



# GRASSROOTS

Grassroots football clubs are extremely important to a young person's development; as a sporting participant and a future adult. Grassroots clubs can help young people realise their potential and shape an individual through their development. The sessions that your club runs help educate, develop and inspire young people - both in their own personal development, in creating a pathway for the future and in your own club's progression.

Your football club can have a huge influence on a young person's childhood and the way that they grow into adulthood. As a football club you have a responsibility for the young people that participate in the club and how they develop. Listening and encouraging young people at your club to voice their opinions makes a much happier environment and changes can be made to suit what your young people want to be a part of.

This resource has been developed to provide guidance on the importance of Youth Voice as well as showing the importance of your role. This resource includes simple methods that aim to engage young people at your club. The resource also includes Best Practice from clubs across North Riding to demonstrate the great work that has already taken place.

By everyone supporting each other, grassroots clubs can become stronger and create a positive environment for all participants. We hope you enjoy using this toolkit and gain confidence as you try out the methods and techniques described.

North Riding County FA Youth Council



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### WHAT IS YOUTH VOICE?

An opportunity for young people to voice their opinions and provide ideas that will contribute to benefiting your football club. Youth voice is getting a view from a young person and putting it in to practice. Youth voice requires action. It is more than making young people heard, it is doing something about what they say. When their views are considered and acted upon, it empowers children and young people with purpose.

### Why is Youth Voice important?

Young people are the future so it is important that they are listened to, so changes can be made NOW to better their futures. Young people get stereotyped, so it is important that they get their say and their opinions across. Youth voice can help you shape the way your club is being run and how your sessions can be developed to suit their needs.

#### Benefits for you as a club:

- Youth voice gives you a greater ability to make changes that promote the growth and development of young people
- Young people have skills and knowledge that can benefit and expand the club, especially in areas such as technology and new ideas

### Benefits for young people:

- Have a sense of purpose
- Grow and change from their experiences
- Develop resilience, and a sense of pride and accountability
- Build self-esteem and confidence
- Develop leadership and problem-solving skills
- Become connected to other young people
- Break down generational barriers between young people and adults

# What activities can be used and how can Youth Voice be implemented at your club?

There are many ways to engage young people to voice their opinions and thoughts. It is important to use methods that young people find interesting, making sure that they want to share their thoughts. Being creative in your methods and using the power of football to promote youth voice is important so that you can connect and engage with the young people at your club. Technology is a great way to keep young people interested and motivated, using phones/tablets to create a modern and up to date environment. The following collection of information, ideas and activities will give you helpful hints, tips and advice for planning and carrying out youth voice work.

### **CLUB YOUTH FORUM**

A club youth forum is an organised event that brings young people together to debate, and to express their ideas, opinions and needs to decision-makers (members of the committee or other people in positions of power). A youth forum or council might be organised to meet monthly or quarterly. Being part of a youth forum can help young people to develop skills and confidence.

There are also practical questions you will need to think through if you set up a youth council, such as:

- What's the location and how frequent are the meetings?
- Will you offer travel expenses, and how will that be administered?
- What refreshments will be provided?
- Who will be responsible for taking and distributing the minutes?

#### How can a Youth Forum be set up?

Firstly, a location needs to be organised for the youth players in your club to meet, in order to discuss issues or gather their thoughts on a situation. This can even take place after a training session (in the club house) as the players are already together, they usually only need to last up to an hour depending on what needs to be discussed. It is important to remember things like refreshments and travel for the young players which needs to be arranged in addition to asking for parents to collect players later than usual. It is also important that members of the club's committee can attend the forum; if possible, all members of the committee should be there to listen to the youth of the club.

We encourage everyone to voice their opinions, and a friendly environment needs to be maintained so that everyone is comfortable to talk and provide truthful responses. It is also important to make the forums interesting for the young players to ensure they don't become bored and unfocused on the task. This can be done by making a guick power point with videos and pictures to aid the discussions.

#### What can be discussed at a Youth Forum?

Many questions or topic areas can be discussed at a youth forum that may include specific elements at your club, where you would like to get young participants thoughts for example:

- · What can we do to make our training sessions more enjoyable?
- Do the training sessions run at suitable times for you?
- What do you think the club can do better?
- · What do you like about the Club?
- Are the coaches running good sessions?
- Do you feel safe and comfortable playing for the club?

#### Why is a Youth Forum good for your club?

A Youth Forum is a way of bringing youth in contact with members of the committee which is very rare. This gives the chance for the youth to voice their opinions and gives the committee members a sense of what they are doing well and not so well for younger players at their club. If everyone involved is available to meet at the same time, a youth forum is very easy to set up. In can also bring a young team together in a different environment other than playing football.



### NRCFA YOUTH COUNCIL



The North Riding FA Youth Council consists of a group of young people between the ages of 14-24 who represent children and young people in North Riding, whilst helping to shape and develop the grassroots game for our youngest participants.

The vision of the Youth Council is to empower and provide a voice for all children and young people to influence change and develop a legacy in football. This newly appointed team of young people have an impact on increasing the number of children and young people (CYP) participating and volunteering in football, as well as developing a vast CYP network within the North Riding County FA.

Steven Wade, North Riding FA Chief Executive, said: "Grassroots football delivered by North Riding FA and our affiliated clubs is extremely important in helping young people to realise their potential. This inspiring work helps to educate, develop and inspire young people - both in their own personal development, in creating a pathway for the future and our collective progression as mentors.

The high volume of young people taking part in club-run activity means that feedback is vital in helping us all to shape the resources and the programmes, to ensure that these continue to make a difference. North Riding FA is totally committed to guaranteeing that the voices of young people associated with all programmes and affiliated clubs are heard and remain prevalent in our work.

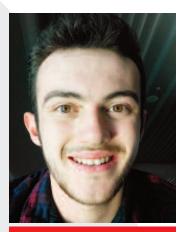
We value the perspectives and views of all stakeholders and that includes young people – and we aim to ensure there is a constant stream of feedback between our clubs and the young people they serve. So many young people tell us of the huge impact our grassroots programmes have on them, how they have developed as a person, and the personal milestones they have achieved thanks to the guidance they receive from their club staff, who have been there to listen and assist them.

We cannot underestimate the positive effect that football can have on young people involved in across our county."

Ellie, an active member of the Youth Council said: "I was over the moon when I found out that I had been accepted onto The FA Youth Council for 2019! I have loved every moment of being part of the team at North Riding FA and feel that this opportunity will allow me to develop and learn so much, helping to improve and grow the game even more in the region."

#### What is next?

The NRCFA Youth Council is open to applications from more young people who want to join this exciting new team. We are looking for young people between the ages of 14-24 from all over the county to represent children and young people and to help shape and develop football in North Riding.



**HARRY** 



I applied to join North Riding FA's Youth Council to ensure that the views of young people in sport are represented and considered. Having both played and coached in grassroots in the area, I felt it was important to put young people at the heart of decision making in the County. It's our game as much as it is anybody else's.



**CHARLIE** 

I joined because It was a great opportunity to develop myself professionally, but at the same time being able to help other young people in the community through the power of football.



**ELLIE** 

I joined the Youth Council because I have always had a passion for sport in particular football and being on the youth council allows me to pass on this passion and use my position to improve the provision and opportunity for other young people, to improve the game.

### YOUTH COMMITTEE MEMBER

Committee members are the people who lead the Football club and decide how it is run. They play a vital role, volunteering their time and working together to make important decisions about the club.

A young committee member is nominated to sit on their club's committee as the representative 'voice' for young people. They use their skills and knowledge to support the club and help it achieve its overall goals, and they gain valuable experience in the process. This method of youth voice involves young people getting involved at the highest level of decision-making. They are not 'pretending' committee members, they are real decision makers! That means they need to think seriously about how they represent young people's views; this is something that can be implemented at your football club.

# How can your club elect a Youth Committee Member?

The Youth Committee Member should be selected by your club. They can be selected in different ways depending on how many young people want to be part of the committee, as it can be a daunting experience for a young person to get involved in.

**Voting** – If there are many keen participants that want to be part of the committee then a voting system may be an option. The voting can be done by other young participants or even by members of the committee.

**Random selection** – If all or nearly all participants like the opportunity of being decision makers at your club then a random selection is a good way of keeping it a fair process,

**Committee selection** – The committee can select a youth member that they think would benefit the process, by selecting a young person at the club they can trust to do as much as they can to improve the club.

#### Why should your club do this?

This is a great way for the club's committee to have a young person's opinion on the committee and actively making decisions for the whole club. The committee will gain the valuable knowledge of a young participant to help make important decisions that in the past may have been overlooked. The club will also be helping a young person to grow their experience in talking to older decision makers at the club, developing their confidence and professional skills.



When including young people make sure you obtain consent from parents/carers.





# Case Study

Dorman FC have used the idea of including a youth committee member to instate two young people into their committee. These two young people are both players within their Under 16's Team and were selected due to being great role models as well as being Captain and Vice-Captain of the team. The impact this has had on the club has been invaluable due to the young people now providing input on how the players see the club and how they would like the club to progress in the future.

"It has been brilliant; they have asked for different types of training sessions and have also arranged team building events. Their input for me is a vital part of making the club stronger and a brilliant way of knowing how the team is working together, as well has having their views noted and not being afraid to speak up. This has been possible at our club and it could be implemented in all clubs at

any age."

### **SOUTH PARK RANGERS JFC**

South Park Rangers JFC have 17 teams as well as an Autism Development Centre.





As a club, we set up a 'Players Committee', who met for the first time in July 2019 and for a second time in early October 2019. This group were tasked by the committee with evaluating the club's annual tournament and the club's presentation night. We also had a discussion around the qualities that make an ideal player and a task for the next meeting is for the group to draw up a player friendly code of conduct that can be displayed around the clubhouse and shared with all players during annual code of conduct meetings in the summer.

The feedback provided by the players committee on the presentation evening has informed discussions on the planning for the 2020 event. These discussions are currently ongoing within the club's committee, and the plan is to present the final plan for the event back to the player's committee for their seal of approval. Potential changes they recommended that we are considering taking forward included removing the top goal scorer award and having players more actively involved in the evening – e.g. hosting a section of the evening, giving a welcome speech or delivering a thank you speech/gift to parents/volunteers.



The players expressed a desire for the event to be held outdoors, with inflatables and activities to create almost a carnival type atmosphere. This is difficult to achieve for the 2020 event as the venue has already been booked, but we are exploring the possibility of hosting a 'fun-day' style event in the late Spring/early Summer to acknowledge their desire for an informal style event. This would also double as a fundraiser and is something we will begin exploring seriously in the new year.

The running of the players committee has been challenging/time consuming for our committee due to its small size. As part of a wider committee restructure that will see some new posts created in Jan 2020 to help increase capacity, we hope to appoint a Community Officer to lead on the development of the players committee, alongside a parents committee and some school liaison work.

Plans for this are currently being finalised but we hope to have a volunteer on the committee with clear responsibility for player voice, so that they're able to dedicate time to ensuring its success. Tasking a new committee member with developing a player voice plan for the club will hopefully see youth voice across the club develop further.

### QUESTIONNAIRES/SURVEYS

Questionnaires and surveys are a good method for gathering both quantitative information (numbers and categories) and qualitative information (which is more descriptive). They can be kept very simple and they can be made anonymous, which is useful for some individuals. They can be in paper form or electronic. Some young people are happy to fill in questionnaires, but some find questionnaires boring (especially long ones) and just tick boxes at random. You need to bear this in mind if questionnaires are your one and only way of collecting feedback, because the answers may not be a true reflection of what young people think.

### How can you make a questionnaire?

- There are a number of online survey software packages that can be used, such as www.surveymonkey.com or www.snapsurveys.com
- Use an incentive or prize to encourage young people to fill out the questionnaire
- If using a paper form, simply using colour and graphics is a good start. Keeping them short and simple with tick boxes, word circling, pictures and symbols as this is helpful for younger children
- Emoji cards can be used for the younger participants to capture their feelings and emotions by holding up the emoji that reflects how the session affected them

### What questions can be asked?

Many questions can be asked on a questionnaire and it is important to keep them specific to the age group and not making it too complicated.

- What do you think the club can do better?
- What do you like about the Club?
- What can we do to make are training sessions more enjoyable?
- What do you enjoy most about the club?
- Did you learn anything new at the club? What?
- How valued/respected did you feel by the club coaches?
- What is the most interesting part of the club?
- If another young person was interested in taking part, how would you describe what you have been doing?

### Why is it good for your club?

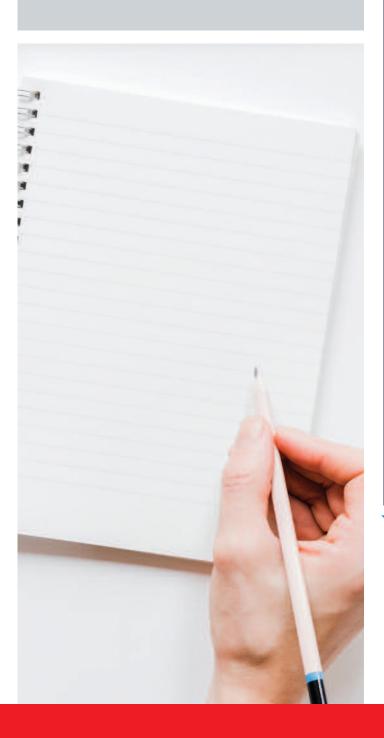
Questionnaires are an easy way of getting lots of information in a very short period, they are also an inexpensive way of gaining information. Questionnaires can be handed out to participants in paper form at the end of sessions or can be electronical on the internet and can be asked to do in spare time away from club sessions. This process can also be important to monitor the great work that your club is already doing and the impact that you are having on the participants.



If including an email address make sure under 18's input a parent or carers email and not their own.

### **COMMENT BOX**

A comment box collects feedback from young people and gives you simple, fast reports of their feelings towards an activity or session. You can make your comment box available at each session or you can make it a 'virtual box', where young people email their comments to a generic club mailbox address. Young participants should be encouraged to use the comment box and it can also be made a norm at the end of each training sessions that the participants must leave a comment in the box before they leave.



### How can you set up a Comment Box?

- Either buy or make your own comment box that you can take along to sessions.
- Leave it somewhere accessible for young people to drop their comment slips into at the end of the session.
- If using a virtual comment box, ensure you publicise the email address (and make sure someone checks this email regularly!).

#### What materials are needed?

- A box
- Comment slips
- Pens
- A generic club email address if doing a virtual box

# Why is a Comment Box good for your club?

A comment box is a straight forward, quick and easy thing to set up with not much resources or expenses needed to make it a success. By bringing the comment box to sessions you can capture a young person's thoughts on a session straight away.

### **KADERFC**



# Case Study

Kader FC have a suggestions box in their café area at the club where the young people can post any comments, thoughts, recommendations or worries that they have in a box. Those within the club committee will then look in the box on a monthly basis to look at what has been suggested to then address within the club committee meetings etc.

As the box is available in the club house which is open during training days and match days the young people have access to this box on a regular basis. This also allows them to anonymously post their thoughts on the club and any worries.

It is a quick and effective way to get children and young people to communicate with the club. It also gives the young people the opportunity to comment on anything and everything at the club.





### **GRAFFITI WALL**

A graffiti wall is a place to write or draw ideas and thoughts. It encourages young people to brainstorm their ideas and then record them on a large piece of 'wall' paper. The paper can be put a display in the football clubs pavilion for all participates to see and can be added to at any time. It's a great way to interact children through the concept of drawing and freedom to write what they want. Graffiti Walls are great for children aged between 5-12 as it is a fun and interactive way of getting the children to be creative about sharing their feelings and thoughts. The facilitator may need to steer the conversation from time to time and encourage young people to stick their written notes onto the wall.

#### What materials will I need?

- Flipchart paper or graffiti wall paper
- Pens
- Post-it notes

Ideally, it's best to hang it on a wall space, so a sports hall is a good venue to run the session. However, if this isn't feasible, lay your graffiti wall on a table or the floor. Use your mobile phone to take a picture to capture the result.

### What are the benefits of a graffiti wall?

It's a visual activity that generates lots of ideas, post-it notes can be used to stick ideas and thoughts on the wall. A graffiti wall is a record of what has been said throughout the session, and young people can return to it to add any additional contributions they may have, anyone can get involved. It is very fun, easy and creative way that young children can share their ideas through drawing and writing, it is also a very inexpensive method of feedback.



### **AUDIO & PODCASTS**

The use of digital audio recorders, such as mobile phones and MP3 players, means you can record good quality audio at the tap of a button. They are easy to use, and young people can pick up and use with little training. Although the product matters, the process of creating it is often the more important opportunity for young people to explore and express their views and opinions and this also creates a record of what has been said. The important part of audio recording for participation is often equipping young people with the skills to use interviewing opportunities to dig deeper into an issue. Pull together a short training on interviewing techniques that can support young people to do this.

A podcast is a digital audio file available on the internet. Free audio editing software can be installed to turn audio files into podcasts, which can then be distributed on your club's website or blog. When thinking about a podcast or interview, it's good for the young people to put together a few talking points prior to the discussion so you have an outline or frame for what they want to talk about. An example of this includes a reflection on a game or training session and how the young participants felt when taking part.

#### How can you create a podcast?

- 1. Choose the theme or topic you want to talk about.
- 2. Choose your format are you going to invite young people to have a conversation with you or are you going to interview them?
- **3.** Record an audio file of the discussion by using an app on your phone, tablet or iPad.
- **4.** Edit the audio file to get the podcast you want. Give it a title and description.
- **5.** Upload it to a host site online.

# What materials will you need to create a podcast?

- Recording device / app on phone,
   Android tablet or iPad
- Editing software (there is a range of audio editing software available, such as Ocenaudio or Audacityteam)

### What are the benefits of a podcast?

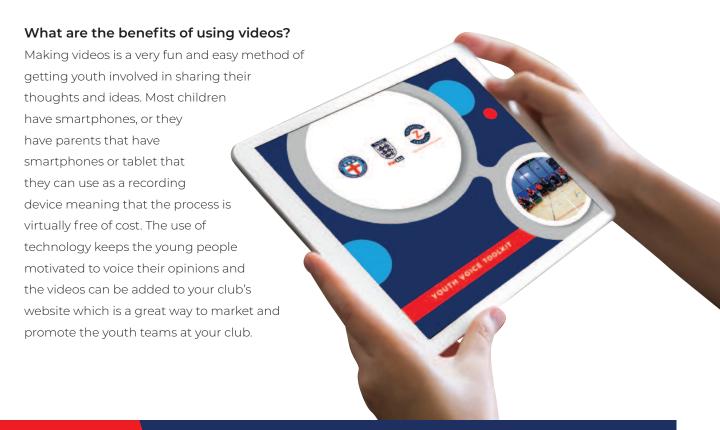
- You can create very raw and real content, which listeners can respond to
- Podcasts are a good way to discuss a story and share anecdotes that can illustrate key points of your narrative to connect with others
- It can be used to highlight young people's views at a meeting, conference or event

### **VIDEOS**

Videoing is a great way to capture the views and experiences of young people. With the ability to record and edit your own short films directly from your smartphone or tablet, this can be a quick and easy way to document young people's views. It is fun to involve young people in the filmmaking, scriptwriting and recording. Videos can be added to your club's website or YouTube channel which is a great way to interact with young people.

### How can your club use videos?

At the end of training sessions and games young participants can get interviewed, these are called post-match interviews and the young people can mimic the professionals they see on television by describing their thoughts and feelings to the session. They can either interview each other or they can get interviewed by an adult who can ask them questions and prompt them to answer.





- There is a whole host of free videos on a variety of issues available on websites such as YouTube. Build up a resource bank of different categorised video clips that you can utilise within your work with young people
- You should always check the content yourself. Watch the video all the way through as you don't want any unexpected surprises being shown halfway through your session
- Make sure you familiarise yourself with the equipment
- You should always obtain photograph and video consent!

### **BISHOPTHORPE WHITE ROSE**

Bishopthorpe White Rose is made up of 31 male and female teams.



Case Study

Bishopthorpe White Rose decided that a video was the best way to tell the story of the club and why they needed to raise funds to build their new clubhouse and ground. It was a great way to show the large number of players they have and the diversity of ages, gender and background. They were able to get across the enthusiasm and energy within the club for fundraising which had a better effect then a series of photos or a written article. Videos are now easily shared on social media and viewed on phones and they found when people watched and liked the video, they would share it with friends and colleagues creating a real buzz.

Bishopthorpe White rose chose to use players within their video as players are the essence of the club and they wanted to use their voice to persuade people to support the fundraising activities. They felt that the players were able to get the message across about why they needed better football facilities much better than the adult coaches could. The young people were able to keep the message simple and clear without all the narrative and distractions that adults often put into a fundraising campaign. Bishopthorpe believe football is about fun and inclusivity and having the players smilling, laughing and playing the game and they believe a video was the best way to bring that message home.

"I would recommend all clubs to use the voice of their players to promote their club. Our players are our best ambassadors and representatives. Their enthusiasm and love of the club will always shine through and they instinctively know how to distil the key messages for the club into a few simple words. It makes them very effective at engaging others and winning support."

### **VISUAL AIDS**

Visual aids and pictures allow people with communication difficulties to also express their views.

Visual aids include pictures and symbols relevant to the topic discussed. The young people can then arrange the symbols into like and dislike columns.

A question can be asked such as; why do you like coming to football? The young person will then get shown various answers such as: football/coaches/games. The young person can then select their answer. In addition to this young people who are non-verbal may use the symbols to express their wants and needs during the session.

You can find examples of visual aids on the next page.

# What are the benefits of using visual aids?

- It can enable young people with communication difficulties to express their views.
- 2. It can also be used by people with physical difficulties as they can point or 'eye point' to their answers.
- 3. Information can be easily recorded.



This form of communication can also be adapted to suit different needs and different forms of communication.

Alternative communication apps can also be using via I-pads and tablets, you can also ask parents and carers what the young person uses at school/home to communicate.

# **VISUAL AID EXAMPLES**



### **ENGAGING YOUNGER PARTICIPANTS**

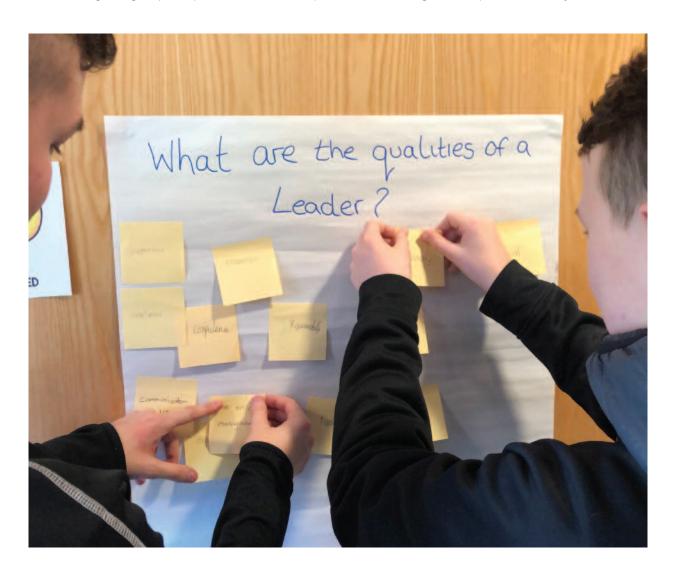
Using drawings, images, cartoons and illustrations can be a fun and effective way to engage with young people and encourage them to share their views and opinions. You can use them to bring your facilitation activities to life, and young people can use them to express themselves.

#### Collage

Various materials are stuck to a poster or display to create a collage. Collages are used to encourage young people to represent their views or an idea visually. You can do many different things with a collage. You can use pictures to capture thoughts and feelings about an event, or you can use it to mark the progress of a programme. It is a good activity to do with younger children and young people with learning difficulties. It is tactile and colourful, and there is opportunity for everyone to get involved.

#### How can we create a collage?

- 1. Introduce the question or idea for discussion to the group.
- **2.** On big sheets of paper, ask young people to represent their thoughts and views using a selection of the provided materials.
- 3. You can encourage young people to be creative rather than pre-plan their design.
- 4. If working in a group, a representative should present their collage and explain what they have made.



### MIDDLESBROUGH POWERCHAIR FC



# Case Study

At Middlesbrough Powerchair FC they all their players who are over 18 are voting members. If they are under the age of 18 then their parent/carer will vote on their behalf. In addition to this they also have a player representative who sits on the committee for all committee meetings.

In having this structure, it means that players get to vote on matters which benefit themselves such as fundraising events which can be used to reduce monthly fees and purchase specialist powerchairs to give the younger members the opportunity to play.



### **MAPPING**

#### **Body Mapping**

This is a good exercise to use with younger children to explore attitudes, likes and dislikes. You can give out individual copies of the body template and ask them to write/draw their thoughts and feelings, or you can lay out large pieces of paper on the floor and ask a volunteer to lie on the paper and draw round them for a group body-map exercise. You can be creative and link the body parts to football and how they feel when using them to play. For example, how does kicking a football make you feel?

### **Benefits of Mapping**

This activity can be interactive and provoke in-depth conversations about participants' experiences, observations and stories along the way. The information generated can provide valuable insight into how the club is supporting younger participant's development.





### **STORYBOARDS**

Storyboarding is a visual activity, where young people can share their views or solutions to an issue through drawings, a bit like a comic book.

#### How can we create a storyboard?

Provide flipcharts, long rolls of paper (perhaps wallpaper) or cards and marker pens and get young people to work individually or in a group. Draw some boxes on the paper so the young people can design their story like a comic strip. Ask them to create drawings that explain their story or solution to a problem. Once the young people have finished, they can explain their story to the group, allowing for questions or discussions.

#### What are the benefits of a storyboard?

- This is a good exercise for younger children or if you have shy participants who perhaps do not want to speak
- Storyboards can be done on long rolls of paper to engage whole groups
- It is good for those young people who use pictures/symbols to communicate

# **STORYBOARD TEMPLATE**

### Please use this page to plan the next steps for your club.

# **ACTION PLAN**

Why do we want to include youth voice within our club?	
How will we get young people involved?	
What difference is this going to make to our club?	

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Are there any safeguarding considerations with our chosen method?
When do we want to implement this by?

### **SAFEGUARDING**

If you have any concerns over a child's welfare, please contact:

### North Riding FA Designated Safeguarding Officer

Jennifer Bennet

Phone Number: 01642 717778

Email Address: Safeguarding@northridingfa.com

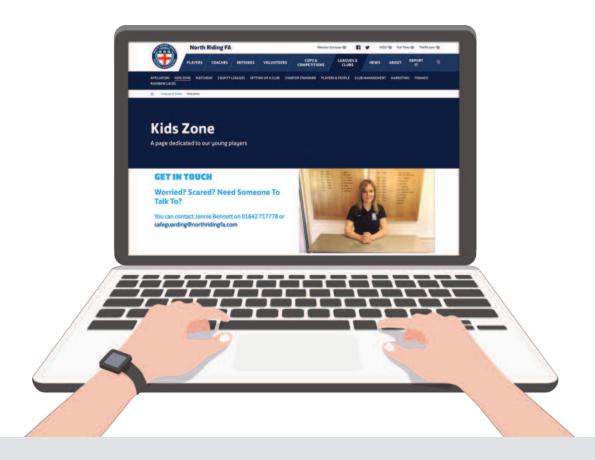
Child Friendly Webpage: www.northridingfa.com/leagues-and-clubs/kids-zone

### North Riding FA Assistant Designated Safeguarding Officer

Clair Shield

**Phone Number:** 01642 717770 Option 2

Email Address: Safeguarding@northridingfa.com



Alternatively, please contact:

Childline

Phone Number: 0800 1111

Website: www.childline.org.uk/

**NSPCC** 

Phone Number: 0808 800 5000
Email Address: help@nspcc.org.uk

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk/

Hopefully this resource has provided you with some new ideas that you can use at your football clubs.

Maybe you can already see how some of the activities would fit well in your club. We strongly encourage you and your club to go ahead and give the methods a try, see what works make changes and most importantly, have fun!

It is extremely important to share the experiences your club has with engaging young people and being enthusiastic about promoting your club's Youth Voice. When you want to reach a mass audience, social media can be useful. You could use several social media platforms to get your message out. To reinforce again, ensure you are familiar with your social media and safeguarding policy to make certain you are doing things safely and responsibly.

This is a resource to help with applying Youth Voice in your club. You are the builder of putting together a Youth Voice ethos that really delivers for you, for your young people and for your club. Never forget how valuable your role is!

Be inspired, be imaginative, and be someone who gives young people a voice.

We would love to hear from your club's Youth Voice activities and news

Share via:

#NorthRidingFAYouthVoice or

Email: support@northridingfa.com

