



GUIDANCE NOTES NO:

**5.1**

# APPOINTING A WELFARE OFFICER

**FOR CLUBS AND LEAGUES**

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# APPOINTING A WELFARE OFFICER

*Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility.*

*However, having a Welfare Officer in place ensures there is someone who actively champions safeguarding.*

## THE ROLE:

With the support of the committee, the Welfare Officer should:

- Review current practices;
- Promote safeguarding awareness and training;
- Promote a culture of listening to children;
- Ensure compliance with safer recruitment practices including DBS Checks.

## THE REQUIREMENT:

Every club and league which runs under-18 teams must have a Welfare Officer who has:

- An 'accepted' DBS check via The FA CRB Unit;
- Completed The FA's Safeguarding Children workshop;
- Completed The FA's Welfare Officer workshop.

There is a Welfare Officer Code of Conduct. Every appointed Welfare Officer is required to sign up and adhere to. To read the code, see **Guidance Notes 5.2: Welfare Officers' Code of Conduct**.

## THE TYPE OF PERSON:

The type of person who makes a good Welfare Officer is someone who:

- Always puts children's welfare first;
- Is a good communicator;
- Has a common-sense approach;
- Is willing to learn and seek advice;
- Is over the age of 18.

It is essential that a Welfare Officer is approachable, has a child-centred approach and the ability to maintain this perspective when carrying out their role.

## THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS:

### Start points:

- Make it known that you wish to appoint a Welfare Officer onto your committee;
- Provide clear information about the role. See **Guidance Notes 5.3: Welfare Officers' Roles and Responsibilities**.
- Advertise the role on your website and via any regular communications you have;
- Ask if anyone involved with your club/league has any professional child protection expertise. E.g. you may have a member who is or was a police officer, teacher, youth worker or social worker that might be willing to take on the role;
- Ensure you have a fair and open recruitment process in line with your constitution.

### Before you appoint:

Ensure you have considered their appropriateness for this role by checking them against The FA's 'Safeguarding Children – Person Specification and Suitability Checklist'.



## WELFARE OFFICER PERSON SPECIFICATION AND SUITABILITY CHECKLIST:

### 1. PERSON SPECIFICATION

#### Essential:

- Experience of dealing or working with young people;
- Knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children issues<sup>1</sup>;
- A good communicator in a variety of situations with people from diverse backgrounds;
- Committed to and ability to promote safeguarding children;
- Empathy when dealing with individuals, sometimes in demanding situations;
- Ability to listen and assess situations fairly;
- Ability to handle confidential information sensitively and with integrity;
- Reasonable level of administration experience and how to deal with confidential documentation;
- Regular access to the internet.

#### Desirable:

- Knowledge and understanding of grassroots football;
- Experience in using IT systems;
- Committed to promoting The FA Respect programme.

### 2. SUITABILITY CHECKLIST

#### Essential:

- Willing and able to provide relevant references;
- Previous experience of dealing or working with children;
- Knowledge of and positive attitudes to equal opportunities;
- Commitment to treat all children as individuals and with equal concern;
- Physical health – appropriate to carry out tasks;
- Integrity and flexibility;
- At least 18 years of age;
- Completion of The FA DBS Enhanced Disclosure process and acceptance by The FA of the outcome<sup>2</sup>;
- Understanding of the need for confidentiality when dealing with issues;
- Reasonable level of administration experience and how to deal with confidential documentation;
- Completion of The FA's Safeguarding Children and Welfare Officer Workshop;
- Willingness to update skills and knowledge and attend in-service training facilitated by The FA or the local County FA.



#### Desirable:

- Knowledge of child protection issues;
- Knowledge of safeguarding children legislation;
- Relevant football knowledge/ understanding.

#### Important:

If anyone is known to be unsuitable to work with children his/her application should be refused. If in doubt about an applicant contact your County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer (CFA DSO).

**Click here** for a full list of County FA key contacts.

<sup>2</sup> Some people with a history of offending can still be considered for this role. To find out more, see **Guidance Notes: 3.7 FA Disclosure and Barring Checks – FAQs**, email [FAChecks@TheFA.com](mailto:FAChecks@TheFA.com) or call **0115 969 4618** (option 1). Also see **Guidance Notes 3.8: Recruiting Ex-offenders**.

## APPOINTING ADDITIONAL WELFARE OFFICERS:

Clubs or even leagues with lots of youth teams may want to recruit more than one Welfare Officer. Feedback shows it can be really positive to appoint more than one Welfare Officer.

You may wish to consider following any of the following models:

- Allocation of responsibility for managing and monitoring DBS compliance for all eligible officials to one Welfare Officer;
- Allocation of responsibility for organising and monitoring compliance of safeguarding training for officials and providing information sessions for parents/carers to one Welfare Officer;
- Appoint a Welfare Officer for girls' teams and another Welfare Officer for boys' teams;
- Appoint Welfare Officers for 'cluster' age groups e.g. 5-11 and 13-17.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

If you need any further advice or information please contact your County FA DSO who will be happy to help you. [Click here](#) for a list of all County FA key contacts, including County FA DSOs.





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