



ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITY – Black Minority Ethnic

Children and young people from minority ethnic groups

Children and young people from minority ethnic groups are additionally vulnerable because they may:

- Experience racism and racist attitudes
- Expect to be ignored by people in authority due to experience of institutionalised racism
- Be afraid of further abuse or racist abuse if they challenge others
- Be subject to myths, e.g. all people of a particular culture are good with or hit their children
- Want to fit in and not want to make a fuss
- By using or learning English as a second language and therefore find it more difficult to communicate worries or concerns
- Experience religious intolerance, fear or hatred based on their religious beliefs
- Be discriminated against, harassed or bullied based on their actual or perceived religious beliefs due to fear of religious extremism.
- By having any religious needs/requirements (e.g. fasting) ignored

The RFL's commitment to ensuring that rugby league is for everyone means that as more people from all communities and faiths get involved in the game, there is an increased possibility that instances of female genital mutilation, forced marriage or honour based violence may be reported or advice sought. Please see below for further advice and guidance.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation is a form of child abuse common to some African, Asian and Middle

Eastern communities in the UK. This illegal and life-threatening initiation ritual can leave young victims in agony and with physical and psychological problems that can continue into adulthood. Carried out in secret and often without anaesthetic it involves the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs.

The NSPCC Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) helpline offers specialist advice, information and support to anyone concerned that a child's welfare is at risk because of female genital mutilation. Though callers' details can remain anonymous, any information that could protect a child from abuse will be passed to the Police or Social Care services. Clubs should be mindful if a regular attender goes missing from a club or if a child, their peer or relative starts expressing worries about a trip abroad. If you are worried that a child may be at risk of FGM, you can contact the 24-hour helpline anonymously on 0800 028 3550 or email fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk or contact the RFL Safeguarding Manager.



If you wish to find out more about FGM then you can access the NSPCC's fact sheet via www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/resourcesforprofessionals/minorityethnic/femalegenitalmutilation_wda96841.html

Forced marriage

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights. The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family).

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) operates a public helpline to provide advice and support to victims and those being pressurised into forced marriages. Of the 1,300 plus cases dealt with in 2012 40% of victims were under 18. If you are worried that a child may be at risk of forced marriage, you can contact FMU via the helpline on 020 7008 0151 or email fmufco.gov.uk or contact the RFL Safeguarding Manager
For more information on forced marriages go to www.gov.uk/forced-marriage

Honour based violence

The term 'Honour Based Violence' (HBV) is the internationally recognised term describing cultural justifications for violence and abuse. It seeks to justify the use of certain types of violence and abuse against women, men and children. The Police define HBV as: 'A crime or incident, which has or may have been committed, to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'.

HBV cuts across all cultures, nationalities, faith groups and communities and transcends national and international boundaries. HBV is also a Domestic Abuse issue, a Child Abuse concern and a crime. If you are worried that a child may be at risk of HBV contact Children's Social Care for further advice and guidance or the RFL Safeguarding Manager

Child Trafficking

Any concerns about the possibility of a child or young person being trafficked should be reported via the statutory agencies. Although no precise figures exist, the ILO (in 2005) estimated that between 980,000 to 1,225,000 children - both boys and girls - are in a forced labour situation as a result of trafficking internationally.

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



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- Developing knowledge of the diverse cultures they serve
- Respecting cultural differences
- Promoting positive environments and behaviours in which difference (in a variety of senses) is embraced
- Building relationships with parents and carers and including all families in club activities
- Observing carefully changes in mood, appearance and behaviour and discussing those concerns with families, carers or the CWO if suspicions or concerns are significantly aroused about the care of the child or young person

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. You can find more information about the RFL

Acknowledgements

The RFL would like to acknowledge that the development of this guidance has been assisted by guidance written by the FA, ASA, ECB, CPSU and CEOP.



ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITY – LGBT

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, and 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 football 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 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

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