Responding to Disclosure, Suspicions and Allegations – Outside 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 team or sport. Children rely on adults being alert to indicators that a child might be being abused.

**5.1 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 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. ‘Rounders England’s Guidance for dealing with a disclosure from a child’ can be found in **Template 4a** to support you with this;
* 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[[1]](#footnote-1) 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 Safeguarding Officers –

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If 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;
* 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 in 5.2.

**5.2 Responding to Concerns about Possible Abuse from OUTSIDE Rounders**

If a young person informs you directly that he/she is being abused outside the sport environment (i.e. at home, school or some other setting outside the sport) OR through your own observations or through a third party you become aware of possible abuse outside the sport environment you must **REACT IMMEDIATELY**. See Flowchart 2.

* 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;
* If available, contact the Welfare Officer immediately who will follow the reporting procedures detailed below. If the Club Welfare Officer cannot be contacted, then the person that has the concerns about the young person’s welfare should follow the reporting procedures.
* Inform the parent/carer of the report unless they are suspected of being the abuser (in which case do not inform them of the information)
* Rounders England expect Welfare Officers to hold details of their local Children’s Social Care Office and know how to make a report. If you believe that a child is at significant risk of harm, you should report this to Children’s Social Care regardless of your role, it may not always be appropriate to wait for someone else. Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.

**Reporting Procedures**

* Seek advice immediately from 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 and forward a copy of the recorded information, as directed to the Children’s Social Care Services and/or Police and to Rounders England Lead Safeguarding Officer who will take the appropriate action. Contact the Welfare Officer as soon as possible;
* If the individual being accused is from within the Rounders environment, Rounders England Lead Safeguarding Officer will consider suspension of the individual concerned following contact with Children’s Social Care Services or the Police. The case will be referred to Rounders England Child Protection Case Management Group following the Children’s Social Care Services and /or Police investigation.

It is never easy to respond to a young person who tells you that they are being abused and you may feel upset and worried yourself. Rounders England will endeavour to offer you support from the Rounders England Lead/Deputy Lead Safeguarding Officer/Safeguarding Board Champion.

All meetings and correspondence will be recorded using the standardised reporting forms which are available via the website and the National Office or your Welfare Officer.

**Flowchart 2**

The Reporting Process for concerns about the welfare of children **outside** Rounders:

You become aware of a situation **OUTSIDE** of Rounders because:

A young person or child discloses to you

You recognise signs or indications of abuse

Remain calm and reassure the young person or child. Do not promise confidentiality.

If the young person or child is in need of medical attention take them to the hospital or call for an ambulance. Ensure that the doctor is made aware of any safeguarding issues.

Ensure the Welfare Officer and the Lead Child Protection Officer (details can be found at [www.roundersengland.co.uk](http://www.roundersengland.co.uk)) are both aware of the situation so they can seek the advice of the local authorities: this will help them determine what action to take with regards to contacting parents or guardians. If the Welfare officer or RE Lead Child Protection Officer cannot be contacted, then you should seek advice from the police or social services on what action should be taken.

The individual who has dealt with the situation should then create a written report of all events – Rounders England Incident Report form, template 4 (details of what to include are the same as for reporting concerns INSIDE Rounders) and this should be sent to the RE Lead Child Protection Officer, and if appropriate, the police or social services.

**Template 4a: Rounders England’s Guidance on Dealing with a Disclosure from a child**

STAFF WILL:

* listen carefully to the child and believe what they are saying;
* not promise confidentiality, as information may need to be passed on so the child and family can receive additional support;
* only ask for clarification if something is unclear and will not ask ‘leading’ questions;
* report disclosure to the designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible, certainly by the end of the working day;
* only discuss the issue with colleagues that need to know about it; and
* will write up the disclosure and pass it to the designated safeguarding lead. It is likely they will have a discussion with the DSL prior to this.

QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE ASKED TO CLARIFY YOUR REPORT TO ROUNDERS ENGLAND; SOCIAL CARE AND THE POLICE AS NECESSARY:

* WHAT HAPPENED?
* WHERE DID IT HAPPEN?
* WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?
* WHO WAS PRESENT WHEN IT HAPPENED?
* HAS IT HAPPENED BEFORE?
* WHAT HAPPENED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE INCIDENT?
* WHAT HAPPENED BEFOREHAND?
* DID ANYONE SAY ANYTHING DURING THE INCIDENT?
* HAVE YOU TOLD ANYONE ELSE?
* IT IS OK TO STATE WHY YOU ARE CONCERNED BY THIS DISCLOSURE BUT NOT TO GIVE PERSONAL OPINION

‘Leading’ questions will often mean that a disclosure cannot be used as evidence against a perpetrator so please be aware of what this terminology means.

A leading question is a question which subtly prompts the respondent to answer in a particular way. Leading questions are generally undesirable as they result in false or slanted information. For example:

**Do you have problems in your relationship with dad? Did dad hurt you?**

This question prompts the person to question their relationship with their father. In a subtle way it raises the prospect that there are problems and possibly that they may be the perpetrator of abuse

**Tell me about your relationship with your family members.**

This question does not seek any judgment and there is less implication that there might be something wrong with the relationship.

*To view the full Rounders England Safeguarding Children Policy please visit our website* [*here*](https://www.roundersengland.co.uk/safeguarding/safeguarding-children/)

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)