

## Safeguarding Newsletter, September 2018

---

### PARENTS IN SPORT WEEK 2018 – 1-7 OCTOBER 2018

Just to follow up on the articles in the last newsletter a reminder that Parents in Sport Week runs from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> October. There is lots of useful information at the following link <https://thecpsu.org.uk/parents/> where your club can also sign up.

### BEHAVIOUR IN END OF MATCH TUNNELS

All CWOs are asked to speak to their coaches and tell them to warn their players that “fingering” the last player through an end of match tunnel is a sexual assault and will be treated as such by the RFL Safeguarding Case Management Group. This sort of behaviour is not only totally unacceptable in Rugby League but is a criminal offence which may lead to a life long Criminal record.

It is believed that this may be copy cat behaviour from Open Age so it may be worth speaking to Open Age players too and reminding them of the potential consequences to them (criminal offence) and their responsibility to set a good example to the rest of the club.

### CARDIAC SCREENING OPPORTUNITY – 6 & 7 OCTOBER 2018

On 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2015, Wales Rugby League international Danny Jones died suddenly playing the game he loved. A post mortem examination showed that he died of cardiomyopathy, an inherited condition leading to abnormal heart muscle, which could have been diagnosed by cardiac screening. He left behind Lizzie, his wife and 5-month-old twins, Bobby and Phoebe. Since then Lizzie, a professional singer has already helped raise nearly £100,000 for the Danny Jones defibrillator fund which is helping community clubs purchase life-saving equipment and provide cardiac screening for their players. This funding has partly paid for the defibrillator we use at the Queensway stadium and North Wales Crusaders Rugby League club.

In memory of Danny, Dr Richard Lawrance a consultant cardiologist at Wrexham Maelor Hospital, director and team doctor for North Wales Crusaders as well as team doctor for the senior Wales Rugby League squad is organising a **cardiac screening event due to take place at Queensway Stadium over the weekend of 6<sup>th</sup> / 7<sup>th</sup> October**. Dr Lawrance trained with world experts in Canada and at the London Heart Hospital and specialises in heart function, ultrasound and MRI scanning and regularly does the cardiac screening for a number of professional clubs, including Warrington Wolves and the North Wales Crusaders.

He said, “During Danny’s career there were minimal cardiac screening initiatives and I have no doubt that if there had have been, this tragedy may well have been prevented. Cardiac screening can potentially detect the majority of heart conditions that can lead to sudden cardiac death. Throughout the UK, there are around 12 sudden deaths in apparently fit and healthy people under age of 35 each week.”

Screening involves performing a painless electrical heart recording (electrocardiogram, ECG) a detailed questionnaire, listening to the heart with a stethoscope and for selected individuals, an ultrasound heart scan. If you are interested please email [josh@northwalescrusaders.com](mailto:josh@northwalescrusaders.com).

## **LISTENING TO CHILDREN**

This powerful video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrAwP79Dmn8> made by the NSPCC highlights the need to talk to children who you think may be suffering some form of abuse.

The following is an extract from the RFL Safeguarding Policy about recognising signs of abuse please remind your coaches that if they have any concerns about a child at your club they should act on those concerns.

## **RECOGNISING ABUSE**

Children and young people may be reluctant to tell someone when they are being abused or may be bullied out of disclosing or forced to retract their concerns, so it is essential that every adult is aware of the possible signals that a child and young person’s welfare or safety is being threatened. However, there is rarely a clear sign and you may often have to piece together various snippets of information and rely on your instinct that something does not seem quite right. You may have one piece of information that, when added to that of others, forms a clear picture of abuse. This is often compared to fitting pieces of a jigsaw together. Only when you have a few pieces can you start to see the true picture.

It is not the responsibility of those working in Rugby League to decide that child abuse is occurring, but it is their responsibility to act and pass on suspicions and/or information to the RFL SCMG and/or appropriate statutory agencies.

The list below gives some possible physical and behavioural signs of abuse. Some are very explicit and specific, others are much more general. You need to be careful as any one of these signs might have another very plausible explanation, such as a death in the family, loss of a pet, an absent family member or problems at school. However, you should remember to raise your concerns if there is a combination of unexplained changes over a period of time. Never allow a child or young person’s disability or cultural difference to explain away concerns. This is not a judgement for you to make.

Indications that a child may be being abused include the following:

Physical Abuse	<p>Fear of contact, aggression, temper, running away, fear of going home, reluctance to change or uncover body, depression, withdrawal, bullying or abuse of others.</p> <p>Unexplained and unusual bruising, finger and strap marks, cigarette burns, bite marks, fractures, scalds, missing teeth</p>
Neglect	<p>Always being tired, early or late, absent, few friends, regularly left alone, stealing, no money, parents or carers not attending or supportive.</p> <p>Constant hunger, dirty, ill-fitting clothes, inappropriate clothing, weight change, untreated conditions and continual minor infections.</p>
Sexual Abuse/Female Genital Mutilation	<p>Apparent fear of someone, nightmares, running away, sexually explicit knowledge or behaviour, masturbation, bedwetting, eating problems, substance abuse, unexplained money or gifts, acting out with toys, self-harm. Distress or anxiety on reading texts, being withdrawn, anger, moodiness, reduced performance.</p> <p>Genital pain, itching, bleeding, bruising, discharge, stomach pains, discomfort, pregnancy, incontinence, urinary infections, STDs, thrush, pain on passing motions.</p>
Emotional Abuse	<p>Unable to play, fear of mistakes, low self-esteem, fear of telling parents, withdrawn, unexplained speech &amp; language difficulties, few friends.</p> <p>Weight change, lack or growth or development, unexplained speech disorders, self-harm.</p>
Bullying	<p>Difficulty making friends, anxiety over school, truancy, withdrawn, anger, moodiness, suicide attempts, reduced performance, money and possessions lost, stealing, distress and anxiety on reading texts</p> <p>Weight change, unexplained injuries and bruising, stomach and headaches, bedwetting, hair pulled out.</p>
Forced Marriage/Female Genital Mutilation	<p>A regular attender goes missing from the club or a child, their peer or relative starts expressing worries about a trip abroad.</p>
Radicalisation	<p>Showing sympathy for extremist causes, glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures, making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school, intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality or attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others.</p>

## **RFL LISTENING CLUB INITIATIVE**

As you know a key reason for the RFL Listening Club initiative is to make sure that children at your club know that if they talk to you, you'll listen and act on the information you receive. If children don't believe that adults at the club will listen to them about everyday things such as what they enjoy about the club they are unlikely to talk to you about serious concerns.

Thanks to those clubs who have held a Listening Club session. If you've held one but haven't told us about it please let us know.

For those who haven't had a Listening Club session please do so soon.

Here's Heworth's presentation on how the Listening Club worked for them <http://media.rugby-league.com/docs/Listening%20club%20Jan%2018%20Heworth%20v2.pdf>

And the link to the toolkit to get you started [http://www.rugby-league.com/the\\_rfl/child\\_player\\_welfare](http://www.rugby-league.com/the_rfl/child_player_welfare) (scroll down to get to the toolkit)

## **BULLYING**

As we do every year the RFL will be supporting Anti-Bullying week which this year runs from 12 to 16 November, more details to follow. Here's a link to the website for you to start planning your actions <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week/anti-bullying-week-2018-choose-respect>

St Helens have just launched an excellent anti-bullying campaign <https://www.saintsrlfc.com/2018/09/19/scdf-launch-anti-bullying-campaign/>

The Safeguarding Team has now developed a resource for Club Welfare Officers to deliver within their club. You can find the PowerPoint here [http://www.rugby-league.com/the\\_rfl/child\\_player\\_welfare/safeguarding\\_children/club\\_welfare\\_officers](http://www.rugby-league.com/the_rfl/child_player_welfare/safeguarding_children/club_welfare_officers)

The BullyingUK website also has lots of useful resources and information, links below.

Bullying in Sports Clubs <https://www.bullying.co.uk/general-advice/advice-about-bullying-in-sports-clubs/>

Cyber-bullying <https://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/>

Advice for young people <https://www.bullying.co.uk/advice-for-young-people/>

The CPSU also has good resources around bullying <https://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/topics/anti-bullying/>

## ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITY

### Supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender(LGB&T) young people come from all socio-economic backgrounds, religions, faiths, ethnicities, and cultures. It is estimated that six per cent of the population is lesbian, gay or bisexual, so there's a good chance that in a group of 30 young people, at least two will be or will grow up to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. Most young people will know LGB people too, including family and friends. In addition, a 2010 piece of research, funded by the Home Office, estimated that between 300,000 and 500,000 people in the UK may identify as transgender.

However, LGB&T people remain largely invisible across sports, and two thirds of LGB young people say they don't like team sports. This lack of visibility, as well as the misapprehensions about LGB&T people, contribute to an environment of homophobia and transphobia in sport. This can potentially cause LGB&T young people to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued. We therefore all have a role to play in dispelling myths about LGB&T people, challenging homophobia and transphobia when they occur, and creating a Rugby League environment where everyone feels included. It's important to remember that people realise they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender at different stages of their lives; so if a young person seems to identify in a certain way, it doesn't mean they will remain that way in the future.

It's also worth remembering that, when young people come out or identify a wish to reassign their current gender it's often the first time they've told anyone and how they do that will often be in response to the way they think others will react. Let them decide how they feel and what, if any, identity, they feel they have, and be supportive.

*“Many lesbian, gay or bisexual people in sport face discrimination simply because they are perceived to be different from the heterosexual ‘norm’: As well as causing many lesbian, gay or bisexual athletes to leave clubs or sport entirely, in the worst cases such negative treatment has resulted in self-harm or suicide”.*

Source: CPSU Homophobic Bullying in Youth Sport, April 2011

Every young person has the right to be treated with dignity and respect; this includes all young people who are openly lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender or are thought to be. A club culture that permits casual use of homophobic or transphobic language makes it all the easier for players to suffer name calling and bullying. This can impact on a young person's sense of belonging, self-esteem and therein achievement. Allowing inappropriate language and jokes to take place may hinder a young person in coming out as they may feel they will be subject to discrimination.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people have the same needs as any other teenager. They'll enjoy, achieve and stay safe if they:

- Feel able to be themselves
- Feel valued for who they are
- Feel included and part of a community
- Have access to resources and information relevant to them
- Feel safe and supported
- Feel they have people to talk to if things aren't going so well

Don't make assumptions; it's impossible to tell whether a young person is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender by the way they act, talk, dress or by who their friends are.

Be positive when young people come out and know what to say; offer them reassurance, listen and be supportive – direct them to where they can get further advice and guidance.

Don't discuss a young person's sexual orientation; with their parents/carers without the young person's permission.

Protect young people from bullying; all young people have the right to grow up free from fear of bullying and that includes those young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Be inclusive; any rugby league setting for young people can make sure it's inclusive by creating zero tolerance for homophobic and transphobic bullying. For further information visit [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk) or to speak with someone call 0800 050 2020.

## **Reducing Vulnerability**

In view of the above it is important for clubs to be extra vigilant in creating a safe culture, including:

- Finding ways of understanding and communicating with all children and young people
- Ensuring best practice at all times
- Promoting positive environments and behaviours in which difference (in a variety of senses) is embraced
- Raising awareness of what discriminatory bullying is, how you will respond and ensure effective reporting systems are in place to enable players to report incidents
- Implementation of a club code of conduct for spectators and players
- Acceptance of the special role club officials have in setting a good example of the way in which people should behave towards children and young people

It's recognised that empowering children and young people helps to protect them; ensure your club is a LISTENING CLUB, effectively communicating with its young players and listening to their needs and suggestions for change. See above for more information about the RFL Listening Club initiative.

## **COURSES & CONTACTS**

Safeguarding & Protecting Children (SPC) courses are advertised here <https://www.coachwisebooker.com/RFL/DesktopDefault.aspx?e=fjefcbdbhgnidcpnhllmnbeiibplgfjmgdiidfnb>

To enquire about a Time to Listen (TTL) course please email [safeguarding@rfl.uk.com](mailto:safeguarding@rfl.uk.com)

DBS applications – you can complete your form by clicking here [http://www.rugby-league.com/the\\_rfl/child\\_player\\_welfare/dbs](http://www.rugby-league.com/the_rfl/child_player_welfare/dbs)

DBS queries should be emailed to [alan.smith@rfl.uk.com](mailto:alan.smith@rfl.uk.com)

For general safeguarding queries, please email [safeguarding@rfl.uk.com](mailto:safeguarding@rfl.uk.com)