



ROLE OF THE SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

DON'T TACKLE IT ALONE



THE ROLE OF THE CLUB SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

The WRU are committed to increasing and enhancing regular engagement and participation across all ages, formats and competitions, in strong vibrant clubs and educational settings that the values of rugby and provide everyone with Positive Rugby Experiences, whilst contributing to the long-term health and well-being of society.

The WRU are working with partners to ensure that our clubs are inclusive and representative of our communities. We have seen the growth of mixed ability rugby in our clubs and more opportunities for people with disabilities to be involved in the game, and this will include adults at risk.

Children are either associated with or can be seen in every rugby club across Wales, and there is a strong association between children and rugby in the communities we live in. Every club, hub or region must appoint a designated Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO) to be the lead contact for safeguarding within that environment. The CSO should be registered with the Welsh Rugby Union and will be required to undertake an induction process.

The community clubs and hubs across Wales play a vital role in developing the next generation of professional and community rugby players, and the involvement of children and adults are at the centre of this.

The CSO is one of the most important roles in any rugby club or hub. CSOs are responsible for co-ordinating the safeguarding and welfare of all children, young people and adults in their club. CSO's are supported by the Management Group, Committee or Board, who have ultimate responsibility for safeguarding in their club or hub.

A key component of effective safeguarding is working together, so it is extremely important that the CSO develops a positive working relationship with the senior Club Secretary and or any other senior management committee officials who have overall responsibility for safeguarding within the club.

CSOs should also work closely with Team Managers and Coaches of any under 18 sides or Mixed Ability sides within the club, who should also understand the basic principles of safeguarding through coach education or bespoke safeguarding training.

The role and responsibilities of the CSO are included in the CSO Role Description (see below)

The responsibilities of a CSO are:

- complete the CSO induction process and commit to continuous professional development.
- promote the WRU Safeguarding Policy and Procedures within the club, and ensure that the policy is available on the club website.
- promote a safe and inclusive environment to develop a safeguarding culture.
- co-ordinate and maintain compliance in relation to safe recruitment and retention of volunteers in regulated activity.
- first point of contact for anyone in the club regarding any safeguarding concerns.
- first point of contact for the Welsh Rugby Union regarding any club to manage issues.

- to manage safeguarding issues on behalf of the Club's Board or Committee, who retain overall ownership and responsibility, ensuring that the board are fully apprised of matters and able to discharge their obligations

The CSO in the Club Structure

CSOs are responsible for ensuring that the club or hub complies with their responsibilities to recruit and retain volunteers who work with children and adults at risk, who have been subject to appropriate vetting checks. They co-ordinate and manage the safe recruitment process and monitor compliance levels in line with the requirement of the club audit.

The contact details of the CSO should be known by all the coaching and management teams within the club. They should be the first point of contact for players, parents, guardians, carers and other volunteers if there are concerns about welfare, poor practice or abuse issues. It is accepted that players, parents, guardians or carers may wish to speak to the coach or another club volunteer, prior to the CSO, and in these cases the CSO must be notified as soon as possible afterwards.

The CSO is responsible for promoting the WRU Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and must ensure that a copy of the policy is available within the club.

If there is a safeguarding investigation being conducted, then the CSO will be the first point of contact for the WRU Safeguarding Team. They are not required to investigate any matters but would be required to assist in contacting potential witnesses or facilitating interviews with volunteers who may be the subject of a poor practice or discipline issues under investigation by the WRU Safeguarding Team or the Discipline Committee.

If there is a criminal or multi agency investigation then the WRU Safeguarding Team will work with the CSO and the club to assist and provide advice, and act as the conduit between the club and the agencies involved. A member of the WRU Safeguarding Team will contribute or attend if there is a strategy meeting convened under Child or Adult Protection Procedures.

The CSO's work closely with the Club Secretary and should be part of the club or hub management committee at both senior and junior level if there are separate committees. They are required to brief club or hub management officials on safeguarding matters where appropriate, and they are central to them fulfilling their responsibilities in terms of safeguarding, ensuring that there is a safe and inclusive environment for everyone.

CSO's must also ensure that they maintain confidentiality when dealing with information of a sensitive nature that need to be discussed.

They should work closely with the WRU Safeguarding Team to ensure that any concerns or issues are responded to in a professional and expeditious manner, and in line with the WRU Safeguarding Policy.

CSOs will be supported by the WRU Policy and Integrity Team, and Community Rugby Department, and will have the opportunity to develop their skills and abilities in dealing with safeguarding matters through a variety of training opportunities. When a club or hub volunteer is recruited as a CSO they will receive a digital Starter Pack from the WRU Safeguarding Team, and also receive an induction into the role.

The CSO Induction will include the following content regarding role and responsibilities –

- Responsibility to promote the WRU Safeguarding Policy and Procedures to develop a safeguarding culture in the club, hub or region.
- Ensure that the WRU Safeguarding Policy is available on the club website.
- Promote safeguarding best practice guidance to develop safe and inclusive environments
- Co-ordinate the Safe Recruitment of volunteers, maintaining compliance in accordance with the WRU Safe Recruitment Procedures.
- Recognising Poor Practice and Abuse.
- Reporting and Responding to Concerns as the first point of contact for anyone in the club regarding any safeguarding concerns.
- Report any allegations of poor practice, abuse or a concern about the welfare of a child or adult to the WRU Safeguarding Team or statutory Child Protection agencies such as the local Social Services Department or Police.
- Responsibility to make such reports without delay, it is NOT the role of the CSO to decide whether a child or adult at risk has been abused or not, this is an assessment that will be made by professional safeguarding staff.
- Responsibility to know the WRU Safeguarding Investigations and Case Management Panel Procedures.
- Promote WRU Safeguarding Training opportunities for clubs and volunteers.
- Consider Continuous Professional Development opportunities for the CSO.
- Responsibility to manage safeguarding issues on behalf of the Club's Board or Committee, who retain overall ownership and responsibility, ensuring that the board are fully appraised of matters and able to discharge their obligations.
- Promote anti-discriminatory practice. The club must ensure that it has made clear its commitment to anti-discriminatory practice in its policy, procedures and plans for safeguarding children and adults at risk.
- Ensure confidentiality is maintained in relation to any safeguarding matters.

The overarching skills that are required for the role are:

- Excellent interpersonal skills and relationship management - working effectively with others
- Database management skills
- Organised, reliable and motivated
- Good written and verbal communication skills
- Good decision making skills
- Ability to maintain confidentiality

CSO's will also have the opportunity for continuous professional development, and can access additional safeguarding training such as the WRU Don't Tackle it Alone Course

There will be other training opportunities for prospective Coaches with Safeguarding modules on Coach Development Courses. Coaches attending the Coach Development Courses will also be required to have been through the safe recruitment process and have a valid DBS certificate, prior to attending.



DON'T BE A BYSTANDER

If you have any concerns please contact
the WRU Safeguarding Team

Integrity Line
02920 822 200

Safeguarding Mailbox E-mail
safeguarding@wru.wales

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