

Setting up an Open-Age Club



Our quick guide will give you a few things you need to consider. Things can get a bit confusing at times as some processes need to be followed in a certain way. If you have questions beyond this guide, then we've added some contacts for you to reach out to along the way!

Where do we start?!

Before you even start the process of setting up a club, you'll need to think about the following:

- Do you have enough players for a team that will be committed?
- Do you have somewhere to play your home fixtures and train throughout the winter?
- Do you have at least two people that are willing to manage the administrative side of running a club including working with Oxfordshire FA, managing finances and creating policies?
- Do you have someone that is willing to manage the team and invest time in obtaining the relevant qualifications?
- Are you committed to meeting Safeguarding Responsibilities in Open-age Football if you plan to have 16- or 17-year olds participating?
- Have you decided on a club name?

Once you are able to answer yes to all of the above, you can start on your journey to your club kicking off for the first time!

If you need support finding a pitch, please get in touch at this point.

When do we need to start thinking about things?

The start of the traditional season generally starts around the first or second week in September, so we will work towards there:

January to April – You will need to start asking yourselves the questions at the start of this guide. There is not too much you can do at this point other than research the leagues you might want to enter and make contact with them to ask what they require you to do to become a member and when by. Then start considering advertising for players and obtaining a suitable venue

May – Affiliation to Oxfordshire FA for the next season opens. This is mandatory and you'll find more info later. Applications for leagues will also close around mid-May!

June – Most Adult leagues will have their AGM's in June, which is when you will need to be voted in by the member clubs. The league committee will likely ask to meet you beforehand to get a better understanding of what the purpose of the club is. You might need to introduce yourself to a room of representatives from each of the member clubs before they vote on whether to allow your club into the league. Don't worry too much about this, it normally goes without incident!

1st July – The new football season officially begins. If you have completed your affiliation prior to this then it will be on 1st July that this becomes active. It will last until June 30th the following year.

July and August – Concentrate on working hard to give the players the best experience. This is a good time for coaches to educate themselves by accessing any courses that Oxfordshire FA are running.



Who can help? Development@Oxfordshirefa.com

Affiliation to Oxfordshire FA

Each year, all clubs need to be members with Oxfordshire FA to be able to play affiliated football. It is normal to complete this by 1 July so that systems are loaded that then allow leagues to create fixtures and importantly for you to register your players for the season (players will need to have emails linked to their individual records).

To start this process, please contact Oxfordshire FA's Governance Team via Sanctioning@oxfordshirefa.com to get yourself and your club setup on the Whole Game System. This is currently the platform for football administration and will allow you to complete your membership online.

As part of this membership on the Whole Game System you will receive various insurances, have the opportunity to enter Oxfordshire FA County Cups and inform us of who will be involved at the club. It is available 24 hours a day and you can save your progress and return at any point.



Who can help? Sanctioning@Oxfordshirefa.com

Roles at the Club

There are three** key roles that will need to be fulfilled within an Open-age Club. Importantly, these can be held by the same person, but we do discourage this as it is not particularly sustainable.

*** If you are setting up an open age disability team within your club, you will be required to have a Welfare Officer. Further details of this role and requirements can be found below.*

The following page will give you details on many different roles that you may look to appoint at the club: <http://www.oxfordshirefa.com/volunteers/volunteering-roles>

Chairperson

This person will Chair the committee meetings and AGM, assist the Secretary to produce the agendas and lead the Committee in making decisions for the benefit of the whole club including disciplinary matters.

Main responsibilities:

- Chair committee meetings/AGM
- Agree monthly agenda for committee meetings and the AGM
- Lead on decision making that will be for the benefit of the club

Secretary

This role is the first point of contact at the club for any external enquiries and the person that Oxfordshire FA will send all our communication to, so it is pivotal in making the club run smoothly.

Main responsibilities

- Attending league meetings

- Applying for membership to the County FA and league(s)
- Registering players to the league(s)
- Organising the club AGM and other club meetings

Treasurer

The main purpose of this job is to look after the finances of the club.

Main responsibilities:

- Collecting subscriptions and all money due to the organisation
- Carry out the banking functions, including being signatory with at least one other officer
- Paying the bills and recording information
- Keeping up-to-date records of all financial transactions
- Ensuring that funds are spent properly
- Reporting regularly to the Committee on the financial position and presenting a year-end financial report to the AGM

Welfare Officer (For Clubs with Open Age Disability teams only)

The importance of this role cannot be underestimated. This person is not just the first point of contact for any safeguarding issues at the club, but should influence a safe, fun and inclusive environment across the game.

It is important to note that this role requires additional training. They need to complete the following:

- Safeguarding Children Course (online modules & takes roughly 2 hours to complete)
- Welfare Officer Workshop (2-hour virtual workshop delivered by The FA)

Details of these workshops and availability can be found on **below**:

FA Safeguarding Course

<https://thebootroom.thefa.com/learning/qualifications/safeguarding-children-course>

FA Welfare Officer Course

<https://thebootroom.thefa.com/learning/qualifications/welfare-officers-course>

This individual will need both of these and an FA approved DBS check in place on their record before the system will allow the club to become a member. Please note that due to the various parties who supply information towards a DBS record, then it can take six weeks (sometimes longer) to get it through and on their records.

Main responsibilities:

- Liaising with the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer, the League Welfare Officer, other clubs Welfare Officers and at times, external organisations that may include the police, NSPCC or social services
- Ensure relevant policies are in place and followed
- Work with committee members, team managers/coaches and of course parents or guardians.
- Ensure the responsibilities of the role are diligently undertaking, including reporting concerns about safeguarding issues

- Monitor for patterns of poor practice and create action plans to address these
- Ensuring everyone who needs an FA DBS check does one and keeps it in date
- Ensuring officials complete The FA Safeguarding Children Workshop
- Ensure there is a thorough OFA Safeguarding Risk Assessment in place for all club run events such as Summer Tournaments



Who can help? Development@Oxfordshirefa.com

What safeguards do we need to think about?

What DBS's do we need in place?

In January 2020, The FA released guidelines for Safeguarding Responsibilities in Open-age Football.

This states that all adult teams that wish to play 16 or 17-year olds must have all manager(s)/coach(es) with an in-date FA DBS (Criminal Record Check).

If all your players will be 18 years of age and older then this is not a requirement. However, you will not be able to register or play anyone aged 16 or 17 throughout the season. If there is a possibility you may sign 16- or 17-year olds at some point throughout the season, we recommend you put your club in a position to meet the requirements. Please note that due to the various parties who supply information towards a DBS record, then it can take six weeks (sometimes longer) to get it through and on their records

If your club will operate Open Age Disability teams, the following page provides you with additional guidance and requirements around Safeguarding Adults in Disability Football:

<http://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/section-10-safeguarding-adults>

Please get in touch if you require support and advice around DBS checks or Safeguarding Adults in Disability Football.



Who can help? Safeguarding@Oxfordshirefa.com

What leagues are available?

We have a variety of leagues across the county. Below is information to help you identify appropriate leagues. You can find more information on their websites, but it is important to remember that many leagues will close applications around mid-May.

Please visit <http://www.oxfordshirefa.com/leagues-and-clubs/county-leagues> to find out what adult leagues may be suitable for your new club!



Who can help? Development@Oxfordshirefa.com

How about finances?

The sustainability of a club relies heavily on ensuring the clubs finances are in order.

With regards to expenditure, it is important to consider the following:

- Oxfordshire FA membership – this may also include County Cup Competitions
- League entry fees – this will vary depending on the league
- Purchasing balls, cones, nets, first aid kit etc
- Courses for members to go on – first aid, etc
- Purchasing kit – will you be buying training tops or jackets as well as playing kit?
- Facility hire – do they require any upfront payment for matches and training?
- Referees – the leagues set these fees, so find out how much they are so you can budget
- Fines – unfortunately, it'll be sensible to have a little left over to pay any fines incurred

Can you make use of the following income sources?

- Subscriptions – these must strike a balance between being affordable for players but enough to cover enough expenditure
- Grants – from time to time there are grants available to support the creation of new teams. Please get in touch with us for more information on any available grants.
- Fundraising – There are lots of ideas online about how you may fundraise. As well as sponsored events, you may be able to take advantage of joining charity events, etc
- Sponsorship – Finding a headline sponsor is great, but challenging! Another idea may be to sell tickets at something around £50 each to lots of companies, with one of them being chosen at random to be a shirt sponsor. One thing to make sure of is that you constantly make your sponsors feel valued.



Who can help? Development@Oxfordshirefa.com

I've heard about England Football Accreditation programme, what is it?

England Football Accreditation is The FA's accreditation scheme open to all grassroots clubs and leagues. It aims to raise standards in the grassroots game, supporting the development of clubs and leagues, recognising, and rewarding commitment, quality and achievement.



ACCREDITED
PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL

England Football Accreditation is for clubs and leagues who can be proud to be places where people want to play. These are the clubs who demonstrate they offer well-run, safe and sustainable football.

For more information about England Football Accreditation, click here:

<https://www.Englandfootball.com/run/leagues-and-clubs/England-football-accreditation>

As part of England Football Accreditation, adult clubs are expected to have specific qualifications in place. Further details can be found via the link above. We have provided you with links to qualifications that will be useful for you & your team officials.

FA Introduction to First Aid in Football

Introduction to First Aid in Football is an online course suitable for anyone looking to develop their knowledge and understanding of medical care for players of all ages. This course can be completed separately but is also part of the FA Introduction to Football Coaching. This course is a minimum requirement for adult teams.
[Click Here for More Information](#)

FA BT Playmaker

BT Playmaker by England Football is our new, free online entry-level football course perfect for anyone interested in taking a more active role in grassroots football.
[Click Here for More Information](#)

FA Introduction to Football Coaching

Introduction to Coaching Football is the perfect online football coaching course for anyone looking to take a more active role in the game. You need to have completed the BT Playmaker to enrol on this course.
[Click Here for More Information](#)

FA Safeguarding Children Course

Providing club representatives, coaches, referees and Managers with an awareness of best practice in safeguarding children in football. This course can be completed separately but is also part of the FA Introduction to Football Coaching
[Click Here for More Information](#)



Who can help? Development@Oxfordshirefa.com

This is great.... but I still have questions, who do I ask?

At Oxfordshire FA we have a team dedicated to creating the best football environment possible for you in Oxfordshire. Please do not hesitate to get in touch!

Give us a call on 01993 778586

Or, if email is your thing,.

For Adult Male – Michael Thurlow via Development@Oxfordshirefa.com

For Women & Girls – James Shiplee via Development@Oxfordshirefa.com

For Disability – Michael Thurlow via Development@Oxfordshirefa.com

We hope this short guide has provided you with the relevant details to get started. If you have any further questions or require support, please get in touch with Oxfordshire FA's Football Development Team via the below details.