

# Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations – Inside Rounders



People within Rounders are ideally placed to recognise or receive concerns relating to the welfare of young people. Everyone has a responsibility to respond to these concerns whether they relate to a child's home or family situation; a community situation or involves incidents within the club or sport. Children rely on adults being alert to indicators that a child might be being abused

## How to Respond to a Disclosure from a Young Person

### **Actions to Take**

If a young person informs you directly that he/she, or another young person, is concerned about someone's behaviour towards them (this is termed disclosure), the person receiving information should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten or deter the young person;
- Tell the young person that he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell;
- Take what the person says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what it is said by a young person
- Keep any questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said;
- Reassure the young person but DO NOT make promises of confidentiality, which might not be feasible in light of subsequent developments;
- Record in writing exactly what has been said using the young person's words as soon as possible. Use Rounders England Incident Report Form (*a copy of this can be found in the Recognising and Responding to Concerns and Reporting section on the website*) and forward to the Rounders England Safeguarding Officer who will make a decision about whether or not the form should be forwarded to Children's Social Care Services and Police (as directed) and to Rounders England Lead Safeguarding Officer;
- Seek advice immediately from Rounders England Lead Safeguarding Officer – Alison Steel

Office Hours: 0114 2480357 or Outside Office Hours: 07411 477849 or contact the Rounders England Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officer  
Alison Howard

Office Hours: 0114 2480357 or Outside Office Hours: 07931 741345

If both are unavailable the local Children's Social Care Services or Police should be contacted immediately, they will advise on the action to be taken, including advice on contacting the parents. Expert advice can also be provided by the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 500 for adults or Childline on 0800 1111 for children.

### **Actions to Avoid**

The person receiving the disclosure should not:

- Panic;
- Allow their shock or distaste to show;
- Ask questions other than to clarify that you have enough information to act;
- Speculate or make assumptions;
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser;
- Approach the alleged abuser;

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- Make promises or agree to keep secrets.

**N.B.** It may not be that all young people are able to express themselves verbally. Communication difficulties may mean that it is hard for them to complain or to be understood. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the signs of abuse from the symptoms of some disabilities or conditions, in relation to the nature of the individual's impairment. However, where there are concerns about the safety of a young person, record exactly what has been observed in detail and follow the procedures to report these concerns as detailed.

## **Responding to Concerns about possible abuse from INSIDE Rounders**

If a young person informs you directly that he/she is being abused within the Rounders environment or through your own observations or through a third party you become aware of possible abuse or poor practice within the sport you must **REACT IMMEDIATELY**. See Flowchart below.

- Ensure the safety of the young person – if the young person needs immediate medical treatment, take the young person to hospital or call an ambulance, inform doctors of your concerns and ensure they are aware it is a child protection issue;

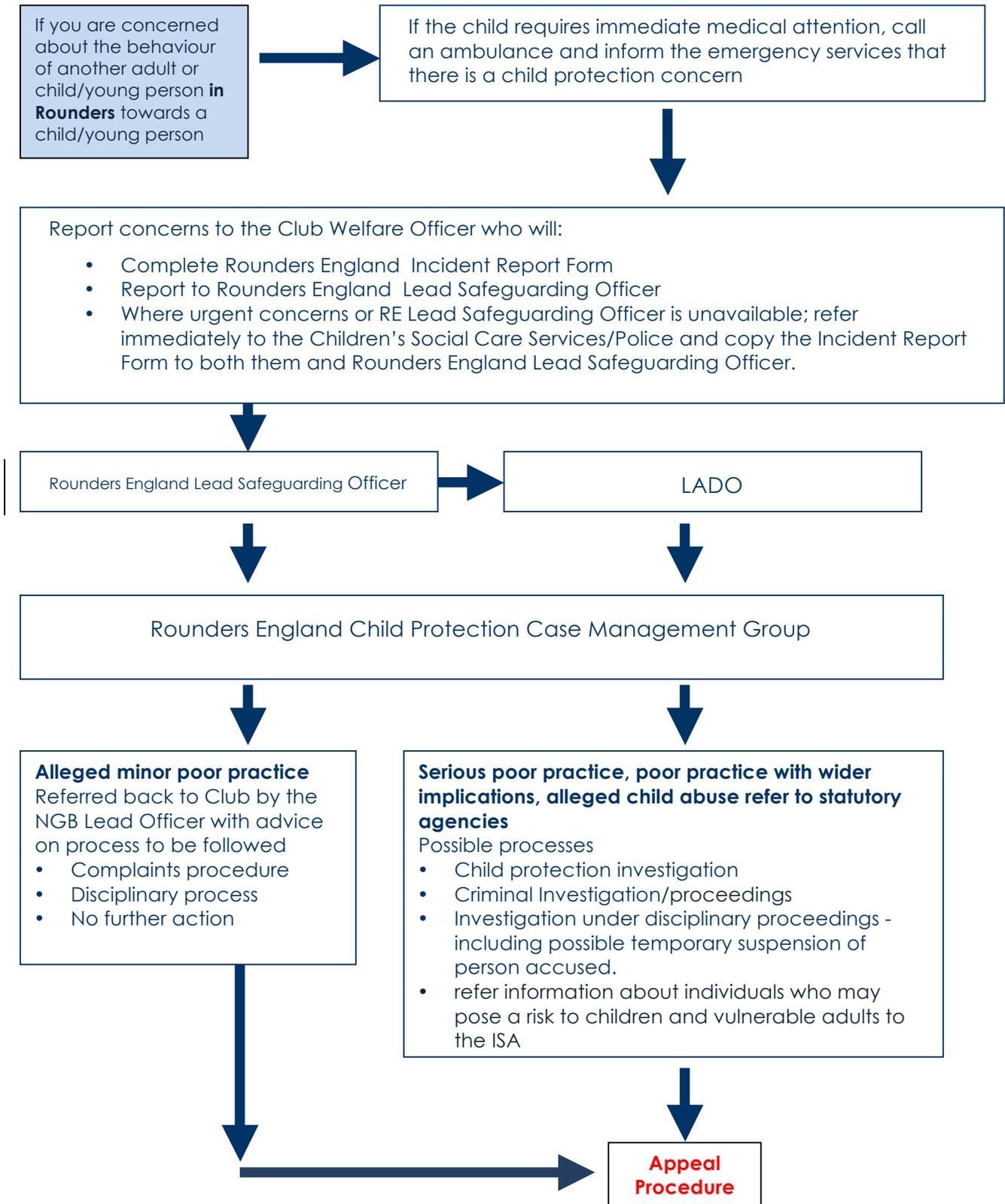
## **Reporting Procedures**

- Contact the Club Welfare Officer (CWO) immediately. If, following consideration, the allegation is about poor practice then the Club Welfare Officer will report it to Rounders England Lead Safeguarding Officer. If the Club Welfare Officer is unavailable or is the subject of the allegation, then the matter should be reported directly to Rounders England Lead Safeguarding Officer; If he/she is unavailable the local Children's Social Care Services or Police should be contacted immediately, they will advise on the action to be taken, including advice on contacting the parents. Expert advice can also be provided by the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or ChildLine on 0800 1111
- Make a full and factual record of events utilising the Incident Report Form (*a copy of this can be found in the Recognising and Responding to Concerns and Reporting section on the website*) and forward a copy of the recorded information to Rounders England Lead Safeguarding Officer who will take the appropriate action.

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## Flowchart

The Reporting Process for concerns of Poor Practice or Possible Abuse from **INSIDE** Rounders



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## Action

- Rounders England Lead Safeguarding Officer and/or one or more members of Rounders England Child Protection Case Management Group, will make the decision on how the allegation is to be dealt with e.g. internally by Rounders England Child Protection Case Management Group, externally as a matter for Children's Social Care Services and/or the Police or referral back to the Club Welfare Officer.
- Alleged minor poor practice will be referred back to the Club with advice on the process to be followed:
  - Complaints procedure;
  - Disciplinary procedure;
  - No further action.
- The possible outcomes:
  - No case to answer;
  - Complaint resolved with agreement between parties;
  - Training/mentoring agreed;
  - More significant concerns emerged (refer back to Rounders England Child Protection Case Management Group).
- Serious poor practice, poor practice with wider implications or alleged child abuse will follow one or more of below processes:
  - Child protection investigation;
  - Criminal investigation/proceedings;
  - Investigation upon disciplinary proceedings – including possible temporary suspension of person accused.
  - Inform the Local Authority Designated Officer.
  - refer information about individuals who may pose a risk to children and vulnerable adults to the ISA
- Rounders England investigation will be pending the outcome of the Children's Social Care Services or Police investigation. The possible outcomes being:
  - No case to answer;
  - Less serious – referred to complaints procedures;
  - Disciplinary hearing – sanctions;
  - Civil proceedings.
- A decision will also be made with regard to suspending the individual concerned, pending the outcome of the internal or external enquiry;
- A Child Protection Disciplinary Hearing, which will include a Chair and two other members, with a designated Secretary in attendance. There is no time limit to the submissions of allegations or incidents of a child protection nature.
- Possible Outcomes of Rounders England Child Protection Disciplinary Hearing

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- No case to answer;
- Warrants advice/warning as to future conduct/sanctions;
- Further training and support needed;
- Banned.

## Appeals

The appeals procedure is available to anyone under investigation as part of natural justice. Rounders England Child Protection Disciplinary Appeal Panel will exclude anyone sitting on the initial panel, excluding the Secretary. The panel should comprise of a chair and two other members, with the Secretary in attendance. Every organisation and participant wishing to appeal against the decisions made by Rounders England Child Protection Disciplinary Panel must do so in writing, to be received by Rounders England Lead Safeguarding Officer within seven days of the decision being made.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

To be conducted at the close of each case by Rounders England Child Protection Case Management Group to see if any changes need to be made to policies/procedures or lessons that can be learnt.

## Possible Outcomes

Where there is a complaint of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer, investigations may include:

- Police enquiry;
- Criminal proceedings;
- Referral back to Rounders England Child Protection Case Management Group.

The result of the Police and/or Children's Social Care Services investigation will inform Rounders England Child Protection Case Management Group investigation.

## Reinstatement and Aftermath

### Reinstatement

Informed by the findings of Children's Social Care Services and/or Police investigations, Rounders England Child Protection Case Management Group will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled.

This may be a difficult decision; particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the Police. In such cases Rounders England Child Protection Case Management Group must satisfy themselves that the person does not present a risk to children. The welfare of young people should always remain paramount.

### Support to Deal with the Aftermath

Consideration should be given to what support may be appropriate to young people, parents and members of staff. Use of Helplines, support groups and open meeting will

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maintain an open culture and help the healing process. The British Association of Counselling Directory may be a useful resource. Rounders England will support the clubs by providing appropriate training for the Club Welfare Officers.

## **Allegations of Previous Abuse**

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a young person or by a member of staff who is still currently working with young people). Where such an allegation is made, the organisation should follow the procedures as detailed above. This is because other young people, either within or outside sport, may be at risk from this person.

## **Records and Information**

Information passed to the Children's Social Care Services or Police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed record at the time of the disclosure/concern. Ideally this information should be compiled utilising Rounders England Incident Report Form (*a copy of this can be found in the Recognising and Responding to Concerns and Reporting section on the website*).

Any visible signs of bruising or other injuries should be recorded on the Incident Report form in addition to the young person's account of what happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.

The person completing the incident report form needs to be very clear about what they record on the form and make a distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.

## **Confidentiality**

Rounders England will at all times respect confidentiality within the current legal framework. The principle that the 'welfare of the child is paramount' will underpin all decisions about sharing information.

However, every effort must be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained when an allegation has been made and is being investigated. Information will be stored in a secure filing cabinet at Rounders England Head Office, with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

## **Whistle Blowing Policy**

If you have a concern with regard to the behaviour of an adult towards a young person, it is important that you share your concerns with Rounders England Lead Safeguarding Officer. If you have a concern regarding Rounders England Lead Safeguarding Officer you should share your concerns with the CEO at Rounders England. All information received and discussed will be treated in the strictest confidence and only shared with those individuals within Rounders England who will be able to manage and resolve the situation. On occasion it may be necessary to seek advice, or inform the statutory agencies e.g. Children's Social Care Services and the Police. All concerns will be taken seriously and managed accordingly within the policy and procedures for the welfare of young people in Rounders and Rounders England's

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Whistle blowing policy (available online or from the National office) You can call the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000 (Adults) or Childline on 0800 1111 (children) directly if you feel more comfortable in doing so. Both Helplines are open 24 hours a day and calls are free of charge.

### **If an Allegation is made Against You**

Any concerns involving the inappropriate behaviour of an adult towards a young person will be taken seriously and investigated within the terms and conditions of the Complaints and disciplinary procedure. If you are the person who is the centre of an allegation, the situation will be explained to you and you may be asked to temporarily cease working with young people in Rounders during the investigation. You will be informed as soon as possible based on advice from the Statutory Agencies. This may result in suspension from activity within Rounders whilst a full investigation is being carried out. This is to protect all parties involved. Rounders England will assess, on a case-by-case basis, any support needed for the person who has had the allegations made against them. They may choose to appoint an independent officer to provide support to the accused.