

A guide for clubs with 16/17-year-old players

Open-Age Adult Football Safeguards

Every affiliated football club that involves under-18s must ensure appropriate safeguards are in place. This guide aims to support clubs with open-age adult teams who have 16/17-year-old players, or are likely to sign 16/17-year-old players.

Everyone working with under-18s, whether in youth or open-age adult football, is subject to The FA's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures⁵ and the underpinning legislative guidance.

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), is an agency delivering the government's requirements for vetting checks for those working with under-18s and they have declared⁶ that if a team has or is likely to have one or more 16/17-year-old in an adult football team, and if the time that the coaches and managers work with these children meets the period condition⁷, then this is deemed as 'regulated activity'. This requires the eligible⁸ coaches and managers working with these under-18s to undertake the requisite DBS Check.

The FA and CFAs are beginning a proactive drive to help support clubs to understand and ensure they are embracing their responsibilities in this respect. This guidance note outlines the key issues and actions required by clubs.

The club committee has a collective responsibility to manage these safeguards and are required to:

- 1. Identify which teams have or are likely to have 16/17-year-old players**
 - If they are registered with your team then safeguards must be in place, even if they have not played yet.
- 2. Identify the coach/manager for each team (including any assistant coaches/managers)**
 - Someone must be identified in this role; they do not have to have any coaching qualifications to be named as the coach/team manager; List them on The FA's Whole Game System/Customer Relationship

⁵ The FA's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures can be found here: [TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-1-football-safeguarding-framework](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-1-football-safeguarding-framework).

⁶ See: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/758272/ENGLISH_-_DBS_Checks_in_Sports_-_Working_with_Children_LATEST.pdf

⁷ The period condition is defined as at any time, on more than three days in any period of 30 days, or at any time between 2.00am and 6.00am with the opportunity for face-to-face contact with children.

⁸ Eligibility for the enhanced DBS Check with check of the barred list in adult football will depend on how likely it is that they will have 16/17-year-old players. If it is anticipated that children are likely to be part of an open-aged team and there is a good chance of this happening, for instance if 16/17-year-olds have already been part of the team during the previous season or have registered to join the team, then the applicant performing any of the roles mentioned would be eligible for the DBS Check stipulated by The FA. If, however, it is unlikely that 16/17-year-olds would be a part of the teams, for instance if no children have ever previously been on a team and none are expected to join then the coaches and managers are not eligible for the check. This is because a standard or enhanced check cannot be applied for just in case an applicant ends up doing an eligible type of work.

- Management system alongside the registered team. This can be done by the club secretary, assistant secretary or if you have youth teams by the club welfare officer (Youth Teams);
- If the coach/manager changes you must update this information.
3. **Support coaches to complete an FA DBS Check***
- * Formerly referred to as an FA Criminal Record Check (CRC)*
- Read The FA DBS Check – FAQs: [TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-3-safer-recruitment-and-dbs-checks](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-3-safer-recruitment-and-dbs-checks);
 - If your club uses ‘Matchday’ you might want to consider using the PayPal funding (£100) to pay for the coaches’ DBS Checks;
 - Check if your league offers any financial support for DBS Checks.
4. **Adopt and adhere to The FA’s Safeguarding Children Policy**
- Read and use The FA’s Safeguarding Children Policy Club Template: [TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-1-football-safeguarding-framework](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-1-football-safeguarding-framework).
5. **Provide 16/17-year-old players with safeguarding information**
- Distribute The FA’s guidance ‘Know your rights’: [TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-7-children-and-young-people-under-18s](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-7-children-and-young-people-under-18s) to all 16/17-year-old players, host this information on your club website, consider making it part of a ‘welcome pack’ for new players aged 16/17 years old.

Helpful Resources

Your CFA Designated Safeguarding Officer

Navigating [TheFA.com: TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding)

The FA’s safeguarding information has 12 sections and offers a variety of downloads all of which can be accessed via the ‘Complete Downloads Directory’: [TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-11-the-complete-downloads-directory](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-11-the-complete-downloads-directory):

1. Football’s safeguarding framework;
2. Reporting concerns;
3. Safer recruitment and DBS Checks;
4. Safeguarding training;
5. The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) network;
6. Safeguarding in the digital world;
7. Children and young people (under-18s);
8. Parents and carers;
9. Support for survivors;
10. Safeguarding adults in disability football;
11. The complete downloads section;
12. Other key safeguarding organisations.