



# BEING RUGBYSAFE

2024-25



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# CONTENTS

3	INTRODUCTION TO RUGBYSAFE
4	GENERAL INFORMATION
7	RUGBYSAFE CHECKLIST
8	RUGBYSAFE LEAD
11	RFU REGULATION 9 (PLAYER SAFETY) RUGBYSAFE
12	GMS PAGE
13	RISK ASSESSMENT
14	INSURANCE
16	FIRST AID & IMMEDIATE CARE PROVISION MEDICAL
20	EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN
21	INCIDENT & INJURY RECORDING
23	RFU REPORTABLE INJURY EVENTS
25	HEADCASE: CONCUSSION AWARENESS
27	ACTIVATE
29	MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING
30	RESEARCH & INJURY SURVEILLANCE
31	WOMEN & GIRLS HEALTH & WELLBEING TOOLKITS
32	OTHER RELATED INFORMATION

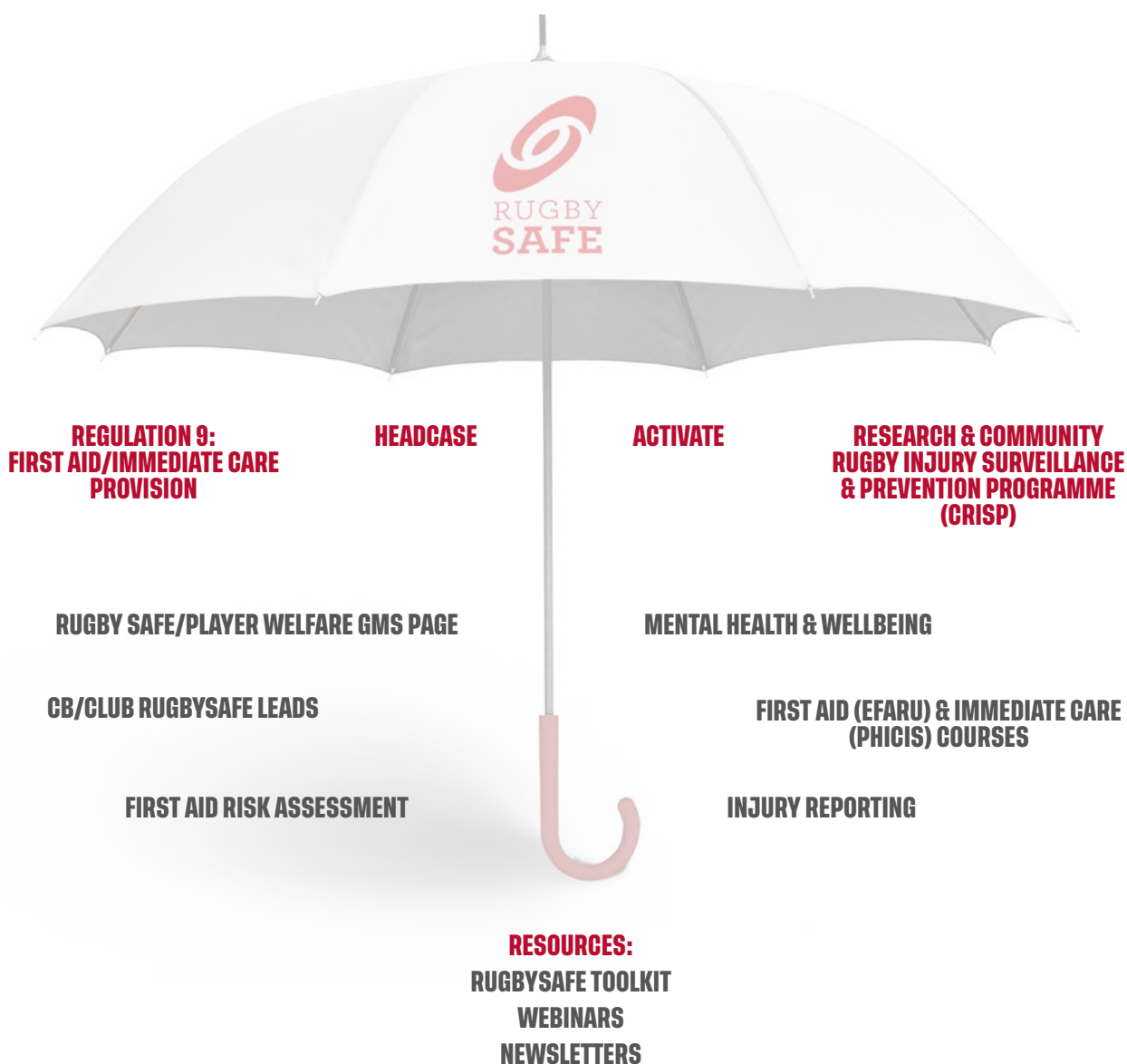
## THIS IS AN INTERACTIVE PDF

Many of the references and guidelines in this document will take you to a website page or PDF.

# INTRODUCTION TO RUGBYSAFE

RugbySafe is the RFU's overarching player safety and wellbeing programme, putting player welfare at the heart of the game and covering how the game should be organised and managed, to provide a safe and enjoyable playing environment.

Within the RugbySafe 'umbrella' there are a number of different initiatives and programmes, all of which play a part in improving and developing awareness of player welfare.



# GENERAL INFORMATION

## RUGBYSAFE TOOLKIT

This document is part of the RugbySafe Toolkit, a series of digital resources designed to provide information and guidance on the different topics and programmes covering player welfare in rugby union.

- > RugbySafe Essential Guides & Resources
- > Community Rugby Pitch-side First Aid and Immediate Care Provision Guidelines
- > Emergency First Aid and Immediate Care Training
- > HEADCASE
- > Activate
- > Mental Wellbeing Guidance
- > Women & Girls Health and Wellbeing

To access the different sections in the Toolkit please visit the [RugbySafe home page](#).

## RUGBYSAFE RESPONSIBILITIES

Clubs and all organisers of rugby activities have a responsibility towards the health and safety of players, staff and volunteers. Measures should be in place to include at least training and first aid provision. Equipment should be in place to ensure that rugby union is delivered to the highest standards in a safe and enjoyable environment.

This document provides information on the role and responsibilities of clubs to ensure they provide a safe and enjoyable playing environment.

This guidance is deemed as best practice and recommends that clubs aim to implement the practices and policies where possible and appropriate.

Schools, colleges, universities and other rugby activity organisers are responsible for their own regulation, and they may have different requirements and needs compared to affiliated rugby clubs.

### PROCEDURES AND BEST PRACTICE

The implementation of procedures and best practice is highly recommended. This document should be used to provide guiding principles and inform best practice.





## RUGBYSAFE BEST PRACTICE

This is a summary of other practices/ideas that clubs, schools, colleges, universities and other rugby activity organisers should consider as part of 'Being RugbySafe' best practice and providing a safe and enjoyable playing environment.

### MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR COACHES AND REFEREES

High quality coaching and officiating can contribute to reducing the risk of injury occurring. Therefore, it is important that individuals in such roles keep up to date with training and information on safe practice both on and off the pitch.

All those involved with coaching or refereeing in clubs should complete regular training, be up to date with current methods and be confident in their knowledge of the rules and laws.

**The England Rugby Continuous Professional Development (CPD)** courses provide an understanding of safe techniques and practices for coaches and match officials.

### USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

For more information on recommended standards and training for coaches in the age grade game see the **Age Grade Code of Practice**.

For more information on training courses, please see the **England Rugby Training Course Booklet**.

## COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/CARERS

Clubs and coaches should communicate regularly with parents/carer(s) and work closely to support any children with pre-existing medical conditions, injuries and specific requirements. Parents/carers should be encouraged to communicate with the child's school and coaches/contacts from other sports/activities that the child participates in. It is important that everyone is clear about what actions (if any) should be taken to consider safety and to ensure that the experience is a positive one for all involved.

Clubs should consider providing information which outlines any measures that the club has put in place to protect the safety and welfare of players, especially providing information to parents on good practice for age grade players (e.g. **HEADCASE** online training modules, first aid training).

In the case of a suspected concussion and a u19 player having to follow a **GRADUATED RETURN TO ACTIVITY AND SPORT (GRAS)** programme, it is essential that clubs engage with parents/carers to ensure they are aware of, and support the child through, an appropriate graduated return to play. Parents/Carers should also be responsible for communicating the details of the GRAS with the child's school and coaches/contacts from other sports/activities that the child participates in.

## COACH AND VOLUNTEER MEETINGS

Clubs are encouraged to host regular meetings (e.g. 2 or 3 per season, potentially delivered by the Club RugbySafe Lead) with all coaches and volunteers to ensure they are kept up to date with relevant player welfare topics and good practice. This includes first aid provision standards and the club's **Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP)**.

## PLAYERS WITH SPECIFIC MEDICAL NEEDS

It is recommended that anyone with a medical condition that may be affected by strenuous exercise, or the physical nature of rugby, seeks medical advice before participating in any rugby union activity. The decision on whether an individual can play and in what format (e.g. contact or non-contact rugby) needs to be based on medical advice by an appropriate expert.

A club may request that a player or parent/carer (for age grade players) confirms in writing that they/their child has been medically assessed. The club must then record/store this information appropriately and include an individual risk assessment. See **Injury Reporting & Incident Recording** section.

If it is considered appropriate for an individual to participate, good communication between the player, parent/carer(s), coaches, referees and other key personnel is important. Everyone is then clear of what (if any) accommodations to take.

The club and coaches should consider using different methods and approaches that meet the needs of the individual and the group of players they work with. Team managers/coaches should always ensure the match official is appropriately briefed.

# RUGBYSAFE CHECKLIST

All clubs, schools, colleges, universities and other rugby activity organisers should work towards the following **10 Steps to Being RugbySafe**:



1

Have a **Club RugbySafe Lead** in place, who is in contact with the CB RugbySafe Lead.



2

Take a club's **RugbySafe responsibilities** seriously and meet the **Regulation 9** requirements.



3

Complete and regularly update the **RugbySafe & Player Welfare GMS Page**.



4

Complete and record a **first aid specific risk assessment** to determine the appropriate level of first aid provision required for training, matches and other rugby activity.



5

Complete and share a **Medical Emergency Action Plan**.



6

Ensure suitable First Aid and/or Immediate Care **provision, facilities and equipment** are in place for all training & matches.



7

Integrate **Activate** into all training sessions and match preparations.



8

Have procedures in place for the **recording and reporting** of injuries and incidents and know what an RFU Reportable Event is.



9

Have a process in place for coaches, referees, players and parents to complete the relevant **HEADCASE** concussion eLearning module.



10

Create a **kinder culture and promote positive wellbeing** within the club.

# CLUB RUGBYSAFE LEAD

**Clubs should identify a Club RugbySafe Lead to help ensure that the club is meeting its responsibilities for the welfare of players and that it is compliant with Regulation 9.**

Everyone has a responsibility to promote and support best practice in player welfare and it is important that clubs take their responsibilities seriously, with the Club RugbySafe Lead(s) receiving support and buy-in from the club Executive Committee/ Board and all sections of the club.

Clubs may take a variety of approaches to cover the role and tasks depending on their size and structure. For example, an individual (or small team of individuals) is appointed the Club RugbySafe Lead(s). There is also a lead first aider for each section and/or age group communicator. Welfare messages to different sections of the club may need a small team of volunteers.

Clubs should ensure their Club RugbySafe Lead's details are listed on the club Game Management System (GMS) profile. This will enable the CB RugbySafe Lead and/or RFU to contact them directly with any relevant information.

## INFORMATION & SUPPORT FOR CLUB RUGBYSAFE LEADS

A **CB RugbySafe Lead** is appointed in each Constituent Body to provide local support and guidance. Club RugbySafe Leads should know who their CB RugbySafe Lead is and be in contact with them. Many CB RugbySafe Leads run local meetings and initiatives for their clubs. A joined-up approach locally with clubs and CBs working together will help to achieve best player welfare and better engagement and awareness across the game.

The **RugbySafe Newsletter** is sent out on a regular basis to those Club Rugby Safe Leads listed on GMS. It provides updates on the latest RugbySafe and Player Welfare related news.

**RugbySafe Webinars** are held throughout the season, they cover various RugbySafe and player welfare topics and aim to provide information and guidance to increase awareness of good practice and improve player welfare standards across the community game.

# CLUB RUGBYSAFE LEAD ROLE DESCRIPTOR

## PLEASE NOTE:

All role descriptions are for guidance only. Clubs should adapt/add to this information to ensure it is relevant to the club's needs and requirements.

## PURPOSE

Player Welfare is the joint responsibility of all involved in the game. It is important that good practice is embedded across the game to promote a proactive approach to player welfare and safety.

The Club RugbySafe Lead role should be an integral part of the club's volunteer structure. With the support and buy-in from the club Executive Committee/Board and all sections of the club, the Club RugbySafe Lead will be an individual (or a team of individuals) who leads on improving Regulation 9 (Player Safety) standards and promoting awareness and good practice of other player welfare initiatives.

A crucial part of this role is liaising with any Health Care Professional/medical cover e.g. physiotherapist for the club, and volunteers such as team managers, safeguarding officer and coaches, and work as a wider team to promote a positive player welfare culture across the whole of the club.

**Good practice in player welfare in clubs is a team effort!**

## KEY TASKS INCLUDE:

### FIRST AID RISK ASSESSMENT AND FIRST AID / IMMEDIATE CARE PITCH-SIDE PROVISION

Carry out an annual review and first aid specific risk assessment, to ensure that every training session and match have the appropriate first aid (FA) and immediate care (IC) provision, and are compliant with the RFU's Regulation 9 (Player Safety) and provision standards.

### RUGBYSAFE AND FA/IC PROVISION MANAGEMENT

Ensure the RugbySafe & Player Welfare section on the RFU Game Management System (GMS) is kept up to date, including number of first aiders, qualifications and equipment.

It is recommended that Club RugbySafe Leads are given Level 2 permissions to access GMS to enable completion of the RugbySafe & Player Welfare section, which can be found in a club's GMS profile under 'Organisational Details'.

## **TRAINING & EQUIPMENT**

Organise training to ensure all appointed first aiders and immediate care practitioners are trained and up-to-date with an appropriate level of qualification, in line with RFU guidelines (e.g. Emergency First Aid in Rugby Union).

Have a process in place for the management of FA/IC supplies and equipment.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN**

Work with other key personnel in your club to ensure there is a clear process in the event of an incident/injury.

Develop a process to ensure that these procedures are communicated and understood amongst all appropriate individuals in the club.

## **REPORTING**

Ensure there is a process in place to keep records of player medical conditions, monitor injuries and report incidents/injuries in line with RFU guidelines.

## **RUGBYSAFE CHAMPION**

Act as a RugbySafe Champion, utilising the RFU's RugbySafe resources and guidelines to work with other key personnel (e.g. CB RugbySafe Lead, club coaches and volunteers) to promote best practice in your club.

Inspire and engage volunteers and parents and increase awareness of everyone's responsibility in supporting player welfare.



# RFU REGULATION 9 (PLAYER SAFETY)

RFU regulations are in place to ensure that the administration, organisation and manner in which the game is played is appropriate, fair and safe. Clubs are responsible for ensuring they are operating within all **RFU regulations**.

Not adhering to and/or acting outside of RFU regulations may invalidate a club's cover of the RFU's or their own additional liability insurance.

The guidelines set out in this document are the minimum FA/IC pitch-side provision guidelines required as part of Regulation 9 (Player Safety).

## REGULATION 9.3:

RFU Regulation 9 (Player Safety) states:

All clubs and those involved in arranging any rugby activity:

- a. must complete a risk assessment and ensure there is an appropriate level of immediate care and/or first aid cover, and equipment provided for that rugby activity as determined by such risk assessment.
- b. must have access to a telephone to ensure that the emergency services can be contacted immediately when needed and ensure there is clear vehicular access for an ambulance or other emergency vehicle; and
- c. must comply with the RugbySafe First Aid and Immediate Care Provision Standards.

For the avoidance of doubt, Regulation 9.3(c) is a mandatory requirement where noncompliance will result in disciplinary action.

The full version of Regulation 9 (Player Safety) is available on the **RFU Regulations page**.



# RUGBYSAFE GMS PAGE

Within each club's RFU Game Management System (GMS) profile there is a RugbySafe & Player Welfare section.

This section has been set up to provide clubs with a space to record and audit the first aid/immediate care provision in the club, including confirming completion of a first aid risk assessment, number of first aiders, qualifications and equipment.

The RugbySafe & Player Welfare section can be found in a club's GMS profile under 'Organisational Details'.

It is recommended that the Club RugbySafe Lead is given Level 2 GMS permissions to allow them to update to appoint/upload first aiders and complete the RugbySafe / Player Welfare page.

To access visit the **GMS login page**.

Any issues with log in or other GMS issues please visit **Community Rugby Help**.





# RISK ASSESSMENT

Clubs and rugby activity providers must consider the emergency first aid provision as part of a first aid specific risk assessment, this should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis and/or updated if there are significant changes to the circumstances.

When completing the risk assessment, clubs should refer and comply with the **Community Rugby First Aid and Immediate Care Pitch side Provision Standards**.

The risk assessment should consider any specific individual club requirements, the type of activity and number of participants, facility and pitch locations etc. to determine if any additional provision is required.

**The risk assessment is particularly important for:**

- > Matches or training which are simultaneously occurring on more than one site, whereby each site will require the appropriate level of cover.
- > Tournaments and festivals, where simultaneous matches are occurring on different pitches, there are large numbers of players and multiple matches and high levels of activity happening in a short period, e.g. back-to-back games in one day.
- > Age Grade Rugby Camps where there may be a varying number of players across multiple age groups.

The first aid risk assessment has been incorporated into a wider online risk assessment programme developed in conjunction with Howden, the RFU's broker for club liability insurance. This includes considering the risks related to the clubhouse, club grounds, changing rooms and car parks as well as reviewing the first aid provision for training, playing and general club activity.

The **Risk Assessment Tool** has been designed to guide users, who may be untrained or inexperienced with regard to risk management, through a series of questions relating to areas they should be considering. Many of the risk management measures highlighted will already be in place and these will be recorded in the risk assessment. The tool will highlight other areas where the club could consider implementing additional measures to manage the risk in areas it may not have considered previously.



## USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

Visit the **Howden's England Rugby Insurance Centre** to access the free Risk Assessment Tool.

# INSURANCE

A club should do all it reasonably can to create a safe environment and reduce or eliminate loss, damage or injury to others. If someone is injured at a club, or whilst taking part in club activities, or if property is damaged, the club could be held legally liable to pay compensation.

The RFU has arranged liability cover for RFU Affiliated clubs at Level 3 and below, which includes:

**Public Liability insurance** – protects the club and its committee or board against a claim made following loss, damage or injury to someone else or their property.

**Employers Liability insurance** – covers the club, or committee, if held liable for an injury that an employee suffers during the course of employment. The policy includes injuries to volunteers. This is a legal requirement.

## INSURED ACTIVITIES

Insurance provided by the RFU covers all rugby activity as well as a wide range of social, fundraising and commercial ventures for affiliate clubs at level 3 and below.

Before undertaking any activity, clubs should check it is covered by the RFU policy.

## PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE

All players are covered by the RFU's **Personal Accident Insurance**. The policy, arranged with RSA, provides fixed benefit payments for death and permanently disabling or catastrophic injuries. This includes traumatic brain injury or spinal injury caused as a result of an accident that occurs whilst taking part in the sport.

Cover is not included for sickness or injuries resulting from a medical condition. If the club, player or parent/carer(s) feel that such cover is required, it is recommended that an additional policy is taken out that is appropriate to the added need.

## FIRST AIDER / HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL INSURANCE

It is very unlikely that any action would be taken against a first aider who appropriately uses their first aid training. The RFU Insurance provides liability cover for clubs at level 3 and below in respect of first aiders carrying out their duties for the club.

### USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

For more information on insurance visit the **Howden's England Rugby Insurance Centre page**.





Where any healthcare professionals (HCPs), are providing services beyond emergency first aider, club/organisers should check that the HCP has their own indemnity insurance in place. Clubs/organisers who engage such personnel, or deploy volunteers in this capacity, may have a vicarious liability for their actions. Such liability is covered under the insurance for clubs at Level 3 and below.

HCPs providing services other than emergency first aid should have their own insurance arrangements as a requirement of their regulating body. Below the elite level of sport, such insurance will usually be provided at no additional cost to them, as long as they have the appropriate training and experience. HCPs should be able to provide evidence of registration with their relevant regulatory body.



## USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

For more please visit the **England Rugby Insurance website**.

Visit the **Howden Group website** for more information about medical personnel / HCP insurance.



# FIRST AID & IMMEDIATE CARE PROVISION

## FIRST AID & IMMEDIATE CARE PROVISION

The **Community Rugby First Aid and Immediate Care Information toolkit** contains standards which set out the recommended first aid and immediate care provision for all training sessions and matches.

The provision standards for first aid/immediate care provision are set using an evidenced-based approach, with information and data collated through RFU's injury surveillance data and other related research.

The **Community Rugby First Aid and Immediate Care Information toolkit** also includes guidance on:

- › First Aid and Immediate Care Provision Principles and Guidelines for different levels of the community game
- › Roles and Responsibilities for Clubs and other rugby activity providers
- › The role of Emergency First Aider
- › The role of Immediate Care Practitioners
- › Other Health Care Professionals in Rugby

All other medical support or provision, such as therapist led prehabilitation and rehabilitation, strapping, soft tissue massage and the treatment of potential non-life and limb threatening and musculoskeletal injuries, is outside the scope of the standards/guidelines and should be determined by the club, school, college, university and rugby activity providers based on circumstances, availability of personnel and capacity. Any organisation and/or practitioner providing additional provision should be appropriately qualified and insured.

## FIRST AID & IMMEDIATE CARE FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT

Clubs and rugby activity providers should:

- > Provide each EFA with a fully stocked first aid kit, as well as a separate club/central fully stocked first aid/immediate care kit.
- > Consider the need and practicalities of an allocated first aid room that is set up/used specifically for FA/IC treatment.
- > Consider the need and practicalities for any other additional equipment e.g. Automated External Defibrillator(s) (AED) and where appropriate have a process in place for the storage, usage and maintenance as appropriate.

### FACILITIES

Where possible and practicable, clubs should have a suitable first aid room (or rooms) for use during rugby and other sporting activities. The room should be easily accessible to stretchers and be clearly signposted. Wherever possible, the room should be reserved specifically for providing first aid and with a designated individual (e.g. first aid lead or appointed first aider) being responsible for the room.

### EQUIPMENT

Every club should assess what equipment is required when completing their first aid/immediate care risk assessment. It is important to have appropriate first aid equipment readily accessible whenever any rugby activity is taking place.

Emergency first aid should only be given by appropriately trained persons. First aid equipment should only be provided appropriate to the level of training of the first aider or immediate care provider.

### AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS (AEDS)

The **Community Heartbeat Trust** provides guidance and support for clubs, universities, schools and colleges on the purchasing, governance and maintenance of **Automated External Defibrillators (AED)**.

Clubs need to consider the requirements of owning an AED, including storage and on-going maintenance.

#### USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

More information can be found by visiting the **London Hearts website**.

For more information on FA/IC equipment, including recommended first aid kit contents, visit the **RugbySafe Essential Guides and Templates Toolkit**.



# FIRST AID & IMMEDIATE CARE TRAINING

The Community Rugby First Aid and Immediate Care Information toolkit provides details on emergency first aid training and qualifications.

The minimum qualification for an Emergency First Aider (EFA) involved in rugby is a Level 3 First Aid Qualification (based on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)) or equivalent, e.g. Emergency First Aid in Rugby Union or Emergency First Aid at Work.

Whilst the RFU's Emergency First Aid in Rugby Union (EFARU) course is recommended, other Level 3 First Aid and equivalent qualifications are accepted and recognised for EFAs covering rugby activity.

Individuals with external first aid qualifications (i.e. not the EFARU) are able to self-certify and add such qualifications to their RFU GMS profile, using the self-service tool in the qualifications section.

## EMERGENCY FIRST AID IN RUGBY UNION COURSE

The Emergency First Aid in Rugby Union (EFARU) course is a rugby specific first aid course developed by the RFU. The course is designed for coaches and other volunteers designated as a first-aider and responsible for providing pitch-side cover at both training and matches.

## OTHER FIRST AID COURSES

Clubs and other rugby organisers organising alternative Emergency First Aid training need to ensure the qualification and training content is appropriate for EFAs in rugby.

For more information on the EFARU, how to organise a course and/or book a place, and other first aid courses go to the **Community Rugby First Aid Provision & Information Toolkit**.

### PLEASE NOTE:

The RFU does not endorse or approve any other first aid courses. Other course providers do not have permission to use the EFARU or any other RFU content/branding.

## PRE-HOSPITAL IMMEDIATE CARE IN SPORT COURSE (PHICIS)

The RFU's Pre-Hospital Immediate Care in Sport Level 2 and Level 3 courses are rugby union specific courses that cover the immediate care training needs of healthcare professionals working within rugby.

Other immediate care qualifications are accepted, however the course must be endorsed by the Faculty of Pre-Hospital Care, and the content must be appropriate for sport.

For more information on the PHICIS course , course dates, venues and costs please visit the **Immediate Care Practitioner Information & Training Toolkit**.





# MEDICAL EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

Clubs and rugby activity providers should have a Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP) in place to identify needs and protocols in an emergency situation.

Along with appropriate levels of first aid cover, a MEAP should be an integral part of the player welfare provision across all sports and recreational activities.

A MEAP should consider all those involved, including players, coaches, officials, first aiders, volunteers, parents and spectators. It should provide a simple, safe and systematic approach, to ensure that any emergencies can be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

It is important that the MEAP is effectively communicated to coaches, first aiders and any others who would be involved in the incident management during an emergency.



## USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

A MEAP template is available in the **RugbySafe Essential Guides, Forms and Templates Toolkit**.



# INCIDENT & INJURY RECORDING

Clubs and rugby activity providers should have a process for recording incidents and injuries that require first aid attention (both on and off the pitch).

Every first aider should be made aware of the process/ have access to ensure all applicable incidents /injuries are recorded appropriately. The process must be General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant, with all records stored appropriately and securely.

The RFU have collaborated with Howden and Proactive to provide an affordable incident report app that provides a quick and efficient system to ensure injuries and incidents, both on and off, the pitch are recorded and maintained in a secure and appropriate manner.

**The Proactive Reporting system includes the following reporting options:**



- ✓ Incident Reporting Dynamic Risk Assessment
- ✓ Pre-Session Checks
- ✓ HEADCASE Concussion Tracker
- ✓ Rugby Safe Resources
- ✓ CRISP Research reporting

Visit the **Rugby Proactive App**.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED IN YOUR PROACTIVE LICENCE:

When your club signs up to Proactive, the club gets 12 months full access to the system which includes:

- ✓ 60 Licences for use across the club
- ✓ Central dashboard for club officers (Chair, Doctor, Grounds Staff etc.)
- ✓ Individual dashboards available for each team - with unlimited team "groups"
- ✓ Unlimited reporting using the report options above

**All of the above costs just £60 + vat.**

Clubs can sign up easily by clicking **here**.



Clubs should also have a policy in place for communicating any injuries with parent/carer(s) and school staff (if relevant) to ensure the appropriate action is taken.

Information recorded on injuries/incidents can also:

- > Help identify injury and incident trends
- > Inform future risk assessments
- > Make recommendations to improve coaching practice and health and safety procedures

The incident/injury report form is not the same as the Statutory Accident Book required under the **Health and Safety at Work Act**, although the two can be combined.

If there is any suggestion that the injury is not an accident the RFU recommends that a record is kept. This is in case a claim is ever brought against the club, coach or referee. Records of injuries to a child should be kept for 15 years.

It is essential that any information and all records are stored appropriately and securely. The **RFU's GDPR toolkit and FAQs** provide important guidance on how clubs should do this.

More information on a club's general Health & Safety requirements including the **Health and Safety at Work Act** can be found on the **RFU's Health and Safety webpages**.

Clubs with employees may be subject to the **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013**. The regulations are for those organisations where there is a legal requirement to report accidents and ill health at work. Information on this is provided by the **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**.



# RFU REPORTABLE INJURY EVENTS

Clubs and rugby activity providers need to be aware of what injuries should be reported to the RFU. It is crucial that all reportable injury events are submitted to the RFU in order for the appropriate support to be put in place.

Reportable injury events are defined as:

- An injury which results in the player being admitted to a hospital (this does not include those that attend an Accident or Emergency Department and are allowed home from there).
- Deaths which occur during or within six hours of a game finishing.

# REPORTABLE INJURY EVENT PROTOCOL

In the event of a serious injury occurring, which fulfils one of the above definitions, after providing immediate first aid and arranging transport by ambulance to hospital, the following protocol is to be followed:

1. A club or school representative must phone the RFU Injury Reporting Helpline **0800 298 0102**, or email **SportsInjuriesAdmin@rfu.com** as soon as the seriousness of the player's condition is confirmed and certainly within 48 hours of the game or training session.
2. In the event of a potentially catastrophic injury or fatality the RFU Injured Players Foundation (IPF) will be notified and will get in touch with the club and/or player or next of kin to confirm the injury and any immediate welfare needs.
3. You will be asked to complete and return an **Injury Report Form**.
4. The club/school must notify their insurance provider.
5. Record witness statements. Where a potential insurance or personal injury claim may arise, clubs and schools are advised to retain witness statements on file. These statements must confine themselves to the facts and not include opinion, hearsay or apportion or infer blame. They must be signed and dated by the person making them.

The RFU Reportable Injury Event forms are available via the RugbySafe Injury Reporting and Incident Recording Toolkit.

Following a reportable injury, the referee should also complete Referee Injury Event Form. The RFU Referee Reportable Injury Event form are available via the **RugbySafe Injury Reporting and Incident Recording Toolkit**.

## SPORTS INJURIES ADMINISTRATOR (SIA)

T: 0800 298 0102

E: **SportsInjuriesAdmin@rfu.com**

# HEADCASE: CONCUSSION AWARENESS

Clubs and rugby activity providers should ensure that all coaches, match officials, players and parents are aware of the **RFU's HEADCASE concussion guidance**. This programme follows the government's UK Concussion Guidelines for Grassroots Sport.

The **HEADCASE modules** are a suite of free online training modules which are designed to meet the needs of different groups within community rugby: adult and age grade players, parents, coaches, referees and first aiders. The modules provide some key information on what to look out for and how to manage a potential concussion.

Any player with a suspected concussion must be removed from play immediately and not return to the game. **"If in doubt, sit them out"**. They must be assessed by an appropriate healthcare professional within the first 24 hours of the injury before following the Graduated Return to Activity and Sport (GRAS) Programme.

This must be adhered to irrespective of the qualification/profession of the individual providing the pitch-side first aid and/or immediate care provision.

Clubs should have a process in place to ensure that parents are informed if their child is suspected of suffering from concussion. Parents should be asked to inform the school/college if their child has a suspected concussion as the GRAS Programme may affect their academic studies and other activities.

More information, including the concussion management guidelines, resources and the online awareness modules is available on the **HEADCASE** webpage.

## REMEMBER:

There is NO Head Injury Assessment (HIA) process in the community game. This includes all age grade and adult games and competitions.

## RECOGNISE & REMOVE

### A PLAYER SHOULD STOP PLAYING/TRAINING AND NOT RETURN IF:

One or more of the following symptoms are present:

- > Headache
- > Seizure or convulsion
- > Dizziness or balance problems
- > Confusion
- > Difficulty concentrating
- > Nausea or vomiting
- > Drowsiness / fatigue
- > Feeling emotional or sad
- > Blurred vision, sensitivity to light
- > Irritable
- > Difficulty remembering or amnesia
- > Neck Pain
- > “Don’t feel right”

They have one or more of the following observable signs:

- > Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
- > Slow to get up
- > Unsteady on feet
- > Incoordination
- > Clutching of head
- > Blank or vacant look
- > Dazed/ Confused



**REMEMBER**  
IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!



# ACTIVATE

Activate is an evidenced-based injury prevention exercise programme that can be integrated into training and pre-match sessions. The exercises included in the programme are designed to improve functional strength, balance and agility and have been shown to reduce the risk of injury.

Activate should be integrated into all training sessions and match-day warm-ups to help prepare players in dealing with the physical demands of the game.

**There are Activate programmes available for all players:**

- > **Activate Kids:** U7-U8, U9-U10 & U11-U12
- > **Activate Youth:** U13-U14, U15-U16 & U17-U18
- > **Activate Adult**

In the age grade game, coaches can add an extra 15 minutes to the allowed training session time limits. This extra time should specifically focus on Activate.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS:

Research has shown that developing a player's ability in these areas has the potential to reduce the risk of injury.

### SCHOOL BOY STUDY

**72%**  
IN OVERALL MATCH INJURIES\*



**59%**  
IN CONCUSSION\*



### ADULT MALE COMMUNITY STUDY

**40%**  
IN LOWER LIMB INJURIES\*



**59%**  
IN CONCUSSION\*



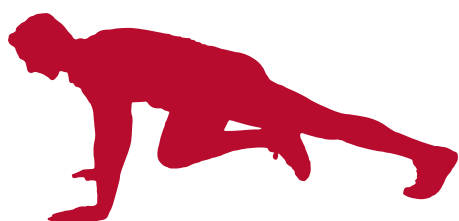
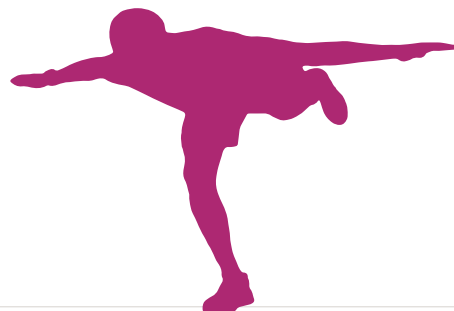
\* When players used the programme 3 times a week.

# THE BENEFITS OF USING ACTIVATE

Activate helps players to develop and improve **four** key "areas"

## 1. GENERAL MOVEMENT CONTROL

Develops adaptability allowing for better 'physical' decisions and reaction around the contact areas.



## 2. PRE-ACTIVATION

The progressive nature of the programme improves muscle activation and enables them to respond better to the demands of exercise.

## 3. FUNCTIONAL CONDITIONING

Over time functional power and strength develops which increases flexibility and range of movement.



## 4. PHYSICAL ROBUSTNESS

Develops the muscles, tendons and ligaments ability to endure physical demands and forces placed on them during exercise.

### USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

To find out more about the different programmes visit the **RugbySafe Activate Toolkit**.







# MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Well run rugby clubs are support hubs for their local communities. Through RugbySafe, there is additional advice and assistance for rugby clubs, which are so often support hubs for their local communities. A dedicated RugbySafe mental health resource for the community game is now available.

The resource has been developed in partnership with Simplyhealth and was researched and prepared by the Mental Health Foundation to provide help to rugby communities and recognise symptoms of poor mental health, allowing them to direct members towards professionals if needed.

There are a number of resources available including on-demand webinars and club posters.



## USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

Visit the **RugbySafe Mental Wellbeing Toolkit** for more information and to access the resources.



# RESEARCH & INJURY SURVEILLANCE

As part of the RugbySafe commitment, the RFU is constantly engaged with research into player safety. Conducting research, commissioning independent studies and collaborating closely with other sports and rugby unions.

The RFU commissions an annual Injury Surveillance Report and Prevention Project in the professional, amateur, women’s and youth boys and girls formats of the game.

These reports form one of the largest and longest running injury surveillance projects in the world.

They are freely available to the general public and allow for the targeted investigation of specific areas of injury risk and the development of evidence-based strategies to reduce injury risk.



## INJURY DATA WANTED!

COMMUNITY RUGBY INJURY SURVEILLANCE AND PREVENTION PROJECT (CRISP): 2024-25 SEASON



The CRISP Project team is hungry for injury data to help us develop our understanding of injuries across all levels of the English community game.

We seek data from the following teams:

- Adult Male Community - National, Regional & Counties Levels
- Adult Female Community - Championship & National Challenge Levels
- Age Grade Female - Clubs, schools, colleges and Player Pathway (U14, U16 and U18)
- Age Grade Male - Clubs, schools and colleges (U13, U15 and U18)

Submitting your injury data helps us to improve player safety.

It allows us to understand the:

- ✓ Impact of the lowered tackle height on injuries
- ✓ Differences in injuries across age groups
- ✓ Differences between the men and the women's game



LEARN MORE.  
REGISTER YOUR TEAM.  
SUBMIT YOUR DATA.

## USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

For more information on the projects and how to sign up your team visit the [RugbySafe Research Toolkit](#)



# WOMEN & GIRLS HEALTH & WELLBEING

The Women and Girls Health and Wellbeing toolkits are a range of resources covering aspects of health which female rugby athletes and their coaches should consider when planning to take part in any rugby related activity.

Topics included in the toolkits:

- \* Menstrual Health
- \* Breast Health
- \* Pelvic Health
- \* Puberty
- \* Menopause

The toolkits provide information on these topics as well as helpful tips and guides for individuals to manage their health alongside the physical demands of rugby.



## USEFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

Visit the [RugbySafe Women & Girls Health and Wellbeing toolkit](#) for more information and to access the resources

# OTHER RELATED INFORMATION

**Community Rugby Help** is the RFU's online hub to help clubs access guidance and support easily and quickly, it includes the Helpdesk FAQs that cover topics on many different areas of community rugby.

**RFU Training Course Booklet (PDF)** provides an overview of all the courses available for coaches, match officials, First Aiders, Health Care Professionals and other volunteers.

**The Age Grade Rugby Codes of Practice** provide practical support and best practice to those delivering the Age Grade game. The Codes give practical advice on how to adopt a safe, player-centred and holistic approach to rugby and support the application of Regulation 15.

**Safeguarding** The RFU Safeguarding guidance and policy provides information for clubs and the importance of creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for everyone to play and enjoy rugby union.

The **RFU Injured Players Foundation (IPF)** provides support and information to rugby players in England who sustain catastrophic injuries. They also help prevent future injuries through research and education.

The **Anti-doping and Illicit drugs** guidance provides information relevant for both elite and grassroots players.

**Food for Rugby** provides information and guidance on the use of supplements and nutrition awareness.



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