

# FA CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS GUIDANCE FOR REFEREES

A photograph of Howard Webb, a FIFA World Cup referee, standing on a grassy football pitch. He is wearing a black referee's uniform and has his right hand raised. In front of him are four young boys in football kits. One boy in a green and yellow kit is in the foreground, looking towards the camera. A football is on the grass near him. In the background, there is a brick school building and a football goal.

**“THE CHECKS ARE NON-INTRUSIVE  
AND REALLY, REALLY MATTER.  
SO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ONE –  
AND THAT IT’S CURRENT.”**

Howard Webb, PGMOL and FIFA World Cup Referee

LET’S MAKE SURE FOOTBALL’S **SAFE – NOT SORRY**

**Most children have a really great time playing football – and long may that continue. With you, our job is to ensure they continue to enjoy the game in a fun and safe environment. With this in mind, The FA and County FAs recognise their collective responsibility for children and young people within football. And that’s why our policy is straightforward when it comes to Criminal Record Checks (CRC). The CRC is exactly the same as what was formerly known as CRB – Criminal Records Bureau Check.**

**Note: When ‘children’ or ‘children and young people’ are referred to in this document, this means persons under the age of 18, playing in organised leagues. CRCs are not currently a requirement where U18 play within open-age football. N.B. This position may be subject to change.**

### **WHO NEEDS A CHECK?**

Everyone aged 16 years or over who undertakes any unsupervised roles with children.

These roles could be teaching, training, instructing and supervising. They include giving advice or guidance on well-being, caring for children or driving a vehicle solely for children on behalf of a club or organisation. And by children, we mean anyone under 18.

Anyone performing these roles **MUST** obtain an Enhanced Criminal Record with Children’s Barred List Check. This Check is made against the Government’s national list of those people barred from working with children (the ‘Children’s Barred List’). Then the checked person has to be approved to work in youth football.

This applies to referees.

**That’s why since 1 September 2014 any referee over the age of 16 without an in date, FA accepted, CRC have not been able to register to officiate within youth football and this position continues.**

### **WHY DO I NEED ONE?**

Mainly because of football’s overall responsibility to children, their parents and carers.

Rightly, parents and carers are increasingly asking people in football two questions:

1. Are you following the correct procedures when recruiting people to work with children?
2. Are all the relevant people checked?

The response has to be ‘yes’ in both cases if the integrity of clubs, leagues, County FAs and The FA

is to be preserved.

As a referee, if you don’t have an in date accepted FA CRC check in place, we will not be able to use you in your vital and valued role in youth football – and no-one wants that.

It all comes down to the strapline on the front of this leaflet: Let’s make sure football’s safe – not sorry.



### **HOW LONG DOES A CRC LAST?**

In short, three years. Criminal Records Checks are a snapshot in time and therefore need to be renewed. We do this every three years to ensure The FA has ‘in-date’ conviction and barring information on the people working with children and young people.

To be ‘in-date’ means:

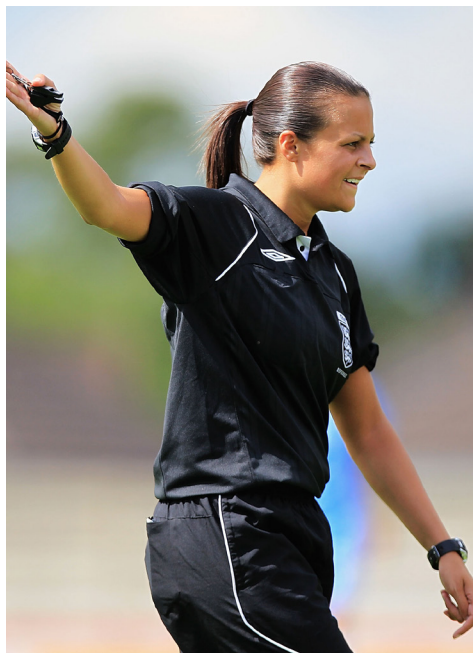
- CRBs with an issue date prior to 2010 should have been renewed before 1 September 2014.
- CRB/CRCs with issue dates of 2010, 2011 or 2012 **MUST** be renewed by 1 September 2015 (CRB/CRCs issued in 2012 need to be renewed as they reach the three-year point)
- CRCs issued 2013 onwards should be renewed in line with The FA three-year renewal policy.

## CAN I APPLY FOR A CRC ONLINE?

Yes – and we'd prefer you to use this method. It's cheaper, easier and faster.

When you apply for – or renew – a CRC online, your County FA will still need to see your original ID documents. But they can now verify these online as well.

For more information on how to use the online CRC application service, please contact your County FA Referee Development Officer (RDO) directly, or contact **The FA Criminal Records Body** on **0845 210 8080** or via email to: [FAchecks@TheFA.com](mailto:FAchecks@TheFA.com)



## I ALREADY HAVE A CURRENT FA CRC, BUT HAVE ONLY JUST STARTED REFEREEING. DO I NEED ANOTHER ONE?

No. If you already have an in-date FA CRC you do not need another one for your role as a referee.

Also, if you have a CRC from outside football which you wish to bring into football, you may not need a new one, provided it meets the portability criteria:

- It has been registered for the DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) update service.
- It is for the right work force (Child).

There is a one-off charge of £10 for 'porting' a CRC from outside football into The FA. For most volunteers it is quicker and cheaper to apply for an FA CRC.

## CAN I RENEW MY FA CRC AUTOMATICALLY?

Yes. You can now have life-time renewals of your FA CRC which means you will not need to reapply every three years.

To take advantage of this you will need to:

- Register your CRC with The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)\*
- Inform The FA Criminal Records Body who administer the Checks. They will charge a £10 administration fee

*\*you must register your CRC disclosure with the DBS update service within 19 days of Issue.*

Once registered for this service, The FA CRB will make annual checks on your CRC status for as long as you remain in football.

For more information and guidance on The FA's CRC policy, the DBS update service and FA CRC life-time checks please visit: [www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/criminal-records-checks](http://www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/criminal-records-checks)

## ISN'T HAVING A CRC A BIT INTRUSIVE?

It's certainly not meant to be – it's simply a way any organisation involved with children should operate and is a requirement under the Protection of Freedoms Act, 2012.

However, we fully understand that as soon as someone says 'you' need to be checked or rechecked, some people may be affronted. They may feel an implication that there may be something inappropriate or untoward in their behaviour.

Nevertheless, The FA and County FAs have a responsibility to ensure that no-one barred from working with children is allowed to referee within youth football.

Everyone would surely agree that we must provide a safe infrastructure for children and young people to participate in our national game.

Carrying out the right checks, ensuring those in key roles are educated on the indicators of abuse – and know how to refer any concerns – are fundamental to creating a fun and safe environment.



## DOES IT TAKE A LONG TIME?

No. If you've never had a CRC, don't worry. It's simple and totally confidential. Approximately 300,000 Checks have been undertaken in football within the last 10 years. That covers coaches, managers, welfare officers and regular first-aiders within youth football, as well as referees.

It only takes a few minutes to complete the form online and your County FA RDO can provide assistance if you have any queries.

If your Check does reveal some information, this does not automatically exclude you from working with vulnerable groups in football.

The FA is very fair, but it does have a duty to make sure the information a Check may reveal does not affect the safety of children. Every Disclosure is assessed individually, taking into account the person's age at the time of any relevant incident; the time expired since the conviction, the way the court dealt with the crime and other salient information.

Almost everyone sails through the check, but identifying anyone who could pose a risk to children is so important to children, parents – and all of us working in football.

If you've any questions when completing the form, we're here to help and advise, so just call

**The FA CRB on 0845 210 8080** or by email at **[FAchecks@TheFA.com](mailto:FAchecks@TheFA.com)**

If you are worried about the process, please don't be.

## FOOTBALL REALLY NEEDS REFEREES – SO PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE A CURRENT CRC IN PLACE.

For further information or to complete/renew your CRC please contact your County FA RDO. A full list of Counties and relevant contacts is available online at: **[www.TheFA.com/my-football/more/country-fa](http://www.TheFA.com/my-football/more/country-fa)**



This is one of a series of information guides The FA has produced about the importance of having a current Criminal Records Check in place for those in football working with children and young people. These can be read and downloaded by going to the Governance tab on The FA.com and clicking on Safeguarding and going to the CRC information or by following this [link](#).



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**Lisa Rashid, FA Level 3 and FIFA  
Women’s International Referee**



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