



NSPCC Independent Assessment of the
Implementation of FA Safeguarding 365
for

Amateur FA

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|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Report | Final Report |
| Lead Assessor | Tom Folkes |
| Second Assessor | Lystra Landon |
| Date of Assessment | 15 th November 2023 |
| Date of Report | 23 rd November 2023 |

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Assessment Outcome Summary

Amateur FA was assessed against the Safeguarding 365 criteria for 2023/2024 on Wednesday 15th of November 2023, in person at Unit 3, 7 Wenlock Road, London, N1 7SL

A Summary of the assessment schedule:

| Assessment | Date | Outcome |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Self - assessment completed | 2nd November 2023 | |
| Independent assessment | 15 th of November 2023 | 'Meets the Standard' |

Following:

- a review of the evidence submission on Smartsheet,
- a one day 'in person' assessment

the NSPCC is satisfied that Amateur FA **'meets the Standard'**

The outcome of each area of the assessment is as follows:

| Standard area | Assessment rating |
|---|--------------------|
| Governance and Leadership | Meets the Standard |
| Operational Delivery | Meets the Standard |
| Listening to the Voice of and Supporting U18s | Meets the Standard |
| Football Disciplinary | Meets the Standard |
| Case Management | Meets the Standard |
| Compliance and Monitoring | Meets the Standard |

NSPCC Assessment team

Tom Folkes (lead assessor) & Lystra Landon

Staff & Volunteers interviewed during independent assessment

- Jason Kilby Chief Executive Officer and SSL
- Robert Hanison Chairman
- Dyahanne Sappleton Designated Safeguarding Officer
- Edleen John Board Safeguarding Champion
- James Tierney Football Development Manager/Deputy SSL
- Samantha Brown Football Development Officer/Deputy SSL
- Daryl Ann Referee Development Officer
- Rob King Football Services Assistant

Summary of assessment

NSPCC independent assessors conducted both an in-depth analysis of evidence submitted to Smartsheet and a one day 'in person' assessment of the Amateur FA and concluded that the Safeguarding 365 criteria for 2023/24 had been fully met. In addition to evidencing that all specific safeguarding criteria were fully evidenced, the assessors identified a number of areas of good practice that are exceeding the standards outlined in the Safeguarding 365 criteria.

The Amateur FA should be commended for the work they have undertaken in the following areas;

- The AFA have started a fantastic initiative called the Safe Award, where clubs are rewarded for their good practice, this ensures that clubs are safe and prioritising safeguarding and good governance. The Safe Award will be renamed after John Bakker, this is a wonderful tribute to their former Board Safeguarding Champion who sadly passed away, and recognition for the work he did to drive safeguarding forward at the AFA.
- EDI is something that the AFA are very passionate about with both the CEO and the Chairman acknowledging the importance of this. The recent appointment of their Board Safeguarding Champion (BSC) demonstrates their commitment to progress this area of work as she will bring diversity to the Board as well as contribute to IAG meetings.
- The AFA have an excellent Youth Advisory Group, this is helped by having a successful recruitment drive once per year to keep things fresh. A member of the YAG also sits on the IAG, this demonstrates the AFA are aware that the voice of youth is critical in driving the safety of grassroots football forward.
- The team as a whole are doing excellent work around mental health, the chair was extremely passionate about this, and a health and wellbeing director has been appointed onto the board. The assessors were extremely impressed with the work the AFA are doing for adults at risk, this includes courses for clubs and working with various charities and organisations.

It was noted by the assessors that the team are extremely well bonded and close knit, the way that they all come together to support each other was excellent to see. The work they are continuing to implement should be commended and something they should be proud of. Being a small team does not hold them back and they are clearly committed to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for everyone to enjoy grassroots football.

Safeguarding is clearly embedded within the AFA, the CEO, Chair and the team as a whole should be congratulated for an excellent assessment.

Assessment grading - Amateur FA

Charts and tables supporting report

Below is a summary of each Standard area of the Safeguarding 365 assessment.

The NSPCC grades each area using the following colour codes:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Red | Fails to meet the Standard |
| Amber | Standard requires developing |
| Green | Meets the Standard |
| Blue | Not relevant to this Football Association at this time |
| Grey | Pending, awaiting additional material by a set date |

Amateur FA – Self Assessment grading

| Standard Area | Total | Red | Amber | Green | Blue | Pending |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Governance and Leadership | 13 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| Operational Delivery | 38 | 0 | 0 | 38 | 0 | 0 |
| Listening to the Under 18s | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Football Disciplinary | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Case Management | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Compliance and Monitoring | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTALS | 78 | 0 | 0 | 78 | 0 | 0 |

Amateur FA – Independent Assessment FINAL grading

| Standard Area | Total | Red | Amber | Green | Blue | Pending |
|----------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Governance and Leadership | 13 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| Operational Delivery | 38 | 0 | 0 | 38 | 0 | 0 |
| Listening to the Under 18s | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Football Disciplinary | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Case Management | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Compliance and Monitoring | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTALS | 78 | 0 | 0 | 78 | 0 | 0 |

STANDARD AREA 1: Governance and Leadership

Total number of criteria - **13**

Standard overall outcome – **'Meets the Standard'**

| Red | Amber | Green | Blue | Grey | Total |
|-----|-------|-------|------|------|-------|
| 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 13 |

Area 1 – Key achievements/strengths

- The team, including the CEO and Chairman are all actively undertaking relevant safeguarding CPD opportunities and there is a robust safeguarding training plan in place. Recent courses completed have included NSPCC Safe Sport Events and adults at risk training.
- The AFA have a comprehensive business strategy that runs from 2021-2024, this was uploaded to their Smartsheet submission, further context was given on the day around the AFA's plans to drive safeguarding forward within the 23/24 season.
- The Board Safeguarding Champion has not been in post very long however she has previously worked for the FA as an EDI Director, she spoke very positively about her integration on to the Board following attendance at her first few meetings. She has an excellent relationship with the team and emphasised part of her role is to support, check and challenge when needed.
- In both Board and Council meetings safeguarding is a consistent and prioritised agenda item, the CEO then reports discussions and actions back to the team. The AFA identified a requirement for more diversity on the Board, this has been achieved with the recent new appointments.
- The CEO evidenced a robust deputising process in his absence, the AFA have two additional SSLs in place. It was clear to the assessors that there is an excellent working relationship throughout the team and that safeguarding was clearly embedded within the AFA.

Area 1 – Criteria requiring action

No criteria requiring action at this time

STANDARD AREA 2: Operational Delivery

Total number of criteria - **38**

Standard overall outcome – **'Meets the Standard'**

| Red | Amber | Green | Blue | Grey | Total |
|-----|-------|-------|------|------|-------|
| 0 | 0 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 38 |

Area 2 – Key achievements/strengths

- The DSO is only contracted to work two full days, however she demonstrated to the assessors how this works for her and how she can be flexible if the work requires it. The DSO spoke extensively about the support she has received from the team when required, she has an excellent relationship with the CEO and is part of the AFA WhatsApp group, this helps her keep on top of any new safeguarding concerns.
- The DSO evidenced the comprehensive support the CWO's receive from the AFA. They have run a course for clubs around mental health first aid, they operate a Club Welfare Officer Forum and widely distribute posters with safeguarding information. During the 23/24 season the DSO has plans to bring the CWO network together in person for training and to share good practice.
- The AFA has been doing extensive work to improve compliance in open age football, the DSO substantiated this on the day by talking through their open age tracker; multiple email uploads were also provided as evidence of what information had been sent to clubs and open age information is promoted on the AFA website.
- It was clear to the assessors that the AFA are doing fantastic job of supporting young referees, they continually offer support if needed, copy parents into correspondence and organise online groups and forums that they can access support from. The AFA have also partnered with The Third Team who are a resilience training organisation, specifically for referees.
- The AFA uses all forms of social media to promote safeguarding and other related guidance. An impressive amount of evidence was uploaded to their Smartsheet ahead of the assessment which demonstrated that communications are well planned out and consistent over a season.

Area 2 – Criteria requiring action

No criteria requiring action at this time.

STANDARD AREA 3: Listening to the Voice of and Supporting U18s

Total number of criteria - 5

Standard overall outcome – ‘Meets the Standard’

| Red | Amber | Green | Blue | Grey | Total |
|-----|-------|-------|------|------|-------|
| 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |

Area 3 – Key achievements/strengths

- As previously mentioned, ensuring the voice of Young People is heard within the AFA is taken very seriously, the Youth Advisory Group is something the team should be extremely proud of. The Smartsheet uploads evidenced that the YAG are a key part of Board meetings, and they now have profiles on the AFA website.
- The AFA are doing excellent work with both LGBTQ+ and BAME communities, this includes the rainbow laces campaign, working with the London Unity League to produce an inclusive guide and promoting events (black history month and faith in football) via their social media channels.
- When speaking to the Football Development Officer it was clear that the women’s game has grown significantly over the last 2/3 years, due to this the AFA have recognised the importance of facilities for girls and women being updated and safe to use. The AFA are prioritising development of changing room, toilets and old shower blocks. This shows a strong awareness and commitment to making football a safe and positive experience for those involved.
- The AFA referred on their Smartsheet to their recent recognition awards in July 2023, this is a fantastic event where young people are recognised for their excellent work within the community at grassroots clubs. This is also promoted on their website where Levin Dookhun was proudly awarded Amateur FA Young volunteer of the Year award.
- The AFA are doing some excellent work promoting the importance of mental health and wellbeing for young people at grassroots level. They have produced a fantastic Health and Wellbeing booklet on nutrition, exercise, and mental health, this was uploaded to their Smartsheet. The team further expanded on this during the face to face assessment as the assessors were shown a keyring booklet that has been handed out at events, this promotes excellent support services and has QR codes attached for any mental health support and information.

Area 3 – Criteria requiring action

No criteria requiring action at this time.

STANDARD AREA 4: Football Disciplinary

Total number of criteria - 5

Standard overall outcome - 'Meets the Standard'

| Red | Amber | Green | Blue | Grey | Total |
|-----|-------|-------|------|------|-------|
| 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |

Area 4 – Key achievements/strengths

- ▶ The AFA have regular weekly meetings to discuss any safeguarding/discipline cases that are received, after speaking with the team it was clear to the assessors that they are close knit and have developed strong internal information sharing processes. Extensive evidence was uploaded to support this criterion.
- ▶ It was evident to the assessors that young people and adults at risk are supported throughout the disciplinary process, both the DSO and RDO spoke passionately about this and provided specific examples of how this had been implemented. It was clear to assessors that the wellbeing of the young people is a primary concern and something that is taken very seriously.
- ▶ The AFA use a non-compliance Smartsheet, this makes it very easy to monitor and track progress. Compliance within the clubs is currently at an excellent level as evidenced by the PowerBi data.

Area 4 – Criteria requiring action

No criteria requiring action at this time

STANDARD AREA 5: Case Management

Total number of criteria - **9**

Standard overall outcome - **'Meets the Standard'**

| Red | Amber | Green | Blue | Grey | Total |
|-----|-------|-------|------|------|-------|
| 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 |

Area 5 – Key achievements/strengths

- ▶ The AFA are now part of the Safeguarding Shared Administration Service, both the CEO and DSO spoke extremely positively about this development, it is allowing them to more proactive in relation to safeguarding as less time is spent on administration.
- ▶ The AFA has developed a robust low-level concerns policy (January 2023). The concerns log was provided via their smartsheet submission and further discussed with the DSO on the day of the assessment. Low Level Concerns are also discussed at the Raising Standards meeting.
- ▶ The DSO provided an example on the day of the assessment where she had to suspend a CWO from open aged football, the FA were involved with this, and it was followed up with the SCMT. This was a strong example of 'working together'.
- ▶ The DSO demonstrated to the assessors that she has a close working relationship with local safeguarding partnerships and LADOs, the AFA is set up across different Counties however she keeps an updated list and knows the LADOs locally to the AFA, this makes getting any help and support easy.
- ▶ The AFA monitor their poor practice via an excel spreadsheet, this is updated by the DSO, they will then upload to ELSA if required. The DSO also uploaded her CWO 23/24 action plan, this was sent out to clubs to highlight the importance of monitoring concerns and any relevant training required.

Area 5 – Criteria requiring action

No criteria requiring action at this time

STANDARD AREA 6: Compliance and Monitoring

Total number of criteria - **8**

Standard overall outcome – **'Meets the Standard'**

| Red | Amber | Green | Blue | Grey | Total |
|-----|-------|-------|------|------|-------|
| 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 |

Area 6 – Key achievements/strengths

- ▶ The assessors were impressed with the AFA's overall commitment to improving the playing environment for young people at grassroots level, this was evidenced via their smartsheet and their website. The team are also committed to updating the facilities within grassroots football that are used by children and adults at risk.
- ▶ Youth Teams are not affiliated by the AFA, however they recognise that club visits would be a positive way of implementing good practice to make all clubs safer, the DSO stated this is something they want to start doing and will get the Board involved as this progresses.
- ▶ The AFA are proactive regarding club affiliation processes, the evidence attached to the Smartsheet upload substantiated this. Evidence of email correspondence sent to clubs was also uploaded which clearly outlined what safeguarding protocols need to be in place before the new season.
- ▶ The AFA use an excel spreadsheet to monitor compliance, this makes the process easy to track and follow if there are any discrepancies within clubs. The AFA uploaded their Power Bi data for their registered referees, this demonstrated excellent compliance.

Area 6 – Criteria requiring action

No criteria requiring action at this time

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