



## **ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITY**

### **Children and young people from minority ethnic groups**

Children and young people from minority ethnic groups are additionally vulnerable because they may:

- Experience racism and racist attitudes
- Expect to be ignored by people in authority due to experience of institutionalised racism
- Be afraid of further abuse or racist abuse if they challenge others
- Be subject to myths, e.g. all people of a particular culture are good with or hit their children
- Want to fit in and not want to make a fuss
- By using or learning English as a second language and therefore find it more difficult to communicate worries or concerns
- Experience religious intolerance, fear or hatred based on their religious beliefs
- Be discriminated against, harassed or bullied based on their actual or perceived religious beliefs due to fear of religious extremism.
- By having any religious needs/requirements (e.g. fasting) ignored

The RFL's commitment to ensuring that rugby league is for everyone means that as more people from all communities and faiths get involved in the game, there is an increased possibility that instances of female genital mutilation, forced marriage or honour based violence may be reported or advice sought. Please see below for further advice and guidance.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

Female genital mutilation is a form of child abuse common to some African, Asian and Middle Eastern communities in the UK. This illegal and life-threatening initiation ritual can leave young victims in agony and with physical and psychological problems that can continue into adulthood. Carried out in secret and often without anaesthetic it involves the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs.

The NSPCC Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) helpline offers specialist advice, information and support to anyone concerned that a child's welfare is at risk because of female genital mutilation. Though callers' details can remain anonymous, any information that could protect a child from abuse will be passed to the Police or Social Care services. Clubs should be mindful if a regular attender goes missing from a club or if a child, their peer or relative starts expressing worries about a trip abroad. If you are worried that a child may be at risk of FGM, you can contact the 24-hour helpline anonymously on 0800 028 3550 or email [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk) or contact the RFL Safeguarding Manager [colette.eden@rfl.uk.com](mailto:colette.eden@rfl.uk.com) or 07595 520610

If you wish to find out more about FGM then you can access the NSPCC's fact sheet via [www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/resourcesforprofessionals/minorityethnic/female-genitalmutilation\\_wda96841.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/resourcesforprofessionals/minorityethnic/female-genitalmutilation_wda96841.html)

### **Forced marriage**

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights. The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family).



The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) operates a public helpline to provide advice and support to victims and those being pressurised into forced marriages. Of the 1,300 plus cases dealt with in 2012 40% of victims were under 18. If you are worried that a child may be at risk of forced marriage, you can contact FMU via the helpline on [020 7008 0151](tel:02070080151) or email [fmu@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmu@fco.gov.uk) or contact the RFL Safeguarding Manager [colette.eden@rfl.uk.com](mailto:colette.eden@rfl.uk.com) or 07595 520610.

For more information on forced marriages go to [www.gov.uk/forced-marriage](http://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage)

### **Honour based violence**

The term 'Honour Based Violence' (HBV) is the internationally recognised term describing cultural justifications for violence and abuse. It seeks to justify the use of certain types of violence and abuse against women, men and children. The Police define HBV as:

*'A crime or incident, which has or may have been committed, to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'.*

HBV cuts across all cultures, nationalities, faith groups and communities and transcends national and international boundaries. HBV is also a Domestic Abuse issue, a Child Abuse concern and a crime. If you are worried that a child may be at risk of HBV contact Children's Social Care for further advice and guidance or the RFL Safeguarding Manager [colette.eden@rfl.uk.com](mailto:colette.eden@rfl.uk.com) or 07595 520610

### **Child Trafficking**

Any concerns about the possibility of a child or young person being trafficked should be reported via the statutory agencies. Although no precise figures exist, the ILO (in 2005) estimated that between 980,000 to 1,225,000 children - both boys and girls - are in a forced labour situation as a result of trafficking internationally.

### **Reducing Vulnerability**

In view of the above it is important for clubs to be extra vigilant in creating a safe culture, including:

- Finding ways of understanding and communicating with all children and young people
- Ensuring best practice at all times
- Developing knowledge of the diverse cultures they serve
- Respecting cultural differences
- Promoting positive environments and behaviours in which difference (in a variety of senses) is embraced
- Building relationships with parents and carers and including all families in club activities
- Observing carefully changes in mood, appearance and behaviour and discussing those concerns with families, carers or the CWO if suspicions or concerns are significantly aroused about the care of the child or young person

It's recognised that empowering children and young people helps to protect them; ensure your club is a LISTENING CLUB, effectively communicating with its young players and listening to their needs and suggestions for change. You can find more information about the RFL Listening Club initiative [HERE](#).

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