



GUIDANCE NOTES NO:

**3.2**

# **DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE CHECKS**

**FOR CLUBS**

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**FOR ALL**

# SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

*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.*

*The FA and County FAs recognise their collective responsibility for children and young people within football. Clearly, this same duty of care is shared by every club in the country which runs youth teams.*

*So this document is a reminder of your responsibilities in respect of Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS Checks). Anyone working in an eligible role, directly working with children and young people – such as managers and coaches – must have an in-date, FA-Accepted, DBS Check as part of responsible recruitment practice before they work or volunteer within football.*

**Note:** When the word/phrase 'children' or 'children and young people' is used in this document, this means persons aged 18 and under, playing in organised leagues.



**COMPLIANCE WITH DBS CHECKS  
REQUIREMENTS AS STATED WITHIN THIS  
GUIDANCE IS PART OF THE AFFILIATION  
CRITERIA FOR CLUBS WITH PLAYERS  
UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE.**



# WHAT'S THE FIRST THING MY CLUB SHOULD DO?

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This work should be carried out by your Club Welfare Officer (CWO), who can access their club's safeguarding information via The FA's online Whole Game System portal.

To access the portal [click here](#) or follow this link [wholegame.TheFA.com/Account/Login](https://wholegame.TheFA.com/Account/Login).

You will need your FA Number (FAN). If you are new to your role you can create or retrieve your FAN on the Whole Game login page. For more information on Whole Game click on the 'Help' tab once logged on.

## WHO NEEDS A CHECK?

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

These roles could be managing, training, coaching 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.

By children, we mean anyone under 18. Anyone performing these roles MUST obtain an Enhanced DBS Check 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.

For a full list of those eligible for a DBS check, see **Guidance Notes 3.5: Eligibility of Roles**.



# WHY DO YOU 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. If those eligible don't have an in-date, FA DBS Check in place, youth football will not be able to use them in their vital and valued role – and no-one wants that.

**ACT NOW TO  
ENSURE YOUR  
COACHES AND  
MANAGERS HOLD  
AN IN-DATE, FA-  
ACCEPTED DBS  
CHECK BEFORE THE  
SESSION STARTS.**





# HOW LONG DOES A DBS CHECK LAST?

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Three years. A DBS Check is a snapshot in time and therefore need to be renewed – ideally before the current one runs out to avoid any gaps and making them non-compliant and unable to be safely involved.

We do this every three years to ensure The FA has current conviction and barring information on the people working with children and young people.



# WHAT CONSTITUTES AN 'IN-DATE' OR CURRENT DBS CHECK?

To be 'in-date' means:

A DBS Check must have been completed within the last three years and be valid for the current season.

## APPLYING FOR A DBS CHECK ONLINE

When you apply for – or renew – a DBS Check online, your Club Welfare Officer (CWO) will still need to see your original ID documents. They can verify these online. If your club isn't already registered to use The FA's online DBS Check application service, please contact The FA DBS Unit on **0115 969 4618** or via email to: [FAchecks@TheFA.com](mailto:FAchecks@TheFA.com).





# DO YOU NEED A NEW FA DBS CHECK IF YOU ALREADY HAVE A CURRENT FA DBS CHECK, BUT HAVE STARTED AS A VOLUNTEER WITH ANOTHER GRASSROOTS CLUB?

No. If you already have an in-date FA DBS Check you do not need another one for your new role within grassroots football.

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

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

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



# CAN I RENEW MY FA DBS CHECK AUTOMATICALLY?

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

To take advantage of this you will need to:

- Register your DBS Check with The Disclosure and Barring Service( DBS);\*
- Inform The FA DBS Unit, who administers the DBS Checks. They will charge a one-off £10 administration fee.

**\*You must register your DBS Check with the DBS update service within 19 days of Issue. Once registered for this service, The FA will make annual checks on your DBS Check status for as long as you have active eligible role in football.**

For more information and guidance on The FA's DBS Check policy, the DBS update service and FA DBS Check lifetime checks please visit: [TheFA.com/footballrules-governance/safeguarding/criminal-records-checks](https://www.thefa.com/footballrules-governance/safeguarding/criminal-records-checks)





# ISN'T HAVING A DBS CHECK 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 your Welfare Officer informs someone they need a DBS Check, that person may be affronted by the implication that there may be something inappropriate or untoward in their behaviour. This is perfectly understandable.

Nevertheless, The FA and County FAs have a responsibility to ensure that no-one barred from working with children is allowed to work or volunteer within under-18 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 YOUR CLUB WELFARE OFFICER NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OR ADVICE?

If your club has a number of teams, your CWO may feel their task is too big or they do not have an adequate level of support. This might mean it becomes difficult to retain them in this role. In such cases, we suggest you discuss with your CWO whether they would benefit from having an additional CWO to support them. Similarly, if your CWO has any queries about the DBS Check process, they should contact your County FA. A full list of County FA contacts can be found at: [TheFA.com/about-football-association/who-we-are/county-fas](https://www.thefa.com/about-football-association/who-we-are/county-fas)







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