

Safeguarding Personnel

The IRFU Safeguarding Policy identifies four roles that come under the heading of 'Children's Officers' as per the Sports Councils' Codes. These together with the definitions agreed upon are as follows:

- i) '*National Protection Officer*' is the person appointed by the IRFU Committee to advise the IRFU in relation to this Policy, with specific responsibility for reporting concerns to the Statutory Authorities.
- ii) '*National Safeguarding Officer*' is the person appointed by the IRFU Committee to implement the policy and decisions for Age Grade Players of the IRFU. This person will act as Designated Liaison Person for the IRFU as per Children First Guidance and Our Duty to Care
- iii) '*Branch Welfare Officer*' is the person appointed by a Branch to implement the directions of the National Safeguarding Officer and to follow the policy for Age Grade Players of the IRFU.
- iv) '*Club Welfare Officer*' is the person appointed by a Club to implement the directions of the National Safeguarding Officer and Branch welfare Officer and to follow the Policy for Age Grade Players of the IRFU.



These officers operate within their respective spheres of influence at IRFU, Branch and Club level to implement the IRFU Safeguarding Policy and to procure the best possible compliance with the IRFU Safeguarding Policy, including implementing the 'Club Action Plan'.

Objectives

The main objectives in defining the roles of the safeguarding personnel are to ensure that :

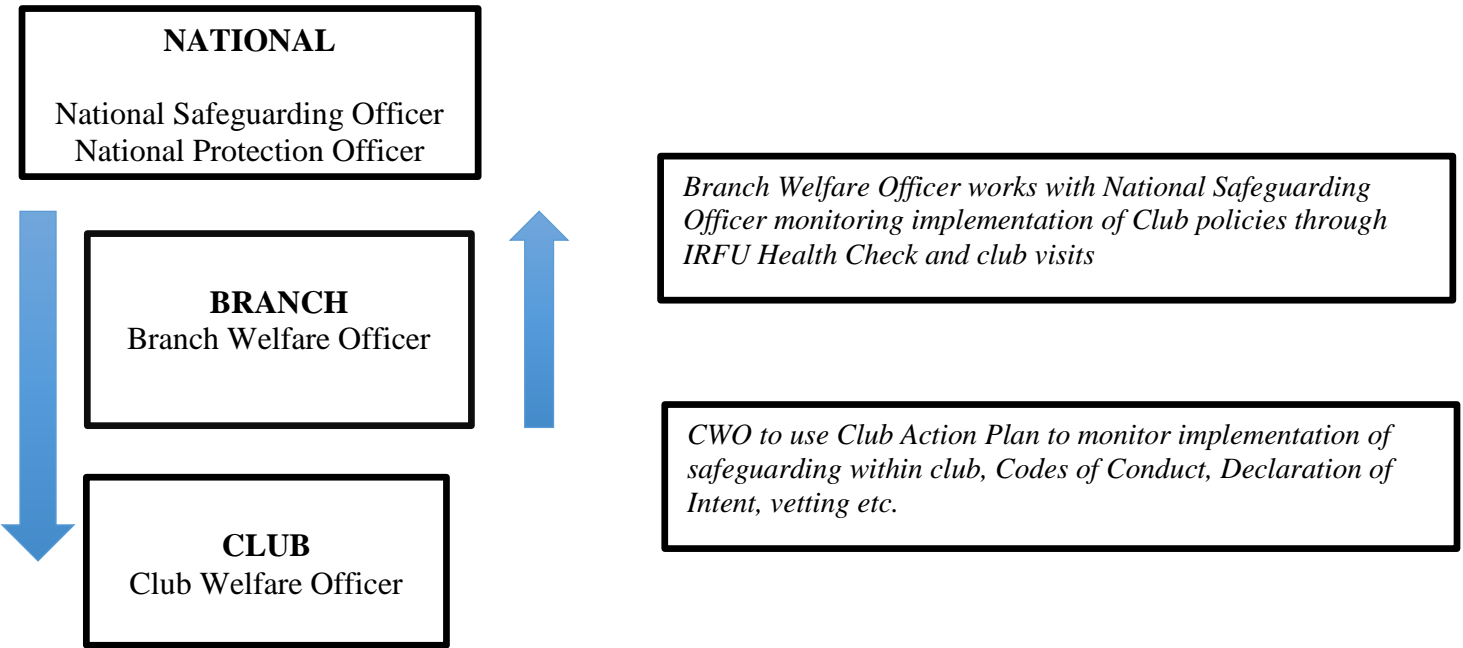
1. The IRFU has available a clear channel of communications outwards of IRFU requirements and advice in respect of the Safeguarding Policy and the implementation of its guidelines.
2. The persons associated with the IRFU, including Age-Grade Players, parents of Age-Grade Players, Sports Leaders, Club Officers and Clubs, operate within a structure which ensures that their needs are met with regard to following the Safeguarding Policy and implementing its guidelines.
3. The IRFU has available to it a structure within which incidents of concern regarding Age Grade Players and the persons working with them are brought speedily to the attention of the relevant officials, and appropriate action is taken.
4. The IRFU has available to it a structure which permits monitoring of compliance with the Safeguarding Policy and implementation of its guidelines.

The chart overleaf outlines how communication between local, Branch and National level will assist in creating and maintaining a safe environment for Age-Grade Players across all issues effecting their participation in rugby.

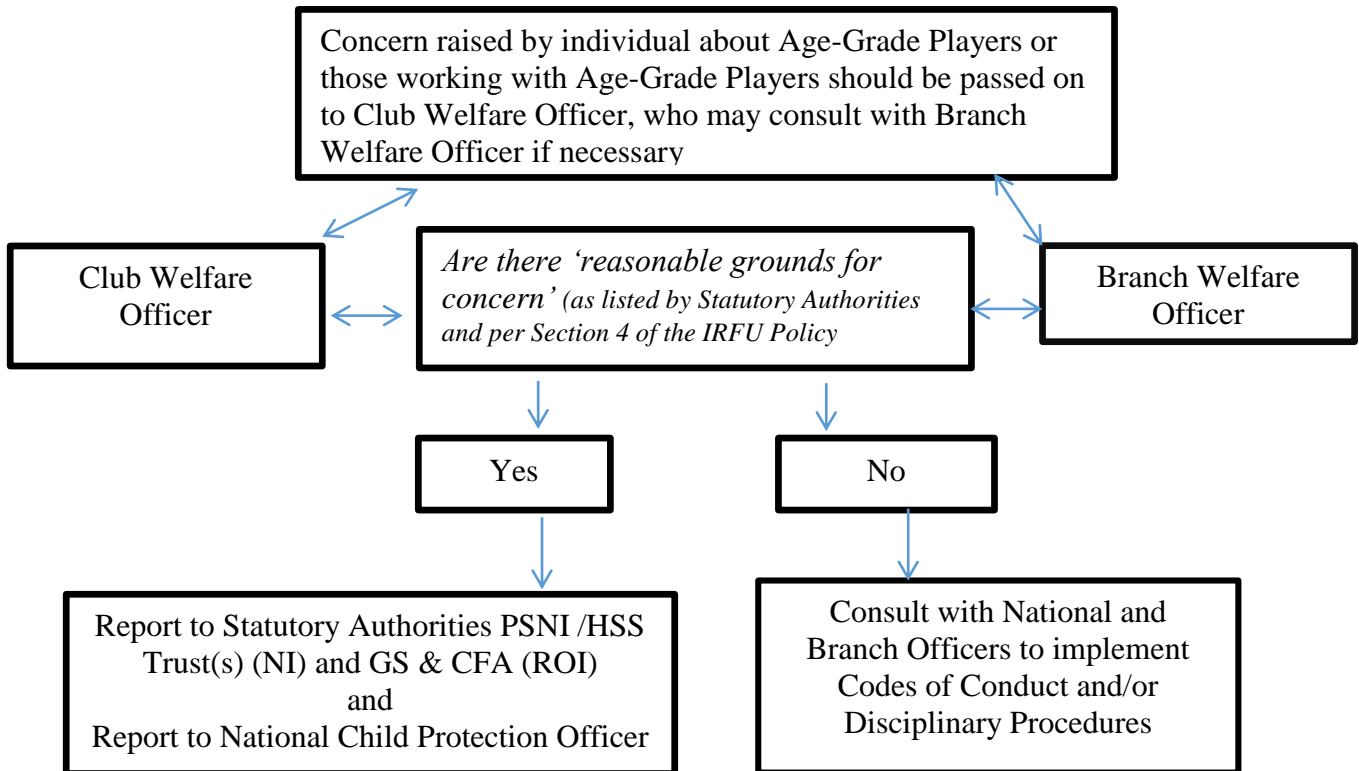
Issues in relation to a player's playing and participation (including team selection, player behaviour, coaching practices and bullying should be dealt with by the club with assistance from the Branch where necessary. All issues in relation to the protection of a child should be communicated to the Branch and National Officers.

IRFU Safeguarding Programme

IRFU Structure for ensuring best practice in Age-Grade Rugby



Reporting A Concern – what to do if you think Best Practice in Age-Grade Rugby is not adhered to



Roles and Responsibilities

A Club Welfare Officer will :

- a. act at all times in the best interests of Age Grade Players ;
- b. be intimately familiar with the provisions of the Safeguarding Policy and its guidelines and with such further information and requirements as may be provided or put in place by the IRFU ;
- c. communicate with the appropriate Branch Welfare Officer on any matter on which the Club Welfare Officer considers it necessary to do so, or any matter in relation to Age Grade Players on which the advice or directions of the Union are required;
- d. receive from the Branch Welfare Officer advice, information and directions from the IRFU concerning Age Grade Players and act accordingly;
- e. inform their Clubs of requirements made by the IRFU concerning Age Grade Players;
- f. ensure that they are in a position to respond accurately and promptly to queries from the IRFU as to the welfare of Age Grade Players in their club generally or in relation to any specific incident which may occur¹;
- g. be the contact person in the club for the Union's National Child Protection Officer and/or Statutory Authorities regarding the welfare of Age Grade Players who are members of the club²
- h. communicate with Age-Grade Players
- i. provide advice and information to parents of Age-Grade Players
- j. complete the Club Action Plan for monitoring purposes and submit to IRFU through the Branch on an annual basis

A Branch Welfare Officer will :

- a. act at all times in the best interests of Age Grade Players;
- b. be intimately familiar with the provisions of the Safeguarding Policy and its guidelines and with such further information and requirements as may be provided or put in place by the IRFU;
- c. ensure that each club within the relevant Branch has in place a Club Welfare Officer and maintain a record of the contact details for each such Officer;
- d. provide information and training to Club Welfare Officers as required by the IRFU;

¹ This will require the keeping of records where required by the Union, for example as to coaching qualifications, recruitment of leaders and/or management practices

² Section 4, Safeguarding Policy, regarding reporting requirements.

- e. communicate with the National Safeguarding Officer on any matter on which the Branch Welfare Officers considers necessary to do so or any matter in relation to Age Grade Players on which the advice or directions of the IRFU are required;
- f. receive from the National Safeguarding Officer advice, information and directions from the IRFU concerning Age Grade Players and act accordingly;
- g. ensure that they are in a position to respond accurately and promptly to queries from the IRFU regarding the welfare of Age Grade Players in their Branch;
- h. transmit requests for information/queries from the IRFU to Club level and be responsible for submitting the responses to the IRFU;
- i. respond in the first instance to queries from Club Welfare Officers regarding the welfare of Age Grade Players;
- j. refer appropriate queries from Club Welfare Officers to the National Safeguarding Officer and communicate the response back to the Club or Clubs.

The National Safeguarding Officer will :

- a. act at all times in the best interests of Age Grade Players;
- b. be intimately familiar with the provisions of the Safeguarding Policy and its guidelines and with such further information and requirements as may be provided or put in place by the IRFU;
- c. assist Branch Welfare Officers in organising the appointment and training of Club Welfare Officers;
- d. receive reports from Branch Welfare Officers of incidents affecting the welfare of an Age Grade Player or Players;
- e. respond to queries from Branch Welfare Officers regarding the welfare of Age Grade Players;
- f. liaise with the National Protection Officer regarding the welfare of Age Grade Players and in particular regarding specific incidents which affect the welfare of an Age Grade Player or Players;
- g. liaise with the Statutory Authorities as necessary on any incident regarding the welfare of an Age Grade Player or Players;
- h. communicate directly with the IRFU Committee on all matters affecting the welfare of Age Grade Players ;
- i. advise the IRFU Committee on matters affecting the welfare of Age Grade Players ;
- j. liaise with the Sports Councils of Ireland (ISC & SNI) regarding the welfare of Age Grade Players.

The National Protection Officer will :

- a. act at all times in the best interests of Age Grade Players;

- b. be intimately familiar with the provisions of the Safeguarding Code and its guidelines and with such further information and requirements as may be provided or put in place by the IRFU;
- c. liaise with the National Safeguarding Officer regarding the welfare of Age Grade Players;
- d. communicate directly with the IRFU Committee on all matters affecting the welfare of Age Grade Players;
- e. receive reports from the National Safeguarding Officer regarding any specific incident which affects the welfare of an Age Grade Player or Players;
- f. liaise with the Statutory Authorities as necessary on any incident regarding the welfare of an Age Grade Player or Players;
- g. advise the IRFU Committee on matters affecting the welfare of Age Grade Players.