Grassroots Football
Safeguarding Children

Working together to safeguard football
Our policy and procedures
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Foreword

Grassroots football is the backbone of our game and key to our success as a football nation. Our extensive Youth Review has shown that talking to young people is key to understanding their needs and shaping the game for the future. The development of the game relies on football being a safe, positive and enjoyable experience for the millions of children and young people who regularly play, watch, coach, referee, pump up the balls and help to put up the nets.

The FA is totally committed to this goal. With so many young people involved in the game, it is our responsibility as the governing body to have a clear safeguarding children policy that is accessible to and adopted by grassroots football.

Safeguarding children is everyone’s responsibility and having welfare officers in all clubs and leagues with youth teams is crucial to The FA’s simple three part approach to safeguarding, which includes:

• ‘The Right People’ – Seeking references and criminal record checks.
• ‘Raising Awareness’ – Education and best practice.
• ‘Dealing With Concerns’ – Policy, procedures and referrals.

Our collective role is to create a fun and safe experience for children in football and where concerns come to light, whether they are about someone in football or in the child’s wider life, then to report these concerns to the appropriate authorities.

Kelly Simmons
Director of the National Game and Women’s Football
Acknowledgements

The FA has drawn from work undertaken by the Amateur Swimming Association, All England Netball Association, The Rugby Football League, England and Wales Cricket Board, Child Protection in Sport Unit, Ann Craft Trust and Stonewall. We would like to thank these organisations for their support and kind permission to adapt some of their materials.

Glossary

ACPO Association of Chief Police Officers
CDM County Development Manager
CFA County Football Association
CFA WO County Football Association Welfare Officer
CMT Case Management Team
CPSU Child Protection in Sport Unit
CPT Child Protection Teams
CRC Criminal Record Checks
CWO Club Welfare Officer
CYP Children and Young People
DfES Department for Education and Science
DBS Disclosure and Barring Service
EA Emergency Aid
FDO Football Development Manager
FGM Female Genital Mutilation
FMU Forced Marriage Unit
HBV Honour Based Violence
LSCB Local Safeguarding Children Boards
NSPCC National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
PoFA Protection of Freedoms Act
SCM Safeguarding for Committee Members
SCW Safeguarding Children Workshop
The FA The Football Association
The FA CRB The Football Association Criminal Records Body
WGS Whole Game System
WOW Welfare Officer Workshop
YLWO Youth League Welfare Officer

Endorsement from the NSPCC, Child Protection in Sport Unit

On behalf of the NSPCC, Child Protection in Sport Unit I am delighted to recognise the great work being carried out across grassroots football and applaud your policies and procedures. It’s well documented that by ‘working together’ safeguards are more effective in supporting and protecting children and young people. With an estimated 5 million children and young people involved in football is essential that there is a clear understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and how to report any concerns.

I’d like to thank all of the volunteers working hard to make football safe – not sorry.

Anne Tiivas
Director, Child Protection in Sport Unit
1.0 Introduction

The FA continues to be committed to ensuring all necessary steps are taken to protect from harm children and young people (CYP) who participate in grassroots football. This document together with the safeguarding regulations, best practice guidelines and educational programme sets out The FA's position, role and responsibilities, and clarifies what is expected of county associations; their affiliated clubs and leagues.

Everyone involved in football needs to understand the individual and collective responsibility they undertake when working with CYP. It’s clear that working together and giving young people a voice makes a difference when it comes to having effective safeguards in football.

It’s essential that everyone is clear about how to report a concern about the welfare of a child or young person. In short this means following the guidelines set out in this policy. Further support and guidance can be obtained through your club or league welfare officer (CWDO or YLMO) and county FA welfare officer (CCFA WO). This essential network of WOs is further supported by The FA’s safeguarding team at Wembley.

Remember it’s not your responsibility to decide if abuse is taking place, but it is your responsibility to report any concerns you may have.

1.1 The Association’s Safeguarding Children Policy

Every child or young person who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in football, thus every club is required to endorse and adhere to The Association’s Safeguarding Children Policy.

The FA recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of CYP who play or participate in football by protecting them from abuse and harm.

This means creating a safe and inclusive atmosphere where everyone at the CWDOs together to tackle both bullying and discrimination, ensure safer recruitment, and tackle poor practice which leads to harm and reduces equal opportunities.

Best practice in Inclusion, anti-bullying, equality, and the respect agenda are all part of making safer cultures and prevention of harm and abuse.

The FA is committed to working to provide a safe environment for all CYP to participate in the sport to the best of their abilities for as long as they choose to do so.

The FA recognises that the terms ‘child or young person’, ‘abuse’ and ‘harm’ are open to interpretation, so for the purposes of this policy, these are defined in Appendix 1.

The Association’s Safeguarding Children Policy principles are that:

• The child’s welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration
• All CYP have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status or civil partnership, racial origin, faith, ability or disability, pregnancy and maternity
• All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
• Working in partnership with other organisations, CYP and their parents and carers is essential

The FA is committed to working in partnership with the Police, Children’s Social Care, local safeguarding children’s boards (LSCB) and the disclosure and barring service (DBS) in accordance with their procedures. This is essential to enable these organisations to carry out their statutory duties to investigate concerns and protect all CYP.

The Association’s Safeguarding Children Policy is in response to Government legislation and guidance, developed to safeguard the welfare and development of CYP.

Clubs and leagues with youth teams must appoint a WO in line with FA affiliation requirements. All league and CWDOs are expected to abide by the Code of Conduct for volunteer WOs.

The Safeguarding Children Policy is supported by The FA’s Respect Programme to address verbal abuse and bullying of youngsters by parents and coaches on the sidelines. More information can be found in sections 3.1 and 3.2.
Grassroots football would not exist without the thousands of volunteers involved today. There are many different roles in football and ensuring we encourage individuals that are suitable is essential.

Getting the right volunteers in place is key to a well-organised and happy club that provides football in a safe and supportive environment.

Remember that a friendly, well-run club is more likely to be successful in encouraging additional volunteers!

Whilst we understand that many clubs and leagues are in need of additional volunteers, all clubs and leagues with youth teams have a responsibility to ensure that appropriate recruitment checks have been carried out. Anyone may have the potential to abuse CYP, therefore all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with CYP.

Sound recruitment and selection procedures will help to screen out those who are not suitable to work in football. Please ensure your club/league follow the steps set out here.

2.0 Recruiting volunteers and staff

2.1 Planning and advertising
- Draw up a role profile which highlights the key responsibilities of the role.
- Decide upon the skills and experience the role will need; a person specification.
- Be clear about what your club/leagues aims and philosophy are in your advert/information.
- Reflect the club/leagues positive stance on safeguarding children and equal opportunities.
- Use application forms to collect information on each applicant.
- Ensure that more than one official looks at each application form.
- Ask for original identification documents to confirm the identity of the applicant, e.g. passport or driving licence.

2.2 Interviewing
- Meet with all applicants prior to any recruitment decision.
- Ensure more than one official is present. The meeting or interview will enable the club/league to explore further the information provided in their application form. Prepare in advance the questions you want to ask; they should provide the applicant with the opportunity to share previous experiences and give examples of how they have or would handle situations.

2.3 References
- Request at least two references from individuals who are not related to the applicant. One reference should be associated with the applicant’s place of work and, if possible, one that demonstrates they have been involved in sport, particularly children’s activities, previously, or other voluntary work.
- References should be followed up prior to any offer of appointment being made. If the references raise any concerns you are advised to contact your CFA WO.

2.4 Criminal Record Checks (CRC)
CRC are another tool in the recruitment process. A CRC Disclosure certificate contains impartial and confidential criminal history information held by the Police and Government departments which can be used by The FA to make safer recruitment decisions. It can indicate that a person is not suitable to work with children, for example if they have a history of sexual offending or offences against children. It may also tell The FA that further investigations are required, for example if the person has a history of drug dealing or racist offending.

The type/level of CRC required in grassroots football will be determined by the role someone has, the frequency of that role being carried out and whether or not the role is supervised. Please use the guidance below to understand which roles in U18 football need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced CRC with children’s barred list.
- CWODs
- Coaches (this includes those who are referred to as assistant coach)
- Team managers (including those referred to as assistant managers)
- Referees in U18 football, referee mentors, referee coaches and referee assessors
- First aiders
- Physiotherapists and other health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) registered roles
- Regular club drivers

Ordinarily, club chairmen, treasurers and secretaries do not require a check, if they are just or mainly administrative roles. However, if the people in these roles also help with coaching or at matches, then they will need a DBS enhanced criminal record check with children’s barred list in their role as a coach, team assistant, etc. Lots of roles do not need to have checks, for example: you do not need to have a check to watch your child play, if you occasionally run the line or if you drive your own child and his/her friends to games if this is a private and personal arrangement with other parents, or if your role is mainly administrative.

It is very important that people who do not need a check are not asked to complete one, as this is breaking the law and has serious consequences.

The FA will need to obtain the disclosures with content in order to risk assess individuals in relation to their suitability to work with children in football.

The FA’s criminal record body will contact individuals directly to request the disclosure certificate as and when this is required. The applicant’s compliance will enable football to carry out a risk assessment on their suitability to work with CYP.

In order for The FA to manage any potential risk, if applicants do not provide the disclosure within the timeframe it is required, then the applicant will be suspended for non-compliance by The FA, from all football.

The FA will take into account the rehabilitation of offenders act and only consider offences which are relevant to the care, supervision and training of children. The FA is not allowed to tell the club about the actual offending and so applicants can be assured of confidentiality. The FA will however tell the club/league and CFA whether or not the person is considered suitable to work with children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your role in football</th>
<th>Action to take</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18s coach, manager, first aider or other club based eligible role</td>
<td>Speak to your CWOD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWOD</td>
<td>Speak to your CFA WO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referee</td>
<td>Contact your CFA referee development officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed coach applicant</td>
<td>Ring 0845 210 8080 or e-mail <a href="mailto:FAChecks@TheFA.com">FAChecks@TheFA.com</a> for advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in a private soccer school or unaffiliated football</td>
<td>You may not be able to get a FA enhanced criminal record check. Please speak to your line manager or contact 0845 210 8080 or e-mail <a href="mailto:FAChecks@TheFA.com">FAChecks@TheFA.com</a> for advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure what you should be doing</td>
<td>Ring 0845 210 8080 or e-mail <a href="mailto:FAChecks@TheFA.com">FAChecks@TheFA.com</a> for advice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Anyone needing to complete an FA criminal records check can do so through The FA Criminal Records Body (FA CRB). This service provides quicker, cheaper checks than the paper application and is simpler for clubs to administer.

We strongly recommend that applicants use The FA online criminal records checks application system. For more about the online application system, e-mail FAchecks@TheFA.com

For more information about who is eligible and how to apply for a check please visit our Frequently Asked Questions – www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/criminal-records-checks

If you have been asked to have a check and you don’t think you need one, please ring The FA criminal record body on 0845 210 8080 or e-mail FAChecks@TheFA.com for advice.

If you have been asked to check certain individuals and are not sure if they need a check, then please speak to your CFA WO or e-mail FAChecks@TheFA.com for advice.

CWOs can find out about The FA Whole Game System (WGS) club portal, a tool developed specifically for WOs to monitor club membership and FA CRC compliance please refer to section 4.4 for more information.

2.5 Appointing volunteers and staff

Clubs and leagues should consider all the information they receive via the application form, confirmation of identity, the outcome of the take up of references and The FA CRC. This information should then be considered alongside the outcome of the meeting/interview to make an informed decision as to whether or not to accept the applicant into their club.

2.6 Post appointment decisions

It is important that once a new volunteer has been recruited follow up action is taken and this should include:

- Any qualifications are substantiated e.g. request to see copies of their coaching certificate(s)
- New volunteers are made aware and sign up to the club’s/league’s safeguarding children policy and procedures, best practice guidelines and codes of conduct
- The roles and responsibilities of the new volunteer are signed up to
- Training needs are established and actioned
- A period of supervision/observation or mentoring is used to support the new volunteer; this is often referred to as an induction
- The FA’s Safeguarding Children Workshop (SCW) is completed or if it was taken over three years ago is renewed either online or via a workshop.

3.0 Getting the essentials in place; the key safeguarding building blocks

Every football club and youth, mini soccer and girls’ league must have a safeguarding children policy. This could be considered the cornerstone of your club or league. For your policy to be truly effective members need to understand what it actually means for them and that it includes how it is integrated into daily football activities. A Safeguarding Children Policy should be based on sound straightforward principles and the foundation of a well-run and effective club or league.

By signing up to The FA’s safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures (see Appendix 2) and implementing key policies and procedures, best practice will soon become common practice. It’s important to make sure that this information is shared with all new members and that your club/league has a process to check that this is happening.

The FA’s current affiliation requirements for youth football mean every club and league with youth teams must have a WO; they are key to ensuring everyone is aware of the safeguarding children policy and what this really means for the club/league.

3.1 Policy and procedures check lists

Please make use of these checklists to ensure your club/league has the key ‘building blocks’ in place which to build and develop successfully run clubs and leagues. Having these in place will guide your club/league members as to what they can expect from your club/league and what in turn you expect from them!
Procedures check list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th>In place</th>
<th>In progress</th>
<th>Last revised</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A CWO appointed*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Procedures for reporting concerns about the welfare of a child or young person</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complaints and disciplinary procedures</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A system for gathering player and parental consent</td>
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<tr>
<td>A system for gathering medical information about a child or young person</td>
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<tr>
<td>A system for gathering information about a child or young person’s specific needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>An avenue for young people to express their views and have them heard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information for parents, carers and players</td>
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<tr>
<td>A committee representative of the wider local community, one that is inclusive representing current members and potential members (e.g. Representing age, gender, disability and ethnicity)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel and overnight stay procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>The FA’s Respect programme</td>
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*In line with The FA’s affiliation policy refer to Section 4 for more information

For further guidance on developing a club or league ‘Health and Safety Policy’, ‘Complaints and Disciplinary Policy’ and having a ‘Complaints Policy’ see Appendix 3.

WDs will be given support on how to implement and develop the key ‘safeguarding building blocks’ when they attend The FA’s Welfare Officer Workshop (WOW). Further information and support can be obtained via your CFA WD.

Download our recommended template policies and procedures for use in your club or league via – www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/raising-awareness/downloads-section

Safeguarding Children Policy template for clubs

Anti-Bullying Policy

The club considers children, young people, adults and families to be an integral part of football. The club is committed to safeguarding the welfare of every child and young person who has been involved in our club.

**Objectives of this Policy**

- The club will do all it can to ensure that the young person feels safe and included in the club
- Bullying will not be tolerated

**Statement of Intent**

Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Bullying hurts. Nobody deserves to be a victim of bullying. Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

- Bullying can be physical or verbal, it can be done through internet harassment, the use of social networking pages such as Facebook and Twitter or in person

**People**

- Club members or parents should know what the club policy is and where to find it
- They should know who to contact if they have a concern

**What is Bullying?**

- Bullying is defined as any act or acts of harassment, intimidation or abuse. This policy is based on the UK government’s definition of bullying: ‘any recognisable pattern of behaviour that is intended to cause harm, either emotional or physical. It includes physical, emotional and verbal bullying. The football associations recommended guidelines for club policy on bullying will be used as a framework for this policy.

**Bullying’ in the online environment**

- Any act that is considered to be bullying is covered by this policy. This includes acts that are carried out online, for example, sending hurtful text messages or making sexual comments.

**Signs and Indicators**

- There are usually some clues to bullying. Always check if there is a young person who is missing from school. They may be in a safe environment or they may be a victim of bullying.

**Who Can Help?**

- The football associations recommended guidelines for club policy on bullying will be used as a framework for this policy. The rules of the game apply to bullying in the same way as they apply to the game of football. If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of an adult volunteer, match official, helper on club tours, football club employee it should be investigated.

**How to Report Bullying**

- If there are concerns regarding the appropriateness of an adult volunteer, match official, helper on club tours, football club employee it should be investigated. The football associations recommended guidelines for club policy on bullying will be used as a framework for this policy.

**What Happens Once the Bullying Has Been Reported**

- The club will investigate any concerns raised. The club will ensure that any action taken will be fair and justifiable. The club will ensure that any action taken will be in line with current FA policy and regulations.
Visit the following link to download the Respect Codes of Conduct for:

- Young players
- Spectators and parents/carers
- Coaches, team managers and club officials
- Match officials

www.TheFA.com/my-football/more/respect/respect-resources

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The FA's Equality Policy

The FA is responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout the game at every level. Football belongs to all, and should be enjoyed by anyone who wants to participate in it. The FA's commitment is to eliminate discrimination whether by reason of age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status or civil partnership, racial origin, faith, ability or disability, pregnancy and maternity.

The FA is also committed to promoting equality by treating people fairly and with respect, by recognising that inequalities may exist, by taking steps to address them and by providing access and opportunities for all members of the community. It's essential that all youth clubs and leagues adhere to this policy and we would recommend you make use of the FA's template policy.

Ensuring everyone understands what's on offer, what's expected and what's not tolerated at your club or league will help to ensure CYP get to play their football in a fun and supportive environment.

Sign up and make use of the resources available including the following:
- Respect Codes of Conduct
- Respect guide for youth clubs
- Good practice guide for leagues
- Respect pitch side barriers
- Promotional films; these have had great reviews, they are short and to the point

To access more information on these resources and others either speak with your CFA respect officer, CFA WO or visit – www.TheFA.com/Respect

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3.2 Footballs Respect Programme

We would encourage clubs and leagues to sign up to the respect programme, it’s free to join and there are excellent resources available to support clubs and leagues to introduce Respect.

The Respect Programme includes four practical steps to improve behaviour - on the pitch and on the sidelines - and at matches throughout the country:

Step 1: Respect Codes of Conduct
Step 2: Designated spectator areas
Step 3: Captain taking responsibility
Step 4: Referee managing the game

Respect is simply the collective responsibility of everyone involved in football to create a fair, safe and enjoyable environment in which the game can take place.

Ensuring everyone understands what’s on offer, what’s expected and what’s not tolerated at your club or league will help to ensure CYP get to play football in a fun and supportive environment.

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3.3 Best practice guidance

We also have a wide range of safeguarding best practice guidance which aims to guide clubs and leagues on things such as how to go about ‘appointing a WO’, ensuring safer recruitment of volunteers and organising trips away. For more information either ask your CFA WO or visit – www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding
to find out more about:
- Appointing a CWO
- CWO roles and responsibilities
- Appointing a YLWO
- YLWO roles and responsibilities
- Safer recruitment
- Club annual membership and consent form
- Choosing a club for your child
- Travel, trips and tournaments
- Safe away cards
- Changing rooms and showering facilities
- Photography guidelines
- Advice and support; for individuals receiving a disclosure
- Advice and support; for those against whom a complaint of poor practice or an allegation of abuse has been made
- Best practice guidance on including and safeguarding deaf and disabled children

Guidance on how to deal with a concern about a child’s welfare, can be found via – www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/dealing-with-concerns
3.4 Social media

Facebook, Twitter, blogs, instant messaging and photo and video exchange sites are now common ways of communicating. All of these online tools provide a useful way for everyone in football to connect with CYP. However the use of social networking sites also introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks to CYP.

Too much information is available via –
www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding

- Social networking, websites, mobile phone and email communications
- Running a website - Do’s and Don’ts
- Responsible use of social networking sites
- Communicating responsibly with young leaders, coaches and referees U18
- Using texts and emails with U18 – Do’s and Don’ts
- ‘Trolling’ – advice for parents

3.5 Managing risk

We naturally assess the potential for risks when planning activities. However, to ensure the welfare of CYP within our care it is important to always ask the following basic questions:

- What is the activity?
- What are the ages or levels of development of the children involved?
- Where is the activity going to take place?
- Are there any additional needs within the group? How do they affect the child’s ability and needs in terms of safeguarding?
- Are there mixed groupings?
- What experience and qualifications do the organisers have?
- Are staffing or volunteer levels appropriate to the needs of the group?
- Do you have someone with the appropriate level of first aid training for the needs of the group?

So it’s important that you, your club/league and your members keep pace with how CYP are being communicated with and follow the best practice guidance provided by The FA.

The following information is available via –
www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding

- Social networking, websites, mobile phone and email communications
- Running a website - Do’s and Don’ts
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- ‘Trolling’ – advice for parents

For additional information and guidance on cyberbullying (including trolling) please refer to section 5.4.2

Additional care may be needed with some children with learning difficulties in terms of internet safety dependant on their understanding and development. This may be an area to consider in partnership with the child and their parent/carer.

It’s important to also consider your familiarity with the venue and the level of responsibility you have for the activity e.g. at your home ground (which may or may not have access to telephone, toilet and changing facilities, first aid provision, secure perimeter) or an unknown ground that your club has to travel to. Local sports centres or community playing fields will have guidelines on use and types of facilities, which you may or may not have access to. Also be mindful of social activities at a non football venue, which may or may not be known to you.

The principles for assessing potential risks remain the same whatever the activity, therefore you need to consider these and decide what ratio of adults to children or young people you consider to be appropriate to ensure their safety.

Adult/participant ratios must be based on the age and understanding of the CYP involved, the degree of risk the activity involves, and whether there are additional needs. The lower the age of the participants, the higher the ratio of staff should be. If the activity is mixed gender, male and female staff should ideally be available.

Whatever the age of the CYP and type of activity, a minimum of two adults should always be present. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of an incident.

As rule of thumb teams should generally have a minimum of 1 adult to 16 CYP. Where the children are aged 8 or younger you will require more staff and remember a minimum of two adults should always be present. If the CYP have additional needs e.g. learning needs or a disability the ratio should be higher than 1:16 to ensure you can meet the specific needs of any given group.

You may have club volunteers including FA Level 1 coaches who are not yet 18. They cannot be considered an adult legally; therefore this affects the ratio of adults to CYP. However, you can ask parents to come along in such circumstances. It is also important to consider the experience of the adults involved. Clearly it is best practice to have FA licenced coaches.
3.6 Charter Standard programme

The FA Charter Standard programme is an accreditation, which recognises and rewards high quality levels of provision in grassroots clubs and leagues. The accreditation is awarded to clubs and leagues that are well run, sustainable and which place safeguarding, quality coaching and safety as being paramount.

There are three levels of FA Charter Standard Awards for clubs to recognise the different standards.

‘FA Charter Standard Club (youth and adult)’ – entry level

‘FA Charter Standard Development Club’

‘FA Charter Standard Community Club’ – the most advanced level.

Each advanced level requires additional criteria to be met. Any club can apply for FA Charter Standard status, even a one team club. The criteria are challenging, but attainable for every club. Once awarded, FA Charter Standard clubs and leagues are given an annual health check to ensure the standards of provision are maintained. Signing up to The FA Charter Standard programme can help with the direction of your club, ensuring minimum standards are in place, setting a clear philosophy and ensuring consistency year on year as well as offering opportunities for growth and development.

Criteria for achieving the entry level award include having a trained WO, CRC for all volunteers involved with youth teams with a valid FA safeguarding certificate, FA emergency aid trained volunteers linked to each team, Respect Programme signup, a minimum Level 1 coach for each youth team, appropriate club administration in place and an volunteer FA Charter Standard co-ordinator.

The benefits for an FA Charter Standard club include free Nike footballs, a free kit for clubs with a youth team as part of the McDonalds FA Charter Standard Kit Scheme, access to the McDonald's FA Charter Standard kit store for a 20% discount on all Nike kit and equipment, free access for coaches to sign up to The FA Licensed Coaches club, access to a free FA legal helpline, access to a free charity and CASC helpline, tickets upon application for England youth and women’s internationals, local in-service FA coaching events, free access to club matters business and administration workshops and support with funding applications.

The ‘hidden’ benefits are key to most clubs working towards the accreditation. By achieving The FA Charter Standard accreditation, you are demonstrating to all members, parents, sponsors and the public, that you are a well-organised, safe club offering opportunities for all.

The club accreditation lasts for one season and will be renewed each year as part of the annual health check process. Accreditation awards can be withdrawn if a club has a poor disciplinary record, fails to attend in-service FA Charter Standard events or is unable to continue to meet the criteria. For more information visit – www.TheFA.com/charterstandard

4.0 Responsibility for safeguarding in football

There is a moral responsibility for the safety and protection of CYP within football. However, there are people designated at every level of the game who take a lead with regards to safeguarding CYP. Their role also includes supporting staff and volunteers in raising and thinking through how to manage concerns with the aim of making football as safe as possible for all concerned.

The FA requires a WO in all clubs and leagues with youth teams in order to affiliate in grassroots football. The WO role is a position of significant responsibility. The FA therefore requires that prior to appointment, every potential WO is considered to be ‘suitable’ to hold such a position as defined in the ‘WO person specification and suitability checklist’ see Appendix 4.

The FA requires that all WOs are perceived as being approachable, having a child-centred approach and the ability to maintain this perspective when carrying out their role. A WO should be clearly identified in every football setting and that includes football festivals and tournaments.

All grassroots football WOs must have:

• Attended an FA SCW
• Attended a CFA WOW
• Have an accepted disclosure and barring enhanced criminal records check; with a check of the children’s barred list via The FA criminal records body
• Completed The FA online SCM
• Been made aware of The FA’s WO code of conduct, (for more information please see Appendix 5).

For more information about The FA’s safeguarding courses and how to book on them please visit – www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/raising-awareness—downloads-section or speak with your CFA WO.

4.1 The Club Welfare Officer (CWO)

Where clubs have multiple youth teams feedback from CWOS has shown that having more than one CWO in place is incredibly helpful. Your club might wish to consider having a CWO for each of its age groups or perhaps one for boys’ teams and another for girls’ teams. Having a realistic ratio of CWOS to teams will help to ensure everyone knows who their CWO is, how to contact them and therefore ensure more effective safeguards are in place in your club. Why not speak with other clubs and see what the benefits have been for them.

We would also recommend that the WO sits on the club’s management committee in order that safeguarding becomes embedded in grassroots football – remember safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and the club’s management committee must play its part in supporting the CWO.

The CWOS are responsible for promoting best practice throughout the club and play a key role in dealing with poor practice concerns in line with the club’s own disciplinary processes. Matters of a more worrying nature should be referred to the CFA WO for advice and support. Confidentiality regarding concerns should be maintained on a strictly ‘need to know’ basis.

CWOs are required by The FA to:

• Know who the CFA WO is and how to contact them
• Refer all child protection and relevant poor practice concerns to the CFA WO
• Seek advice from the NSPCC Helpline if the CFA WO is unavailable or in circumstances of child protection urgency
• Seek advice from local Children’s Social Care or the Police in an emergency
• Assist the club in effectively implementing The FA’s safeguarding children policy
• Assist the club to utilise The FA’s safer recruitment best practice guidance on recruiting volunteers and always requesting and following up references and recruitment checks
• CWO and LWOS can use the WGS to effectively monitor safeguards
• Promote, support and encourage the benefits of the safeguarding children education programme
• Assist the club in implementing The FA’s best practice guidelines.

Please refer to section 3.3 or download information via – www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/raising-awareness—downloads-section
4.2 The Youth League Welfare Officer (YLWO)

All YLWOs are expected to promote awareness of The FA’s Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and best practice guidelines. The introduction of Codes of Conduct, appropriate sanctions and proactive requirements for affiliation such as signing up to the Respect Programme will do much to safeguard CYP. It is anticipated that the league’s rules and disciplinary procedures will deal appropriately with many poor practice issues.

However, where appropriate the YLWO may be required/asked to acknowledge and support sanctions imposed by the CFA. Any concerns about a child’s or young person’s welfare should be reported immediately to the CFA WO.

YLWOs are required by The FA to:

- Know who their CFA WO is and how to contact them.
- Know who their registered clubs WOs are and how to contact them.
- Ensure all their registered clubs have a safeguarding children policy.
- Encourage all their registered clubs to implement The FA’s safeguarding best practice guidelines
- Promote and support as many people as possible to complete The FA’s safeguarding Children Education Programme.
- Have an understanding of The FA CRB and its role within safeguarding CYP.

CWOs and YLWOs can use the WGS to effectively monitor safeguards.

Coordinate annual CWO network gatherings for those CWO who are affiliated to their league.

YLWOs are also advised to make use of the FA’s respect programme which will help to embed safeguards. Please refer to section 3.2. or visit – www.TheFA.com/Respect

4.3 The County FA Welfare Officer (CFA WO)

The CFA WO is a key member of The FA’s safeguarding team and works closely with The FA. They will receive and collate child protection concerns in accordance with FA protocols and procedures and deal with poor practice concerns directly. As and when required they will seek advice from The FA case manager, Children’s Social Care, the Police or the NSPCC helpline regarding case referrals.

Part of their role is to promote and support the aims of The FA’s Safeguarding Children Policy and procedures and The FA’s best practice guidelines. They will assist the youth, mini-soccer and girls’ leagues to appoint WOs. Thereafter they will maintain contact with the network of WOs to offer support and guidance where necessary. The CFA WO will also support clubs and leagues in implementing criminal records checks and can advise on making use of The FA’s Respect programme.

4.4 The FA’s Whole Game System (WGS) Safeguarding Views

The FA’s WGS club/league safeguarding views are online tools which allow CWO and YLWOs to monitor volunteers within their club/league. Please note the safeguarding views are only available to the WO and secretary.

The safeguarding views give the WO oversight of who has completed FA safeguarding courses such as the SCW, CFA WOW and SCM courses. The views also show the Emergency Aid (EA) qualification and who has completed or renewed their CRC and, of course, who still needs to.

The system has a built in qualification and CRC expiry process. This is colour coded and supported by WGS and email so CWOs and club secretaries can easily see those individuals whose qualifications are due to expire. Monitoring this view means clubs can easily stay on top of essential safeguards such as CRC and training.

WGs are reminded that they should be making use of the WGS each time they take on a new volunteer.

The system provides different levels of information for CWO and YLWOs. The system includes the following tools for CWOs:

- Views of the safeguarding profile of individuals by clicking on an individual’s FAN via the club status page. This then shows the individual’s CRC, EA, SCW, SCM and WOW records along with the contact details we have on record.
- Filtering tool to sort data with an inbuilt colour coded qualification and CRC expiry flagging process.
- WGS notifications and email alerts for CWOs and club secretaries to flag individuals where their qualification(s) are shortly due to expire.
- Ability to add and remove individuals who are no longer involved with the club.
- Print off the full safeguarding record of the club.
- Ability to start individual’s CRCs applications directly through WGS (expected autumn 2017).

The system for YLWOs also includes the following tools:

- A view of the safeguarding profile of all CWOs at clubs within the league. This includes their CRC, EA, SCW, SCM and WOW records along with the contact details we have on record.
- A view of the safeguarding profile of all coaches and managers attached to teams within the league. This includes their CRC, EA, SCW, SCM and WOW records.
- WGs use their unique FA Number (FAN) and email /password to access the WGS.
- For more information about how to find your FAN number and /or how to access WGS please go to https://wholegame.thefa.com/ Respect Programme.

4.5 Everyone’s responsibility; raising awareness

The network of designated persons is critical, but for clubs and leagues to be really effective in creating a well run, happy and safe club/league everyone needs to play their part.

Raising awareness of what safeguarding means for everyone will pay dividends.

Make sure you encourage parents/carers as well as the club’s/league’s management committee to get to know your WO(s) and also to attend The FA’s SCW.
Section 5

5.0 Poor practice and abuse

Child abuse is a very emotive and difficult subject. It is important to understand the feelings involved but not to allow them to interfere with our judgement about any action to be taken. It is also important that child abuse and child protection are openly discussed as this helps create an environment where people are more aware of the issues and sensitive to the needs of children. Open discussions also create environments that deter abusers.

Neglect and child abuse can occur anywhere both within and outside of the family. This includes sport, leisure, cultural, religious and care environments and on the transport to and from these places. It can also occur on-line and through social media. Recent inquiries have also indicated that abuse which takes place within a public setting is rarely a one-off event. This means that if abuse is detected, it is highly unlikely to be the first time it has happened. It is therefore crucial that all allegations and suspicions are treated seriously and appropriate actions taken.

Children may be harmed or abused by professionals, volunteers, carers, family members and by other children. The issue is the effect on the child; sometimes harm or abuse is intentional; sometimes the intent is unclear, sometimes the harm is unintended.

5.1 Legislative framework

The Children Acts 1989 and 2004 set out duties to support families to meet the needs of children, to meet needs and to carry out enquiries where ‘significant harm’ is suspected. This role is given to social care but all agencies and organisations have a duty to work together, share information and cooperate in the best interests of the child.

Working Together To Safeguard Children 2013 is the guidance for all local authorities and all agencies whether statutory, non-statutory and including sports bodies.

All local authorities have local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) which coordinate the work of the agencies, and organisations in their area.

Extra government guidance, Safeguarding Disabled Children, was produced in 2009.

All local authorities will have their own child protection policies which fit into this framework.

It is not the role of The FA to investigate where significant harm to a child is suspected – but it is our role to carefully pass on to social care our concerns, record and report them accurately including areas we are unsure about – it is the role of the Police to investigate possible criminal offences and of Children’s Social Care to investigate risks to children and to consider how they need to be managed.

The use of social media/mobile technology continues to increase and whilst they offer many benefits for football it’s important that those working with CYP understand that appropriate boundaries must be in place in an online environment just as they need to be on or off the field of play. For more information about social media refer to section 3.4.

An environment that explicitly attempts to identify and report abuse helps create a safer culture for CYP.

Let’s make football safe – not sorry.

Allegations may also relate to poor practice where an adult’s or a peer’s behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing concern to a young person within a football setting.

Poor practice includes any behaviour that contravenes existing codes of conduct, infringes an individual’s rights and/or reflects a failure to fulfil the highest standards of care. Poor practice is unacceptable in football and will be treated seriously with appropriate actions taken.

Sometimes a child or young person may not be aware that practice is poor or abusive and they may tolerate behaviour without complaint. An example of this is a child with a disability who is used to being excluded from activities or a bullied young person who is used to being mocked.

Children may also be used to their cultural needs being ignored or their race abused. This does not make it acceptable.

Many CYP will lack the skills or confidence to complain and it is therefore extremely important that adults in the club advocate for the CYP.Advocating for CYP who find it hard to speak out is part of creating a safer culture for them. For information about the categories of abuse and signs and indicators see Appendix 6. If you have not already attended The FA’s SCW but would like to find out more about safeguarding children in football them please contact your CFA WO.
5.2 Relationships of trust
The power and influence of an older colleague (where an U18 has taken on a leadership role) or member of staff has over someone attending a group activity cannot be underestimated. If there is an additional competitive aspect to the activity and the older person is responsible for the young person’s success or failure to some extent, then the dependency of the younger member upon the older will be increased. This is the case in coaching. A coach has significant power and influence over his or her players and is therefore in a relationship of trust, coaches are therefore expected to act within appropriate boundaries with their players, in relation to all forms of communication. Coaches should be mindful of any physical contact with their players and coaches should not have intimate or sexual relationships with their players. It is therefore vital for volunteers to recognise the responsibility they must exercise in ensuring that they do not abuse their position of trust.

Genuine relationships do occur between different levels of volunteers and participants in a group, however no intimate relationship should begin whilst the member of staff or volunteer is in a position of trust over them.

The FA acknowledges that intimate relationships between teenagers take place and often no harm comes from them. However, it is also acknowledged that CYP who suffer abuse often do so at the hands of other children or young people.

It must be understood that the notion of ‘relationships of trust’ applies as much to young people who have taken on a leadership role as it does to adults involved in football.

“The inequality at the heart of a relationship or trust should be ended before any sexual relationship begins”. Caring for young people and the vulnerable? Guidance for preventing abuse of trust (Home Office 1999).

Please note: young people aged 16-18 can legally consent to some types of sexual activity; however, in some provisions of legislation (under the Children’s Act 1989) they are classified as children.

“It is an offence for a person aged 18 or over to involve a child under that age in sexual activity where he or she is in a specified position of trust in relation to that child. This includes those who care for, advise, supervise or train CYP (Sexual Offences Act 2003)”. The principle of this section of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 will be applied by The FA thus if you engage in an intimate or inappropriate relationship with a young person it is a breach of The FA regulations and as such may result in disciplinary action. You can download The FA’s safeguarding regulations via this link – www.TheFA.com/-/media/Files/thefportalandgoverndoc/rules-0f-the-association/2014-15/052a_safeguarding-children-regs.aspx


5.3 Raising awareness of potential vulnerability

Some children may experience multiple challenges and difficulties. This could be due to family circumstances, poverty, discrimination, disability, family problems with mental health, domestic violence or substance and alcohol use. The more challenges facing a child or young person the greater their vulnerability.

This safeguarding children policy is inclusive and the same actions should be taken regardless of the needs and background of the child or young person.

The FA recognises however that some CYP are disadvantaged by their experiences and would want to highlight the following.

5.3.1 Children and young people (CYP) with disabilities

Research has consistently shown that children with a disability are more at risk of abuse. Disability may be visible such as Cerebral Palsy or invisible such as a learning disability. Many things contribute to this including:

- Poor practice resulting from not understanding the care and support the child needs
- Attitudes and assumptions about disability
- Lack of awareness and the belief that disabled children are not abused
- Factors linked to the impairment i.e. it may be harder to communicate or avoid the abuser if the child depends on them
- Targetting by abusers who may believe they are less likely to tell or be believed.

Because of this clubs may need to put extra safeguards in place. Best practice to build safeguards includes:

- Making sure everyone working with the child understands what the impairment actually means for the child
- Talking to the child and parents/carer to understand the child’s needs
- Making sure there is a plan to meet additional needs and that this is clear and shared with those who work with the child

5.3.2 Children and young people (CYP) from minority ethnic groups

CYP from minority ethnic groups are additionally vulnerable because they may be:

- Experiencing racism and racist attitudes
- Experiencing racism being ignored by people in authority
- Afraid of further abuse if they challenge others
- Subjected to myths, e.g. all people of a particular culture are good with or hit their children

- Wanting to fit in and not make a fuss
- Using or learning English as a second language.

The FA’s commitment to ensuring that football 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 (FGM), forced marriage or Honour Based Violence (HBV) may be reported or advice sought. Please refer to 5.3.3, 5.3.4 and 5.3.5 respectively for further advice and guidance.

"Child trafficking is about taking children out of their protective environment and preying on their vulnerability for the purpose of exploitation". International Labour Organisation (ILO). 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.

FIFA has implemented regulations and an on-line system to monitor and control the movement of under 18s to help safeguard CYP in football. The regulations only permit the international movement of under 18s in very limited circumstances and require the approval of FIFA before an under 18 can be registered in a new country. The FA, Premier League and Football League work closely to ensure the FIFA regulations are fully respected by English clubs. If you have any concerns about a young person involved in football then please contact your CFA WD or The FA safeguarding team.


5.3.3 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM 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 FGM helpline offers specialist advice, information and support to anyone concerned that a child’s welfare is at risk because of FGM. 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.

If you wish to find out more about FGM then you can access the NSPCC’s fact sheet via this link – www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/resourcesforprofessionals/minorityethnic/female-genital-mutilation_wda96841.html
5.3.4 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 pressured into forced marriages. Of the 1,100 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 or email fnmu@fcgo.co.uk. For more information on forced marriages go to www.gov.uk/forced-marriage.

5.3.5 Honour based violence (HBV)

The term ‘Honour Based Violence’ (HBV) is internationally recognised and describing cultural justifications for violence and abuse. It justifies the use of certain types of violence and abuse against women, men and children.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) defines 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 speak with your CFA WO.

5.3.6 Supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people come from all socio-economic backgrounds, religions, faiths, ethnicities and cultures. It is estimated that six per cent of the population is lesbian, gay or bisexual, so there’s a good chance that in a group of 30 young people, at least two will be or will grow up to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. Most young people will know LGBT people too, including family and friends. In addition, a 2010 piece of research, funded by the Home Office, estimated that between 300,000 and 500,000 people in the UK may identify as transgender.

However, LGBT&T people remain largely invisible across sports, and two thirds of LGBT&T young people say they don’t like team sports. This lack of visibility, as well as the misapprehensions about LGBT&T people, contribute to an environment of homophobia and transphobia in sport. This can potentially cause LGBT&T young people to feel excluded, isolated and undervalued.

We therefore all have a role to play in dispelling myths about LGBT&T people, challenging homophobia and transphobia when they occur, and creating a football environment where everyone feels included. It’s important to remember that people realise they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender at different stages of their lives; so if a young person seems to identify in a certain way, it doesn’t mean they will remain that way in the future. It’s also worth remembering that, when young people come out or identify a wish to reassess their current gender it’s often the first time they’ve told anyone and how they do that will often be in response to the way they think others will react. Let them decide how they feel and what, if any, identity, they feel they have, and be supportive.

‘Many lesbian, gay or bisexual people in sport face discrimination simply because they are perceived to be different from the heterosexual ‘norm’. As well as causing many lesbian, gay or bisexual athletes to leave clubs or sport entirely, in the worst cases such negative treatment has resulted in self harm or suicide’.

Source: CPSU Homophobic Bullying in Youth Sport, April 2011.

Every young person has the right to be treated with dignity and respect; this includes all young people who are openly lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender and are thought to be. A club culture that permits casual use of homophobic or transphobic language makes it all the easier for players to suffer name calling and bullying. This can impact on a young person’s sense of belonging, self-esteem and their achievement.

LGBT&T young people have the same needs as any other teenager. They’ll enjoy, achieve and stay safe if they:

• Feel able to be themselves
• Feel valued for who they are
• Feel included and part of a community
• Have access to resources and information relevant to them
• Feel safe and supported
• Feel they have people to talk to if things aren’t going so well.

Don’t make assumptions; it’s impossible to tell whether a young person is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender by the way they act, talk, dress or by who their friends are.

Be positive when young people come out and know what to say, offer them reassurance, listen and be supportive – direct them to where they can get further advice and guidance.

Don’t discuss a young person’s sexual orientation; with their parents/carers without the young person’s permission.

Protect young people from bullying; all young people have the right to grow up free from fear of bullying and that includes those young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Be inclusive; any football setting for young people can make sure it’s inclusive by creating zero tolerance for homophobic and transphobic bullying. Make sure your club/league makes use of The FA’s Equality and anti-bullying policies.

Much of this information has been taken from materials developed by Stonewall. For further information visit www.stonewall.org.uk, or to speak with someone call 0800 050 2020. The FA’s equality team has more information about tackling homophobia in football, email equality@TheFA.com or visit www.TheFA.com/equality.

5.3.7 Children and young people (CYP) who take on leadership roles

Taking on a leadership role within football is intended to be an enjoyable and positive learning experience. However, coaches, club officials, players, parents/spectators in both adult and junior football often lose sight of the fact that an individual in a leadership role who is under 18 is still legally a child! As a consequence young coaches, medics and referees are open to experiencing abusive behaviour verbally, physically and emotionally. This behaviour is not acceptable in adult or youth football.

The increased potential harm that verbal, physical and emotional abuse can cause to CYP in these roles needs to be recognised.

It is important that clubs acknowledge their role in ensuring that club officials, players and spectators behave appropriately towards young people who take on such roles. It is necessary to recognise that, like adults, CYP can and do make mistakes when they are learning, and overly critical and unsupportive responses may constitute verbal and/or emotional abuse.

Some young match officials have experienced physical abuse from coaches, spectators and players. Please make use of the Respect Codes of Conduct to guide appropriate behaviour and ensure those who fail to adhere to their code are dealt with accordingly.

Remember failing to take action means you can become part of the problem!

Inappropriate behaviour unchallenged can often become the norm – everyone needs to take responsibility for creating change and ensuring positive and supportive environments for CYP involved in football, whatever their role. There is safeguarding guidance provided directly to Young Leaders when they enter into the Football Futures Programme, if you would like more information about this please speak with your CFA WO.

From January 2015 children in leadership positions over the age of 14 and under 16 can take The FA’s new online course - Introduction to Safeguarding. This helps young leaders recognise poor practice and abuse and know how to report it. It helps them keep themselves safe from harm and report concerns.
5.4 Dealing with bullying

No one deserves to be the victim of bullying. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect. The FA will not accept or condone bullying in football and has defined bullying as a category of abuse. It is the responsibility of everyone in football, whatever their role, to ensure that bullying is dealt with appropriately.

Bullying can be defined as:

- Physical: hitting, kicking and theft
- Verbal: name-calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist, sexist or homophobic taunts or comments about disability, threats and gestures
- Emotional: tormenting, mobile text messaging, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring or isolating.

Bullying can take place anywhere but is more likely to take place where there is inappropriate supervision, e.g. in the changing rooms or on the way to and from the football pitch - but it can also take place at a training session or competition. Football’s competitive nature can create and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware and even support an environment for the bully 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5.4.1 Bullying as a result of any form of discrimination

Bullying because of discrimination occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassigment, disability or ability.

Generally, these forms of bullying look like other sorts of bullying, but in particular it can include:

- Verbal abuse – derogatory remarks about young female players, suggesting they are inferior to boys; or that young black, Asian or minority ethnic coaches are not as capable as white coaches; spreading rumours that a young referee is gay, or that someone or something is inferior and so they are ‘gay’. For example, “you’re so gay!” or “those trainers are so gay”. Ridiculing a young volunteer because of a disability or mental health related issue, or because they have a physical, mental or emotional developmental delay. Referring to someone by the colour of their skin, rather than their name; using nicknames that have racial connotations; isolating someone because they come from another country or social background etc.
- Physical abuse – including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault, and threatening behaviour
- Cyberbullying – using online lines to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. It can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging.

Discrimination is often driven by a lack of understanding which only serves to strengthen stereotypes and can potentially lead to actions that may cause women, ethnic minorities, disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, or people who follow specific religions or beliefs, to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued. Ensure that club members know that discriminatory language and behaviour will not be tolerated in your club/league.

If an incident occurs, members should be informed that discriminatory language is offensive, and will not be tolerated. If a member continues to make discriminatory remarks, explain in detail the effects that discrimination and bullying has on people. If it is a young person making the remarks their parents should be informed just as in any breach of the club’s Code of Conduct and Anti-Bullying policy.

If a member makes persistent remarks, they should be removed from the training setting in line with managing challenging behaviour procedures and The CWO or club officials should talk to them in more detail about why their comments are unacceptable.

If the problem persists, the member should be made to understand the sanctions that will apply if they continue to use discriminatory language or behaviour.

Consider inviting the parents/carers to the club to discuss the attitudes of the youth member in line with the procedures detailed in The FA’s Anti-Bullying template policy.

5.4.2 Cyberbullying

Young people are communicating more frequently online through social networking sites and via mobile – whilst a great way to communicate it also lends itself to potential abuse. Cyberbullying is when a person uses technology i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger), to deliberately upset someone. This behaviour can also be referred to as ‘trolling’ when deliberately offensive comments are posted on an individuals social media pages aimed at causing upset and distress. This type of behaviour could result in legal action.

Bullies often feel anonymous and ‘distanced’ from the incident when it takes place online and ‘bystanders’ can easily become bullies themselves by forwarding the information on. There is a growing trend for bullying to occur on line or via texts - bullies no longer rely on being physically near to the young person.

Clubs and leagues have a responsibility to ensure their websites and/or social networking pages are being used appropriately and any online bullying must be dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

Children with disabilities also use the online world to meet others and at times hide their disability in order to make friends and build relationships. People who pose on line as children may target disabled CYP.

Remember that The FA’s equality team has more information about tackling homophobia in football, email equality@TheFA.com or visit www.TheFA.com/equality.

5.4.3 Taking a proactive approach

- Ensure The FA’s definition of bullying and its anti-bullying policy are promoted
- Ensure your club or league has codes of conduct of which an anti-bullying policy is a part; why not make use of The FA’s Respect Codes of Conduct?
- Ensure that you take all signs of bullying seriously
- Raise awareness of what discriminatory bullying is and how your club or league will respond
- Develop an open environment that encourages CYP to share their concerns; why not introduce a young person’s forum into your club or league?
- Ensure you have someone regularly monitoring your club website and social networking sites.

Remember that it is not the responsibility of an individual to decide that bullying is or is not taking place in football, but it is their responsibility to act on any concerns. If your club or league signs up to The FA’s Respect Programme the measures should be in place to seek to prevent bullying if everyone is adhering to their respect code.

Download further information on developing an anti-bullying policy via www. TheFA.com/~/media/files/thefaportal/governance/docs/safeguarding/raising-awareness/the-fa-anti-bullying-policy-for-clubs-2012.ashx
6.0 Responding to concerns, allegations and disclosures*

The term disclosure in this context is used to describe the sharing of child protection concerns(s) by one individual to another and not the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) formal record of an individual’s relevant convictions.

There is a moral responsibility to report any concerns about a child or young person in any context. The FA will support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or young person, even if that concern is proved to be unfounded.

The following guidelines are relevant whether or not the child or young person is involved in football. It is essential that you follow The FA procedures for any concerns that are related to football settings.

Concerns may arise because:

- A child or young person informs you directly that he or she is concerned about someone’s behaviour towards them
- You become aware, through your own observations or through a third party, of possible abuse occurring

Most suspicions of abuse come about from observation of changes in the child or young person’s behaviour, appearance, attitude or relationship with others. Your suspicions may develop over time (see Appendix 6 signs and indicators of abuse). Where the concern does not involve individuals in football settings, the matter should be reported directly to local Children’s Social Care or the local Police.

6.1 What to do if a child or young person discloses to you

If a child or young person informs you directly that they are concerned about someone’s behaviour towards them, this is known as a disclosure. A disclosure may be given slowly over time or all at once and it may seem incomplete, unclear and may sometimes be retracted. Children don’t often tell in one simple ‘disclosure’.

The person receiving the disclosure should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child or young person
- Ensure the immediate safety of the child or young person
- Tell the child or young person that he or she is not to blame and that he or she was right to tell
- Take what the child or young person says seriously
- If the child or young person needs immediate medical treatment, take them to hospital or telephone for an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a child protection issue as it is their responsibility to refer this on appropriately to the Police or Children’s Services
- When speaking with the child or young person keep any questions to the absolute minimum. Ask only what is necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said
- Re-assure the child or young person but do not make promises of confidentiality or outcome, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments
- In the event of suspicion of sexual abuse try to avoid the child bathing or showering until given permission to do so. Washing can destroy valuable evidence
- Take a detailed written record of what the child said to you
- As soon as the child or young person completes the disclosure make sure you accurately record what they said using their language and of any actions you may have taken as a result
- Inform the parents/carers immediately unless you have a specific reason not to, e.g. the child has named the parent/carer as the abuser. If this is the case then contact the WO. If they are unavailable contact local Children’s Social Care or the Police for guidance.

6.2 The FA’s reporting procedures

Whether informed directly by a child or young person, via a third party, or through your own observations within a football setting, you should follow The FA Procedures outlined below and in the flow diagrams on pages 37, 38 and 39.

- Ensure the immediate safety of the child or young person
- If the child or young person needs immediate medical treatment, take them to hospital or telephone for an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is a child protection issue
- Report the concerns to the designated person for child protection or the person in charge immediately, unless the concern is about this individual
- If the designated person is not available, or the concern is about this person, report your concerns directly to the local Children’s Social Care, the local Police or the NSPCC Child Protection helpline
- If the child has a disability or extra communication needs share the needs with the people you report to so they can communicate effectively with the child or young person
- These agencies will advise you whether a formal referral to Children’s Services is necessary and what further action you might need to take. If you are advised to make a formal referral make it clear to Children’s Social Care or the Police that this is a child protection referral
- All Police forces have dedicated Child Protection Teams (CPTs) which deal with allegations of abuse within the family setting and by people in a position of trust. In a real emergency dial 999 to involve the full squad
- Remember if the concern is about someone involved within a football setting and you are unable to contact the WO in your club/league or CFA, then you should also inform The FA’s safeguarding team on 0800 169 1863 Extension 6300 or 6400 or via email on safeguarding@TheFA.com and let them know what action, in line with FA procedures, you have taken
- The flow diagrams on pages 37–38 explain how to deal with a concern about possible poor practice and or child abuse within a football setting. The following definitions on page 36 will help you to decide whether the issue is likely to be poor practice or abuse. If you are at all unsure make sure you seek guidance from your CFA or YLMOs as appropriate

6.2.1 Dealing with possible poor practice and/or abuse in a football setting

You become aware of a poor practice and/or possible abuse situation.

- Stay calm
- If child or young person is present reassure him or her they are not to blame
- Don’t make promises of confidentiality or outcome
- Keep questions to a minimum
- Is the concern poor practice or child abuse?
- Write down what the child has said using their words and phrases or the signs and gestures they used.
- If you decide the concern relates to poor practice follow flow diagram 1 on page 37. If you decide that the concern relates to abuse use flow diagram 2 on page 37. If you decide that the concern relates to concerns outside of a football setting use flow diagram 3 on page 38.

Possible outcomes:
- Further information requested
- Advice/warning as to future conduct/sanctions
- Further training/support needed
- No case to answer
- Referral to FA’s Safeguarding team for action
- All appeals regarding CFA decisions will be dealt with via CFA complaints procedures*

Where deemed appropriate, contact will be made with and action taken by:

- CFA Disciplinary Committee
- CFA FDO or CDM
- YLWD

Possible outcomes:
- CFA WO for information only
- CFAs safeguarding team on
- YLWO
- CFA Disciplinary Committee
- CFA FDO or CDM
- YLWD

* (refer to the current FA Handbook)
6.2.2 Distinguishing between child abuse and poor practice

Concerns identified as child abuse will fall within the following five categories:

Physical abuse: A child is physically hurt or injured by an adult or an adult gives alcohol or drugs to a child or young person.

Neglect: A child’s basic physical needs are consistently not met or they are regularly left alone or unsupervised.

Sexual abuse: An adult or peer uses a child or young person to meet their own sexual needs.

Emotional abuse: persistent criticism, denigrating or putting unrealistic expectations on a child or young person.

Bullying: persistent or repeated hostile and intimidating behaviour towards a child or young person.

Incidents of poor practice occur when some CYP have experienced what may be referred to as ‘initiations’ (e.g. openly verbally abusing the referee) or ‘hazing’ (e.g. allowing young players set up goal posts unsupervised by adults).

Please note:

• The assessment about whether an incident is one of child abuse or poor practice (or hazing) may not be able to be made at the point of referral, but only after the collation of relevant information.

• The majority of poor practice concerns can be dealt with by the club or alternatively with support and guidance from the CFA.

• All child abuse will be dealt with by the FA (in conjunction with the statutory agencies) and with the support of the CFA.

• For further clarification concerning abuse concerns see Appendix 6.

There is evidence which indicates that some CYP have experienced what may be referred to as ‘initiations’ more commonly now referred to as ‘hazing’ into a sports club or team; often a historical practice which may have been started with good intentions but can result in oppressive, intimidating and abusive behaviour.

6.2.3 Flow diagram 1: dealing with possible poor practice in a football setting

You became aware of a poor practice concern in football

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Stay calm, if any child is present reassure him/her that they are not to blame. Don’t make promises of confidentiality or outcome.

Take a detailed record of any concern and the action taken by you.

Referrer the poor pracice concern to the CWO, who will follow club or league procedures for a first report of poor practice.

↓

The FA’s safeguarding team will assess the information and advise accordingly.

The CWO will

1. Contact the Police and Children’s Services immediately.

2. Refer to the CFA WO or The FA’s safeguarding team using the Affiliated Football Referral Form.

3. Inform the parent/carer immediately unless you have a specific reason not to, e.g. the child has named the parent/carer as the abuser.

If poor practice is repeated the CFA WO will deem whether this should be referred to The FA’s safeguarding team.

↓

If referred, The FA’s safeguarding team will offer advice.

The CFA’s safeguarding team will assess the information and advise accordingly.

If the designated person is not available, or the concern is about this person, report your concerns directly to The FA safeguarding team.

6.2.4 Flow diagram 2: dealing with possible child abuse in a football setting

You became aware of a possible child abuse concern in football

↓

Stay calm, if any child is present reassure him/her that they are not to blame. Don’t make promises of confidentiality or outcome.

Take a detailed record of what is said and any action taken by you.

Contact the FA’s safeguarding team.

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If the child or young person is in need of medical attention take them to hospital or telephone for an ambulance. Inform doctors about the abuse concerns. Make them aware that it is a child protection issue.

Contact CWO and inform of concerns raised by alleged victim. If not possible, relay concerns directly to CFA WO.

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Refer the poor practice concern to the CWO, who will follow club or league procedures for a first report of poor practice.

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The CFA WO will seek advice from the CFA WO.

↓

This could result in advice directly from CFA WO to CWO.

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If poor practice is repeated the CFA WO will deem whether this should be referred to The FA’s safeguarding team.

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The FA’s safeguarding team will assess the information and advice accordingly.

If referred, The FA’s safeguarding team will offer advice.

The CFA’s safeguarding team will assess the information and advise accordingly.

If the designated person is not available, or the concern is about this person, report your concerns directly to the local Children’s Social Care, the local Police or the NSPCC Child Protection helpline.

NB If the designated person is not available, or the concern is about this person, report your concerns directly to the local Children’s Social Care, the local Police or the NSPCC Child Protection helpline.
6.2.6 Concerns outside of a football setting

You may receive information regarding the welfare of a child or young person who is involved in football, yet the concern itself does not relate to someone within the game. In these circumstances (e.g. the concern relates to the child’s home or a social setting other than football) you need to follow The FA Procedures outlined below:

- Follow the guidance on page 34 if the child or young person informs you directly
- If your concerns are via a third person or through observation, report your concerns directly to the CWO
- If you are unable to contact the CWO immediately or the CFA WO refer your concerns directly to local Children’s Social Care or to the local Police
- These agencies will advise you whether a formal referral to Children’s Social Care is necessary and what further action you might need to take. If you are advised to make a formal referral make it clear to Children’s Social Care or the Police that this is a child protection referral
- Make a factual record of events using ‘The Affiliated Football Referral Form’ including any action as directed, indicating clearly whether or not the allegation refers to someone involved in football. Forward this to The FA case manager.

6.3 Recording of suspicions, concerns or events

- Accurate recording is essential, as there may be legal proceedings at a later date. Referrals to Children’s Social Care or Police should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours - if not, then at the earliest opportunity
- Keep a record of the name and designation of the Children’s Social Care member of staff or Police Officer to whom concerns were passed and record the time and date of the call in case any follow-up is needed
- Ensure all information is maintained safely in accordance with data protection legislation
- Information should only be shared on a strictly ‘need to know’ basis
- Complete Appendix 7 (affiliated footballs referral form) and send this to the CFA WO. The CFA WO in turn will send this onto The FA’s safeguarding team.

6.2.5 Flow diagram 3. dealing with concerns outside of a football setting

You became aware of a poor practice and/or possible abuse situation outside of a football setting involving a child or young person who participates in football activities

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Is the child or young person in need of medical attention?

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Yes

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If the child or young person is in need of medical attention take them to hospital or telephone for an ambulance. Inform doctors about the concerns. Make them aware that it is a child protection issue

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Contact the CWO immediately

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The CWO will

- Seek advice immediately from the local Children’s Services, the Police or NSPCC Helpline
- Take action as advised by these agencies, including advice on contacting parents
- Make a factual record of events using The Affiliated Football referral form, including any action taken as directed, and forward to The FA case manager
- Indicate clearly whether or not the allegation refers to someone involved in football in any capacity

NB If the designated person is not available, or the concern is about this person, report your concerns directly to the local Children’s Social Care, the local Police or the NSPCC Child Protection helpline.
Section 7

7.0 The FA safeguarding team
In case of child abuse or alleged child abuse, The FA’s safeguarding team will:
• Complete an initial assessment on the alleged perpetrator and take any action required to safeguard children, pending further Police and Children’s Social Care inquiries
• Assess all individual cases under the appropriate FA misconduct and disciplinary procedures, irrespective of the findings of the Children’s Social Care or Police inquiries
• Decide whether the nature of the concerns need to be dealt with by the FA Disciplinary Commission
• Support all WOs in carrying out their role and responsibilities
• Inform individuals when they are the subject of a complaint or child protection concern
• Decide and advise on any contact with the alleged perpetrator
• Inform individuals when they are the subject of a complaint or child protection concern
• Support all WOs in carrying out their role and responsibilities
• Decide whether the nature of the concerns need to be dealt with by the FA Disciplinary Commission
• Support all WOs in carrying out their role and responsibilities

7.1 Possible outcomes
Cases of poor practice will be investigated by the CFA and may be subject to CFA disciplinary procedures. Cases of child abuse (having been dealt with by the statutory agencies) will be investigated by The FA’s safeguarding team who may refer the case to The FA safeguarding review panel. In these circumstances, the following outcomes are possible:
• No case to answer
• Advice and or warning as to future conduct
• Further support or training
• Supervision and or monitoring
• Suspension.

7.2 “Whistle-blowing”
Whistle-blowing can be used as an early warning system or when it’s recognised that appropriate actions have not been taken. It is about revealing and raising concerns over misconduct or malpractice within an organisation or within an independent structure associated with it.

This could suggest that, on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true, regardless of any decisions relating to criminal prosecutions. The welfare of CYP should always remain paramount. NB. The FA is entitled to carry out its own investigations independently of the Police and Children’s Social Care and does so regularly, where it believes this is necessary.

Any adult or young person with concerns about a colleague can also use whistle-blowing by contacting The FA’s safeguarding team on 0800 169 1863 Extension 6300 or 6400 or via email on safeguarding@TheFA.com. Alternatively you can go direct the Police or Children’s Social Care and report your concern there.

7.3 Appeals
The appeals procedure is available to anyone who is subject to a decision made by The FA safeguarding review panel or the head of judicial services. Every individual and organisation wishing to appeal against decisions by The FA must do so in writing, to be received by The FA head of judicial services, The FA, Wembley Stadium, PO Box 1966, London SW1P 9EQ within 14 days of the date of notification of the decision appealed against. The appeal must identify the specific decision(s) being appealed and set out the grounds of appeal and the reasons why it would be substantially unfair not to alter the decision. A fee of £100.00 must be enclosed with the appeal. The FA disciplinary appeal panel will exclude anyone who sat on the initial decision-making panel and will consist of an independent chair and two other members. Further information regarding The FA appeals procedure can be downloaded via www.TheFA.com/football/docs/rules-of-the-association/2014-15/031e_disciplinary-procedures—appeal-regulations.pdf

7.4 Complaints procedures
A complaint may be made by an individual who has been the subject of a poor practice referral or child protection concern that has been dealt with by The FA’s safeguarding team. Please note, any matters relating to appeals with regard to disciplinary hearings, suspensions and the rules of the association and laws of the game will be separately dealt with under established procedures and are not the subject of a complaint.

In the first instance the complainant is required to contact The FA case officer responsible for the relevant CFA (the contact details can be obtained from the CFA or on 0800 169 1863 Extension 6300 or 6400 or via email on safeguarding@TheFA.com). It is hoped that the member of staff will be able to resolve the complaints concerns and give appropriate assurances regarding the management of the case in question. A record of this resolution will be made and copied to the complainant. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response and wishes to take the matter further, they are required to put the matter in writing to The FA case manager, The FA, Wembley Stadium, PO Box 1966, London SW1P 9EQ within 28 days of the known outcome of the informal communication with The FA case officer. Further information about The FA’s complaints process can be downloaded from The FA handbook via www.TheFA.com/football/docs/rules-of-the-association/2014-15/031e_disciplinary-procedures—appeal-regulations.pdf

7.5 Allegations of previous (historical) abuse
Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event. This may be by an adult who was abused as a child, by a volunteer or member of staff who is still currently working with children or young people or by a young person.

Where such an allegation is made, you should inform the CFA WO who will in turn inform The FA’s safeguarding team. Historical allegations should be treated with the same care and attention as current disclosures.

The FA will, following consultation, take appropriate action. This is because other children or young people, either within football or outside it, may be at risk from this person and anyone who has been abused has the right to be heard at any time. This position is reinforced by UK legislation and guidance. For more information about reporting go to http://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/reporting-concerns

7.6 Providing support
The FA will support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child or young person, even if that concern is proved to be unfounded, in the following ways:
• Via the CFA WO
• Via The FA’s safeguarding team
• Provision of specialist independent organisations contact details
• NSPCC Helpline and ChildLine
• NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit.

Consideration will be given to what support may be appropriate for children, young people, parents or carers, volunteers and members of staff during and after poor practice and child abuse referrals to The FA.

It is never easy to respond to a child or young person who tells you that they are being abused. You may well be feeling upset and worried yourself. Confidentiality is paramount. However, The FA acknowledges that having received a disclosure, individuals may have a need for some support. To download information on support groups and help lines for those who have received a disclosure please use this link – www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/reporting-concerns

Every effort will be made to ensure that any child or young person, who has been subjected to poor practice or abuse, and their parents or carers, will be given support from the appropriate agencies and The FA. A list of independent support groups and help lines is available for those who have experienced abuse. To download information on support groups and help lines please use this link – www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/reporting-concerns
Appendix 1

The FA’s definitions of child, young person, abuse and harm

The FA recognises that the terms ‘child or young person’, ‘abuse’ and ‘harm’ are open to interpretation and challenge but for the purposes of this safeguarding children policy they are defined as follows:

A child or young person shall be defined as:

‘Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.’

Abuse shall be defined as:

‘A violation of an individual’s human or civil rights by any other person or persons and, for the purposes of safeguarding children, shall include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and bullying.’

Harm shall be defined as:

‘Ill treatment and forms of ill treatment (including sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical) and also the impairment of or an avoidable deterioration in physical or mental health and the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development.’

‘Harm’ may be caused by acts of commission and acts of omission.

Appendix 2

Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures – club template

Appendix 3

Guidance for developing a club health and safety policy

The type and ownership of facilities will shape the policy and procedures that you need to have in place. Having a club ‘Health and Safety Policy’ really means applying common sense to the use and maintenance of your pitch(es) and facilities to ensure that you have a safe environment in which to carry out the club’s football activities and meet the needs of all users including those with disabilities. If you are using local authority facilities, e.g. local sports centre or school, there will already be a health and safety policy in place for these facilities. It is your responsibility to ask for the regulations and best practice guidance relating to usage of these facilities and to ensure they are suitable for all.

Make sure you find out the needs of your members, what your club is responsible for and what the provider is responsible for. This should be clearly indicated when initially hiring the facility. If the club owns the facilities there will have to be a health and safety policy as part of the development of the facility so check who holds this information within the club and what regulations and best practice guidance the club has in place already.

Recommended action

- Make sure the club’s management committee is aware of the need for procedures relating to health and safety and takes ownership of this responsibility
- Ensure the club has public and civil liability insurance and follows the expectations of the insurance policy
- Establish where and how access is gained by emergency services to the pitch/club house
- Sign up to and abide by The FA’s Goalpost Safety Guidance (see Appendix 10)
- Check the pitch before use for obvious dangers e.g. broken glass, drinks cans
- Ensure goalposts are erected appropriately and always supervised by adults
- Establish where the nearest phone is
- Know the postcode of the field/venue and ensure any barred gates etc would be ready to admit an ambulance if required
- Establish those individuals who have a recognised emergency first aid qualification within the club
- Establish emergency procedures within the club and ensure all coaches/managers are aware of these procedures
- Utilise The FA’s guidance for travel and trips when transporting club members to and from football activities and when organising trips away. Download information via – www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/raising-awareness—downloads-section
- Have an Incident/Accident Report Form

Guidance for developing a club complaints and disciplinary policy

THE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

Many clubs will already have in place codes of conduct for players, spectators, coaches and officials. If a club is yet to have implemented codes of conduct this is your starting point. Codes are only effective if there is a disciplinary process to support them. It is essential that the club is fair and consistent. The following options can be considered:

- Verbal warning
- Written warning
- Exclusion from specified number of matches
- Exclusion from specified number of training sessions
- Removal from team for remainder of current season
- Exclusion from the club
- Refusal to register with team for a future season
- Refusal to register with the league(s) to which they are affiliated, County Association and FA rules
- Experience of dealing with issues will in turn help to inform and develop the club’s disciplinary process

Having a complaints process

For those clubs which have clearly stated and communicated the club’s philosophy, what it can offer to and what it expects from, players, spectators, coaches and officials, this will limit potential complaints. Most complaints can be dealt with by referring individuals to club policies and procedures. However, where there are complaints which cannot be satisfied via these routes their needs to be a procedure for dealing with these.

The following options can be considered:

- Complaints can be submitted in the first instance to the CWO. Alternatively where the issue relates to a technical aspect the concern can also be submitted to the appropriate age group coach. If the complaint relates to the CWO it should be sent directly to the club chairman and club secretary
- Complaints can be directed to the club chairman
- All complaints must be submitted in writing
- If an individual is unhappy with the outcome of their original complaint they can appeal to the club management committee
- The outcome of an appeal to the club management committee is final

Individuals have the right to seek guidance from the CFA where they feel they have been unfairly treated by the club’s management committee. Please note, all clubs must be aware of the County disciplinary process which may decide that a punishment is required following a report from a referee or any participant. Any sanctions made must take into account the time it will take a CFA to deal with a case. They must not expect a CFA to take into account any action taken by the club when dealing with cases against players, coaches and officials of their club although this can be included in any club mitigation submission.
## Person Specification

### Essential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Evidenced</th>
<th>No evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience of dealing or working with young people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children issues¹</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A good communicator in a variety of situations with people from diverse backgrounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committed to and ability to abide by The FA Rules and Regulations and promote The FA’s Respect Programme and Safeguarding Children Education Programme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy when dealing with individuals, sometimes in demanding situations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to listen and assess situations fairly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to handle confidential information sensitively and with integrity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonable level of administration experience and how to deal with confidential documentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to attend in-service training facilitated by either The FA or the local CFA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Desirable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Evidenced</th>
<th>No evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of grassroots football</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to the internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Footnotes can be found on the following page

## Suitability Checklist

### Essential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Evidenced</th>
<th>No evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willing and able to provide relevant current references</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous experience of dealing or working with young people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of and positive attitudes to equal opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to treat all young people as individuals and with equal concern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health – appropriate to carry out tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity and flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 18 years of age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of The FA CRC Disclosure process and acceptance by The FA of the outcome²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of the need for confidentiality when dealing with issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonable level of administration experience and how to deal with confidential documentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of The FA’s safeguarding children and CFA WOWs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of The FA online SCM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to update skills and knowledge and attend in-service training facilitated by The FA or the local CFA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has signed up to and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for volunteer WOs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Desirable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Evidenced</th>
<th>No evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of child protection issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of safeguarding children legislation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant football knowledge/understanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Footnotes can be found on the following page
This can be gained through The FA’s Safeguarding Children Education Programme; see www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding for further information or speak to your CFA WO.

Some people with a history of offending can still be considered for this role. If you wish to find out more about this visit the CRC FAQ via this link – www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/criminal-records-checks or email FAChecks@TheFA.com or call 0845 210 8080.

The policy on CRC enhanced disclosures may be subject to change.

**NB** If anyone is known to be unsuitable to work with young people please contact your CFA WO. Legally it is our collective duty to ‘not knowingly employ’ a barred person in regulated activity in future this duty will require us to ensure that persons in regulated activity are not barred.

**More Information**

More information about the role of the WO is available via – www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/thinking-of-becoming-a-welfare-officer if you need any further advice or information please contact your CFA WO who will be happy to help you.

The FA reserves the right to refuse to accept any individual as a WO where there is relevant information held by either the football authorities or the statutory agencies to suggest that they do not meet the suitability criteria provided.

The role of the WOs is to:

1. Be clear about the club’s responsibilities when running activities for CYP.
2. Help those actively involved with CYP understand what their duty of care means on a day to day basis.

As a WO you agree to act as a role model to others in accordance with the roles and responsibilities of your position, in line with FA Rules and Regulations, The FA Respect Codes of Conduct for officials and the laws of the game.

In taking up the position of WO you are agreeing with this Code of Conduct and will accept that within the role of WO you will:

- Be child-centred at all times and promote a fun safe environment for CYP
- Follow all of The FA’s policies and in particular procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns including discrimination
- Act appropriately with all situations brought to your attention
- Champion best practice within your club/league
- Communicate and positively engage with the CFA WO on all poor practice/safeguarding matters brought to the attention of CFA/The FA
- Attend meetings as reasonably required by the club committee, youth league and CFA
- Manage and deal with poor practice issues in an appropriate and timely manner
- Ensure appropriate levels of confidentiality and data security are maintained at all times
- Implement and manage a responsible recruitment process in line with The FA’s policy and procedures
- Attend continued personal development (CPD) opportunities as offered by my CFA or The FA and show a commitment to keeping my training up to date.

By agreeing to hold the post of WO, you understand that if you do not follow the above code any/all of the following actions may be undertaken by your club, League CFA or The FA (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Required to meet with the club/league committee, YLWO or CFA WO
- Required to follow an action plan monitored by the YLWO/CFA WO
- Required to complete an FA education course
- Suspended by the club/league
- Fined or suspended by the CFA
- Required to leave the club/league
- Removed from role by the club/league CFA/The FA.

On appointment you agree to uphold the Code of Conduct for WOs and understand the actions that may be taken should you fail to act in accordance with the Code. You also confirm that you meet the criteria outlined within The FA’s Suitability Checklist for YLWO/CWOs.
Appendix 6  

Signs and indicators of abuse

What is abuse?

Where and how does it happen? Does it really happen in sport and indeed, in football? “Child abuse” is a term used to describe what happens when a person, or group of people, harm a child or young person under the age of 18. Child abuse may mean that harm is actively done to the child or young person, such as beating or burning, or it may refer to neglect where the carers fail to protect the child or young person from harm. The abuser is often an adult, but may also be another young person and occasionally even a child. Usually the abuser has some sort of power over the child or young person, and often knows them well. Abuse can happen anywhere, e.g. in the family, any institution or group and in any activity where children or young people are present. There is a risk that direct abuse, or neglect, can happen in football.

The FA defines abuse into five categories. These are:
- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying.

Neglect

Neglect takes place if adults fail to meet a child or young person’s basic physical needs, e.g. for food, warmth and clothing, or emotional needs such as attention and affection. It occurs if children or young people are left alone or inadequately supervised or where they are exposed to danger, injury or extreme weather conditions. In football, neglect could occur if children or young people do not have proper supervision, clothing or are allowed or encouraged to play whilst injured. It could occur if a child or young person’s particular health needs are disregarded before, during, or after a game.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs if people physically hurt, burn, poison, shake or in some way hurt or injure CYP; or fail to prevent these injuries from happening. In football, physical abuse could happen where training methods are inappropriate for the developmental age of the child or young person, where they are allowed to play with an injury or where inappropriate drugs or alcohol are offered or accepted. It would clearly happen if a child or young person is hit or physically restrained or manhandled by those supervising the game or training session.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs if children or young people are used to meet another person’s sexual needs. This includes any form of sexual behaviour with a child or young person (by an adult or another child or young person), the use of sexually explicit language and jokes, inappropriate touching and exposure to pornographic material. It also includes ‘sexting’ an increasingly common activity among CYP, where they share inappropriate or explicit images on-line or through mobile phones. In 4 children have received unwanted images on the subject of sex according to the NSPCC 2014. Creating an indecent image of someone under 18 or sending such images is against the law. Sexual abuse can occur in football. For example, where there is inappropriate touching, or where sexually-explicit jokes occur between adults and children or young people or if indecent images are taken or adapted and placed on pornography sites.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse includes frequent threatening, taunting or sarcastic behaviour, along with holding affection or being extremely overprotective. It includes racist or sexist behaviour and demeaning initiation ceremonies. It can be inflicted by other CYP as well as by adults. CYP who are being abused or bullied in any way will also experience emotional abuse. In football, coaches or parents emotionally abuse CYP if they constantly criticise, abuse their power, or impose unrealistic pressure to perform to a high standard. It may also occur if a club allows members to deride people with disabilities or from minority cultures and use derogatory language about them.

Bullying

Although anyone can be the target of bullying, CYP who are perceived as “different” from the majority may be at greater risk of bullying. This includes CYP from minority cultures or CYP with disabilities.

Bullying can be defined as:
- Physical: hitting, kicking and theft
- Verbal: name calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats and gestures
- Emotional: tormenting, mobile text messaging, ridiculing, humiliating and ignoring
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.

Bullying can take place anywhere, but is more likely to take place where there is inadequate supervision. In football it is more likely to take place in the changing rooms or on the way to and from the football pitch - but can also take place at a training session or in a competition. Football’s competitive nature can create and even support an environment for the bully if individuals and clubs are unaware. The bully in football can be a parent who pushes too hard, a coach or manager who has a win-at-all costs philosophy, a child or young person intimidating another; or an official who places unfair pressure on a child or young person. In an NSPCC survey of young people (2000), bullying was reported to be the most common source of distress and anxiety.

Signs and indicators

CYP may be reluctant to tell someone when they are being abused or may be bullied out of disclosing or forced to retract their concerns, so it is essential that every adult is aware of the possible signals that a child and young person’s welfare or safety is being threatened.

However, there is rarely a clear sign and you may often have to piece together various snippets of information and rely on your instinct that something does not seem quite right. You may have one piece of information that, when added to that of others, forms a clear picture of abuse. This is often compared to fitting pieces of a jigsaw together. Only when you have a few pieces can you start to see the true picture. Remember, it is not your job to decide whether or not a child or young person is being abused - however it is your responsibility to share your concerns. The table on the next page shows some possible physical and behavioural signs of abuse.
### Possible signs and indicators of abuse

One, or more of the following might trigger concerns about a child:

- a sudden change in behaviour
- something a child says
- physical sign of abuse

NB The signs may vary according to the age and understanding of the child.

#### Physical abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural signs such as fear of contact, aggression, temper, running away, fear of going home, reluctance to change or uncover body, depression, withdrawal, bullying or abuse of others.</th>
<th>Physical signs such as unexplained and unusual bruising, finger and strap marks, cigarette burns, bite marks, fractures, scalds, missing teeth.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Emotional abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural signs such as unable to play, fear of mistakes, fear of telling parents, withdrawn, unexplained speech and language difficulty, few friends.</th>
<th>Physical signs such as weight change lack of growth or development, unexplained speech disorders, self-harm, clothing inappropriate for child’s age, gender, culture.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Bullying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural signs such as difficulty making friends, anxiety over school, truancy, withdrawn, anger, moodiness, suicide attempts, reduced performance, money and possessions reported as lost, stealing from within the family, distress and anxiety on reading texts and emails.</th>
<th>Physical signs such as weight change, unexplained injuries and bruising, stomach and headaches, bed wetting, disturbed sleep, hair pulled out.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Sexual abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural signs such as apparent fear of someone, nightmares, running away, sexually explicit knowledge or behaviour, masturbation, bedwetting, eating problems, substance abuse, unexplained money or gifts, acting out with toys, self-harm. With regards to sexting behavioural signs such as distress and anxiety on reading texts, being withdrawn, anger, moodiness and reduced performance.</th>
<th>Physical signs such as genital pain, itching, bleeding bruising, discharge, stomach pains, discomfort, pregnancy, incontinence, urinary infections or STDs, thrush and pain on passing motions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Neglect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural signs such as always being tired, early or late, absent, few friends, regularly left alone, stealing, no money, parents or carer not attending or supportive.</th>
<th>Physical signs such as constant hunger, dirty, ill-fitting clothes or inappropriate clothing, weight change, untreated conditions and continual minor infections.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### Affiliated Football Referral Form

**Date of Referral:** __________________  **County FA(s):** _______________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s details</th>
<th>Details of alleged victim(s) (age)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant name</strong></td>
<td><strong>FAN</strong> (if relevant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address</strong></td>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postcode</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact details</strong></td>
<td><strong>Parent/carer name</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tel Number</strong></td>
<td><strong>Contact details</strong> (telephone number, email, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email</strong></td>
<td><strong>County FA</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s relationship to victim(s)</th>
<th><strong>Details of alleged victim(s) (age)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of referrer</strong></td>
<td><strong>FAN</strong> (if relevant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address</strong></td>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postcode</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship to participant</strong></td>
<td><strong>Parent/carer name</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child or Vulnerable Adult’s details</th>
<th><strong>Details of alleged victim(s) (age)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant name</strong></td>
<td><strong>FAN</strong> (if relevant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address</strong></td>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postcode</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact details</strong></td>
<td><strong>Parent/carer name</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Details of concerns</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of abuse</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Please specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please summarise the incident, including details of any other relevant parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearly identify a list of your safeguarding concerns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you think this referral relates to?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High level Poor practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible or actual risk of harm to children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For information only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please specify if you referred to a statutory agency, the County FA, the Club Designated Safeguarding Officer or any other action taken related to your concerns (including action taken by the Club).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other relevant information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Further information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please include any information that you think is relevant to our investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can the FA contact the victim or their parent(s) directly?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For FA use only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date received by FA: ________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Accepted: Yes / No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Participant’s details** (This is the person you are referring to The FA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant name</th>
<th>Relationship to victim(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tel Number</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postcode</strong></td>
<td><strong>Email</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role in football</strong> (Is the post paid?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Club or organisation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>FAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referrer’s details (Please enter your details)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of referrer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postcode</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child or Vulnerable Adult’s details (The children or vulnerable adults who are at risk of harm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Details of alleged victim(s) (age)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Joe Bloggs (12 years), Hendon FC U13 girl's team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAN</strong> (if relevant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent/carer name</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional network (Please provide name, contact number and email. Kindly provide the advice received and contact date with agency)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LADO</strong> (Name, telephone number and email address)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children’s Social Care</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Police</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong> (e.g. NSPCC, Club Designated Safeguarding Officer, etc)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Appendix 7**
Appendix 8

How we support:
Safeguarding children workshop (SCW)
The three-hour SCW is mandatory for trainee referees over the age of 16 and is a pre-requisite for YLWD/CWOs prior to attending the WOW. It explores in greater depth, what is meant by best and poor practice, and how to recognise concerns about the welfare of children and young people and what to do if you have concerns. The workshop is also aimed at helping individuals to examine the strong emotions this subject raises. In so doing it helps participants to manage their feelings in a positive way that won’t interfere with their judgement about when and how to act.

Safeguarding for coaches
This is a two hour face to face course with one hour online afterwards for coaches taking their Level 1 award and is the equivalent of the three hour SCW. It is strongly recommended that ALL coaches who work with under 18s complete safeguarding training.

http://www.thefa.com/

Introduction to safeguarding
This online course is for trainee referees aged 16 or under and is a mandatory part of this FA Learning qualification. Other young people in leadership positions who wish to take it may do so and this would be considered best practice but at this time is not mandatory. It focuses on safeguarding yourself, recognising harm and knowing how to report concerns.

Recertification
The free online safeguarding children recertification course provides an opportunity for all those who have completed the three-hour SCW to refresh, update and extend their knowledge.

For more information about this online course go to your local County FA website and follow the link http://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/safeguarding-children

Welfare officer workshop (WOW)
The CFA WOW is targeted at those people in local club or league welfare officer roles. It builds on the best practice workshop, providing essential knowledge and skills, helping to develop the confidence required to deal with child protection issues at local level e.g. bullying and poor practice. It also enhances relationships with the CFA WOs and statutory agencies, where additional support can be gained and or serious concerns can be referred on to.

The online safeguarding for committee members course
This free online course is for club officials and looks at the systems and processes clubs with under 18 teams need to help safeguard children.

From the season 2017-2018 it is a requirement that all chairmen, secretaries and CWOs complete this course so their club can affiliate.

www.thefa.com

Appendix 9

Facility development

The FA has been investing in the development of facilities for the past 12 years and as such has significant experience in this area. It is strongly recommended that any plans for new facilities, or the redesign of current facilities is referred to one of the facilities and investment team at The FA. They will be happy to help in ensuring appropriate compliance and that suitable criteria is established early in the scheme.

The design and guidance offered will cover how CYP can use and access the facilities, as well as providing a focus on the foot flow of the building to ensure adults and children do not access areas which could lead to allegations or incidents.

To help safeguard CYP, designs of changing areas, including toilets and showers, together with vanity screens to the changing rooms themselves, require careful planning. Other issues can include access to changing areas, the location of spectator toilets, lighting, recessed areas, electrical and boiler systems and proximity to car parking on site. The location of pitches to the changing rooms should also be considered carefully.

Details of The FA’s facilities and investment team and the regions they cover can be found via – www.TheFA.com/news/my-football/facilities/2012/dec/fa-facilities-team
Several fatalities and serious injuries have occurred in recent years as a result of unsafe or incorrect use of goalposts. The most recent fatality was in 2011 in Wales with the football club and their representatives being found guilty of breaches of health and safety. The goal used was freestanding and did not meet British Standards.

Safety is always of paramount importance and everyone in football must play their part to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future. The FA’s Goalpost Safety campaign was originally launched in August 2000 and will be refreshed in Autumn 2015 to make sure of the awareness and importance of checking goalposts to prevent accidents: Check it, Secure it, Test it, Respect it, stresses the need for everyone involved in playing and organising football to play their part to make sure that these tragic accidents never happen again.