



Northampton Saints Safeguarding Adults Policy

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1.0 Policy Statement

Northampton Rugby Football Club Limited ('Northampton Saints' or the 'Club' or the 'Company') is a professional rugby club with a proud history dating back to 1880. Our work extends beyond the playing field and includes elite sporting performance, coaching, medical and support services, commercial and business operations, community activity, and matchday delivery.

This policy sets out Northampton Saints' commitment to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for everyone involved in our club and wider activities. The Board and Executive Team fully endorse this policy and expect safeguarding to be embedded across all departments, venues and events. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility and a core part of how we operate as a professional sporting organisation.

We recognise that safeguarding adults means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect, while promoting wellbeing, dignity, choice and respect. We are particularly mindful of adults who may have care and support needs and who may be unable to protect themselves from abuse, neglect or poor practice because of those needs.

Northampton Saints expects all staff, volunteers and individuals acting on behalf of the club to take concerns seriously, report them promptly, and respond in a person-led and proportionate way. Wherever possible, adults will be listened to and involved in decisions about what happens next, reflecting the principle of "nothing about me without me".

2.0 Purpose and Scope

Northampton Saints is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, inclusive and positive environment for everyone involved in rugby and related club activity. This policy applies to all adults aged 18 and over who engage with Northampton Saints in any capacity, including within performance, academy, community, foundation, matchday, commercial and operational settings.

The purpose of this policy is to set out Northampton Saints' commitment to safeguarding adults at risk across all Club activities. It provides clear expectations for staff, volunteers, contractors and others connected with the Club, supports consistent safeguarding practice, and explains how concerns, disclosures, allegations or incidents involving adults at risk should be recognised, recorded and responded to promptly, proportionately and appropriately. The Club is committed to reviewing any safeguarding incidents or concerns, identifying lessons learned and implementing improvements to strengthen future practice and reduce the risk of recurrence.

3.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, an adult is anyone aged 18 or over.

Adult at risk – refers to an adult who has needs for care and support, is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves from the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect because of those needs.

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons.

Neglect – the failure to meet an adult's basic physical, emotional, medical or care needs, either deliberately or through poor practice, where this causes harm or creates a risk of harm.

Capacity refers to a person's ability to make a specific decision at the time it needs to be made. Adults should always be presumed to have capacity unless it is established otherwise. Where capacity is in doubt, Northampton Saints will seek to act in the adult's best interests, use the least restrictive option available, and involve carers or support persons where appropriate while keeping the adult's rights, wishes and dignity central to decision-making.

Abuse and Neglect

Abuse and neglect can take place in any setting, including within sport, and may be carried out by anyone, including relatives, carers, staff, volunteers, peers, members of the public or other participants.

Abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Discriminatory abuse
- Domestic abuse and coercive control
- Organisational abuse
- Modern slavery
- Self-neglect
- Cyber bullying or online abuse
- Forced marriage
- Mate crime
- Radicalisation



Northampton Saints recognises that abuse can be a single incident or a pattern of behaviour, and that poor practice, bullying, harassment, discrimination and misuse of power can escalate into safeguarding concerns if not addressed appropriately. In a professional sporting environment, this may include unsafe training practice, coercive behaviour, inappropriate use of power by staff or peers, financial exploitation of a supporter or participant, sexualised messaging, discriminatory language, or failing to respond appropriately to welfare, medical or support needs.

4.0 Principles of Adult Safeguarding

Northampton Saints adopts the six safeguarding principles set out in the Care Act 2014:

- **Empowerment** – supporting adults to make their own decisions and give informed consent.
- **Prevention** – taking action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** – responding in the least intrusive way appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** – providing support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership** – working with statutory agencies, families, carers and communities where appropriate.
- **Accountability** – being clear about roles, responsibilities and decision-making.

We also recognise the importance of wellbeing, dignity, inclusion and reasonable adjustment, and the need to avoid making assumptions based solely on age, disability, appearance, behaviour or role. Safeguarding adults also includes promoting personal dignity, physical and mental wellbeing, protection from abuse and neglect, control over day-to-day life where possible, and full participation in rugby and related activity

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

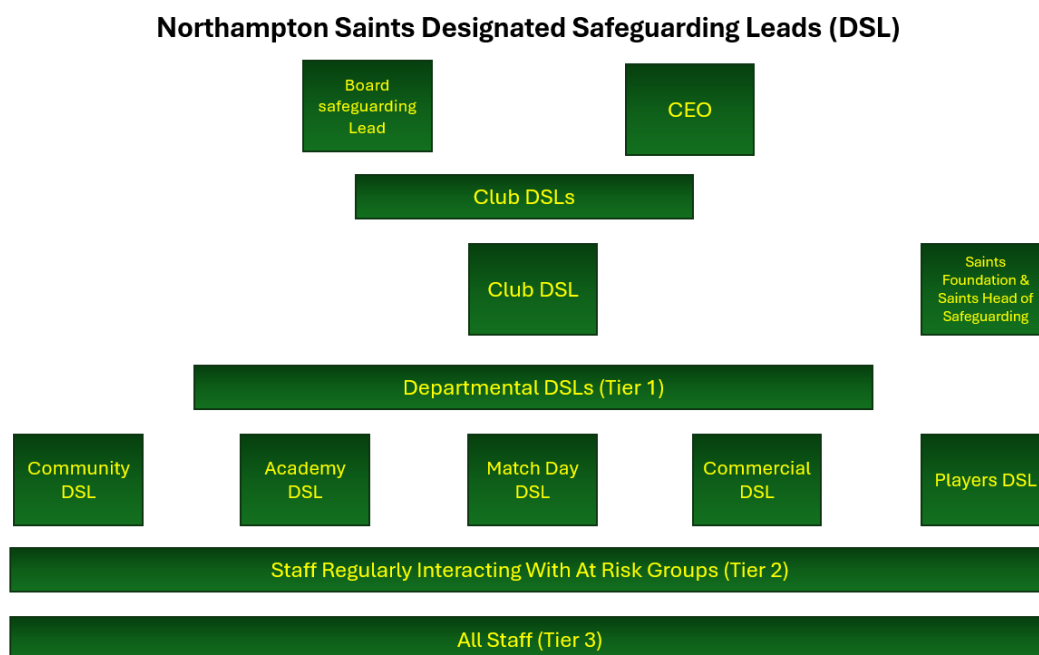
Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff, volunteers and contractors working with or around adults in Northampton Saints environments must:

- act in line with this policy and associated procedures;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries and standards of behaviour;
- remain vigilant to signs of abuse, neglect, poor practice or exploitation;
- respond appropriately to disclosures or concerns;
- record and report concerns promptly;
- cooperate with safeguarding processes, investigations and risk management measures;
- undertake safeguarding training relevant to their role.

Northampton Saints' Designated Safeguarding Lead and relevant departmental safeguarding leads are responsible for receiving concerns, advising on immediate

actions, liaising with the RFU and external agencies where required, maintaining appropriate records, and supporting a safe and consistent safeguarding culture across the organisation. Northampton Saints will maintain clear safeguarding leadership, defined escalation routes, and appropriate management oversight for safeguarding concerns, including concerns relating to the behaviour of staff, volunteers or contractors.

Northampton Saints Safeguarding Structure:



6.0 Good Practice, Poor Practice and Professional Boundaries

Northampton Saints expects all staff, volunteers and others working with adults at risk to create positive, respectful and safe experiences. Good practice includes acting openly and transparently, treating all adults with dignity, listening to their views, promoting independence where possible, making reasonable adjustments, working within role boundaries, and ensuring that any physical contact, support or intervention is appropriate, necessary, explained and, wherever possible, consented to.

Poor practice includes unnecessarily spending excessive time alone with an adult at risk, creating unobserved one-to-one situations without justification, using inappropriate or humiliating language, engaging in rough or sexually provocative behaviour, making suggestive comments, ignoring disclosures, taking an adult at risk alone in a private vehicle, inviting them to a private home or room, sharing accommodation without clear justification, or doing things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves. Where an exception is genuinely required in the person's best interests, it should be risk assessed, appropriately authorised and recorded.

If, during any interaction, an adult becomes distressed, appears to misunderstand contact or support, suffers an injury, or raises a concern about how they have been treated, the incident must be reported promptly to the relevant safeguarding lead and recorded factually.

7.0 Safer Recruitment, Training and Culture

Northampton Saints is committed to safer recruitment and to ensuring that appropriate checks, references, induction and safeguarding training are in place for relevant roles. We will support staff and volunteers to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and will promote a culture in which concerns can be raised promptly, professionally and without fear of retaliation. Northampton Saints recognises that DBS eligibility for roles involving adults differs from eligibility for work with children, and safeguarding or HR leads should seek RFU advice where required.

Any individual whose conduct gives rise to a safeguarding concern may be subject to risk management measures, internal processes, referral to relevant governing or statutory bodies, and disciplinary action where appropriate.

8.0 Recognising, Responding to and Reporting Concerns

Signs and Indicators of Concern

Possible indicators of abuse or neglect may include unexplained injuries, changes in behaviour, fear of particular individuals, withdrawal from activity, signs of distress, poor hygiene, sudden loss of confidence, controlling or coercive relationships, concerns about finances or belongings, or disclosures made by the adult or another person. In a rugby setting, this might also include a participant repeatedly arriving unkempt or without suitable kit, unexplained absence from sessions, unusual reliance on another person to speak for them, or visible anxiety when a particular individual is present. These signs do not always mean abuse has occurred, but they should never be ignored.

Responding to and Reporting Concerns

If you see, hear or suspect that an adult may be at risk, respond calmly, ensure immediate safety, record the facts, report the concern without delay to the relevant safeguarding lead, and refer to external agencies where necessary. If someone is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical treatment, call emergency services first.

If an adult is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical attention, emergency services must be contacted without delay.

If a concern arises through observation, disclosure or allegation, the person receiving the concern should stay calm, listen carefully, avoid asking leading questions, avoid making promises of confidentiality, and explain that the concern will need to be shared



with appropriate safeguarding personnel. The concern must then be reported as soon as possible to the relevant Northampton Saints safeguarding lead. You do not need the adult's consent to discuss a concern internally with Northampton Saints safeguarding leads, although consent should be sought wherever possible and the adult should be kept informed unless doing so would increase risk.

Where possible and appropriate, the adult should be involved in the discussion about next steps and their wishes should be listened to carefully. However, the need to seek consent must not prevent action being taken where there is immediate risk of harm, a serious crime may have been committed, or another person may also be at risk.

Northampton Saints will consult or refer to the RFU Safeguarding Team, statutory agencies and local safeguarding arrangements where appropriate, and will comply with any legal or regulatory reporting obligations. Where a concern cannot appropriately be managed solely within Northampton Saints, or where advice is required, the relevant safeguarding lead should consult or refer to the RFU Safeguarding Team. If the concern relates to the usual safeguarding lead, it should be escalated to an alternative safeguarding lead, relevant RFU contact or local safeguarding adults arrangements. Concerns relating to the conduct of staff, volunteers or contractors will be managed under safeguarding procedures and not treated solely as ordinary conduct matters where a safeguarding threshold may be met. Not all concerns raised under this policy will meet the threshold of an adult-at-risk safeguarding referral; some may instead be managed as welfare, conduct, disciplinary or complaints matters, while still being taken seriously and recorded appropriately.

Recording Concerns

All concerns must be recorded promptly, factually and accurately on My Concern. Records should include what was seen, heard or disclosed, using the adult's own words wherever possible, together with dates, times, names of those present, and any action taken. Records must distinguish clearly between fact, observation, allegation and opinion.

9.0 Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Safeguarding information must be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis. Northampton Saints will process personal data in accordance with applicable data protection law, while recognising that information may need to be shared without consent when this is necessary to protect someone from serious harm or to meet a legal safeguarding obligation.



10.0 Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside Northampton Saints' safeguarding children, whistleblowing, and safer recruitment policies. Policies within the staff handbook are also related including, equality, inclusion and diversity, positive work environment, sexual harassment and the disciplinary and grievance policies.

Appendices of related processes including match day and public events arrangements, transportation, trips, tours and overnights stays, and changing room arrangements are found at the end of the safeguarding children policy

11.0 Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and at least annually to ensure it remains aligned with legal requirements, RFU guidance and Northampton Saints' operational safeguarding arrangements. It may also be reviewed sooner following any significant incident, change in legislation, regulatory update or learning arising from practice.



Appendix 1: Northampton Saints Safeguarding Contacts:

Safeguarding at Board level

Board Safeguarding Champion: Ella Bevan (Chairman)

Chief Executive: Julia Chapman (CEO)

Club Designated Safeguarding Lead and support

- Emily Goss Chief People Officer

emilygoss@northamptonsaints.co.uk 07483 078369

- Trudy Jones Head of Safeguarding

trudy.jones@northamptonsaintsfoundation.org 07518 836983

Departmental Safeguarding Leads

Community Safeguarding Lead

- Ben Lawrence Head of Community

benlawrence@northamptonsaints.co.uk 07772 297687

Academy Safeguarding Lead

- Max Dominy Foundation Phase and Coach Development Manager

maxdominy@northamptonsaints.co.uk 07841 768065

Match Day Safeguarding Lead

- Julia Wells Operations Manager

juliawells@northamptonsaints.co.uk 07979 944237

Commercial Safeguarding Lead

- Helen Hoban Ticketing Manager

helenhoban@northamptonsaints.co.uk

Players Safeguarding Lead

- George Hibberd Team Manager

georgehibberd@northamptonsaints.co.uk 07825 336225

In the event of an incident, if no member of the safeguarding team is available for support and guidance, please contact a member of your senior management team

Appendix 2. Adults at Risk Attending Public Events

Northampton Saints recognises that some adults attending public events may require additional support to remain safe and enjoy the event. This may include adults with care and support needs, adults who attend with a carer, family member or support worker, or adults who become temporarily at risk because of illness, injury, distress, intoxication, disorientation or separation from the person supporting them. Event safeguarding arrangements must promote dignity, choice and independence while ensuring timely and proportionate action where a welfare concern arises.

If an adult appears confused, distressed, unwell, disoriented, unable to locate the person supporting them, or otherwise at risk, stewards or staff should notify the control room and the relevant safeguarding lead or event welfare lead as soon as possible. A calm and respectful welfare check should then be carried out, with staff seeking to establish the adult's immediate needs, whether they require medical support, and whether they can provide details of the person accompanying them or an emergency contact.

Where an adult at risk requires temporary support, they should be taken, with their agreement wherever possible, to a suitable welfare point or other safe location staffed by appropriate personnel. Staff should remain with the adult until the situation is resolved, maintain the person's dignity and privacy, and avoid leaving them alone if there are concerns about their safety, capacity, physical wellbeing or vulnerability to exploitation.

Where an adult at risk has become separated from a carer, companion or responsible person, staff should, wherever possible, seek the adult's consent before sharing information or making announcements. Any announcement must be discreet and must not broadcast that the person is missing, vulnerable or at risk. Reunification should be carried out carefully, with reasonable checks undertaken where necessary to ensure the adult is being supported by the correct person.

If the adult appears to be at immediate risk of harm, lacks capacity in relation to the immediate decision that needs to be made, requires urgent medical attention, or there are concerns about abuse, neglect, exploitation or predatory behaviour, emergency services must be contacted without delay and the safeguarding concern must be recorded and escalated in line with this policy.

Event staff should also remain vigilant to circumstances that may increase risk for adults at public events, including alcohol or substance misuse, harassment, coercive behaviour, financial exploitation, discriminatory abuse, sexual misconduct, or suspicious behaviour in pick-up, drop-off, circulation or welfare areas. Concerns of this kind must be taken seriously and reported promptly.



Where safe onward travel is a concern, Northampton Saints will seek to support a safe and appropriate resolution, which may include contacting the adult's emergency contact, carer or support person, arranging medical assistance, or seeking police support where necessary. Staff must not take an adult home in a private vehicle unless this is expressly authorised within an emergency procedure and subject to appropriate safeguards.

Any incident involving an adult at risk at a public event must be recorded as soon as possible, including the presenting concern, actions taken, any consent sought, whether capacity or immediate safety was an issue, who was informed, and the outcome. This record should then be shared with the relevant safeguarding lead in line with Northampton Saints' reporting procedures.