



RIO FERDINAND FOUNDATION

SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK

Adopted January 2024

Next Review Date: January 2025

Signed by Chair of Trustees, Bintou Crookes-Martin:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bintou Crookes-Martin'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

1<sup>st</sup> January 2024

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Established as a registered charity in 2012, the Rio Ferdinand Foundation (“the “Foundation” or “RFF”) works collaboratively with young people and communities to deliver progression pathways aimed at ensuring young people are socially mobile and empowered to be independent, take control of their lives and achieve their full potential.

Our work is delivered under four strategic pillars: Sport & Social Inclusion, Health & Wellbeing, Safer & Stronger Communities and Skills & Training. It takes place across very diverse communities of London, Manchester, The Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

We are an equal opportunities employer and do not discriminate on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability or age or any personality trait.

The Safeguarding Policies in this Handbook are designed to ensure that we fulfil our obligations under applicable laws to participants, stakeholders and otherwise in order to protect the interests of those members of society who may be vulnerable to risks identified in applicable legislation.

The Safeguarding Policies and procedures set out in this document apply to all staff unless otherwise indicated. They therefore apply to managers, officers, directors, employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, homeworkers, part-time and fixed-term employees, casual and agency staff (collectively referred to as “staff” in this handbook). Non adherence to the safeguarding policy or any RFF policy or code of conduct could result in disciplinary action or be classified gross misconduct, resulting in contract termination.

## 2. STATEMENT OF INTENT - EMBEDDING A SAFEGUARDING CULTURE

- 2.1 The implications of the failure to implement a robust approach to Safeguarding have been extensively documented, involving direct harm and abuse to the most vulnerable members of society. Ownership and commitment to a Safeguarding culture across RFF, starts at the top with Foundation Trustees and its CEO. Our aim is that this commitment cascades through to all staff, who know that abuse can and does happen and are prepared to respond if the need arises. Equally, we want our participants to feel that they will be listened to, supported, and know that action will be taken on their behalf. The arrangements below are intended to complement our policy framework by providing response, where implementation

of planned actions can be tracked to ensure we are meeting expectations of Safeguarding good practice.

- **Policy Review:** The two Safeguarding policies in this document set out in detail the procedures for responding to with concerns of abuse, disclosure, and allegations. They also include arrangements for Safer Recruitment and are complemented by the Foundation's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy, its Anti-Bullying, Whistleblowing, and privacy policy alongside a Behaviour Policy for both staff and participants. These documents will be reviewed annually in close consultation with the Board of Trustees and wider staff team.
- **Induction, Onboarding and Training:** All full time, sessional staff and volunteer have received a check from the Disclosure and Barring Service, Garda, or Access NI. Staff will receive appropriate Safeguarding awareness training within 4 weeks of joining the Foundation that is updated and refreshed every year, plus training specifically on the organisation's own safeguarding policy and procedures. This is to ensure that staff not only have an overall awareness of what good Safeguarding means but understand how to take action within the Foundation.
- **Staff Engagement and Continuous Improvement:** RFF is made up of a talented staff team. We want to draw on the different perspectives they have to ensure we continue to promote and embed a safeguarding culture. We will achieve through formal arrangements such as bi-monthly meetings of regional leads and weekly management meetings. This will be complemented by fostering a culture which encourages challenge, open discussion and information sharing where staff can feel comfortable raising Safeguarding related issues as well as opportunities for improving our response. Regular supervision and monitoring of staff will be carried out to ensure they everyone is clear about their roles, responsibilities, and boundaries.
- **Communication:** A copy of our approach to Safeguarding is on the Foundation's website and we will seek to explore other opportunities to promote Safeguarding culture through wider RFF communications.
- **Record Keeping and Data Management:** The following records will be stored on the RFF secure 'Sharepoint' drive and will be made available as appropriate/on a 'need to know' basis to evidence compliance with Safeguarding good practice across the Foundation.
  - List of current DBS checks with dates for renewal
  - Individual DBS/Access NI Certification
  - Staff training records showing completion of Safeguarding induction and subsequent Safeguarding related training
  - Reports of Safeguarding concerns
  - Gifts/Hospitality Register

## 2.2 Summary of Management Arrangements

Who	Level of Responsibility
Foundation Trustees	Ownership/accountability for Safeguarding Ensure robust policy in place and review OF implementation Ensure high quality reports on Safeguarding matters and all reports Investigation of Safeguarding concerns/poor practice by CEO/SMT
Foundation CEO	Responsibility for Safeguarding with RFF staff team Ensure that the objectives of Safeguarding Policies are fully understood by Trustees and Senior Management Team members Ensure adequate resources are assigned (funds, materials, equipment, staff, training, and time) to meet requirements Ensure Policy is reviewed and updated annually and effectively communicated to all employees Provide appropriate updates on Safeguarding related matters and reports to the Board.
Senior Management Team	Oversee implementation of policy arrangements on behalf of CEO Nominate Designated Safeguarding Lead and Officers Ensure that objectives of Safeguarding Policies are embedded within the RFF team. Ensure all compliance processes and procedure relating to Safeguarding are being followed e.g. Induction, DBS, staff training, reporting etc Escalation of serious Safeguarding concerns to relevant Local Authority Safeguarding panels Investigation of concerns Safeguarding poor practice within the RFF team
Designated Safeguarding Lead/Officers	First point/s of contact for Safeguarding concerns Responsibility for timely response and reporting to Safeguarding concerns Provide advice to all employees on Safeguarding related matters Keep the CEO, SMT and Trustees updated on Safeguarding matters Lead on Safeguarding Training and identifying opportunities for continuous improvement Advise on changes and developments in Safeguarding best practice Support record keeping of all Safeguarding concerns and related matters Advise on Safeguarding policy development
RFF Staff Team	Completion of Safeguarding related training Contribution to Safeguarding policy development/continuous improvement Approach Designated Safeguarding lead asap with any concern no matter how minor it appears Act as positive role models standards in line with the Foundations vision and values

## 2.3 RFF Annual Safeguarding Forward Plan 2024/5

RFF Board Cycle	Safeguarding issues for consideration
Quarter 4 (2024/24)	Adoption of 2024 RFF Safeguarding Framework Sign off of RFF Training schedule for 2024 Identification/presentation of renewal dates for all staff DBS renewals Quarterly Safeguarding update/Quarterly review of Safeguarding Reports
Quarter 1 (2024/2025)	Completion of all outstanding DBS Renewals Completion of all DBS renewals carried out Formal survey/disclosure of staff of relevant welfare issues, incidents not captured on current DBS that have Safeguarding or wider reputational implications for RFF. Quarterly Safeguarding update/Quarterly review of Safeguarding Reports
Quarter 2 (2024/2025)	Quarterly Safeguarding update/Quarterly review of Safeguarding Reports
Quarter 3 (2024/2025)	Preparation/consultation of 2025 Safeguarding Framework Quarterly Safeguarding update/Quarterly review of Safeguarding Reports
Quarter 4 (2024/2025)	Q4 Adoption of 2025 RFF Safeguarding Framework

## 3. SAFEGUARDING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS POLICY

### 3.1 Introduction

Rio Ferdinand Foundation (“the Foundation”) acknowledges and accepts it has a responsibility for the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people who are under the Foundation’s care or utilising the Foundation’s facilities. It is the duty of all adults working at the Foundation to safeguard the welfare of children and young people by creating an environment that protects them from harm.

The wellbeing of children and young people is paramount for all staff and accordingly, they must make themselves aware of the Foundation’s Safeguarding Children and Young Persons Policy. Where appropriate, the following guidelines will be supplemented by in-service training and additional guidance. Through the application of policy, procedures and best practice, the Foundation promotes the safety, welfare and well-being of all children and young people enabling them to participate in any Foundation activity in an enjoyable, safe, inclusive, and child-centred environment.

Principles for Safeguarding equally applies to the safety and security of those working with and who are responsible for the activities involving children and young people and this policy is to be read alongside policies to ensure the wellbeing of the RFF staff team. Relevant policies include the Foundation’s Health and Safety framework, particularly those involving mental health, management of stress and lone working.

### 3.2 Rules & Regulations

The Foundation is subject to the rules and regulations set out in the 1989 and 2004 Children Act, Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018), the London Child Protection Procedures (5<sup>th</sup> edition)

In the Republic of Ireland, this Safeguarding policy is based on guidelines and legislation outlined in the Children First Act 2015

In Northern Ireland, this Safeguarding policy is based on guidelines and legislation outlined in the following documents:

- Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children’s Sport, Sport Northern Ireland 2007.
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.
- Our Duty to Care NI, DHSSPS 2012.
- Getting It Right, DHSSPS 2012.
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children DHSSPS 2003.
- Area Child Protection Committee – Regional Child Protection Policy 2005.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007.
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

The Foundation is fully committed to ensuring that the best practice recommended by these bodies is employed throughout the Foundation and its activities.

The Foundation has a responsibility to maintain regular dialogue with the Local Safeguarding Children Boards

### 3.3 Definitions

“*Child*” (collectively referred to as “*Children*”): anyone under the age of 14.

“*Young Person*” (collectively referred to as “*Young People*”): anyone between the ages of 14 and 18.

### 3.4 Aims & Key Principles

The aims of the Foundation’s Safeguarding Children Policy are:

- To safeguard all children and young people who interact with the Foundation.
- To demonstrate best practice in safeguarding children.
- To develop a positive and pro-active programme of engagement to enable all children and young people to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- To promote high ethical standards throughout the Foundation.

The key principles underpinning this policy are:

- The child's and young person's welfare must always be the paramount consideration.
- All children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs, or sexual identity.
- All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to efficiently and appropriately in accordance with our policies and training.
- To ensure that coaches, parents, and other adults who come in contact with children and young people provide good role models of behaviour.

### 3.5 Safeguarding Children and Young People within RFF

#### RFF Youth Engagement Programme

The Foundation has an ongoing commitment to delivering a programme of activities which covers all areas of the organisation. The programme will regularly be reviewed and updated according to any needs that may be identified.

#### Designated Safeguarding Lead and Designated Safeguarding Officers

The Foundation has a Designated Safeguarding Lead ("DSL") who is supported by three Designated Safeguarding Officers ("DSO") who have overall responsibility for the safeguarding of children and young persons engaged in Foundation activities/programmes. These Officers have special responsibilities and are the focal point for safeguarding children and young people in their nominated area.

Anybody with concern about a child or young person's welfare should contact a Designated Safeguarding Officer for advice in the first instance (details can be found at the end of this policy).

### 3.6 Human Resources & Disclosure

#### Recruitment

As part of the Foundation's recruitment and selection process, offers of work for positions which involve working with children and young persons are subject to a satisfactory Enhanced DBS / Access NI disclosure or a Garda Checks and appropriate references. See below and attached for details of the Foundation's Access NI and DBS procedures.

#### Staff Training

All staff working in direct contact with children and young people shall be required to complete a workshop on Safeguarding Children and Young Persons within 4 weeks of joining the Foundation. Details of those satisfactorily completing this course are retained by the Foundation. Staff training will include regular 'refresher' training in the context of continuous improvement and development in Safeguarding best practice. [NB The nominated officer for delivering Safeguarding Children and Young Persons training RFF is Melissa Fordham, [DSL and Head of National Programmes]. Donald Forde, [Director of Operations] will be responsible for delivery or will source alternative provision if she is unable to deliver within a 4-week window of a new member of staff joining the Foundation.]

#### Work Experience

The Foundation often offers work experience placements to young people. The Foundation has a central work experience scheme which provides forward planned and structured work experience placements. Whilst undertaking work for the Foundation, those on work experience will be given no unsupervised access to children and young persons. Potential Young People identified to take part in work experience will be subject to a risk assessment to establish their suitability to take part in work experience and that any necessary adjustments can be made before they join.

#### Health and Safety

Rio Ferdinand Foundation's Health and Safety Policy gives guidance to those whose roles involve working with children and young people. Where a child or young person is involved, a risk assessment must take account of their particular vulnerabilities. The risk assessment should set out what arrangements are in place for their care and supervision. Health and Safety considerations extend to the welfare of RFF staff, particularly in the context of mental health, management of stress and delivering community sessions within a safe environment.

#### Lone Working

In line with the Foundation's Health and Safety Framework, staff should not engage in any activity where they are in one-to-one contact with children or young people alone. The one exception to this requirement is around planned, one-to-one mentoring sessions between staff and participants which the Foundation recognises can be extremely important in supporting the personal development of young people. To accommodate these sessions, engagement is permitted but will only take place in Foundation offices with other staff close by or in a public space such as a reception area or cafe but never in an enclosed private space such as a vehicle or residential address. Staff are obliged to make their Line Manager aware of planned one-to-one sessions and to keep a written record of discussions with the young person. This is to protect the member of staff as much as the Young Person. This is to protect the member of staff as much as the Young Person.

#### Disclosure and Barring Service/Access NI/Garda Vetting Checks

Rio Ferdinand Foundation uses the Disclosure and Barring Service (Formally the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)) (“DBS”) in England and Wales as well as the Access NI Service in Northern Ireland and a Garda vetting in the Republic of Ireland. The DBS/Access NI/Garda provides a disclosure service for organisations. This vetting and disclosures enable employers to undertake more thorough recruitment and selection procedures for positions which involve working with Children. These checks will be mandatory for all full-time, sessional staff and Trustees.

### 3.7 Process for Criminal Records checking

#### New Appointments

All staff who are offered a position which involves working, or coming into contact, with children and young persons will be required to complete a Self-Declaration Form and undertake a DBS Disclosure, Garda vetting or Access NI Disclosure in line with our Safer Recruitment Policy. All offers of work are subject to the outcome of the screening process and where applicable, this is set out in the initial job advertisement and the applicant’s offer of work. Until such time as a satisfactory Disclosure certificate has been received, the member of staff will not be left unsupervised with children and young persons.

Should a positive Disclosure be received, a risk assessment will be carried out by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or member of the Foundation’s Senior Management Team in consultation with Trustees , to assess the information contained within the Disclosure certificate. The member of staff may also be asked to attend an interview prior to a recruitment decision being made. All DBS/Access NI certificates are stored securely on the Foundation’s share point system with restricted HR access.

New Appointments who already have a Disclosure/Access NI/Garda Certificate  
If a new member of staff has been DBS / Access NI checked / Garda Vetted by their previous employer, the Foundation may choose not to ask that person to undertake another check if the original Disclosure certificate is provided, is dated within six months of the worker’s start date at the Foundation and for a similar role to that to which the person has been appointed.

#### Existing Staff

Priority is being given to those who come into regular contact with children. All staff who have one-to-one contact with children and young persons will be DBS/Access NI/A Garda Checked. All staff will undergo a new DBS check after 3 years. Staff will be encouraged to disclose any events/issues which may have Safeguarding implications and/or which may otherwise impact on the Foundation’s reputation during the lifespan of formal DBS checks. A more formal exercise will also be carried out annually to provide the opportunity for staff members to disclose such information.

### *Temporary Staff and External Consultants*

All temporary staff and external consultants sign a self-declaration form and will not have unsupervised access to children and young people during their time with the Foundation or any associated event.

### Equal Opportunities

Rio Ferdinand Foundation is committed to providing equal opportunities for all staff, participants, and supporters. A copy of the Foundation's policy on equal opportunities can be obtained from the Management Team.

## 3.8 Gifts & Favouritism

Staff should take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment (see *Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy* within the Staff Handbook for further details).

The Foundation recognises that there are occasions when children, young persons or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff, for example at a religious holiday time or as a "thank you", and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value. The receipt of all gifts will be recorded on a register of Gifts and Hospitality. Staff must report any gifts received and token gestures to their line manager. The appropriate documentation must be completed to satisfy HMRC, the Charity Commission and Companies House.

Similarly, it is not permitted for staff to give personal gifts to children and young people. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or to single out the child or young person. It might also be perceived that a "favour" of some kind is expected in return. All employees will be required to register any such gifts on a formal gifts and hospitality register.

Any Foundation reward given to a child or young person must first be agreed with the staff member's line manager as part of a structured reward system and not based on favouritism

## 3.9 Use of images

The Foundation applies the guidance on the use of images from guidelines issued by the Local Safeguarding Children Board:

- Parental consent for the taking of images of children and young people must be sought in writing at the start of the financial year or prior to the event or session. Parents/Carers/Guardians are responsible for informing the Foundation of any change of circumstances which may affect consent;
- Parents/Carers/Guardians will be informed of how the image will be used. The Foundation will not allow an image to be used for something other than that for which it was initially agreed;

- All children and young persons featured in Foundation publications will be appropriately dressed;
- Where possible, the image will focus on the activity taking place and not a specific child or young person;
- Where appropriate, images represent the broad range of people participating safely in the event;
- Designated Foundation photographers will, where applicable, undertake a DBS check and attend a Safeguarding Children and Young Persons workshop and in any case will be personally responsible for keeping up to date with the latest guidelines on the Use of Images policies from the Local Safeguarding Children Board;
- Foundation Identification and uniform will be worn at all times;
- Children and young people who are under a court order will not have their images published in any Foundation document;
- No images of children or young persons featured in Foundation publications will be accompanied by personal details such as their school or home address or other protected information;
- Recordings of children and young persons for the purposes of legitimate coaching aids are only filmed by Foundation officials and are stored safely and securely at the Foundation's premises;
- Any instances of inappropriate images must be reported to a Safeguarding Officer. The Foundation does not put young peoples' profiles with images and personal information on its website.

### 3.10 Guidelines in the event of concern

#### Highlighting a concern

Although the Foundation is committed to doing the utmost to safeguard children and young people from harm there may be occasions when concern is raised over the treatment of a child or young person. It is reasonably accepted that the Foundation may be the point of contact for someone who raises a concern over a child or young person in a programme that does not relate to a programme.

“Child abuse” and “neglect” are generic terms encompassing all ill treatment of children and young persons as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or development. Children and young people may be abused or suffer neglect through the infliction of harm, or through the failure to act to prevent harm. Abuse can occur in a family or an institutional or community setting. The perpetrator may or may not be known to the child or young person and may be of the same or opposite sex. There is often a common misconception that only a certain type of person can abuse children and young persons, but this is simply not the case; abuse may take place in any setting, by someone of either sex, of any sexual orientation and of any age.

#### Recognition –Types of Abuse

There are several forms of abuse identified as follows, should you have any concern that abuse is occurring you should contact a Foundation Safeguarding Officer immediately.

**Physical Abuse:** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child or young person. A person might do this to seek the attention they get through having a sick child. Physical abuse can be caused through omission or the failure to act to protect.

**Sexual Abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse may be perpetrated male and female adults or indeed other children.

**Child sexual exploitation (CSE):** is a type of sexual abuse. It happens when a child or young person is coerced, manipulated or deceived into sexual activity in exchange for things that they may need or want like gifts, drugs, money, status and affection. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they're in a loving and consensual relationship so the sexual activity may appear consensual. This is called grooming and is a type of abuse. They may trust their abuser and not understand that they're being abused. CSE does not always involve physical contact and can also occur through the use of technology.

**Neglect:** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Emotional Abuse:** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a Child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the Child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to Children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the Child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations

being imposed on Children. These may include interactions that are beyond the Child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the Child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including but not limited to cyber bullying), causing Children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of Children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a Child, though it may occur alone.

Bullying: is not always easy to define and can take many forms. The three main types are: physical, verbal, and emotional. The Foundation has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and any reported incidents of bullying by a staff member to a Child, Child to staff member or Child to Child will be taken seriously and investigated by a Safeguarding Officer and, where necessary, the Foundation's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Grooming: Grooming is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit, and abuse them. Children and young people who are groomed can be sexually abused, exploited, or trafficked. Anybody can be a groomer, no matter their age, gender, or race. Grooming can take place over a short or long period of time – from weeks to years. Groomers may also build a relationship with the young person's family or friends to make them seem trustworthy or authoritative.

Child Criminal Exploitation: Children and young people involved with gangs and criminal exploitation need help and support. They might be victims of violence or pressured into doing things like stealing or carrying drugs or weapons. They might be abused, exploited, and put into dangerous situations. Criminal exploitation includes the prevalence of County lines where gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns.

### 3.11 Responding to a report or suspicion\*

Where possible a Designated Safeguarding Officer should be contacted as early as possible; however, it is recognized that an individual may need to respond to a situation immediately. The following guidelines offer help and support in responding to abuse or a suspicion of abuse.

#### Do:

- listen carefully to what they're saying
- don't push them too much, but allow them to talk freely or answer
- treat any allegations extremely seriously and act at all times towards the child or young person as if you believe what they are saying
- tell the child or young person they are right to tell you;
- reassure the child or young person that they are not to blame;
- be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why;

- tell the child or young person what you are doing and when; keep them up to date with what is happening;
- take further action (subject to the “Don’t” section below). Note that you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse;
- write down everything said and what was done (handwritten is preferable) and sign and date the notes as soon as possible. An Incident Report Form should be used where possible and, in any case, a referral must be made to the Foundation within 24 hours of the incident taking place. Notes must be made available to the designated person with parental responsibility (subject to the caveats under the “Don’t” section below) and/or designated outside organisation supporting the incident as indicated by the designated organisation only;
- seek medical advice if necessary.

**Do not:**

- make promises you cannot keep;
- interrogate the child or young person. It is not your job to carry out an investigation. Questioning may contaminate or otherwise affect evidence. It is the responsibility of the Police and Children’s Social Care to investigate the matter;
- cast doubt on what the child or young person has told you, don’t interrupt or change the subject;
- say anything that makes the child or young person feel responsible for the abuse;
- inform parents/carers. The Foundation’s CEO or members of the Senior Management Team in consultation with the RFF Safeguarding Lead and relevant Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Lead will make this decision based on whether there is suspicion of their involvement in any issues arising;
- repeat information to any member of staff or another other than as directed by the Safeguarding Officer and/or direct senior management of the Foundation.

*Doing nothing is not an option; it is your responsibility to act in line with the policy.*

Make sure you tell a Foundation Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately; they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.

### 3.12 Recording and Reporting allegations or suspicions

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will immediately report any allegation to the Foundation’s Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will ask for a written factual statement from the person making the report. If an Incident Report Form has been completed a copy should be provided to the DSL and will need to be signed by the member of staff completing a statement and countersigned by the DSL.

Any statement made by the child or young person should be reported in their own words. These reports should be confined to facts. Any opinion, interpretation or judgment should be clearly stated at this stage.

The Foundation will ensure that any child or young person concerned is immediately removed from any possible risk of harm.

Investigations into possible abuse will require careful management. In these cases, the DSL will first seek the advice of the Safeguarding Children Team, Children's Social Care, a Local Authority Designated Officer ("LADO"), or the Police in England or the Social Services Gateway Team in Northern Ireland, before setting up an internal inquiry and following their advice on informing the Child's parents. In any case of suspected abuse, as soon as the Local Authority, Social Services Gateway Team or the Police have been informed, the Foundation must provide a report to the Foundation's Senior Management Team and Trustees protecting anonymity where required at law.

Providing it is appropriate to do so the DSL will maintain constant dialogue with all parties involved with the allegation until such time as the matter has reached a reasonable outcome.

Specific information regarding allegations against members of Staff

If the report involves an allegation about any member of the Foundation staff and the Foundation believes that the report may indicate that the member of staff in question has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she is unsuitable to work with children,

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Members of the Foundation's Senior Management Team or Trustees shall immediately inform the relevant LADO or Social Services Gateway Team where the alleged incident took place so that he or she can consult with the Police and local authority children's social care colleagues or Social Services Gateway Team as appropriate. Where they are unsure as to whether the report meets the criteria stated above, the advice of the LADO / Social Services Gateway Team shall still be sought.

The member of staff and any other relevant person in question may be asked to write a brief report in respect of the allegation. This process will only be carried out after advice from the relevant external bodies and in consultation with the DSL, Foundation Senior Management Team, or Board of Trustees. Provided that it does not contradict advice received from the LADO/ Social Services Gateway Team, any internal investigation will be carried out in line with the Foundation's Disciplinary Policy and either general or Grievance Procedures, as applicable.

### 3.13 Confidentiality

There is always tension and caution around issues of confidentiality. The advice for all staff at the Rio Ferdinand Foundation is that no guarantee of confidentiality can be given to a child (although this does not necessarily mean that the parents/carers must be told).

A child or young person should never be pressured to give information or show physical marks unless they do so willingly. If they choose to show markings, two members of staff should be present.

There are actions which staff have to and are obliged to take once they are aware of a problem. Undertakings of confidentiality should not be given either to the person making the allegations or to the person being interviewed. A matter is confidential on a need-to-know basis, and nobody should have any reservations about referring any issue to a Foundation's Designated Safeguarding Officer. The key issue is that the welfare of the child or young person is protected.

### 3.13 Resources

#### SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Gary Stannett CEO

Rhiannon Watts – Consultant Director

Donald Forde – Consultant Director (07869821096)

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD [DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON - Republic of Ireland]

Melissa Fordham 07939995515

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS [DEPUTY DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON - Republic of Ireland]

Victoria Lowe – Greater Manchester and North West (07375701950)

Shauna Belvett – London and the South East (07946466519)

Darryl Forsythe – Northern Ireland and Ireland (07342177763)

The Foundation's Senior Safeguarding contact is Chair of Trustees, Bintou Crookes-Martin (07958239963)

### 3.14 EXTERNAL RESOURCES

THE FA/NSPCC HELPLINE: 0808 800 5000 / Textphone: 0800 056 0566

NSPCC SMS: 88858

In Northern Ireland:

PSNI Public Protection Unit: 028 9065 0222

Ask for your local Public Protection Unit

Sport Northern Ireland: 028 9038 1222

Child Protection in Sport Unit: 0203 222 4246

Health and Social Care Trusts in NI - Each trust will have a Gateway team to deal with reports of abuse and also more local contacts for on-going professional liaison for advice on concerns.

Northern HSC Trust                      Tel: 030 0123 4333 / Out of hours 028 9446 8833

South Eastern HSC Trust              Tel: 030 0100 0300 / Out of hours – 028 9056 5444

Southern HSC Trust                    Tel: 080 0783 7745 / Out of hours – 028 3833 4444

Belfast HSC Trust                      Tel: 028 9050 7000 / Out of hours – 028 9056 5444

Western HSC Trust                     Tel: 028 7131 4090 / Out of hours – 028 7134 5171

Emergency (Out of Hours) Social Work 028 9504 9999

FA Safeguarding Children Guidelines:

<http://www.thefa.com/TheFA/WhatWeDo/FootballSafe/Downloads>

Information Sharing Guidance for Managers and Practitioners:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-00807-2008>

Working Together to Safeguard Children:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-00305-2010>

Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland: 028 95 361810

<https://www.safeguardingni.org/>

In Republic of Ireland:

Tusla [Child and Family Agency] - Child Safeguarding Guide

[https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Tusla\\_-\\_Child\\_Safeguarding\\_-\\_A\\_Guide\\_for\\_Policy,\\_Procedure\\_and\\_Practice.pdf](https://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/Tusla_-_Child_Safeguarding_-_A_Guide_for_Policy,_Procedure_and_Practice.pdf)

Tusla Dedicated Contact Point

<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3/>

Tusla Web Portal

<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/web-portal/>

Tusla Out of Hours Social Work Service – 0818 776 315 between 6pm and 6am every night and between 9am and 5pm on Saturdays, Sundays, and bank holidays.  
Emergency Contact for Garda Síochána - 999/112

## 2.15 Date and Review

This policy was adopted in January 2024 and applicable to January 2026. It is under constant review . Revisions will be considered on an ongoing basis.

## 4. Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

### 4.1 Introduction

Rio Ferdinand Foundation (“Foundation”) acknowledges and accepts it has a responsibility for the wellbeing and safety of all vulnerable adults who are under the Foundation’s care or utilising the Foundation’s facilities. It is the duty of all adults working at the Foundation to safeguard the welfare of Vulnerable Adults by creating an environment that protects them from harm.

The wellbeing of Vulnerable Adults is a paramount consideration and responsibility for all staff and accordingly, they must make themselves aware of the Foundation’s Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy. Where appropriate, the following guidelines will be supplemented by in-service training and additional guidance.

The practices and procedures within this policy are based on the principles contained within UK legislation and government guidance and have been developed to complement the Safeguarding Adults Board’s policy and procedures, and take the following into consideration:

- Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership (July 2015)
- Adult Safeguarding Operational Procedures (Sept 2016).
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007
- The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Data Protection Act 1994 and 1998
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015

### 4.2 Aims, Key Principles and Responsibilities

The aims of the Foundation’s Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy are:

- To safeguard all vulnerable adults who interact with the Foundation.
- To demonstrate best practice in safeguarding vulnerable adults.
- To develop a positive and pro-active welfare programme to enable all Vulnerable Adults to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.
- To ensure staff are aware of this policy and are adequately trained.
- To promote high ethical standards throughout the Foundation.

The key principles underpinning this policy are:

- The Vulnerable Adult’s welfare must always be the paramount consideration;

- All Vulnerable Adults have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, disability, culture, language, racial origin, religious beliefs or sexual identity;
- All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to efficiently and appropriately;
- To encourage carers and relevant members of the Vulnerable Adult's support structure to be involved in a relationship with the Foundation;
- To ensure that coaches, parents, and other adults who come into contact with Vulnerable Adults provide good role models of behaviour.

Our Responsibilities:

- To notify the appropriate agencies if abuse is identified or suspected (see below "To Refer or not to Refer");
- To support and where possible secure the safety of individuals and ensure that all referrals to services have full information in relation to identified risk and vulnerability;
- To DBS check employees that have access to or work with Vulnerable Adults;
- To promote the principles and good practice to other voluntary organisations.

#### 4.3 Definitions

*"Vulnerable Adult": a person over the age of 16 who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age, or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him/herself or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation. [See further section 'Defining Vulnerability' below]*

*"Abuse": the "...harming of a person usually by someone who is in a position of power, trust, or authority over that individual. The harm may be physical, psychological, or emotional or it may be directed at exploiting the vulnerability of the victim in more subtle ways (for example, through denying access to people who can come to the aid of the victim, or through misuse or misappropriation of his or her financial resources). The threat or use of punishment is also a form of abuse. In many cases, it is a criminal offence..."<sup>1</sup>*

#### 4.4 Defining Vulnerability

- (1) In addition to the defined terms above, Regulations<sup>2</sup> define a 'vulnerable adult' as a person aged 18 or over who is receiving Services of a type listed below and in consequence of a Condition of a type listed in paragraph (3) below has a Disability of a type listed in paragraph (4) below.
- (2) The Services are:
  - a) Accommodation and nursing or personal care in a care home;
  - b) Personal care or nursing or support to live independently in his/her own home;

- c) Any services provided by an independent hospital, independent clinic, independent medical agency, or NHS body;
- d) Social care services;
- e) Any services provided in an establishment catering for a person with learning difficulties.

(3) The Conditions are:

- a) A learning or physical disability;
- b) A physical or mental illness, chronic or otherwise, including an addiction to alcohol or drugs;
- c) A reduction in physical or mental capacity.

(4) The Disabilities are:

- a) A dependency upon others in the performance of, or a requirement for assistance in the performance of, basic physical functions;
- b) Severe impairment in the ability to communicate with others;
- c) Impairment in a person's ability to protect him/herself from assault, abuse, or neglect.

## 4.5 Types of Abuse

### Examples

#### Physical abuse

- Bodily assaults resulting in injuries e.g. hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- Bodily impairment e.g. malnutrition, dehydration, failure to thrive.
- Medical/healthcare maltreatment.

#### Sexual abuse

- Rape, incest, acts of indecency, sexual assault.
- Sexual harassment or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- Sexual abuse might also include exposure to pornographic materials, being made to witness sexual acts and encompasses sexual harassment and non-contact abuse.

#### Psychological/emotional abuse includes:

- Including threats of harm, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, enforced isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- Humiliation.
- Bullying, shouting, swearing.

#### Neglect

- Including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care, or educational services.

- The withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating.

#### Financial or material

- Including theft, fraud.
- Exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial matters, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

#### Discriminatory

- Including racist, sexist, or based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs, or similar treatment.

Note: Multiple forms of abuse may occur in an ongoing relationship or abusive Service setting to one person, or to more than one person at a time, making it important to look beyond single incidents or breaches in standards, to underlying dynamics and patterns of harm. Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence, or ignorance.

## 4.6 Responding to a report or suspicion\*

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults. To this end it is the responsibility of all staff to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person or agency.

### Designated Safeguarding Lead and Designated Safeguarding Officers

The Foundation has a Designated Safeguarding Lead ("DSL") who is supported by three Designated Safeguarding Officers ("DSO") who have overall responsibility for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults engaged in Foundation activities/programmes. These Officers have special responsibilities and are the focal point for safeguarding vulnerable adults in their nominated area.

Where possible a Designated Safeguarding Officer should be contacted as early as possible; however, it is recognized that an individual may need to respond to a situation immediately. The following guidelines offer help and support in responding to abuse or a suspicion of abuse:

#### Do:

- take urgent action in situations of immediate danger, by calling the relevant emergency services (e.g. Police, ambulance).
- always treat any allegations extremely seriously
- listen carefully to the Vulnerable Adult and reassure them that they are right to tell you.
- reassure the Vulnerable Adult that they are not to blame.

- be honest about your own position, who you have to tell and why.
- tell the Vulnerable Adult what you are doing and when; keep them up-to-date with what is happening.
- take further action (subject to the “Don’t” section below). Note that you may be the only person in a position to prevent future abuse.
- write down everything said and what was done (handwritten is preferable) and sign and date the notes contemporaneously. An Incident Report Form should be used where possible and, in any case, a referral must be made to the Foundation within 24 hours of the incident taking place.
- seek medical advice if necessary.

**Do not:**

- make promises you cannot keep.
- interrogate the Vulnerable Adult. It is not your job to carry out an investigation. Questioning may contaminate or otherwise affect evidence. It is the responsibility of the Police to investigate matters.
- cast doubt on what the Vulnerable Adult has told you.
- interrupt or change the subject.
- say anything that makes the Vulnerable Adult feel responsible for the abuse.
- inform relevant carers. The SO will make this decision based on whether there is suspicion of their involvement in any issues arising.
- repeat information to any member of staff or another other than as directed by the Safeguarding Officer and/or direct management of the Foundation.

*Doing nothing is not an option; it is your responsibility to act within the guidelines of the policy.*

Make sure you tell a Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately; they will know how to follow this up and where to go for further advice.

#### 4.7 Confidentiality

There is always tension and caution around issues of confidentiality. The advice for all staff at Rio Ferdinand Foundation is that no guarantee of confidentiality can be given to a Vulnerable Adult (although this does not necessarily mean that the carers must be told).

Issues of confidentiality must be clarified early on. For example, staff must make it clear that they will have to discuss the concerns with their supervisor.

Where a Vulnerable Adult expresses a wish for concerns not to be pursued then this should be respected wherever possible. However, decisions about whether to respect these wishes must have regard to the level of risk to the Vulnerable Adult and others, and their capacity to understand the decision in question. In some circumstances the Vulnerable Adult’s wishes may be overridden in favour of objective considerations of safety.

Decisions to override the Vulnerable Adult's wish not to take the matter further should if possible be the product of discussion with appropriate line management (see further section on *'To Refer or not to Refer'*).

A Vulnerable Adult should never be pressured to give information or show physical marks unless they do so willingly. If they chose to show marks that are in discussion, two members of staff should be present.

There are actions which staff must and are obliged to take once staff in their capacity as representatives of the Foundation become aware of a problem. Undertakings of confidentiality should not be given either to the person making the allegations or to the person being interviewed. A matter is confidential on a need-to-know basis, and nobody should have any reservations about referring any issue to a Foundation Safeguarding Officer. The key issue is that the welfare of the Vulnerable Adult is protected.

#### 4.8 Discussion and Decision-making

Information must be shared with a Designated Safety Officer or Lead wherever possible on the same day as the matter arising, who must approve any actions to be taken and any documentation or correspondence being sent out. If neither are available then any concerns should be discussed with a member of the Foundation's Senior Management Team

#### 4.9 To Refer or not to Refer

The decision to refer or not to refer should be made by either the Foundation's Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of its Senior Management Team.

When considering the decision as to whether to refer elsewhere (e.g. to Police, Social Services, National Care Standards Commission, HSC Trust Adult Safeguarding Gateway Team, or Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA)) the following should be taken into account:

- The wishes of the Vulnerable Adult, & their right to self-determination;
- The mental capacity of the Vulnerable Adult;
- Known indicators of abuse;
- Definitions of abuse;
- Level of risk to the Vulnerable Adult;
- The seriousness/effect of the abuse;
- Level of risk to others;
- The effect of the abuse on others;
- Whether a criminal offence has been committed;
- Whether other statutory obligations have been breached (e.g. NCSC); The need for others to know;
- The ability of others (e.g. Police, Social Services) to make a positive contribution to the situation.

#### 4.10 Mental Capacity & Consent

The consent of the Vulnerable Adult must be obtained except where:

- The Vulnerable Adult lacks the mental capacity to make a decision, and a risk assessment indicates that referral would be in their best interests;
- Others may be at risk; or
- A crime has been committed.

#### 4.11 To whom to Refer or Report Concerns

It is expected that reports/referrals may be made to the following:

- Relevant hospital Social Services team if Vulnerable Adult is in hospital;
- Community Mental Health Team or the local HSC Trust Adult Safeguarding Gateway Team in Northern Ireland, where the Vulnerable Adult has an ongoing mental health need;
- National Care Standards Commission in England or RQIA in Northern Ireland, where there are issues relating to standards and regulations in care homes and domiciliary care agencies;
- Hospital Trusts/Primary Care Trusts where there is a complaint of abuse by a member of staff;
- The Police or PSNI in Northern Ireland or Emergency Contact for Garda Síochána in the Republic of Ireland, if there is an emergency where delay may result in serious harm to the Vulnerable Adult or if the abuse may constitute a crime.

#### 4.12 Information, if known, which will be required when making a referral or report

- Details of alleged victim – name, address, age, gender, ethnic background including principle language spoken, details of any disability;
- Details of GP and any known medication;
- Whether the individual is aware of and has consented to the referral/report;
- The mental capacity of the individual (are there any concerns/doubts about this?)
- If appropriate advise agency on preferred/advised method or environment when approaching the alleged victim or perpetrator;

Also, any relevant information, for example:

- Reasons for concerns and therefore this referral;
- Details of how these concerns came to light;
- Specific information relating to these concerns;
- Details of any arrangements which have already been made for the protection of the vulnerable adult or any immediate action taken;
- Details of anyone else to whom this referral has also been made;
- Details of the alleged perpetrator and if they are a vulnerable adult;
- Details of alleged abuse and information about suspicions;
- Details of any other background information;
- An impression of potential seriousness of the situation;
- Details of any other professional involved;

- Details of carers and any significant family members, neighbours, friends.

Information passed on must be relevant, necessary, and up to date.

#### 4.13 Resources

##### SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Gary Stannett CEO  
Rhiannon Watts – Consultant Director  
Donald Forde – Consultant Director (07869821096)

##### DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD [DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON - Republic of Ireland]

Melissa Fordham 07939995515

##### DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING OFFICERS [DEPUTY DESIGNATED LIAISON PERSON - Republic of Ireland]

Victoria Lowe – Greater Manchester and North West (07375701950)  
Shauna Belvett – London and the South East (07946466519)  
Darryl Forsythe– Northern Ireland and Ireland (07342177763)

The Foundation’s Senior Safeguarding contact is Chair of Trustees, Bintou Crookes-Martin (07958239963)

#### 3.14 Date and Review

This policy was adopted in January 2024 and applicable to January 2026. It is under constant review . Revisions will be considered on an ongoing basis.

#### 4. Declaration

DECLARATION: I have read and understood the Handbook of Safeguarding Policies herein and agree to work to the expected standards.

Name:.....

Signature:.....

Date:.....