



# RFU SAFEGUARDING BULLETIN

April 2020

## DBS Update during COVID-19 social distancing measures

The RFU is implementing a temporary suspension of DBS checks whilst the government's social distancing measures remain in force.

This decision has been made in light of the cessation of all rugby activity and the difficulties inherent in an online ID verification system that will require in-person checks to be completed at some point in the future. The pausing of applications in rugby will enable the DBS Service to concentrate on dealing with the thousands of disclosure requests that are being made by returning keyworkers, NHS volunteers etc.

The RFU will keep this under constant review and intend to resume processing applications prior to the commencement of rugby activity to ensure that clubs have sufficient time to prepare for the upcoming season.

Club Safeguarding Officers will receive additional information by email. Please direct any queries to [dbseapp@rfu.com](mailto:dbseapp@rfu.com)

## USEFUL LINKS & CONTACTS

England Rugby Safeguarding

For DBS enquiries:  
[dbseapp@rfu.com](mailto:dbseapp@rfu.com)

For general safeguarding help:  
[Safeguarding@rfu.com](mailto:Safeguarding@rfu.com)

For GMS assistance:  
[GMSSupport@RFU.com](mailto:GMSSupport@RFU.com)

RFU 24 hour child protection  
message service –

Tel: 0208 831 6655

 [@RFUSafeguarding](https://twitter.com/RFUSafeguarding)

# **A letter to Club Safeguarding officer and GB Safeguarding Managers from the RFU Head of Safeguarding**

Dear Club Safeguarding Officers,

We hope that you and your families are well. The message above was delivered to the game via today's Community Game Update.

We thought that it might be helpful for us to explain our rationale and to pre-empt some reasonable questions.

You may be aware that in response to the current COVID-19 crisis, the DBS temporarily relaxed the requirement to see identification in person. They will allow ID to be verified remotely, using Skype or similar on the understanding that the individual brings copies of their ID to the first session where they are engaged with children or adults at risk.

This arrangement is in place to assist in issuing DBS checks during the Coronavirus pandemic. It is particularly relevant for organisations that are attempting to get individuals cleared to enable them to undertake immediate regulated activity, for example childcare for keyworkers, volunteering with the NHS and keyworkers returning to the workforce.

There is no necessity for rugby to continue with DBS checks now and there is a risk that the integrity of the system is diminished as in a rugby environment, it could be several months before an in-person ID check is completed.

The concern is that original documents will be mislaid or not checked when rugby resumes and there will be an unrealistic expectation that CSOs will be able to see every applicant in person before training commences.

There is also a concern that individuals may use RFU DBS certificates issued during this period to volunteer over the coming months and other organisations would not be aware that their ID has not been verified in person.

There is also an added complication if Atlantic Data alert us to a disclosure that contains cautions, convictions, barred list information or soft data. In these circumstances the RFU write to the applicant and ask that they send in their original certificate along with a letter of explanation. Given the sensitivity of the information we recommend that this be sent by registered post.

It seems unreasonable and goes against current government advice, to ask that someone attend the post office for a non-urgent matter. To adhere to safer recruitment expectations we do need to see the original certificate; we may also require the club to meet with the applicant and references to be obtained, all of which are difficult at the current time.

Ensuring that we continue to operate robust safer recruitment measures, including the use of the DBS process is vital to maintain a safe environment for children in our sport. Pausing DBS applications until the strict social distancing measures are lifted maintains the integrity of the system.

Thank you for all of your support. We will be back in touch as soon as circumstances allow the DBS process to resume.

As ever, if you require any additional support or advice do please get in touch.

With very best wishes

Vivien Rimmer  
RFU Head of Safeguarding