



GUIDANCE NOTES NO:

3.3

GETTING A DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE CHECK (DBS CHECK)

FOR ALL

WORKING WITH UNDER-18s IN FOOTBALL

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FOR ALL

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Most children have a really great time playing football – and long may that continue. With you, our job is to ensure they continue to enjoy the game in a fun and safe environment.

The FA and County FA s recognise their collective responsibility for children and young people within football. Clearly, this same duty of care is shared by every coach/manager, referee, first-aider and welfare officer within youth football. So this document is a reminder of your responsibilities in relation to Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS Checks).

Anyone working in an eligible role, directly working with children and young people – such as coaches/managers, referees, first-aider and welfare officer – MUST have an in-date, FA-Accepted DBS Check as part of responsible recruitment practice before they work or volunteer within football.

Note: When the word/phrase 'children' or 'children and young people' is used in this document, this means persons aged 18 and under, playing in organised leagues. It currently does not include this age group playing in open-age football.



WHO NEEDS A DBS CHECK?

Everyone aged 16 years or over who undertakes any unsupervised roles with children.

These roles could be managing, training, coaching, supervising. They include giving advice or guidance on well-being, caring for children or driving a vehicle solely for children on behalf of a club or organisation.

Anyone performing these roles MUST obtain a DBS Check. This Check is made against the Government's national list of those people barred from working with children (the 'Children's Barred List'). Then the checked person has to be approved to work in youth football.

For a full list of those who need a DBS Check to work in football, see **Guidance Notes 3.5 – Eligibility of Roles**.

WHY DO YOU NEED ONE?

Mainly because of football's overall responsibility to children, their parents and carers.

Rightly, parents and carers are increasingly asking people in football two questions:

1. Are you following the correct procedures when recruiting people to work with children?
2. Are all the relevant people checked?

The response has to be 'yes' in both cases if the integrity of clubs, leagues, County FAs and The FA is to be preserved.

As a coach/manager, referee or first-aider, if you don't have an in-date, FA-Accepted DBS Check in place, we will not be able to use you in your vital and valued role in football – and no-one wants that.

HOW LONG DOES AN FA DBS CHECK LAST?

Three years. A DBS Check is a snapshot in time and therefore need to be renewed. We do this every three years to ensure The FA has current conviction and barring information on the people working with children and young people.

Note for FA-licensed coaches:

To be licensed to coach children, you need to hold an in-date DBS Check.

For information on FA Education requirements please go to: [TheFA.com/about-football-association/st-georges-park/discover/education/licensed-coaches-club](https://www.thefa.com/about-football-association/st-georges-park/discover/education/licensed-coaches-club) or email Education@TheFA.com.

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN 'IN-DATE' OR CURRENT DBS CHECK?

To be 'in-date' means:

A DBS Check must have been completed within the last three years and be valid for the current season.

CAN YOU APPLY FOR AN FA DBS CHECK ONLINE?

Yes – and we'd prefer you to use this method. It's cheaper, easier and faster.

Club Welfare Officers (CWO); When you apply for – or renew – a DBS Check online, your County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) will still need to see your original ID documents, but they can now verify these online as well.

Coaches/managers/first-aiders: When you apply for – or renew – a DBS Check online, your CWO will still need to see your original ID documents. But your CWO can now verify these online as well. For more information when applying for your DBS Check online, please speak to your CWO or contact your County FA.

Referees: When you apply for – or renew – a DBS Check online, your County FA will still need to see your original ID documents, which they can now verify these online as well.

For any queries on The FA's online DBS Check application service, please contact The FA's DBS Unit on **0845 210 8080** or via email to: FAchecks@TheFA.com

DO YOU NEED A NEW FA DBS CHECK IF YOU ALREADY HAVE A CURRENT ONE, BUT HAVE STARTED A DIFFERENT ROLE WITHIN YOUTH FOOTBALL?

No. If you already have an in-date, FA-Accepted DBS Check you do not need another one for your new role within grassroots football.

For example, you could be a coach/manager that's changed clubs. Or a newly-qualified referee who already holds a current DBS Check.

Also, if you have a DBS Check from outside football which you wish to bring into football, you may not need a new one, provided it meets the portability criteria:

- It has been registered for the Disclosure & Barring Service update service;
- It is for the right workforce (Child).

There is a one-off charge of £10 for 'porting' a DBS Check from outside football into The FA. For most volunteers it is quicker and cheaper to apply for an FA CRC.

A FULL LIST OF COUNTY FA CONTACTS IS AVAILABLE AT: [THEFA.COM/ABOUT-FOOTBALLASSOCIATION/WHO-WE-ARE/COUNTY-FAS](https://www.thefa.com/about-football-association/who-we-are/county-fas)

CAN I RENEW MY FA DBS CHECK AUTOMATICALLY?

Yes. You can now have life-time renewals of your FA DBS Check which means you will not need to re-apply every three years.

To take advantage of this you will need to:

- Register your DBS Check with the Disclosure and Barring Service*;
- Inform The FA DBS Unit who administer the Checks. They will charge an annual £10 administration fee.

***You must register your DBS Check with the DBS update service within 19 days of issue. If you do not register within 19 days, you will need to complete the renewals' process again in three years' time.**

Once registered for this service, The FA DBS Unit will make annual checks on your DBS Check status for as long as you remain in football.

ISN'T HAVING A DBS CHECK A BIT INTRUSIVE?

It's certainly not meant to be – it's simply a way any organisation involved with children should operate and is a requirement under the Protection of Freedoms Act, 2012.

However, we fully understand that as soon as someone (e.g. your CWO or a County FA official) tells someone they need a DBS Check, that person may be affronted by the implication that there may be something inappropriate or untoward in their behaviour. This is perfectly understandable.

Nevertheless, The FA, County FAs and clubs with youth teams have a responsibility to ensure that no-one barred from working with children is allowed to work or volunteer within under-18 football.

Everyone would surely agree that we must provide a safe infrastructure for children and young people to participate in our national game.

Carrying out the right checks, ensuring those in key roles are educated on the indicators of abuse – and know how to refer any concerns – are fundamental to creating a fun and safe environment.

DOES IT TAKE A LONG TIME?

No. If you've never had a DBS Check, don't worry. It's simple and totally confidential.

It only takes a few minutes to complete the form online and your CWO, County FA or The FA can provide assistance if you have any queries.

If your Check does reveal some information, this does not automatically exclude you from working with vulnerable groups in football. The FA is very fair, but it does have a duty to make sure the information a Check may reveal does not affect the safety of children. Every Disclosure is assessed individually, taking into account the person's age at the time of any relevant incident; the time expired since the conviction, the way the court dealt with the crime and other salient information.

Almost everyone sails through the Check, but identifying anyone who could pose a risk to children is so important to children, parents/carers – and all of us working in football.

If you are worried about the process, please don't be.

FOOTBALL REALLY NEEDS YOU – SO PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE A CURRENT DBS CHECK





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