



Northampton Saints Safer Recruitment 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.

Northampton Saints is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. We recognise that safer recruitment is a vital part of creating and maintaining a safe environment across all areas of the Club. This policy sets out the measures we take to deter, identify and, where necessary, reject applicants who may pose a risk of harm, and to ensure that all people engaged in work that brings them into contact with children or adults at risk are suitable for their role.

2. Purpose and Scope

This policy applies to all recruitment activity carried out by Northampton Saints for roles involving work with children, young people and adults at risk, whether paid or unpaid. It applies to permanent and fixed-term employees, casual and match day staff, coaches, volunteers, agency staff, consultants, contractors, apprentices, work experience placements and any other individuals engaged on behalf of the Club where their role may involve contact with children or adults at risk. Where roles involve adults at risk, Northampton Saints will apply the same safer recruitment principles and safeguarding standards as for roles involving children, adjusted to the relevant legal and regulatory framework.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- Safeguarding is embedded throughout recruitment, selection, induction and ongoing oversight.
- The level of scrutiny applied is proportionate to the role, the nature of the contact with children or adults at risk, and whether the role involves regulated activity.
- Northampton Saints only request criminal records checks where the role is legally eligible for that level of check. The level of check requested is determined by the legal eligibility of the role and the nature, frequency and intensity of the individual's contact with children or adults at risk.
- Recruitment decisions are based on merit, suitability, safer recruitment checks and the needs of the role.
- The Club follows a fair, consistent and legally compliant recruitment process, while taking all reasonable steps to protect children and adults at risk from harm.

- No individual is permitted to begin unsupervised regulated activity until all required pre-appointment checks have been completed and assessed as satisfactory.

Where concerns arise from recruitment checks, risk will be assessed carefully and decisions will be made in consultation with appropriate safeguarding and people leads.

3. Definitions:

Child – refers to anyone under the age of 18

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.

Position of trust means a role in which an adult has authority, responsibility, influence or power over a child or young person because of their role, status or access to them

Regulated activity has the meaning given within safeguarding legislation and RFU Regulation 21 and includes frequent coaching, teaching, instruction, care or supervision of children.

Designated Safeguarding Leads and Officers will act as first points of contact for safeguarding concerns, maintain records, support decision-making, liaise with the RFU Safeguarding Team and statutory agencies, and oversee implementation of safeguarding procedures.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The HR Team is responsible for maintaining this policy, coordinating recruitment checks and supporting recruiting managers. Recruiting managers are responsible for ensuring that safer recruitment requirements are built into role design, advertising, shortlisting, interview and appointment decisions. Departmental safeguarding leads and the Club Safeguarding Lead will support risk assessment and decision-making where safeguarding issues arise and will seek advice from the Head of Safeguarding.

All panel members involved in recruiting to relevant roles should understand the Club's safeguarding responsibilities and apply this policy consistently. For roles with substantial safeguarding responsibilities (e.g. roles designated as a position of trust), at least one person involved in the selection process should have appropriate safeguarding or safer recruitment knowledge.

Any employee involved in the recruitment process who has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant must declare this as soon as they become aware of the

application and must not take part in the recruitment or selection decision-making process.

5. Recruitment Planning and Advertising

Before recruitment begins, the Club will consider the safeguarding responsibilities of the role and determine the level of vetting and checks required. Job descriptions and person specifications for relevant roles must make clear the safeguarding responsibilities attached to the post, the standards of behaviour expected, and whether the role is eligible for a Disclosure and Barring Service check and, where applicable, barred list information.

Advertisements and recruitment materials for roles involving children or adults at risk should include a clear safeguarding statement, make clear that safer recruitment checks will be undertaken, and state that the role may be subject to enhanced vetting and references. For relevant roles, applicants should be required to complete the Club's application process in full, including details of their full employment history and explanations for any gaps, anomalies or relevant issues that may affect suitability for the role. Incomplete applications may be excluded from shortlisting.

6. Selection and Interview

Shortlisting will be carried out against the job description and person specification. Any discrepancies, gaps in employment, patterns of short service, or issues relevant to safeguarding should be explored and recorded. Interviews for relevant roles should include questions that test the candidate's values, conduct, boundaries, attitude to safeguarding, and ability to work safely with children and adults at risk.

Where appropriate for the role, applicants may be asked to complete a self-disclosure or declaration form relating to criminal record information and suitability to work with children or adults at risk. Any information disclosed will be handled confidentially and assessed fairly and proportionately.

Where possible, interviews should be conducted by at least two people. For roles with significant safeguarding responsibilities, the panel should include, or have access to input from, a person with appropriate safeguarding knowledge. Candidates must be asked to bring original documentation to verify identity, right to work, address, qualifications and any name changes where relevant.

A record of interview questions, panel notes and the reasons for appointment decisions will be retained in line with the Club's retention schedule. Notes relating to the successful candidate will be placed on the personnel file. Notes relating to unsuccessful candidates will be retained for an appropriate period and then securely destroyed. Any applicant who is found to have knowingly withheld relevant information

or provided false or misleading information during the recruitment process may be excluded from appointment or, if already appointed, may be subject to disciplinary action.

7. Pre-Appointment Checks

Any offer of appointment to a role covered by this policy must be conditional on the satisfactory completion of appropriate pre-appointment checks. Depending on the nature of the role, these may include:

- verification of identity, current address and right to work in the UK;
- verification of relevant qualifications, registrations, accreditations and coaching awards where required for the role;
- a full employment history, with any gaps or discrepancies explored;
- a minimum of two references, including one reference from the applicant's current or most recent employer where possible, and where relevant a referee able to comment on the individual's suitability to work with children or adults at risk;
- a Disclosure and Barring Service check at the appropriate level for the role, including a barred list check where legally permitted and required;
- confirmation that the individual is not disqualified, prohibited or otherwise restricted from carrying out the work in question, where this is relevant to the role;
- where appropriate, a self-disclosure or declaration form relating to criminal record information and suitability for the role; and
- any additional checks considered necessary because of the role, the context, overseas residence or information disclosed during recruitment.

References should be obtained directly from the referee wherever possible and scrutinised before the individual starts work. One reference should normally be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. Referees must not be relatives. Open references or testimonials will not be relied on as the sole form of reference. Where the role involves work with children or adults at risk, referees should, where appropriate, be asked whether they have any reason to believe the individual is unsuitable for that work. Concerns, vague statements, discrepancies or safeguarding issues identified through references must be followed up and resolved appropriately before an appointment is confirmed.

8. Disclosure and Barring Service Checks and Risk Assessment

The Club will assess each role to determine whether a DBS check is required and, if so, the appropriate level of check in accordance with current legislation and applicable guidance. Northampton Saints will only request criminal records checks where the role



is legally eligible for that level of check. For roles involving regulated activity with children or adults at risk, the Club will obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information where this is lawful and required.

No individual may undertake unsupervised regulated activity until all required checks have been completed and confirmed as satisfactory. In exceptional circumstances, where a start date is required before all non-statutory checks are completed, the Club may permit limited supervised duties only where this is lawful, a written risk assessment has been completed, and appropriate safeguards are in place. Under no circumstances will an individual begin regulated activity before receipt and assessment of the required barred list information where that check is applicable.

If information is disclosed through a DBS check, self-disclosure, references or any other part of the recruitment process, this will not necessarily bar the individual from appointment. The Club will consider the information fairly, carefully and proportionately, assess its relevance to the role and the safeguarding risks presented, and make a reasoned decision. This assessment will normally involve the HR Team, the relevant safeguarding lead and, where appropriate, the Club Safeguarding Lead. A written record of the decision and reasons will be kept securely, in line with data protection requirements.

DBS certificate information will be handled confidentially and in line with data protection requirements and the DBS Code of Practice. Northampton Saints will maintain a written procedure covering the secure handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of DBS certificate information. Access to this information will be restricted to those who need it for legitimate recruitment or safeguarding purposes. The Club will retain only the minimum information necessary to evidence that the check has been completed and assessed and will not retain certificate information for longer than permitted.

9. Induction, Training and Supervision

All new starters appointed to roles covered by this policy will complete an induction appropriate to their role. This will include safeguarding expectations, codes of conduct, reporting procedures, whistleblowing arrangements, professional boundaries, and the specific safeguarding risks relevant to the Club's environment. Completion of induction and required training will be recorded.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that individuals are supervised appropriately, understand their responsibilities, and complete any required safeguarding training within the timescales set by the Club or relevant governing bodies. Where a role requires qualifications or certifications to remain current, those requirements must be monitored and renewed as appropriate.

10. Agency Staff, Contractors, Consultants and Volunteers

Where Northampton Saints engages agency staff, contractors, consultants or volunteers in roles that may involve contact with children or adults at risk, the Club will take reasonable steps to assure itself that appropriate recruitment and vetting checks have been carried out. This may include obtaining written confirmation from the supplying organisation, checking identity on arrival, setting safeguarding expectations contractually, and restricting duties until assurance has been obtained.

Volunteer roles will be assessed in the same way as paid roles to determine safeguarding responsibilities, supervision arrangements and whether the role is eligible for DBS checking. Volunteers engaged in relevant roles may be required to complete an application, interview, identity checks, references and DBS checks as appropriate. No volunteer will be given unsupervised or sole responsibility for children or adults at risk unless the required checks have been completed and assessed as satisfactory.

11. Ongoing Suitability and Culture of Vigilance

Safer recruitment does not end at appointment. The Club expects all staff, volunteers and others working on its behalf to maintain the highest standards of conduct and to act promptly on any safeguarding concern. Individuals must inform the Club if any issue arises that may affect their suitability for their role, including relevant criminal investigations, charges, convictions, barring decisions or other serious matters, subject to applicable law. Where appropriate to the role and in line with Club procedures, Northampton Saints may require periodic re-checking of DBS status or other suitability checks.

The Club will maintain a culture in which safeguarding concerns can be raised appropriately, recorded and acted upon. Concerns about the behaviour or suitability of any adult working with children or adults at risk must be referred promptly in accordance with the Club's safeguarding procedures and, where relevant, disciplinary or referral obligations. Where safeguarding concerns indicate that an individual may pose a risk of harm, Northampton Saints will consider whether referral should be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service, the RFU and/or any other appropriate statutory or regulatory authority in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements.

12. Record Keeping, Data Protection and Confidentiality

The Club will keep clear and proportionate records of recruitment decisions and checks carried out under this policy. Personal data will be processed in accordance with UK data protection law and the Club's privacy and records management requirements. Information relating to criminal records checks will be accessed only by those who need it for legitimate recruitment or safeguarding purposes and will be stored and



disposed of securely. Records should be sufficient to demonstrate that the appropriate level of recruitment scrutiny, safeguarding consideration and decision-making has been applied to the role and appointment in question. The Club will maintain a central record or tracker of safer recruitment and vetting checks for relevant roles to support compliance, oversight, audit and safeguarding assurance.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and earlier where there are changes in legislation, guidance, governing body requirements, organisational learning or safeguarding practice. Compliance may be tested through recruitment file checks, internal audit activity, safeguarding reviews, central record checks or other assurance processes. Actions arising from any review or audit will be recorded and followed through to completion.

Appendix A: Safer Recruitment Checklist

Check	Complete	Notes
Role assessed for safeguarding responsibilities and legal eligibility for vetting level required		
Conflict of interest declaration completed where applicable		
Job description/person specification includes safeguarding responsibilities		
Advert includes safeguarding statement and vetting requirements		
Application/full employment history reviewed and complete		
Self-disclosure/declaration requested where appropriate		
Gaps, anomalies or safeguarding issues explored at interview		
Appropriate panel knowledge or safeguarding input confirmed		
Interview questions, panel notes and appointment rationale retained		
Identity, address and right to work verified		
Qualifications/accreditations/coaching awards verified where required		
Two references received directly and reviewed, including current or most recent employer where possible		
DBS check completed at legally appropriate level		
Barred list check completed where applicable		
Risk assessment completed where concerns identified or checks outstanding		
Induction completed and safeguarding training assigned/completed		
Start date approved with safeguards in place		
Central safer recruitment/vetting record updated		
Referral considerations documented where concerns arise		

Appendix B: Templates and Example Screening Questions

Bullet point to be added to all job descriptions considered a 'Position of Trust' and/or where the role consists of regulated activity:

Safeguarding is a fundamental part of this role. The post holder is expected to uphold the highest standards of conduct, maintain appropriate professional boundaries at all times, and actively contribute to a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for children, young people and adults at risk.

Paragraphs to be added to adverts for all vacancies for roles as above:

Appointment to this role is subject to robust safer recruitment processes. This will include the receipt of satisfactory references, verification of identity and right to work in the UK, and completion of an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (including barred list where applicable).

Any offer of employment will be conditional upon the satisfactory completion of these pre-employment checks. Individuals will not be permitted to undertake unsupervised work with children, young people or adults at risk until all required checks have been completed and deemed satisfactory.

The following questions are in place to support the pre-screening or a candidate and should be asked of referees provided by the candidate:

Questions in bold to be sent to referee as a form to be completed. Additional questions are suggested if a broader conversation is required.

- **Can you confirm your relationship to the applicant and the period during which you worked with them?**
- **In what capacity did the applicant work with children, young people or adults at risk (if applicable)?**
- Are you aware of the applicant ever raising a safeguarding concern? If so, how did they handle it?
- In your experience, would the applicant report a concern appropriately, even if it involved a colleague?
- Have there ever been any allegations, concerns, or investigations (whether substantiated or not) relating to safeguarding, conduct, or behaviour?
- How does the applicant demonstrate professionalism when working in situations involving power imbalance (e.g. coaching, mentoring, supervision)?
- Have you ever observed any behaviours that could be considered inappropriate, overly familiar, or blurred boundaries (e.g. favouritism, personal relationships, communication outside appropriate channels)?

- How does the applicant respond to challenge or constructive feedback, particularly in relation to conduct or behaviour?
- **Is there any reason why this individual should not work with children, young people or adults at risk?**
- **Would you re-employ this individual in a role involving responsibility for children or young people?**

Suggested questions to be asked at face-to-face Interviews to gain a better understanding of the candidates experience and approach to safeguarding.

1. **CV Based Questions:** *used to review any concerns from the CV and application – ask as required*
 - We noticed a gap in your employment between *[dates]*. Can you talk us through this period in more detail?
 - Can you explain your reasons for leaving your previous role?
 - We note that you have held several short-term positions. Can you help us understand the reasons for this?
 - Have you ever been subject to any disciplinary procedures or safeguarding concerns in previous roles?
 - Is there anything from your previous work with children or young people that you feel we should be aware of to properly assess your suitability for this role?
2. **Behaviour (Experience) Based:** *Ask the one most closely matched to role recruiting for*
 - Tell us about a time you had to manage a safeguarding concern or welfare issue. What did you do?
 - Describe a situation where you had to challenge inappropriate behaviour. How did you approach it?
 - How have you adapted your communication style when working with children or vulnerable individuals?
 - Can you give an example of how you have created a safe and inclusive environment?
3. **Professional Boundaries and Position of Trust:** *Ask the one most closely matched to role recruiting for*
 - What do you consider appropriate and inappropriate relationships or behaviours when working with young people?
 - How would you respond if a young person attempted to form a closer personal relationship with you outside of your professional role (e.g. social media, messaging, gifts)?
 - What steps would you take to ensure transparency in one-to-one situations?

4. Scenario Based Question – *to be asked to all candidates with the wording tailored based on the likely age range group or adult demographic.*

Scenario: You are coaching an academy training session. A *[enter age / appropriate demographic]* player has recently become withdrawn and quieter than usual. During a session, you notice:

- They have visible bruising that they attempt to hide
- They appear anxious when receiving messages on their phone
- Another player mentions they “haven’t been eating much” during camp

After training, the player approaches you and says they are “fine” but seems reluctant to go home.

Question: What would you do in this situation? Please talk us through your actions step-by-step.

Paragraph to be added to Offer Letters/emails to ensure that an offer can be made subject to safer recruitment processes and standards being met

This offer of employment is conditional upon Northampton Saints receiving and assessing as satisfactory all required pre-employment checks. These include verification of your identity and right to work in the UK, receipt of satisfactory references, and completion of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check at the appropriate level for the role. The Club reserves the right to withdraw this offer, or delay your start date, if these checks are not completed, are not satisfactory, or if you are unable to provide evidence of your right to work in the UK. Where the role involves regulated activity or work with children, young people or adults at risk, you will not be permitted to undertake unsupervised duties until all required checks have been completed and confirmed as satisfactory.

Template email to send with reference request Typeform

Subject: Reference Request – **[Candidate Name]**

Dear **[Referee Name]**,

I hope you are well.

I am writing to request a reference for **[Candidate Name]**, who has been provisionally offered a position of **[enter role]** with us at Northampton Saints, subject to the satisfactory completion of our safer recruitment checks.

We fully understand that organisational policies can sometimes limit the level of detail you are able to provide within a reference. However, given the nature of the role and the



importance of safeguarding within our environment, we would respectfully ask that you respond to this request as fully as you are able within those constraints.

As part of our commitment to safer recruitment and safeguarding, your response plays an important role in helping us ensure we are creating a safe and positive environment for everyone the candidate may work with or come into contact with in their role. We'd really value any relevant information you feel able to share to support us in making a well-informed and responsible appointment.

The link to the reference form to be completed is here: [\[add type form link\]](#)

We appreciate the time and care taken to complete this request and thank you in advance for your support.

If you require any further information or would prefer to discuss any aspect of this request, please do not hesitate to contact me on [\[enter number\]](#).

Kind regards,

[\[Your Name\]](#)

[\[Your Job Title\]](#)