

How to Recognise, Respond, Report and Record

There are many signs and indicators that a child is being harmed. Often one of these signs alone is not cause for concern (e.g. most children will get a bruise at some point during activity) however cumulatively they should form a picture and be taken seriously. If a child discloses or you observe any concerns or are told about concerns from someone else, follow the 4 R's.

4 R'S:

- RECOGNISE
- RESPOND
- REPORT
- RECORD

You first need to **RECOGNISE** a child protection or safeguarding concern. You need to know what abuse is, what to look out for and be vigilant at all times.

Things to look out for:

- A change in the child's behaviour – e.g becoming disruptive or unreasonable during sessions.
- Becoming anxious, lack confidence or are withdrawn and stop communicating.
- Begin bullying other children.
- Display sexual behaviour or language inappropriate for their age.
- Are often hungry, may steal food, always tired.
- Have inadequate clothing, are dirty, poor personal hygiene.
- Have unexplained cuts and bruises or bite marks.
- Self-harming or eating disorder.
- Reluctance to change clothes for sport/activity or receive medical treatment such as physio.
- Seem afraid of parents or carers, don't want to go home.
- Are frightened to say what's wrong.

If you have a concern, it is not the role of any volunteer or staff member including the CPO to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused. Concerns should be reported so that experts can advise and take action if necessary. Scottish Rugby liaise with Children 1st, Police Scotland and Social Work departments for their advice on individual concerns.

Please see the flowchart for action to be taken in the event of a concern.

Respond appropriately

Second, you need to **RESPOND** to possible concerns. Sometimes a concern is obvious; sometimes it is not. It is important to respond when a player or another person tells you that something bad is happening in their lives, or someone else tells you. Not all children will tell someone what is happening to them, so if you see or hear anything that could be a concern for them, you must respond quickly.

RESPOND

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child.
- Listen to what they say and don't show disbelief or disgust.
- Reassure them they are not to blame and were right to tell you.
- Avoid stopping them to go and get someone else – let them speak.
- Avoid asking too many questions, just gather basic questions, who, where, when.
- Don't give personal viewpoints.
- Don't promise to keep it a secret, be clear that this is important and you have to tell someone else.
- Reassure them they are not in any trouble.

Report your concerns

Third, you need to **REPORT** – or refer – passing on information to the Child Protection Officer in your club. This will begin the process of making sure that the club and Scottish Rugby is doing what it should to keep players safe.

REPORT

- If the child is in immediate danger call **Police Scotland on 999**.
- Speak to the Child Protection Officer at your club.
- If you are the CPO, contact Scottish Rugby Safeguarding team for advice.
- Refer to “Report a Concern” on page 12 for further information and incident form.
- Or contact one of the main charity helplines – either **CHILDREN 1ST on 08000 282223** or **NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 (24/7)**.

Record your observations

Fourth you need to **RECORD** your observations, your concerns and the actions you take or do not take using Scottish Rugby reporting form.

RECORD

As soon as you can, write down:

- The child's name, date of birth.
- When they made the disclosure (date/time/where).
- Whether the child told you about their concern or about someone else.
- Use the child's own words – don't try to edit or make it sound more polite.
- What the concern is.
- Description of any visible injuries, behaviours – don't examine the child.
- Details of any witnesses.
- What the child's view is – bear in mind the abuse may be something the child is not conscious of – it could be normal to them.