

SAFE CRASH NEWSLETTER



Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter, the intention is to re-introduce the magazine and circulate it every quarter i.e. September, December, March and June.

As part of our ongoing commitment to creating safe, respectful, and inclusive environments.

In addition, this publication aims to keep you informed about key safeguarding developments, best practices, and strategic initiatives across our organisation.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; through shared knowledge, collaboration, and continuous improvement, we can ensure that our policies and culture reflect the highest standards of care and protection.

Thank you for your dedication to safeguarding and for playing a vital role in upholding the values that define our sport.

Yours in Sport

Barry Pollin

National Safeguarding Manager



MEET THE RFL INTERIM BOARD CHAMPIONS

Joanna “Jo” Coates

We are pleased to spotlight Jo Coates, a Non-Executive member of the RFL Interim Board and a seasoned leader in sport governance and commercial strategy.

Jo brings a wealth of experience from previous roles as CEO of UK Athletics and England Netball, where she led transformative initiatives in governance, inclusion, and strategic planning.

At England Netball, she secured major partnerships, expanded broadcast reach, and guided the team to Commonwealth Games gold in 2018.

At UK Athletics, she introduced a new governance structure and a 12-year strategic plan, improving collaboration across the home nations.

Jo has previously served as interim CEO for England Hockey, Jo also sits on the FA Women’s National League Board and has held leadership roles at British Wheelchair Basketball and British University & College Sport (BUCS).

Her focus on governance and welfare aligns closely with the RFL’s safeguarding priorities, ensuring that integrity, transparency, and care remain central to the sport’s future.

Jo’s presence on both the RFL Interim Board and the Strategic Review Committee reinforces the importance of safeguarding as a strategic imperative, not just a compliance requirement.

She has also been nominated as one of the two RFL representatives on the Board of Rugby League Commercial.



Emma Rosewarne MBE

We are pleased to highlight Emma Rosewarne MBE, a member of the RFL Interim Board and a long-standing advocate for welfare and safeguarding in sport.

With decades of experience in player welfare and safeguarding policy, Emma brings deep insight and unwavering commitment to ensuring that Rugby League remains a safe and supportive environment for all participants.

Her leadership has helped shape national safeguarding frameworks and embed a culture of care across the sport.

Emma joined the RFL in 1983 in the operations department and was at the heart of major initiatives from the implementation of the salary cap to safeguarding policy and equality work, as well as contributing to the work of Rugby League Cares.

Emma was awarded the MBE in 2022 for her services to the sport, and specifically to player welfare.



SAFEGUARDING CASE MANAGEMENT GROUP (SCMG)

The SCMG is a vital part of the Rugby Football League's safeguarding infrastructure.

Its primary role is to oversee the management of safeguarding concerns, ensuring that all cases are handled with consistency, fairness, and in line with national legislation and best practice.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Case Oversight:** Reviewing and advising on complex or high-risk safeguarding cases involving children, young people, or vulnerable adults.
- **Decision-Making:** Recommending appropriate actions, including temporary suspensions, referrals to statutory agencies, or internal disciplinary measures.
- **Expert Input:** Drawing on the expertise of professionals from legal, police, welfare, and safeguarding backgrounds to ensure robust and informed decisions.
- **Policy Alignment:** Ensuring that all safeguarding responses align with the RFL's Safeguarding Policy, the NSPCC's CPSU standards, and relevant legislation.
- **Confidentiality and Integrity:** Maintaining the highest standards of confidentiality, impartiality, and procedural fairness.

The SCMG currently consists of the following members:

Barry Pollin (Chair), Gavin Wild (Compliance Manager), Andrea Murray (National Education Manager), Alan Smith (Community Game Senior Administrator), Liam Moore (Legal & Compliance Case Manager) and Chris Bibby (Safeguarding Officer).



DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE (DBS) - NEW ID CHECKING GUIDELINES

Identity verification is an important part of the DBS process; the information provided is used to search for any relevant police records and entries on the barred lists; without accurate information the DBS may not be able to provide a full and accurate document which will severely impact on the safeguarding of vulnerable groups.

By requesting as much detail as possible when reviewing DBS applications as part of the verification process the DBS will then be able to process applications accurately and swiftly.

New guidelines came into effect from 22nd April 2025, however the [previous ID checking guidelines](#) can also be used up until 1 November 2025; this is to take into account technical changes that Registered Bodies may need to make in line with the updated guidelines.

Additional information can be found by using the following link:

[ID checking guidelines for Standard/Enhanced DBS check applications from 22 April 2025 - GOV.UK](#)

To assist with the administration of the process the RFL uses a third party partner (Matrix Security Watchdog) and they have informed us that they plan to migrate our data into a new version of their eBulkPlus, Matrix Screening database.

At present, this is scheduled for the week commencing Monday 27th October 2025 and some minor adjustments have already been made to their platform.

N.B. A more comprehensive brief is being prepared and will be circulated to our volunteers and staff who currently process DBS applications on a weekly basis.



CRIME AND POLICING BILL 2025

The new Bill is coming into law shortly, which enforces that anyone who has a key role with responsibility for children and young people in England must report sexual abuse when they are made aware of it.

It includes sports coaches, and anyone who works with children in the sport and leisure industries.

It will also be a criminal offence to prevent someone reporting child sexual abuse, more details can be found by following this link:

[Crime and Policing Bill](#)

CHILD PROTECTION IN SPORT UNIT (CPSU) UPDATE

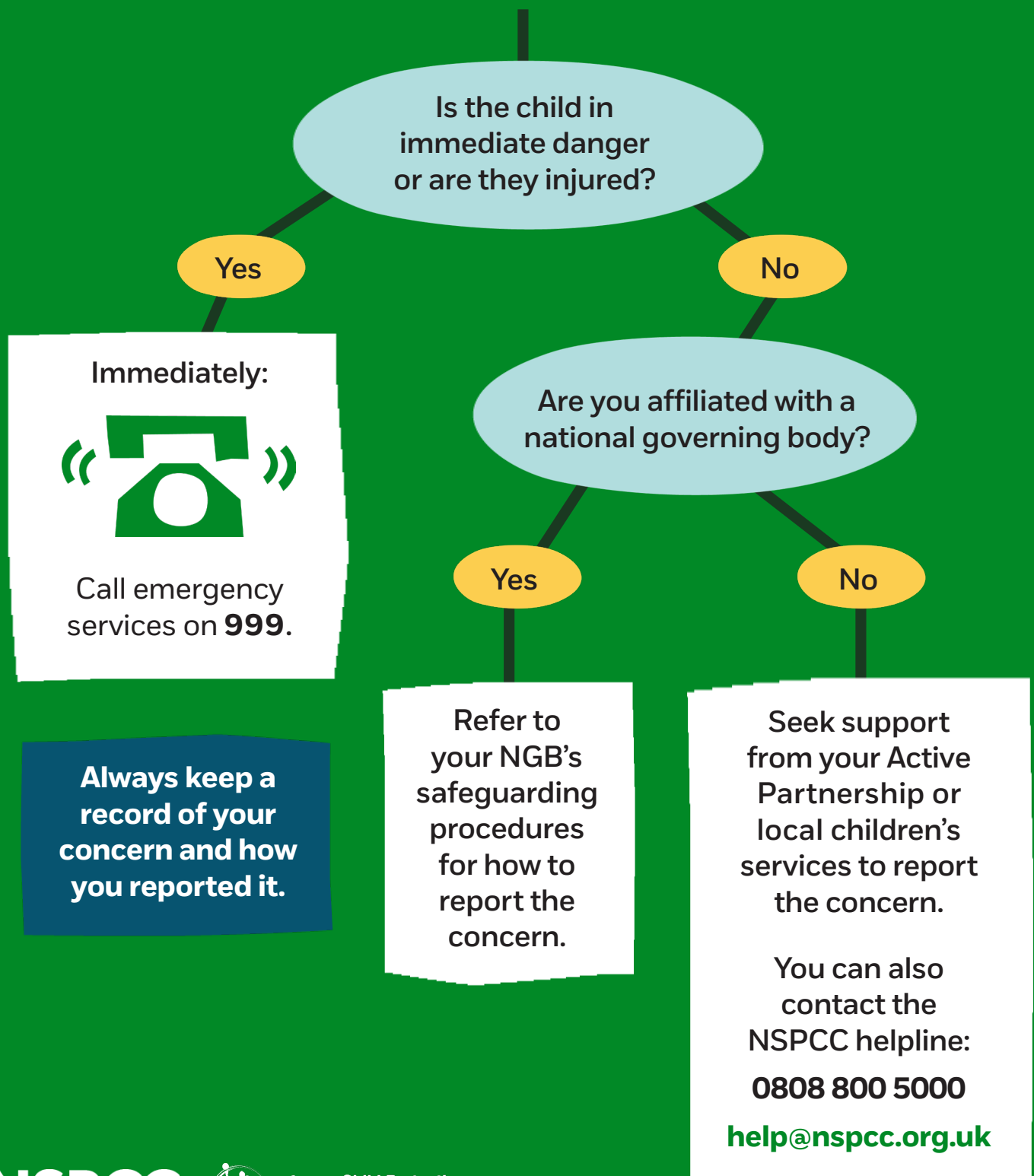
The CPSU have issued the following guidance, “If you are affiliated with a National Governing Body (NGB) you must refer to your NGB’s safeguarding procedures for how to report the concern.

This compatible with the RFL Safeguarding Policy 2025 and is clearly explained in in the following link [safeguarding reporting procedures flowchart.](#)

In addition the CPSU have prepared a poster which succinctly encapsulates their advice.



What to do when you have concerns about a child...



ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE 2026

After careful consideration, we will not be hosting an Annual Safeguarding Conference in 2026.

This decision reflects our current strategic priorities and our focus on embedding safeguarding practices more directly within our day-to-day operations and local engagement efforts.

While the conference has previously been a valuable platform for collaboration and learning, we are currently exploring alternative ways to share insights, celebrate progress, and strengthen our safeguarding culture across the organisation.

We appreciate your continued commitment to safeguarding and look forward to working with you through other channels to support our shared goals.

NEW SAFEGUARDING & PROTECTING CHILDREN REFRESHER COURSE

The RFL Education team have completed an updated Safeguarding & Protecting Children Course, which went live on the RFL learning platform during the last week in September.

This RFL Safeguarding and Protection Children Refresher (SPC) eLearning course is designed to provide students with a good understanding of safeguarding, the role of a coach or volunteer and support volunteers as they deal with a safeguarding incident. The new refresher course is only for individuals who have previously completed the full Safeguarding and Protecting Children Workshop.

