

MANIFESTO

In March 2016, I and others sent an open letter to Ministers, Chief Medical Officers and Children's Commissioners, calling for action to be taken to remove the tackle from schools' rugby. Since then, various stakeholders have taken an interest in the debate but a lack of clarity has sometimes allowed for misinterpretation. Below, I will outline my position and what I am calling for.

Physical Education

In the Physical Education (PE) curriculum, I am calling for the removal of tackling and other forms of harmful physical contact. This particularly impacts contact sports like rugby union, rugby league and rugby sevens. In England, rugby union is the dominant sport.

Community sport

In the community youth context, I am calling for the following:

1. Participants (and for those under 18 years of age, their parent(s)/guardian(s)) to be presented with clear information on the short-term and long-term risks of injuries – particularly traumatic brain injuries – that are associated with contact sport.
2. Participants (and for those under 18 years of age, their parent(s)/guardian(s)) should have the choice to participate in the sport or not, meaning they must give their informed consent.
3. Coaches and those delivering or facilitating (including officials) the sport should be required to have a rugby license. The license should include frequent continuous professional development, a recent DBS check, safeguarding training and annual safety training (inc concussion awareness and first-aid).
4. All time-loss injuries should be logged, reported and monitored by the club / organisation.
5. If a youth player (under 18) sustains a suspected concussion, it is the responsibility of everyone (inclusive of parents/guardians, coaches, other players, teachers, volunteers,

team managers, medical staff and others) to communicate this with family members, schools, workplaces and other sporting bodies.

6. Further guidance should be developed by the Rugby Football Union on Return to Learn and Return to Work. The current suggestions are ambiguous and insufficient.
7. The only process in the instance of any suspected injury, and particularly traumatic brain injuries, should be 'if in doubt, sit them out'.