

KENT COUNTY RFU INFORMATION SENDOUT AUGUST 2026



1. WHISTLEBLOWING

The KCRFU has developed a 'Whistleblowing' policy to be used and complied with by all its volunteers. Member clubs are free, also, to use this, adapting it as necessary to their own needs. A copy of the full policy is available [HERE](#), on the KCRFU's website (under 'County Documents')

In summary, the policy explains:

1. How officers, volunteers, member clubs, players, coaches and the public can, confidentially, raise concerns about wrongdoing.
2. How concerns should usually be handled first by the relevant club's committee or senior officers, unless they need to be escalated to KCRFU.
3. What issues are covered, including illegal conduct, RFU rule breaches, fraud, bribery, health and safety risks, misuse of funds, abuse, unethical conduct and concealment.
4. That people raising genuine concerns in good faith are protected from victimisation or detriment, even if the concern is later not upheld.
5. That formal KCRFU concerns should be emailed to the Whistleblowing Officer at Honsec@kent-rugby.org with "WHISTLEBLOWING" in the subject line.
6. That the KCRFU will acknowledge reports within five working days, usually respond within 20 working days, investigate independently, and report the outcome to the person who raised the concern.

Nigel Fray
KCRFU Hon Sec

2. ARTICLES FOR 'INTOUCH' - Surely, you have something to shout about!

We've had no responses yet – surely there's something happening at your club that you'd like to shout about?

We're putting together our next edition of 'InTouch' and we really want it to showcase the fantastic things happening across rugby in Kent.

It doesn't have to be a huge story. If you're proud of it, we'd like to hear about it.

Please send your stories, along with good-quality, large-size photographs, to office@kent-rugby.org.

Come on, Kent clubs – tell us what you've been up to and give us something to shout about!



3. RUGBYSAFE OR SAFEGUARDING – do you know the difference?

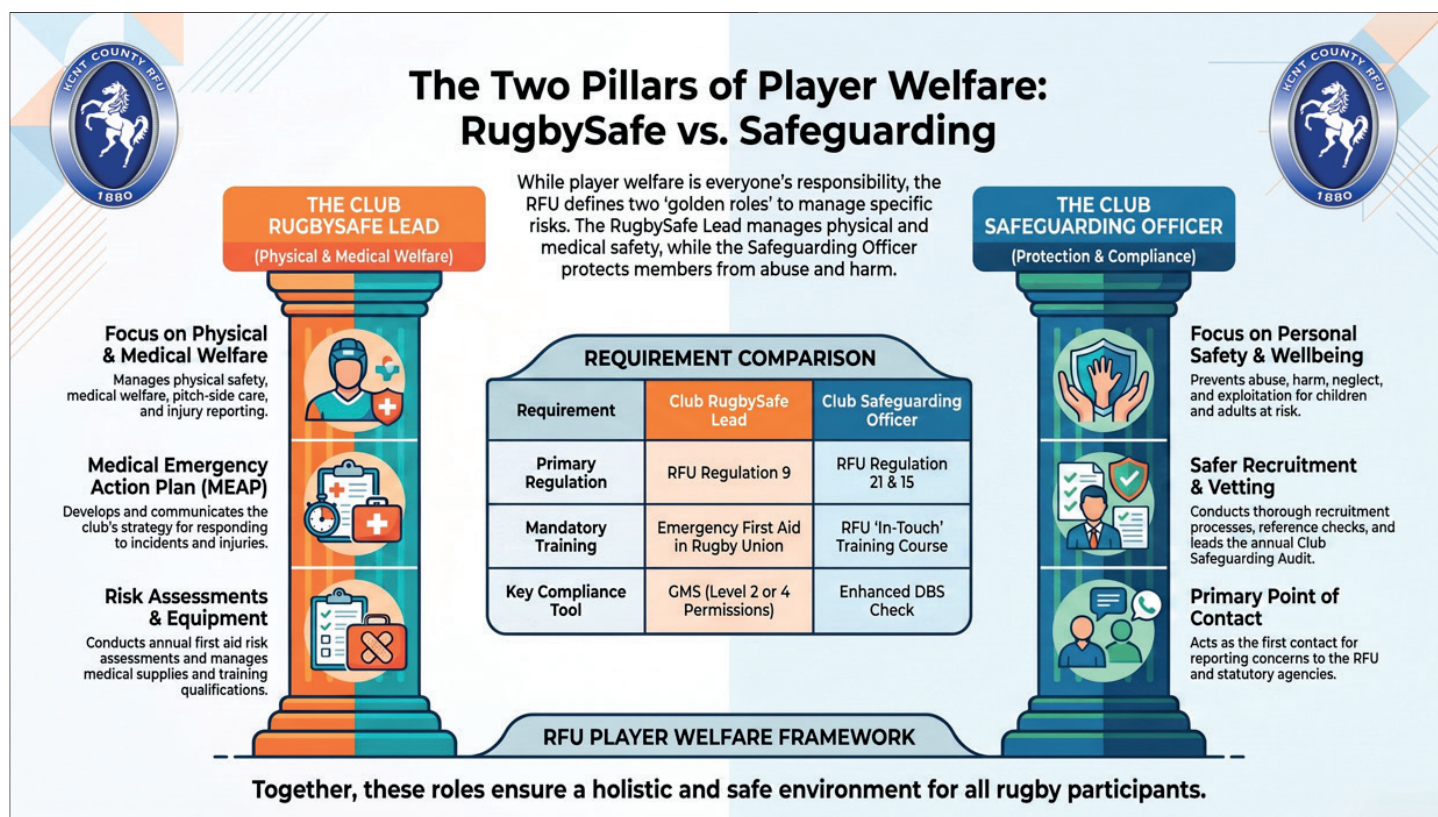
We know that clubs can sometimes get confused about where RugbySafe ends and Safeguarding begins. Both are essential to player welfare, but they are two distinct roles with different responsibilities, training and requirements.

Put simply, the Club RugbySafe Lead focuses primarily on physical and medical welfare of players, including first aid, emergency planning, risk assessments and appropriate medical provision.

The Club Safeguarding Officer focuses on protecting children and adults at risk from harm, abuse and neglect, as well as safer recruitment, DBS requirements and responding to safeguarding concerns.

The graphic below provides an at-a-glance guide to the two roles and should help clubs understand who is responsible for what. If you have any questions about either roles and what they mean for our club, please contact **Peter Thompson (Rugbysafe)** or **Dawn Stanford (Safeguarding)**.

Both roles contribute to a safe rugby environment – but one does not replace the other.



4. SAFEGUARDING - KEY REMINDERS FOR THIS SEASON

I hope everyone has had a good summer and is looking forward to what promises to be a great season ahead. As clubs get back into the swing of things, here are a few safeguarding reminders to help us start the 2026/27 season positively.

Please make sure your club's Golden Role information on GMS is fully up to date, and that you are familiar with any new regulatory changes and safeguarding processes.

The 2026/27 safeguarding audits are now live and need to be completed. Please be aware that Kent RFU will not consider applications from clubs that have not completed their safeguarding audit for the 2026/27 season.

Please also check that all relevant volunteers have the required DBS checks, In Touch course completion and up-to-date safeguarding training, including Play It Safe where required. If you are having any difficulties booking or accessing courses, please let me know and I will be happy to help.

If you have a new Club Safeguarding Officer, please ask them to send me a quick introductory email. Clubs should also let me know about any changes to safeguarding roles. Club Safeguarding Officers who are not already members of the Kent RFU Safeguarding WhatsApp group are welcome to contact me to be added.

Finally, a reminder that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. It is not simply a box-ticking exercise; it is about creating a positive, welcoming and safe environment where everyone can enjoy rugby and feel confident to speak up if something doesn't feel right.

Thank you to all our clubs and volunteers for continuing to put safeguarding at the heart of the game. I look forward to working with you all throughout the season.

Dawn Stanford - safeguarding@kent-rugby.org

5. RUGBY SAFE CHECKLIST

To ensure a safe, successful, and fully compliant 2026-2027 season, please review and complete this step-by-step RugbySafe Compliance Checklist. These tasks are mandatory under RFU Regulation 9 and are vital for protecting your players and securing your club's insurance coverage .

1. Assign & Update GMS "Golden Roles"

- Action: Ensure that your Club RugbySafe Lead is officially assigned on your Game Management System (GMS) profile .
- Why: Keeping this role active and updated ensures that local safety communications from the County and the RFU reach the correct point of contact .
- Tip: Club RugbySafe Leads should have at least Level 2 GMS permissions to manage and update the club's RugbySafe GMS page .

2. Complete Your Annual First Aid Risk Assessment

- Action: Log in to GMS, navigate to Organisation Profile > RugbySafe & Player Welfare, click on the Howden RA Tool, and complete your assessment . Alternatively, you can upload a pre-completed risk assessment document .
- Deadline: Under RFU Regulation 9.3(a), annual assessments must be completed between 1st July and 30th September .
- County Target: To allow us to audit compliance and support clubs well ahead of this deadline, Kent County RFU strongly requests that all clubs complete this by the end of August .

3. Update & Upload Your Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP)

- Action: Create or review your club's tailored Medical Emergency Action Plan (MEAP). Once your GMS RugbySafe section is complete, load and attach your MEAP via the GMS attachments link.
- Communication: You must actively communicate this emergency plan so it is fully understood by all coaches, team managers, first aiders, and referees.

4. Complete the Club Safeguarding Audit

- Action: If your club hosts any Age Grade players (or older juniors playing up to adult rugby), complete the mandatory Safeguarding Audit on GMS.
- Where: Find this on GMS under Organisation Profile > Questionnaires.
- Deadline: Must be completed by the end of September

5. Roll Out HEADCASE Concussion Training

- Action: Raise concussion awareness early by directing coaches, match officials, players, and parents to the free HEADCASE online e-learning modules (takes approximately 30 minutes).
- Rule of Thumb: Strictly apply the "Recognise and Remove" principle during all training sessions and matches: "If in doubt, sit them out".

Need Support? We are here to help!

If your club needs assistance with GMS workflows, first aid requirements, or Regulation 9 compliance, please reach out:

Kent County RugbySafe Lead: Peter Thompson. Phone: 07811287941. Email: rugbysafe@kent-rugby.org

6. PLAYER REGISTRATION

All players from Under 6 upwards are required to renew their registration each season. This applies to players in Age Grade rugby, adult players participating in the RFU Pyramid, Merit Tables, Inner Warrior and Vets activity, and players involved in non-contact formats such as T1 Rugby, Touch and Walking Rugby.

Having an accurate understanding of player participation across all clubs will help the KCRFU to better target resources to support our clubs, determine future programmes, and competition structures in line with its strategic objectives.

To support players, parents and club volunteers, bespoke club posters have been created and sent to every Kent club. They are designed to simplify the registration process and reduce the administrative burden on volunteers by:

- supporting players and parents through the registration process;
- encouraging earlier registration engagement;
- increasing renewal rates among Age Grade and adult player; and
- reducing the administrative workload for club volunteers

If you would like a copies of the poster, please contact your local RFU Club Developer;

Kent Clubs inside the M25 (Metropolitan) – Sally Russo – SallyRusso@RFU.com

Kent Clubs outside the M25 (Rural) – Mark Finnis – MarkFinnis@RFU.com

The 10-Step Guide to Being RugbySafe

A comprehensive checklist for club administrators and RugbySafe Leads to ensure mandatory compliance and player welfare best practices for the 2024/25 season, managed primarily through the Game Management System (GMS).

MANDATORY CLUB COMPLIANCE



Complete Annual Risk Assessments by September 30

Use the Howden Risk Assessment Tool integrated within your GMS Organisational Profile.



Update GMS "Golden Roles"

Ensure your Club RugbySafe Lead and contact details are current for essential communications.



Mandatory Safeguarding Audit

Clubs with age-grade players must complete the online audit via GMS by September's end.



PITCH-SIDE SAFETY & WELFARE



"Recognise and Remove" Concussion Protocol

Immediately remove any player showing signs of concussion; they cannot return that day.



Minimum First Aid Ratios

Every squad needs at least one pitch-side Emergency First Aider (EFA) during training.



EFA Requirements for Match Days

1:10
1:10 Adult-to-Child Ratios
Maintain at least one DBS-checked adult for every ten children aged 9+.

U6 – U8
1 EFA
per Age Group
up to 40 players

U9 – U12
1 EFA
per Match

U13 – U18
1 EFA
per Team

7. CRISP RESEARCH PROJECT

The Community Rugby Injury Surveillance and Prevention (CRISP) Project is looking for community rugby teams to take part in its research during the 2026/27 season.

The project relies on clubs voluntarily providing injury data, helping to improve understanding of injuries and player safety across the community game.

Adult men's, adult women's and age-grade teams can all take part.

Please see the attached poster for further information and details of how to register your team.

It would be great to see plenty of Kent clubs supporting this important research.

8. SEASON START DELAY.

Following the exceptional summer weather, the ground remains exceedingly hard. The RFU has therefore announced that the start of the community game season has been delayed until the week commencing Monday 21 September. Whilst this delay does not necessarily affect youth games, given the planned later start, the ground conditions may still affect the start of the Kent competitions. Following the announcement of the delay to the start of the season the RFU has provided additional information to support Community Rugby Clubs. The resources can be found :

Community Rugby Help

Season Delay Guidance Hub

We will do all we can to get fixtures published as soon as possible but without significant rain in the next couple of weeks, it is likely that the ground will be too hard to safely play. Your competition managers will be in touch with any further updates in due course. Please use common sense when planning your training and friendlies.

9. CLUB SUPPORT WEBINARS

Club Support Webinars & Virtual Workshop programme

Recordings of August Webinars

Age Grade Regulation 15 – Update on Changes for 2026/27

17-Year-Olds Playing Adult Rugby – The New Process Explained

TOPIC	Date	Booking Link
Understanding and Tackling Sexism and Misogyny in Rugby	Monday 28th September	Book your Place
Grow Revenue at your Club - One Club: Small Changes, Quick Wins	Monday 12th October	Book your Place
Building your Volunteer Team	Monday 2nd November	Book your Place
Engaging People with Neurodivergence	Monday 9th November	Book your Place
Grant Funding	Monday 23rd November	Book your Place

10. APPROVALS

The approvals forms have been updated to reflect the recent changes to Reg 15 and are available for use.

Please be aware that there have also been revisions to the Safeguarding regulations which need to have been reviewed and implemented prior to any forms being submitted.

You must also have completed your safeguarding audit prior to requesting approvals. Any applications made without a safeguarding audit in place will be rejected.

Please ensure all email addresses are correctly input as mistakes cannot be rectified and this will result in delays or rejection of your application.

For club approval for 17 year olds playing adult rugby and for player approval the RFU process has changed and we are in the process of understanding how we can implement the new process while retaining our robust approval process. As a result no club or player approvals will be processed either via the Kent forms (which are currently suspended) or via GMS.

Once we have worked out how to deal with the changes effectively, we will make contact via the competition managers.

Alan Erskine
Youth Chair

11. ENGLAND RUGBY LEARNING IS LIVE

Learn anytime, anywhere

Get content built just for your role

Follow clear pathways with zero guesswork

Track your progress all in one place

See more information from the RFU's Community Game Update **HERE!**

Watch the promo video to learn all about it **HERE!**

Any questions contact your RFU Club /Coach developer.



England
Rugby *Learning*

HOW TO BOOK ONTO AN ENGLAND RUGBY LEARNING COURSE

Follow these simple steps to complete your learning journey.



1

SEARCH FOR YOUR COURSE

Use the 'Search' tab on England Rugby Learning to find the relevant course you want to do.



England
Rugby Learning

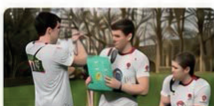
Home

My Learning

Search

Help

Search for courses...



Developing Coaching Practice
Online Module



England Rugby Coaching Award
Online Module



Introduction to Advanced Coaching Practice
Online Module



2

COMPLETE THE ONLINE MODULE FIRST

You must complete the Online Module before you can book a Face-to-Face Session.

Note: You only pay for the Online Module.

Complete Online Module



Module Complete!

You can now book your Face-to-Face Session.



Then Book Face-to-Face



Select your region and book your preferred Face-to-Face Session.



3

BOOK YOUR FACE-TO-FACE SESSION

Select your region and view available Face-to-Face Sessions. Choose the date and venue that suits you.

Important: You must book at least 5 days before the start of the Face-to-Face session, otherwise you will not be able to access it.

Select Your Region

South West



REMEMBER

You must book at least **5 days** before the start of the session. Late bookings will not be accepted.



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

For additional support, visit Community Rugby Help.

<https://help.rfu.com/support/home>

COURSE DATES					
CB	COURSE TYPE	DATE	DAY	VENUE	
Kent	DCP	28-Aug-26	Fri	Dartford Valley RFC	
Kent	ERCA	30-Aug-26	Sun	Dartford Grammar School	
Kent	DCP	11-Sep-26	Fri	Southwark RFC	
Kent	ERCA	13-Sep-26	Sun	Dulwich College	
Kent	IACP	27-Sep-26	Sun	Sevenoaks School	
Kent	DCP	02-Oct-26	Fri	Canterbury RFC	
Kent	DCP	04-Oct-26	Sun	Eltham College	
Kent	IACP	23-Oct-26	Fri	Eltham College	
Kent	ERCA	30-Oct-26	Fri	Aylesford Bulls RFC	
Kent	IACP	01-Nov-26	Sun	Kings School, Canterbury	
Kent	ERCA	13-Nov-26	Fri	Sidcup RFC	
Kent	DCP	15-Nov-26	Sun	Kings School, Rochester	
Kent	DCP	27-Nov-26	Fri	Folkestone RFC	
Kent	ERCA	13-Dec-26	Sun	The Langton Grammar School for Boys	
Kent	DCP	06-Dec-26	Sun	Sevenoaks School	

DCP = Developing Coaching Practice | ERCA = England Rugby Coaching Award | IACP = Introducing Advanced Coaching Practice

12. KCRFU AGM 21ST SEPT 2026

At Weaving RFC, Heathers, Bicknor Road, Parkwood, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9PS at 7pm for 7:30 start.



Emergency Funding

Self employed?
Cannot work due to rugby injury?
Loss of income?

Access an application form [HERE!](#)



CRISP >

COMMUNITY RUGBY INJURY
SURVEILLANCE AND PREVENTION PROJECT



2026-27 SEASON

INJURY DATA WANTED!

The CRISP Project team is hungry for injury data to help us develop our understanding of injuries across all levels of the English community game.

We seek data from the following teams:

- **Adult Male Community**
- National, Regional & Counties Levels
- **Adult Female Community**
- Championship & National Challenge Levels
- **Age Grade Boys and Girls**
- Clubs, schools, colleges (U13-U18)

Submitting your injury data helps us to improve player safety. It allows us to understand the:

- Continued impact of the lowered tackle height on injuries
- Differences in injuries across age groups
- Differences between the male and female game



LEARN MORE.

REGISTER YOUR TEAM. SUBMIT YOUR DATA.

