



**FOR  
ALL**

STAFFORDSHIRE FA

# GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND COACHES



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# WELCOME

It is always great to see new players, parents and coaches embark upon their journey in football.

We all have a valuable part to play to ensure young players have the best start possible. Whilst we all hope to see the players develop their skills, the main focus for all of us must be to ensure that players can develop to the best of their ability in a safe, friendly and fun environment.

I would ask all coaches to consider not only how important their role with player development is, but also their role in encouraging supporters and players to fully embrace positivity in sport. Players and supporters will take their lead on what is acceptable from their coach. Always be positive when speaking to fellow coaches, referees and opposition players, remembering that the result is not really the most important thing.

Finally, if you are unsure of anything, remember the league will always be there to provide support and guidance.



**Clyde Redfern,**  
**Walsall Junior Youth Football League**  
Staffordshire FA Council Member  
Chairman of Participation Committee



May I take this opportunity to welcome you to youth football within your football club and the wider family of Staffordshire FA.

I hope this handbook provides an insight to youth football. When I started my journey as a coach and parent some five years ago, it will have helped provide advice and guidance at an earlier point, allowing in dealing with situations maybe in a better manner.

All the football clubs within our community work hard to provide an excellent, fun and safe football environment for players, parents and supporters to enjoy. It can be difficult or frustrating but can also be incredibly rewarding for all.

We need your support to ensure we keep delivering community football for our players by being respectful of each other. Above all, development should be seen as more important than winning.

**Richard Webb,**  
**Lichfield City U10s Coach**  
**and Club Secretary**  
Staffordshire FA Council Member  
Club Representative

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## TEAMS

Teams may be pulled together with groups of friends from school, from an Under-6 soccer school or due to high numbers, the creation of another team.

All teams will be led by coaches who are often volunteers. Coaching isn't an easy task; the majority of our coaching workforce will be parents who are stepping forward into coaching for the very first time. Our youth team coaches come from all walks of life with different experiences of football or possibly none at all.

All team officials who are in a capacity which may see them leading the children on their own must have a Criminal Records Check. This includes the coach/manager, assistant coach or parent helper.

To complete a Criminal Records Check, please visit [www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/criminal-record-checks](http://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/criminal-record-checks)

In addition to planning and delivering training and matches, which could be over five hours a week already, the role of a coach can become very time-consuming unless they are surrounded by a good network of willing volunteers within the team. Roles may include assistant coach, team treasurer, team secretary, Respect Marshall and match day logistics, such as setting the goals and pitch up.

Coaches - share the workload! Parents -offer to help and take some of the stress off!

Without the hard work of our volunteers, there would be no youth football.

## CLUBS

All teams must be members of the County FA through a club. The club's membership will ensure that teams are covered by the appropriate Personal Accident and Public Liability Insurance. They also ensure the club is adhering to The FA's safeguarding procedures. All clubs will have a Club Welfare Officer. Please find out who your Club Welfare Officer is and have their number stored in your phone.

Clubs will often be filled with experienced heads who are able to support and mentor new coaches and volunteers. The club will also have a committee of at least a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Welfare Officer. Other roles may include kit coordinator and a fundraiser.

Club meetings are a great opportunity for coaches to talk, share best practice and learn from each other. Clubs can be the size of small businesses, especially if they manage their own facility, so any expertise is usually greatly appreciated.

Clubs only need a Welfare Officer, Committee and coach with a CRC to reach minimum standards from The FA. Each nominated team coach will need a CRC to meet minimum standards, however some clubs commit to much more than that to get The FA's stamp of approval, by becoming a Charter Standard Club. This ensures that the club run and operate in a transparent manner, has adopted FA guidelines and policies and every team has a coach who has their FA Level 1 Coaching Certificate, which includes Safeguarding and Emergency Aid. To achieve Charter Standard Accreditation, please contact Staffordshire FA.

[www.staffordshirefa.com/leagues-and-clubs/club-management/membership](http://www.staffordshirefa.com/leagues-and-clubs/club-management/membership)

## **LEAGUES**

Leagues will manage the competition which teams play in. Teams will be expected to register players through The FA's Whole Game System website, with permission granted through the parent club to coaches. Fixtures will be distributed and published through The FA Full Time website and FA Matchday App.

Leagues must follow a set of guidelines called the FA Standard Code of Rules (Youth). These will be distributed at the league's AGM and can often be found on the website. Leagues may issue discipline charges aligned to their rules, and clubs may be fined in line with the fines tariff. Leagues can only issue discipline based on issues related to the competition organisation and not incidents within the matches themselves. Any league fine can be appealed to the County FA.

Leagues will also have a League Welfare Officer who will work with clubs to address any issues which may be related to the Respect campaign, and can be contacted should the Club Welfare Officer not be available or appropriate.

In some leagues, there may be central venues where matches are played, where the league will arrange the pitch, kick-off time and referee, with a match fee paid per game. Other leagues will arrange fixtures and referees with it the club's responsibility to find a pitch which they may own or use through the local authority.

## **THE STAFFORDSHIRE FA**

The Staffordshire FA governs the game in the county. The Staffordshire FA lead on safeguarding and membership of clubs and leagues, ensuring that football is played in line with The FA's guidelines and rules. The Staffordshire FA also handles discipline issues which happen on a matchday.

The Staffordshire FA look to develop all areas of the game, whether adult, youth, male, female, futsal or disability, through use of FA programmes but also facility development. FA Coach Education is also delivered and coordinated through the counties. We run County Cup competitions which start at U15 upwards.

At The Staffordshire FA we have a number of focus and working groups and are keen to engage with leagues, clubs, players, parents and coaches to help us guide the work which we are doing in the local area. If you'd like to be involved, then please get in touch. There is a Designated Safeguarding Officer in the county who is contactable for anybody within football. The DSO will work alongside Club and League Welfare Officers in addition to external bodies like the police and local authorities. [www.staffordshirefa.com](http://www.staffordshirefa.com)

## **THE FA**

The FA is the National Governing Body for football in England. They set the competition rules and guidelines on how teams, clubs and leagues run. The FA is the main funding body who support County FAs with their work in the local community. The FA support funding for facility development in the country through the Football Foundation, which is in partnership with the Department for Culture Media and Sport and the Premier League. The FA also has a safeguarding department, who assesses Criminal Records Checks for the suitability of volunteers within the game. [www.thefa.com](http://www.thefa.com)

# CHARTER STANDARD

Charter Standard is the recommended operating standard which the FA encourages clubs and leagues to work at to provide the optimum experience and environment for players and volunteers to thrive.

Charter Standard Clubs must have appropriate policies and procedures in place, an elected committee and accounts.

In Youth Clubs, every team must also have a fully-qualified coach with them. This includes having the Level 1 Qualification, Safeguarding Children Workshop and Emergency First Aid.

In Adult Clubs, every team must have a qualified First Aider with them.

Clubs must maintain their Charter Standard status annually. As a reward, the clubs receive discounts on FA courses, kit and equipment from The FA and the status would also support any funding applications or facility development which they would be seeking to apply for.

Is your club Charter Standard?

Learn more by visiting [www.staffordshirefa.com/leagues-and-clubs/charter-standard](http://www.staffordshirefa.com/leagues-and-clubs/charter-standard)



# RESPECT

The FA's Respect campaign is pivotal in trying to create a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone involved in youth football. The Respect campaign leads with the tag line **WE ONLY DO POSITIVE** and sets out the following key messages for your club to take forward and implement.

**Create a positive environment:** Coaches, parents, players and referees should give and receive positive messages and feedback. People respond to positive messages rather than criticism. Any criticism should be delivered in a constructive manner.

**Lead by a positive example:** We all react differently to situations but it is essential that the adults set the right examples. Always enjoy the game but keep your emotions in control. It is important that we are humble in victory and gracious in defeat. Clubs should use their codes of conduct to set out to coaches, parents and players behavioural expectations and the standards the club want to achieve on matchdays and training.

**Understand your players:** Think about your players as people first, learn about their backgrounds and personal circumstances. This will help you in managing the team and making decisions. Get to know what your players want to achieve and what they want from your club. This will make the game much more enjoyable for all.

**Build a positive team around you:** Clear communication between everyone is essential for building a positive environment. Everyone needs to understand the philosophy of the team and the aims of the club. Get other people to support in roles; Respect Marshall, first aider or subs collector are all examples of roles that can reduce stress, focus minds and make the running of the team easier.

**Instil an anything is possible attitude:** Try not to put limits around what may be achievable. Get young people to set small goals to keep achieving. Remember the power of sport in giving young people an opportunity to express themselves regardless of their background and ability.

Think about these areas and how these can be developed within your club. Getting these basic areas right will make everyone's football experience much more enjoyable. Also remember to use respect barriers and conduct respect handshakes at games. These help to set the right tone but need to be reinforced as to why they are there with spectators and parents.

More information about Respect can be accessed at [www.staffordshirefa.com/about/respect](http://www.staffordshirefa.com/about/respect)



## RESPECT MARSHALLS

All youth leagues with membership to Staffordshire FA have implemented Respect Marshalls at youth games. The Respect Marshall for each team will go back to their respective spectators and explain the referee's message. The Marshalls will be identified by wearing a yellow vest. They will not act as stewards at a football match, but if they witness unacceptable behaviour from spectators, they should bring this to the attention of the manager and referee for them to deal with. In extreme cases, this may lead to the match being abandoned if behaviour is persistent.

## UNDER 18 REFEREES ARMBANDS

All referees under the age of 18 have been given a yellow armband to wear when officiating youth games. This is to act as a visual reminder that the referee is still legally a child and subject to children's safeguarding legislation. A referee of any age should not be abused but a young referee who is still learning the game is still developing their abilities in being a match official and should be supported by the adults involved in the matchday environment. Remember, mistakes will happen and this is how we learn. Confronting referees is not a positive experience for anyone but marking the referee's performance correctly helps identify training opportunities through the correct supportive channels with the league and County FA.



## PETER HEAFIELD

**Message from the Staffs FA Council Member, Referees Association Representative and Chairman of the Workforce Committee:**

"It is great to see so many people interested in refereeing football matches. The majority are young boys and girls and we have to remember that, they too are beginning to learn how to manage a football match. It is important to remember players have generally played and have been coached from as young as five, referees do not start to officiate until they are at least 14 years of age, and they will make honest mistakes. Remember the phrase, "he who never made anything, never made a mistake." But they be the next Michael Oliver or Sian Massey.

Football requires referees for all football; but we would like to see players who have finished playing give it a go, some of the finest Sunday league players have gone on to make very good referees, some progressing to the top of the tree.

We host many courses expertly delivered by the trained tutor team in a variety of ways, and there is a support mechanism being put into place to help and guide you at the start of the refereeing ladder, then as you go up the scale to higher levels of football, with mentoring coaching and official observers to support and guide. So give it a go you may find you enjoy the challenge. I know I did."



# RESPECT MARSHALL GUIDANCE



**GREET** - The Official(s), welcome them to your club, provide any information which would be of relevance to the referee(s)



**ACKNOWLEDGE** - The positive child focused environment which the referee wants to create in a pre-game talk. Please relay the message to your spectators.



**MONITOR** - The environment during the game, be visible to the referee, so you are easily contactable should you be needed.



**ESCALATE** - Any incidents which the referee, club, league or CFA need to be aware of. Do not put yourself in a dangerous situation by confronting spectators.

For any further information or to report an incident please email  
[support@staffordshirefa.com](mailto:support@staffordshirefa.com)

# SAFEGUARDING IN FOOTBALL

Making sure the game is safe and enjoyable for everyone should be a number one priority within the game. There are a number of approaches to help promote good safeguarding practices, which include the following:

- Anyone with regular contact with young players should have a current DBS accepted by the FA on their FAN. They should also be recorded on the Whole Game System against the role they have in the team.
- Club committees are required to complete the Online Safeguarding for Committee Members course before they can affiliate
- The FA administers Safeguarding Children Workshops that anyone can attend. These are mandatory for Level 1 and 2 coaches as part of the qualification, and for Club Welfare Officers but can be accessed by anyone and provide a basic understanding around safeguarding children.
- Know your Club Welfare Officer. Every club has a Club Welfare Officer who is there to support anyone with a safeguarding question or concern. It is important that you know who they are and how to contact them. They are supported by a League Welfare Officer and by the County FA's Designated Safeguarding Officer.
- All clubs should have a safeguarding policy, anti-bullying policy and equality policy to support everyone within the club.
- If you have a concern, report it. Any concerns should be reported to your Club Welfare Officer, or alternatively you can contact your League Welfare Officer or the County FA's Designated Safeguarding Officer, Jan Scott, on [support@staffordshirefa.com](mailto:support@staffordshirefa.com). You can also contact your local children's services or the police if you feel the matter is urgent.
- Know the FA Whistleblowing Policy. If you have reported something and you feel this is not being addressed correctly, escalate the issue. This can follow the route mentioned above and can include reporting to The FA's safeguarding team at [safeguarding@thefa.com](mailto:safeguarding@thefa.com)
- Always seek consent for taking photographs or images. It is best practice to obtain written consent of both teams' parents before filming or taking any images of children playing. This is to protect any child subject to any legal protection orders.
- Use Social media correctly. Coaches should not directly contact under 18 players but use open group aps such as WhatsApp which include parents in the group.

There is a wide range of support around best practice and safeguarding children on the Staffordshire FA website. Please visit [www.staffordshirefa.com/about/rules-and-regulations/safeguarding-and-welfare](http://www.staffordshirefa.com/about/rules-and-regulations/safeguarding-and-welfare)

# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

In 2009 The FA changed the way that youth football was played, introducing Mini Soccer and 9v9 football to promote player enjoyment and development. Children began playing on appropriately sized pitched, with smaller goals and a smaller ball which gradually increased in size as they got older.

The way competition was organised also changed. Development focused football was introduced which aims to provide teams with the appropriate level of competition, to keep games close in score, where possible, whilst not focusing and dwelling on the end result of the game, which isn't always a good indicator as to the development of the players or indeed their enjoyment of the game.

This interspersed with three trophy events, which could be a mini-league or cup which start at two weeks long, up until U11 where the three events can be up to six weeks long. At U12, the rules on how competitions can be run are removed, allowing full flexibility for leagues to be innovative in organising competitions.

## ENGLAND FOUNDATION PHASE DNA

This aim of the EnglandDNA.com resource is to help clubs and coaches at all levels of the game learn more about the vision for future England teams.

Players and the ways of working are being developed to ensure consistency and connection between all age-group teams and impairment-specific development and senior squads.

This has seen success, with the U17 and U20 male teams winning the World Cup and the seniors reaching the semi-finals of the 2018 World Cup. The Women also reached the semi-finals of the Euros in 2017.

For more information, please visit [www.thefa.com/learning/england-dna](http://www.thefa.com/learning/england-dna)



# KEY ENGLAND DNA PRIORITIES FOR PLAYERS AGED U7-10

- **Love the game** – It is important that players enjoy playing the game. Whilst winning is one aspect of what children enjoy, there are many others which come ahead of it in terms of importance, like learning new skills, having fun working as a team and playing with their friends.
- **Love the ball** – Young players want to have the ball at their feet all the time. They may not understand the benefits of passing yet so make the most of this opportunity by encouraging them to dribble and take people on, using tricks, fakes and skills. They will have plenty of opportunity to develop other areas of the game as they get older, but this age is key to developing good individual ball skills or working in small groups like 1v1, 2v1 or 2v2 scenarios.
- **Equal playing time** – No one knows who the next Raheem Sterling or Fran Kirby is at Mini Soccer. There are so many variables whilst they are playing over the coming years so it is important that all players play a similar amount of time, so they get the opportunity to develop in matches.
- **Rotation of positions** – Many senior professionals have started their life in different positions. England international Ashley Young has played most of his careers as a winger, now is a right back at Manchester United and played the last World Cup at left wing back! Rachael Daley has played as a striker and defender for England. We don't want to restrict players' potential so at mini soccer ensure that players get the opportunity to experience playing in many different positions, including in goal!
- **Let them make their own decisions** – Don't tell the players what to do when they've got the ball on the pitch, use breaks in matches to give advice or guidance. It can be quite daunting having coaches and parents all trying to tell you different things at one time, and there is nothing to say that it's always right either!
- **Help players to reflect on matches or training** – Some players won't want to discuss football after the match or training has finished, but if they do, try to ask open-ended questions. What did you enjoy? What did you do well today? How did it make you feel? Is there anything which you could be better at? Coaches and parents should work together and try to help reinforce the same messages which they are giving in training and matches.
- **Encourage the players to play other sports** – Whilst we are thrilled that children are choosing football, there are other sports which can develop them physically, socially and psychologically. Wayne Rooney was a keen boxer, Millie Bright was an equestrian, the Neville brothers played cricket to a high level and Jack Butland played rugby.

# Make sure that you are playing the correct format as of the 2019/20 season



This document highlights the formats of football which should be played across all age groups. We encourage all leagues to play in these formats. **Mixed football** has now **approved for all age groups up to Under 18s**.

## Player | Pitch Size | Ball Size | Goal Size | Number of trophy events

	Player	Pitch Size	Ball Size	Goal Size	Number of trophy events
Under 7s Under 8s	 5 v 5	 40 x 30 YD 37 x 27 M	 3	 6 x 12 FT 1.83 x 3.66 M	 3 x trophy events lasting a maximum of two weeks each
Under 9s	 7 v 7	 60 x 40 YD 55 x 37 M	 3	 6 x 12 FT 1.83 x 3.66 M	 3 x trophy events lasting a maximum of four weeks each
Under 10s	 7 v 7	 60 x 40 YD 55 x 37 M	 4	 6 x 12 FT 1.83 x 3.66 M	 3 x trophy events lasting a maximum of four weeks each
Under 11s	 9 v 9	 80 x 50 YD 73 x 46 M	 4	 7 x 16 FT 2.13 x 4.88 M	 3 x trophy events lasting a maximum of six weeks each
Under 12s	 9 v 9	 80 x 50 YD 73 x 46 M	 4	 7 x 16 FT 2.13 x 4.88 M	 One season long league table
Under 13s Under 14s	 11 v 11	 90 x 55 YD 82 x 50 M	 4	 7 x 21 FT 2.13 x 6.40 M	 One season long league table
Under 15s Under 16s	 11 v 11	 100 x 60 YD 91 x 55 M	 5	 8 x 24 FT 2.44 x 7.32 M	 One season long league table
Under 17s Under 18s / 21s Senior (18+)	 11 v 11	 110 x 70 YD 100 x 64 M	 5	 8 x 24 FT 2.44 x 7.32 M	 One season long league table

# COACHING

Staffordshire FA offer many Coach Education opportunities throughout the county.

FA Level 1, 2 and UEFA B Coaching Courses are regularly organised, with discount given to Charter Standard Clubs. The FA is currently funding any team which does not have a qualified coach to go through the FA Level 1 - details have been sent to Club Secretaries.

In addition to formal courses, The FA also offers informal opportunities free of charge. There are regular Coaching Roadshow events held across the county, with varying topics led by FA staff and tutors. You don't have to be a qualified coach to attend these events, or even a coach! We just want to educate as many people as possible into how to create an environment in which players learn, enjoy the game and thrive.

The FA funds an FA Coach Mentor Programme, where Mentors are placed with clubs in the community to support their development. This could be at training or a match day and is entirely based around meeting the needs of the individual coach. They are also happy to run club events for coaches.

Learn more about Staffordshire FA's Coach Education programme by visiting [www.staffordshirefa.com/coaches/development-and-courses](http://www.staffordshirefa.com/coaches/development-and-courses)



# CLUB ADMIN/ COACHES TIMELINE

## JUNE

League AGM

## JULY

Membership to County FA must be completed in order to play in summer tournaments and be insured to train and play friendlies. Register players to the league via the Whole Game System.

## OCTOBER

First trophy event competition usually takes place

## DECEMBER

Leagues will close for Christmas

## FEBRUARY

Second trophy event of the season

## APRIL

Membership with County FA

## MAY

League Cup finals

## HAVE A BREAK

Let children play other sports. Volunteers, have a well-deserved rest!

## SEPTEMBER

League season starts

## NOVEMBER

Consider winter indoor training

## JANUARY

Some leagues may have a winter break

## MARCH/APRIL

Third trophy event of the season

## THE TYPICAL WEEK

### MONDAY

Find out how many people are coming to training - Plan session

### TUES/WEDS

Training session  
- Confirm match with opposition and referee

### THURSDAY

Find out player availability for the weekend

### FRIDAY

Plan warm up, team selection and playing time

### SATURDAY/SUNDAY GAME DAY

9am - Set pitch up (goals/corner flags/nets/respect barrier) Check pitch, Set out warm up arrive  
10am - Players and opposition arrive  
10.10 - Warm up (15 minutes)  
10.25 - Team talk  
Respect Marshall, referee and manager meeting (home team's responsibility)  
10.30 - Kick-off  
11.30 - Match ends  
Take pitch down and pay referee  
Fill out match report online via Full Time/Matchday app

# COACHING TESTIMONIAL

**The Coaching Representative on Staffordshire FA's Council, Keith Halliday, had this to say on the impact of our coach education programme on Berkswich FC...**

"Berkswich FC has benefitted hugely from the increased resources that Staffordshire FA has invested on coaches and coaching resources in the last few years.

The feedback from our volunteers is that all the courses (including Level 1, 2 and UEFA B) are more relevant to the all-round skills that are needed to develop local community teams into teams that compete at a regional level.

The introduction of coaching mentors has been great for coaching development at our weekly training sessions and has increased the level of respect from parents who appreciate the on-site support for their team. The FA coaches have successfully coped with so many different coaching styles.

As a club, Berkswich FC now has three girls-only teams. This could only have been achieved with the continuous support of the coaching staff at Staffordshire FA."



**Keith Halliday**  
Coaching Representative on  
Staffordshire FA's Council



# FUTSAL

Futsal is a version of the game which originates from South America, with many top players such as Messi and Ronaldo attributing some of their skill development down to playing the game as a youngster.

Futsal, which can be played in its own right or as part of a football training programme, is growing across the county, with traditional Youth Football Leagues utilising Futsal for their winter programme for Mini Soccer Teams or running leagues alongside their football offer.

## **SIMPLE FUTSAL RULES:**

- Must be played on a hard court surface
- Futsal ball is heavier with reduced bounce
- Goals are 'hockey sized' 3m x 2m
- Played to lines on the edge of a pitch
- Kick ins not, not throw ins
- 'Goal kicks' are thrown back in play by the keeper



## **BENEFITS OF FUTSAL**

- 5 v 5 game encourages touches on the ball in relation to other formats
- Enhances individual control skills when under pressure
- Emphasises the importance on maintaining team possession
- Fast paced game improves decision making
- The ball is easier to control to increase confidence to try new things
- Can continue to play / train even when the weather is poor outside!

To find out more about Futsal, please visit

[www.staffordshirefa.com/players/ways-to-play/futsal](http://www.staffordshirefa.com/players/ways-to-play/futsal)

# FEMALE FOOTBALL

Staffordshire FA and The FA are working hard alongside clubs and the Staffordshire Girls and Ladies League to develop the female game in the county.

Girls can play mixed football with boys until the age of U18, however there is a female only pathway which is thriving.

## SSE WILDCATS

The SSE Wildcats Programme exists to give girls a high-quality introduction to football. The Wildcats Centres are community based and sessions may be run in clubs, schools or leisure centres.

They are aimed at girls aged 5-11, providing a safe, fun and social environment to encourage girls into the game. From the centres, teams are encouraged to be created, utilising funding such as the 'Grow the Game' Fund through the Football Foundation to kick-start teams.

For more information around Wildcats, please follow the link; [www.thefa.com/ssewildcats](http://www.thefa.com/ssewildcats)



## STAFFORDSHIRE GIRLS AND LADIES LEAGUE

The Staffordshire Girls and Ladies League run the female game in the county, with over 120 teams competing every week. These start at U8 and run through to the adult game all across Staffordshire. The league continues to grow year on year as the girls' game continues to thrive.



## REGIONAL TALENT CENTRES

The Regional Talent Centres are the pathway for elite players in the county. In Staffordshire, Stoke City run the Regional Talent Centre at ages U10, 12, 14 and 16. This is then part of the overall England strategy for recognising players into the national representative teams. They have annual open trials at the end of the season which are promoted by both the club and the County FA.

Learn more about women's football in Staffordshire by visiting; [www.staffordshirefa.com/players/youth/girls](http://www.staffordshirefa.com/players/youth/girls)



# DISABILITY FOOTBALL

Staffordshire FA strives to make the beautiful game inclusive for all.

To contribute to the large number of players with disabilities that participate in 'mainstream' football, the county presents an extensive disability programme catering for a broad range of ages and abilities. There are currently a total of 44 affiliated teams across the county, the majority of which are 'pan' disability and therefore are open to individuals with a diverse range of disabilities including: down syndrome, cerebral palsy, sight impairment, hearing impairment, and special educational needs, to name a few.

## CHARTER STANDARD ABILITY COUNTS LEAGUE

The number of players participating in the Ability Counts League grows year on year. The league now includes four separate divisions: U12s, U16s, Adult Male Championship and Adult Male Premiership. The teams from each division have monthly fixtures that are played in various locations around the county, and at the end of every season the team with the most points across all fixtures will be crowned the county champions of their division.



## 'TURN UP AND PLAY' SESSIONS

For those individuals who want to play football without the commitment of joining a team, Staffordshire FA provides regular recreational sessions that are delivered by (minimum) FA Level 1 qualified coaches across the county. At present, there are a number of pan disability sessions available for children and young adults including both 'regular' football disability sessions, as well as the introduction of 'walking' football disability sessions to enable the inclusion of all abilities. The recreational sessions that are on offer are continually developing in response to demand and this year will see the introduction of a number of impairment-specific 'turn up and play' sessions to add to our existing pan provisions.

## TALENT ID

Think you have what it takes to play for England? Staffordshire is home to one of thirteen disability talent hubs across the country, giving players the invaluable opportunity to enter the talent pathway and start their journey towards representing their country. Regular talent days are held around the county and hosted by Stoke City FC; these are open to youths with cerebral palsy, visual impairment, and hearing impairment.

For more on disability football, simply head to [www.staffordshirefa.com/players/disability](http://www.staffordshirefa.com/players/disability)

# OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO GET INVOLVED

## TRADITIONAL GAME (MALE)

Staffordshire has a number of traditional format leagues supported by the Staffordshire FA. The Staffordshire County Senior League operates within the National League System with their Premier Division being classed at Step 7 in the pyramid.

There are also Sunday Leagues across the county with hundreds of teams, many of which would welcome new players.

## FLEXIBLE FORMAT FOOTBALL AND VETERANS

Staffordshire FA have been pioneers in the country with their Friday night Flexible Football. The games last for 60 minutes and take place fortnightly at a central venue. Leagues take place on 3G at venues such as Oak Park Leisure Centre, Penkridge Leisure Centre, Dimensions and Burton Albion FC. For more information, please visit our website or email [support@staffordshirefa.com](mailto:support@staffordshirefa.com)

## MUM'S PLAY CENTRES

Mum's Play are open sessions which are an introduction to football for any women who are aged 16+. An example of a few sessions would be Stafford Soccer Mum's, Wyrley Juniors, Brereton Social, Pelsall Villa, Stafford Rangers, Blurton Reds, Burton Albion and Sporting Khalsa. These are often women who have little or no experience of playing football before but also welcome to people who are returning to the game. To find your local session, please visit [www.staffordshirefa.com/players/women/mums-play-football](http://www.staffordshirefa.com/players/women/mums-play-football)

## WOMEN'S VETERANS LEAGUE

Ladies Over 30s League is run on Thursday evenings at Penkridge Leisure Centre. This is a step up from the Mum's Play sessions in a competitive league but still welcoming and open to teams of all abilities. For more details on the Ladies Over 30s League recreational opportunities, email [Bethan.Woolley@StaffordshireFA.com](mailto:Bethan.Woolley@StaffordshireFA.com)

## REFEREEING

Staffordshire FA are always looking to recruit new referees, especially adults who are able to officiate in the older youth ages and adult football. Refereeing is a great way to keep fit, stay engaged in the game and earn a little bit of extra money. Referees are integral to players enjoying the game and young players often learn about how to play the game through the guidance of referees.

There is fantastic support open for referees through mentoring and the promotion system which is the pathway to the Premier League. All referees start with the Basic Referees course, which is open to anyone over the age of 14. Referees must then complete five games of 9v9 or 11v11 football to become a fully qualified Level 7 referee.

Learn more at [www.staffordshirefa.com/referees](http://www.staffordshirefa.com/referees)

Staffordshire FA



## USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACT DETAILS

### WEBSITES

Staffordshire FA - [www.staffordshirefa.com](http://www.staffordshirefa.com)

The FA - [www.thefa.com](http://www.thefa.com)

The NSPCC - [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Sport England - [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)

Club Matters - [www.sportenglandclubmatters.com](http://www.sportenglandclubmatters.com)

The Football Foundation - [www.footballfoundation.org.uk](http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk)

SASSOT - [sportacrossstaffordshire.co.uk](http://sportacrossstaffordshire.co.uk)

### ADDRESS

Staffordshire FA,  
Staffordshire Technology Park,  
Beaconside,  
Stafford,  
ST18 0LQ

### TELEPHONE

01785 256994

### E-MAIL

[Support@StaffordshireFA.com](mailto:Support@StaffordshireFA.com)

**OUR OFFICE IS OPEN  
MONDAY TO THURSDAY – 8AM TO 6PM  
FRIDAY – 8.30AM TO 4.30PM.**