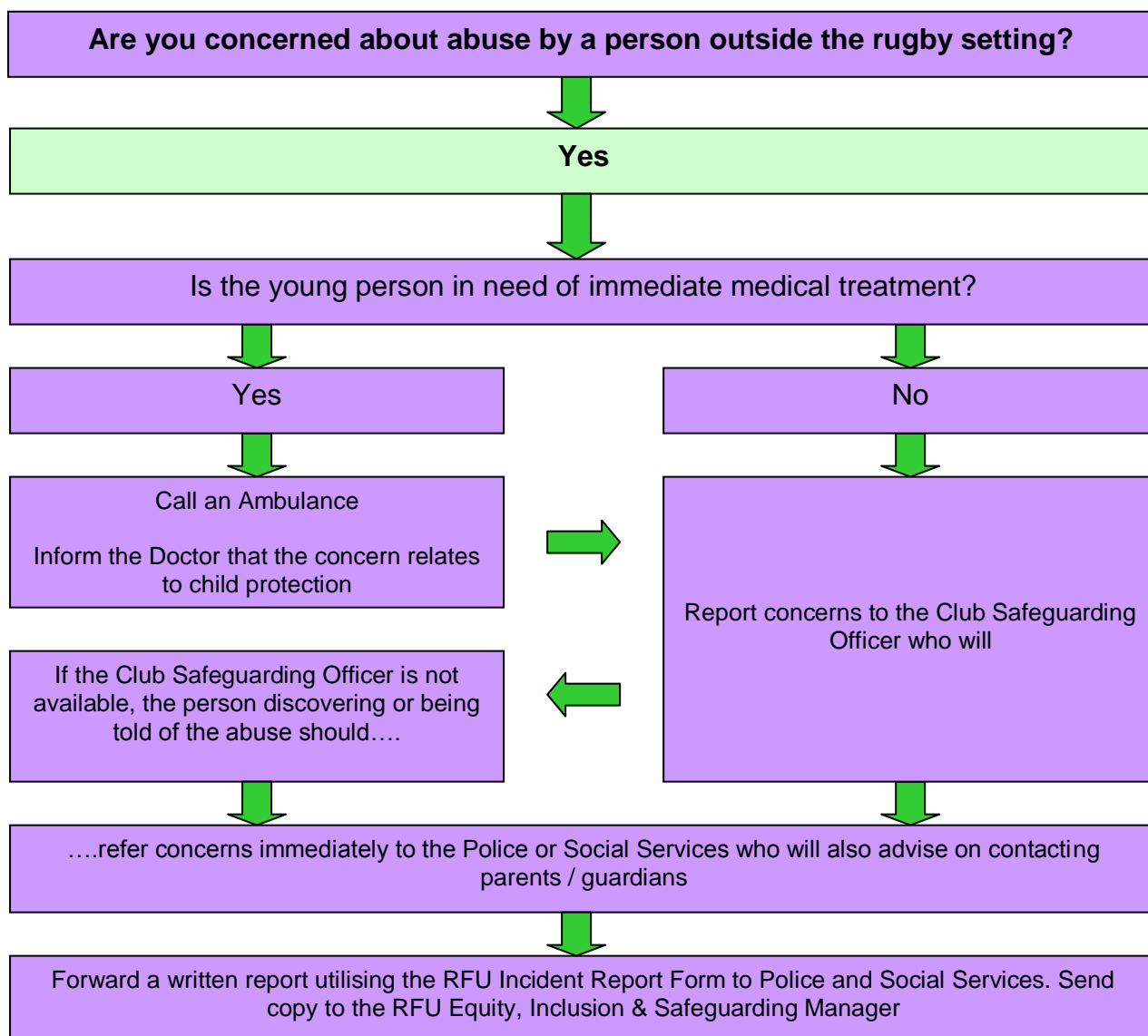
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## Exmouth Rugby Football Club

Imperial Recreation Ground, The Royal Avenue, Exmouth, Devon. EX8 1DG

### DEALING WITH POSSIBLE ABUSE OCCURING OUTSIDE OF THE RUGBY SETTING.



#### 6. Recruitment and selection, of Coaches and Volunteers

Exmouth RFC recognises that anyone may have the potential to abuse young people in some way and will therefore ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with young people within the Rugby Club. The club recognises that, under the Children Act 1989 and 2004, the Protection of Children Act 1999, all individuals working on behalf of the club are treated as employees whether paid or volunteers.

Exmouth RFC will carry out the following recruitment checks;

# Exmouth Rugby Football Club

Imperial Recreation Ground, The Royal Avenue, Exmouth, Devon. EX8 1DG

## 6.1 Advertising

If any form of advertising is used to recruit staff, it will reflect the

- Responsibilities of the role
- Level of experience or qualification required
- The club stance on Child Protection

## 6.2 Checks and References

- All adults within the club who have regular supervisory contact with young people will undertake an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure check (CRB).

These people will include:

- Professional Staff (if relevant).
- All Club Coaches/assistant Coaches.
- Board of Directors.
- Club Officers (with direct and indirect contact).
- Team Managers.
- All referees who manage mini/midi, junior and youth games.
- Safeguarding Officers.

## 6.4 Interview/induction

- All professional appointments for full or part time posts will undergo formal interview.
- All staff paid or voluntarily working with young people will undergo an induction process where;
  - Coaching qualifications, if applicable are verified.
  - Codes of Conduct and Club Policies are signed up to.
  - The roles, responsibilities and expectations of the role are clarified.
  - Child Protection Procedures are explained.
  - Training needs are identified.

## 6.5 Training

Exmouth RFC will offer training that will enable all adults working with young people to recognise their responsibilities with regard to their own good practice and the reporting of poor practice or concerns of possible abuse.

## 6.6 Monitoring and Appraisal

Exmouth RFC will provide appropriate feedback to adults working with young people which will;

- Identify training needs.
- Set new goals.
- Highlight concerns about inappropriate behaviour.

## Exmouth Rugby Football Club

Imperial Recreation Ground, The Royal Avenue, Exmouth, Devon. EX8 1DG

### 7. Useful contact details

Exmouth Rugby Football Club Safeguarding Officer  
Steve Oates Telephone 01395 274828

Devon RFU Safeguarding Manager  
Nigel Larcombe-Williams Telephone 07966-423216

Devon RFU Safeguarding Advisor  
Elaine Palmer Telephone 07800-534377

The RFU Equity, Inclusion and Safeguarding Manager  
Nic Scott  
Telephone: 07764 960403 Email: [nicscott@rfu.com](mailto:nicscott@rfu.com)

The RFU Safeguarding Executive  
Ann Hutchins  
Telephone: 0208 831 7479 Email: [annhutchins@rfu.com](mailto:annhutchins@rfu.com)

Childline  
Telephone: 0800 1111  
NSPCC Helpline  
Telephone: 0808 800 5000  
Asian Helpline: 0800 096 7719  
Welsh Helpline: 0800 100 2524  
Text phone service: 0800 056 0566  
Online service : [www.There4Me.com](http://www.There4Me.com)

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

This is a 24 hour free and confidential telephone Helpline that provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of ill treatment or abuse.

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU)  
3 Gilmour Close, Beaumont Leys, Leicester LE4 1EZ  
Telephone: 0116 234 7278 [www.cpsu@nspcc.org.uk](http://www.cpsu@nspcc.org.uk)

Devon Social Services

- Emergencies (to report an incident)  
Telephone: 0845 – 600 0388
- Children and Families Helpdesk (to make a referral or seek advice)  
Telephone 0845 – 155 1013