Club Welfare Officer Welcome Pack

Season 2023/2024



W E L C O M E !

Firstly, thank you for taking on the incredibly important role of Club Welfare Officer (CWO). Your time and dedication to your children, young people and vulnerable adults is never taken for granted.

As your County Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) I am available, along with the rest of the team at Suffolk FA, to assist you in any way I can. Please therefore make a note of our contact details contained in this pack.

Some of you may be new to the role and others may have been a CWO for many years, all of you bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the role which I hope you will all share with each other through our networking and CPD sessions which will take place each month during the season.

In addition, this CWO Welcome Pack contains some useful information, resources and up to date links which I hope will aid you in your role.

It will also enable us - as your County FA, to share our vision, values and expectations for the upcoming season and beyond.

As ever, there is an abundance of information available to you via TheFA.com and you can keep up to date with all your local football news by visiting SuffolkFA.com or by following us on Facebook and Twitter.

Best wishes for a fun and successful season!
Hayley Chart
Suffolk FA DSO

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Club Welfare Officer

Club Welfare Officer - Role Profile

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. But as a Welfare Officer you are key, along with the committee, to ensure safeguards are in place at your Club.

1. Some starting points for your role:

- There is a safeguarding children policy, anti-bullying policy and equality policy in place;
- Those who hold official roles eligible for an FA DBS check have one that is in-date;
- Officials, players, and parents know who their Club Welfare Officer is and what the role of the Welfare Officer is;
- There are responsible recruitment processes which include the taking up of references.

2. The Commitment

You should always:

- Work collaboratively with your CFA DSO;
- Attend committee meetings, ensuring safeguarding is a regular agenda item;
- Work proactively with your local welfare officer network(s) and attend network meetings;
- Give children and young people a voice.

When reporting safeguarding concerns, always:

- Ensure everyone has access to your safeguarding policy and reporting procedures;
- Ensure concerns are dealt with swiftly and in line with The FA's safeguarding policy;
- Seek advice from your CFA DSO when necessary;
- Use The FA's Referral Form to report safeguarding concerns

When raising safeguarding awareness, always:

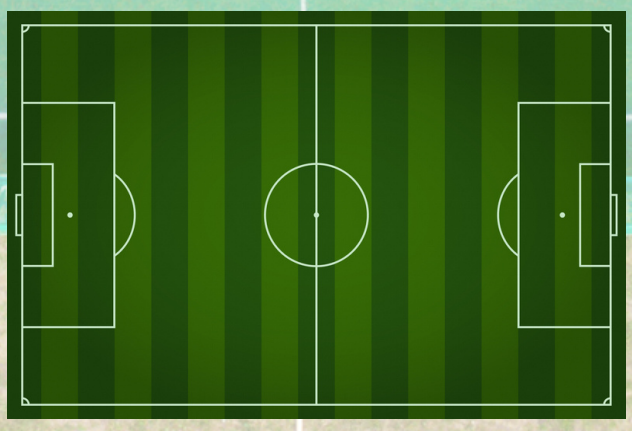
- Promote The FA's Safeguarding training among coaches/managers, first-aiders, referees, and parents/carers;
- Ensure committee members complete the free online FA 'Safeguarding for Committee Members' course;
- Encourage young leaders to complete The FA's 'Safeguarding For All' online course.

To create a positive and safe environment:

- Familiarise yourself with and make use of The FA's safeguarding children best practice guidance & CWO Code of Conduct.
- Sign up to England Accreditation (formally The FA Charter Standard programme);
- Sign up to The FA's Respect Programme and its Codes of Conduct;
- Hold parent/carer information sessions;
- Develop a club welcome pack for new starters;
- Have a clear and accessible complaints process;
- Ensure you consistently deal with poor practice concerns in line with club policy and procedures.

When monitoring and reviewing, always:

- Ensure compliance with Enhanced DBS checks via The FAs online 'Whole Game System' and Club Portal;
- Track repeated incidents of poor behaviour and liaise with your committee and where necessary your league and/or County FA



Club Welfare Officer - Code of Conduct

WELFARE OFFICERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
But as a Welfare Officer you are key, along with the committee, to ensure safeguards are in place at your club/league.

This is a position of influence and it's important we all have a positive and proactive approach to safeguarding across football.

To guide both consistency and appropriateness The FA has developed a Code of Conduct to which all Welfare Officers are required to sign up and adhere.

THE CODE:

In taking up the position of Welfare Officer you are agreeing with this Code of Conduct and will accept that within the role of Welfare Officer you will:

- Be child-centred at all times and promote a fun, safe environment for children and young people;
- Follow all The FA's policies and in particular procedures for reporting safeguarding concerns, including discrimination;
- Act appropriately in all situations brought to your attention;
- Champion best practice within your club/league;
- Communicate and positively engage with the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer (CFA DSO) on all poor practice/safeguarding matters brought to the attention of County FA/ The FA;
- Attend meetings as reasonably required by your committee, league and County FA;
- Manage and deal with poor practice issues in an appropriate and timely manner;
- Ensure appropriate levels of confidentiality and data security are maintained at all times;
- Implement and manage a responsible recruitment process in line with The FA's policy and procedures;
- Attend Continued Personal Development (CPD) opportunities as offered by your County FA or The FA and show a commitment to keeping your training and qualifications up to date.



By agreeing to hold the post of Welfare Officer, you understand that if you do not follow the above Code any/all of the following actions may be undertaken by your club, league, County FA or The FA (this is not an exhaustive list). You could be:

- Required to meet with the club/league committee, Youth League Welfare Officer (YLWO) or CFA DSO;
- Required to follow an action plan monitored by the YLWO/CFA DSO;
- Required to complete a relevant FA education course;
- Suspended by the club/league;
- Fined or suspended by the CFA;
- Required to leave the club/league;
- Removed from role by the club/league, CFA/The FA.

On appointment you agree to uphold the 'Code of Conduct for Welfare Officers' and understand the actions that may be taken should you fail to act in accordance with the Code.

You also confirm that you meet the criteria outlined within The FA's 'Suitability Checklist for Welfare Officers'. The checklist is contained with **Guidance Notes 5.1: Appointing a Welfare Officer**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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



Club Welfare Officer Support

The Club Welfare Officer is a vital role on the committee of all youth football clubs. The person fulfilling this role has a responsibility for managing and reporting concerns about children and for putting in place procedures to safeguard children at the club.

Your County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer is always on hand to provide you with help, advice and guidance. Please feel free to email, text or call: **hayley.chart@suffolkfa.com, 07572 107791**

Ongoing CPD

Each month throughout the season, we will hold online CPD training sessions on a variety of relevant and useful subjects to assist you in your role. These will take place in the evening on Teams, alternating on different days each month throughout the season, starting from September. Dates will be sent out at the beginning of the Season.

CWO Teams Channel

When you become a CWO, you will automatically be added to our Suffolk FA dedicated Teams channel. This is where you will receive regular updates, news and information. There is also a whole host of documents, posters, policy templates and other useful items for you to download and use in your club - simply click on the 'files' tab at the top of the page. This is also your safe space to ask each other questions, share knowledge and experience and support each other, so please feel free to comment, chat and post away!

Drop In Sessions

Starting back from September, on the last Tuesday of every month, your County DSO will hold an evening drop in clinic online or via phone (whichever suits you best) between 6-7pm for you to ask any questions or advice. As many of you work during the day, these extra evenings give you another opportunity to speak to your DSO directly.

Suffolk FA Vision, Mission & Values

Our Vision: A Thriving Local Game

Our Mission: work together to support, develop and strengthen the local football community

Our Values: Suffolk FA commit to

- always put the participant first to ensure that our game is safe, inclusive and respectful for all
- work collaboratively to strive for excellence
- operate with integrity and transparency

Codes of Conduct

Codes of Conduct

What are codes of conduct?

Codes of conduct were introduced by the FA as part of their RESPECT campaign. RESPECT is the FA's response to a clear message throughout the game, that the health of football depends upon high standards of behaviour on and off the pitch.

Why are they important?

Codes of conduct outline the types of behaviour that will support a safe, fun and inclusive game in this country. They also identify a range of sanctions which may be taken if the codes are breached.

Who are they for?

Codes of Conduct apply to all involved in football - young players, spectators, coaches, team managers and club officials and match officials.

Where can I find them?

The FA Codes of Conduct can be found **here** These must be followed as a minimum. You may wish to add your own Club's rules to your Codes.

What are the CWO's responsibility with regards to the Codes of Conduct?

You must make all persons involved with your Club aware of the Codes. It is advisable to have these on your website or other social media pages and displayed around and throughout your Club. You must ensure that all have signed a copy of the Codes of Conduct and are given a copy of these to remind them of their responsibilities. You can re-issue these at the beginning of the season as part of your registration process and refresh these again halfway through the season. These can then be referred to if needed when breached either on or off the pitch at any point throughout the season.

There are some examples of the FA Codes of Conduct on the following page.

Play your best. Be your best.

Make sure you and everyone around you has a good time on and off the pitch.



Play Your Part
(Code of Conduct)

Young Players

Play your part and support The FA's Code of Respect:

When playing football, I will:

- Always play my best for the benefit of the team
- Play fairly and be friendly
- Play by the rules and respect the Referee
- Shake hands with the other team - win or lose
- Listen carefully to what my coach tells me
- Understand that a coach has to do what's best for the team
- Talk to someone I trust or the club welfare officer if I'm unhappy about anything at my club
- Encourage my team mates
- Respect the facilities home & away

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, I may:

- Be asked to apologise to whoever I've upset
- Receive a formal warning
- Be dropped, substituted or suspended from training

RESPECT Nationwide
Building society with mutual respect

We ONLY do Positive.

If we behave positively during practice and matches, our children will too.

By setting a good example, we'll help build a supportive environment in which everyone can enjoy themselves.



Play Your Part
(Code of Conduct)

Spectators and Parents/Carers

Play your part and support The FA's Code of Respect:

I will:

- Have fun; it's what we're all here for!
- Celebrate effort and good play from both sides
- Always respect the Referee and coaches and encourage players to do the same
- Stay behind the touchline and within the Designated Spectators' Area (where provided)
- When players make mistakes, offer them encouragement to try again next time
- Never engage in, or tolerate offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour
- I will make myself familiar with safeguarding practices & review guidance on **physical contact** (5.6) & **Acceptable Behaviours When Working With Young People** (5.7) documents on the safeguarding section of **EnglandFootball.com**

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, I may be:

- Issued with a verbal warning or asked to leave
- Required to meet with the club committee, league or CFA Welfare Officer
- Obliged to undertake an FA education course
- Requested not to attend future games, be suspended or have my membership removed
- Required to leave the club along with any dependents and/or issued a fine

RESPECT Nationwide
Building society with mutual respect

We ONLY do Positive.

Set the standards for a great game.

Use your position to set a positive example for the people you're responsible for and lead a better game for everyone.



Play Your Part
(Code of Conduct)

Coaches, Team Managers and Club Officials

Play your part and support The FA's Code of Respect:

On and off the field, I will:

- Always show respect to everyone involved in the game
- Stick to the rules and celebrate the spirit of the game
- Encourage fair play and high standards of behaviour
- Always respect the Referee and encourage players to do the same
- Never enter the field of play without the Referee's permission
- Never engage in, or tolerate offensive, insulting or abusive behaviour
- Be aware of the potential impact of bad language on others
- Be gracious in victory and defeat
- Respect the facilities home and away

When working with players, I will:

- Place the well-being, safety and enjoyment of each player above everything
- Never tolerate any form of bullying
- Ensure all activities are suited for the players' ability and age
- Work with others (e.g. officials, doctors, welfare officers, physiotherapists) for each player's best interests
- I will make myself familiar with safeguarding practices & review guidance on **physical contact** (5.6) & **Acceptable Behaviours When Working With Young People** (5.7) documents on the safeguarding section of **EnglandFootball.com**

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, I may be:

- Required to meet with the club committee, league or CFA Welfare Officer
- Suspended by the club from attending matches
- Suspended or fined by the County FA
- Required to leave, lose my position and/or have my license withdrawn

RESPECT Nationwide
Building society with mutual respect

We ONLY do Positive.

Make your impact a positive one.

By managing the game in a positive, calm and confident way, you'll encourage everyone to have fun.



Play Your Part
(Code of Conduct)

Match Officials

Play your part and support The FA's Code of Respect:

I will:

- Respect the game, the competition and all other participants
- Maintain my integrity and approach each game with a positive mind set
- Be knowledgeable of the laws of the game, regulations and competition rules
- Set a positive personal example, by promoting good behaviour
- Embrace and empathise with the spirit of the game
- Submit accurate and concise reports and misconduct
- Complete and submit accurate and concise reports
- Apply the laws of the game, promoting positive actions and not tolerating actions that do not fit the image of the game
- I will make myself familiar with safeguarding practices & review guidance on **physical contact** (5.6) & **Acceptable Behaviours When Working With Young People** (5.7) documents on the safeguarding section of **EnglandFootball.com**

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, I may be:

- Required to meet with The FA, County FA Referee Development Staff or Referees Committee
- Suspended by the County FA

RESPECT Nationwide
Building society with mutual respect

We ONLY do Positive.

Training Recommendations

Training Recommendations: Club Officials

The FA Bootroom has an abundance of training courses and other useful resources. Simply click on the links below or visit **The Bootroom**

Safeguarding Children:

- Safeguarding for All
- Safeguarding Children Course & Recertification
- Guide to Safeguarding Adults
- Safeguarding for Committee members
- Welfare Officers Course (CWO's only)

All FA Safeguarding Courses can be found here



Coaching:

- EE Playmaker by England Football
- Introduction to Coaching Football
- UEFA A, B & C licences
- Advance Youth Award
- Respect
- Disability Football Introduction

All FA Coaching Courses can be found here



First Aid:

- Introduction to First Aid in Football (IFAIF)
- Emergency First Aid in Football (EFAIF)
- Emergency Medical First Aid in Football (EMFAIF)
- Intermediate Trauma Medical Management in Football (ITMMIF)
- Advanced Trauma Medical Management in Football (ATMMIF)

All FA Medical Courses can be found here



Training Recommendations: Parents/Carers

There are lots of resources online to share with your parents/carers to support them in Safeguarding their child. Simply click on the links below to visit the website.



Please encourage all your parents and carers to take the **FREE online Safeguarding Course for Parents.**

This is available here



The **NSPCC** has some excellent information and resources for parents including 'PANTS the Underwear Rule' and 'Talking about difficult topics'. To visit their website and for more information, please click **here**

CEOP is the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre. This offers support and guidance to parents on keeping their children safe online of all ages. To visit their website and for more information, please click **here**



Policies & Procedures

Policy & Document Checklist

Here is a handy checklist to make sure your Club has all the relevant documents and policies & procedures in place.

FA templates or copies of these for your Club to adopt are available by clicking here

- [ ] Safeguarding Children Policy
- [ ] Safer Recruitment Policy
- [ ] Equality Policy
- [ ] Anti-Bullying Policy
- [ ] Health & Safety Policy
- [ ] Complaints Policy
- [ ] Whistleblowing Policy
- [ ] Codes of Conduct
- [ ] Club Philosophy
- [ ] Safeguarding reporting procedures
- [ ] Physical Contact & Young People Guidance
- [ ] Social Media, Photography & Filming Guidance
- [ ] Welcome pack for new players & their parents

Don't forget to visit the Grassroots Technology support page for all digital help & guidance by clicking here

Safeguarding Children Policy

What is a Safeguarding Children policy?

A safeguarding policy makes it clear what your Club will do to keep children safe. It should set out your Club's commitment to protecting all children.

Why is it important?

A safeguarding policy contains detailed steps that your Club will take to keep children and young people safe and what to do when there are concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.

You must ensure that all staff and volunteers at your Club read and abide by this policy, reporting any concerns they may have about a child's life, whether or not it is happening at your Club.

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility.

Where can I find the guidance or template for a policy?

The FA have a safeguarding children policy template that you can edit for your Club. You can find it **here**. This must be reviewed annually and updated where required.

All individuals - from parents/carers, coaches and players should know who the Club Welfare Officer is and how they can report concerns either to yourself as CWO or to the appropriate authorities directly. Your policy should also contain these contact details.

Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy

Who is an 'Adult at Risk'?

An adult at risk of harm or vulnerable adult is defined as:

- A person aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and:
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect, and:
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

An individual's level of vulnerability to harm may vary over time depending on the circumstances they are in and their needs at that time. Not all adults with care and support needs will be at risk of harm. This will depend on the individual, their current situation and the circumstances they are in.

What is a Safeguarding Adults at Risk policy?

A safeguarding policy makes it clear what your Club will do to keep adults at risk and vulnerable adults safe. It should set out your Club's commitment to protecting all adults at risk and state how you will work with adults who have care and support needs to keep them safe from abuse or neglect.

Why is it important?

It is important that all those working in football recognise their responsibility to safeguard and protect adults at risk by responding appropriately to any allegations or suspicions of abuse, working in partnership with the adult at risk wherever possible, depending on their capacity and the risk to them and others. In partnership with the appropriate authorities, you should put the needs of the adult first and take into account the six principles of safeguarding adults detailed in the Care Act 2014: empowerment; protection; prevention; proportionality; partnership; and accountability. These principles will underpin all work with adults at risk.

Where can I find the guidance or template for a policy?

The FA have a safeguarding adults policy template that you should adopt for your Club. You can find it **here**. All individuals - from parents/carers, coaches and players should know who the Club Welfare Officer is and how they can report concerns either to yourself as CWO or to the appropriate authorities directly. Your policy should also contain these contact details.

Suffolk FA Whistleblowing Policy

Whistleblowing is an important aspect of safeguarding where staff and volunteers are encouraged to share genuine concerns about an individual or organisation's behaviour. The behaviour may not be child abuse, but they may not be following Suffolk FA Code of Conduct or could be pushing the boundaries beyond normal limits.

Whistleblowing is very different from a complaint or a grievance. The term 'whistleblowing' generally applies when you are acting as a witness to misconduct that you have seen and that threatens other people or children.

The concern may relate to something that is happening now, has happened in the past or that you think could happen in the future.

It is Suffolk FA's intention that all staff and participants of the game feel confident about coming forward and reporting any issues/concerns that they may have regarding the areas below, whilst remaining protected from any subsequent discrimination.

Aim

Our aim is to:

- **Ensure our staff understand their responsibilities and feel confident in raising and reporting a serious concern at the earliest opportunity**
- **Provide avenues for staff to raise their concerns and receive feedback on any action taken**
- **Ensure that staff receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied**
- **Reassure staff that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have made any disclosures in good faith**

Any concerns can be reported without this leading to any harassment or victimisation, and every effort will be made to keep both the concern and the whistle-blower's identity confidential.

What should be reported?

- **Any breach in the behaviour of management, staff, volunteer or associated paid professional**
- **Discrimination of any kind**

Suffolk FA Whistleblowing Policy (cont.)

- Concerns that could impact on the health and safety of the children or adults
- The inappropriate treatment or care of a child
- In appropriate use of WRCFA assets
- Decision making for personal gain
- Abuse of position
- Deceit
- Tampering with documents

Methods of reporting

A concern can initially be raised by any individual to Suffolk FA CEO Richard Neal, richard.neal@suffolkfa.com. In the event that the concern is about the Suffolk FA CEO, then the complaint would be raised with Safeguarding Board Champion Geraldine Day, gaday1971@gmail.com

- Discuss the nature of the concern together with the background, history of the concerns and provide relevant dates of incidents
- There is no expectation that whistle-blowers prove beyond doubt the truth of their suspicion, however, they will need to demonstrate that they are acting in good faith and there are reasonable grounds for their concern
- All individuals will be treated fairly

Alternatively, concerns can be reported:

- Direct to the local Police or Children's Social Care services, or
- The NSPCC 24 Hour Helpline on 0808 800 5000

Concerns will be dealt with in the following way:

- Initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and if so, what form it should take.
- The incident will be investigated by Suffolk FA CEO (Richard Neal) or Geraldine Day (Safeguarding Board Champion).
- If appropriate it will be referred and put through established Safeguarding procedures and may form the subject of an independent inquiry
- Within ten working days of the concern being raised, the whistle-blower will receive in writing:
  - Acknowledgement that the concern has been received, and an indication as to how the setting will proceed to deal with the matter
  - Information on support mechanisms
  - Information as to whether any further investigation will take place and if not, why not.

Suffolk FA Whistleblowing Policy (cont.)

It may be necessary to interview the whistle-blower to ensure that their disclosure is fully understood. Any meeting can be arranged away from the workplace, if so wished, and a representative or a friend may accompany the whistle-blower/individual for support.

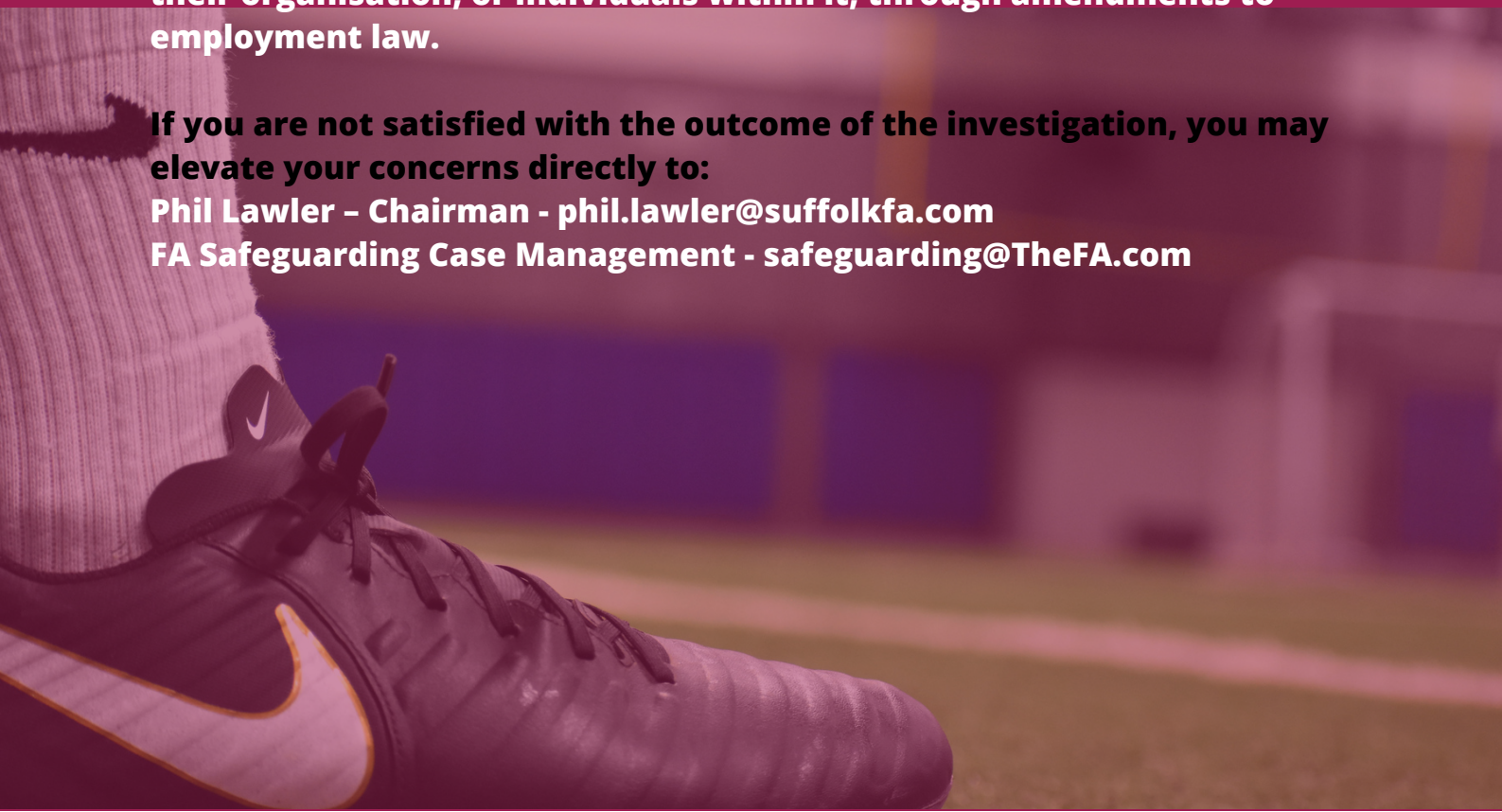
If there are any difficulties experienced as a result of raising a concern, support will be offered.

The whistle-blower will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation to assure that any disclosure has been properly addressed unless legal reasons determine otherwise.

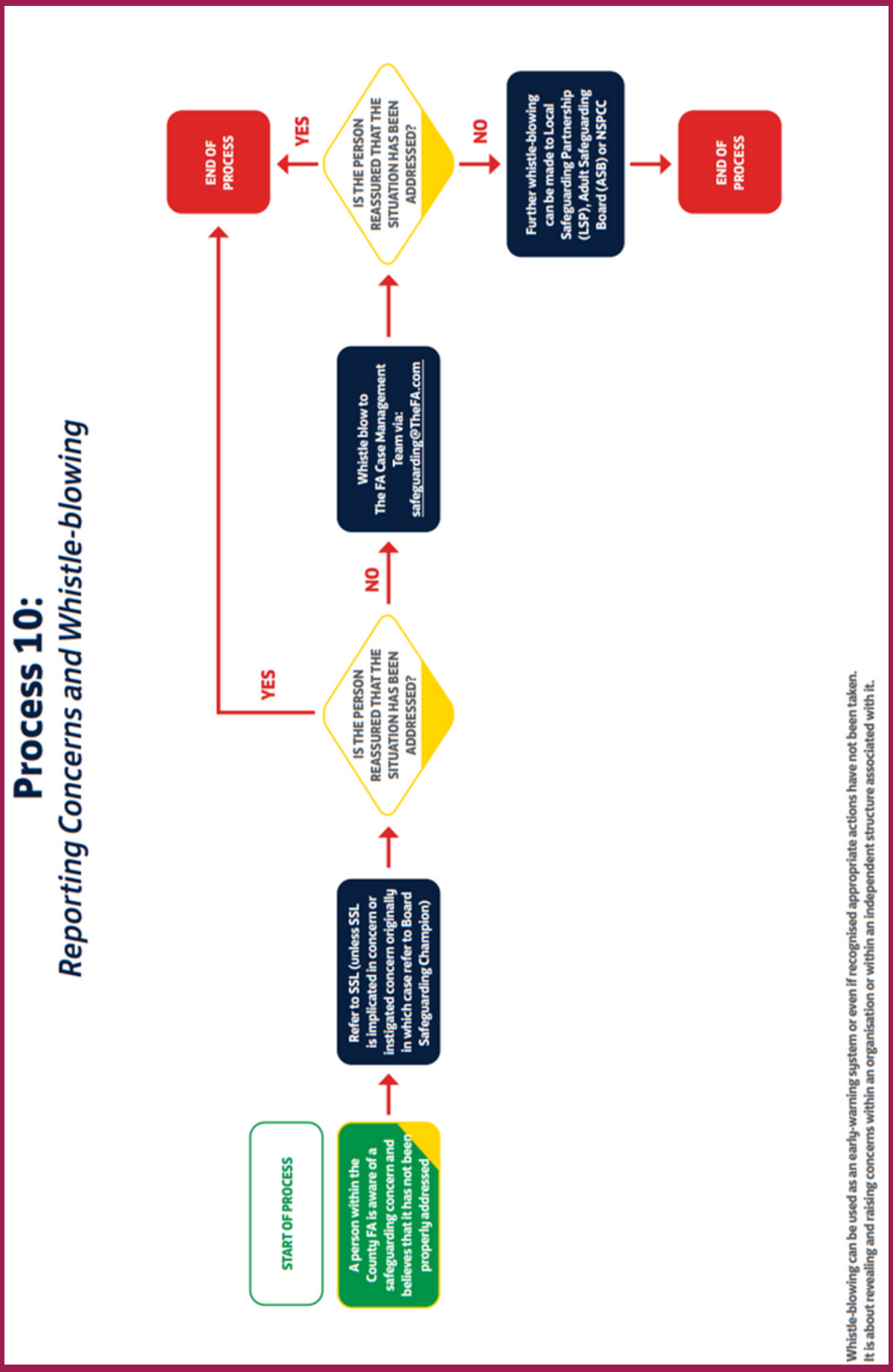
Confidentiality will be maintained, and every effort will be made not to reveal the whistle-blowers' identity if they so wish. If, however, an individual makes an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, appropriate action that could include disciplinary action may be taken.

The public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 seeks to protect employees and individuals from discrimination as a result of "blowing the whistle" on their organisation, or individuals within it, through amendments to employment law.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, you may elevate your concerns directly to:
Phil Lawler – Chairman - phil.lawler@suffolkfa.com
FA Safeguarding Case Management - safeguarding@TheFA.com



Reporting Concerns & Whistleblowing Flowchart



Social Media Guidance

RUNNING WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

The following guidance is to support clubs and leagues to manage their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

It aims to ensure children, young people, coaches, referees and adults in a position of trust are not subjected to improper online behaviour or improper allegations.

Remember that clubs and leagues are responsible for ensuring all content hosted on their websites, social network areas and any associated message boards or blogs abides by the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association.

THE RULES:

It is against FA rules to post comments that are or maybe perceived as:

- Offensive;
- Insulting;
- Abusive;
- Threatening;
- Racist;
- Discriminatory;
- Any other reference that may cause offensive or harm to others.

Any such comment made on club or league websites and/or social networking sites regarding match officials may result in disciplinary action being taken in line with The FA's disciplinary policies and procedures.

Comments made on websites that are threatening, abusive or racist could lead to legal action being taken against those responsible for posting or hosting them. Comments made may attract libel claims and legal action through the civil courts if they are untrue or defamatory.

Children and young people should be advised by their coaches, parents/carers and Club Welfare Officer to always tell an adult they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or where they've been asked not to tell their parent/carer about the communication.



THE DO's & DON'T's:

Clubs/leagues are advised to adhere to the following:

DO:

- Appoint an appropriate adult(s) to monitor the content of the website, who should also attend The FA's Safeguarding Children Workshop to carry out this role;
- Make sure everyone within your club/league knows who is responsible for monitoring the content of the website and social networking areas and how to contact them;
- Apply the principles within The FA's photography guidelines. See **Guidance Notes 8.3: Photographing and Filming Children**;
- Place the CEOP, 'Report Abuse' app on your web site and links to the advice offered via its ThinkUKnow.co.uk programmes which give age appropriate advice to children as well as parents/carers;
- Provide a link to TheFA.com safeguarding section – TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding;
- Consider the benefits hosting message boards, forums or blogs will bring to your club/league against the potential risks. If you decide to use them ensure that they are password protected and only allow comments to be posted by individuals known and permitted access by the club/league;
- Remember that the club/league is responsible for all content contained on its website, forum blogs, tweets or social networking areas;
- Regularly monitor the content of the above and use The FA's 'Respect Codes of Conduct' and 'Relationships of Trust Statement' as a guide to acceptable behaviour online;
- Ensure privacy settings are locked so that that the page(s) are used explicitly for club or league matters and not as a place to meet, share personal details or have private conversations;
- Get written parent/carer permission before access to view your club/league social media platforms is given to under-18s.

DON'T:

- Host children's or young people's details where they can be seen or used by others to contact them. This includes the mobile phone and email of referees and coaches under the age of 18. Any details hosted should only be done with written parental/carer consent;
- Host pictures of individuals without the express permission of parents/carers;
- Post detail of individuals which may lead them to be identified e.g. school/class/year, player profiles detailing personal information e.g. favourite foods, movies, teams etc.;



- Post or host items which may be considered to be hurtful, insulting, offensive, abusive, threatening, racist or discriminatory or otherwise may cause offence or harm to another or might incite such behaviour in others;
- Post or host match results for teams that are under-11. Remember the focus is on participation not outcome at this age.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you need any further advice or information please contact your County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer who will be happy to help you.

Click here to find a list of County FAs and their websites. Then visit the relevant website to find your County FA's DSO.

Digital Communications Guidance

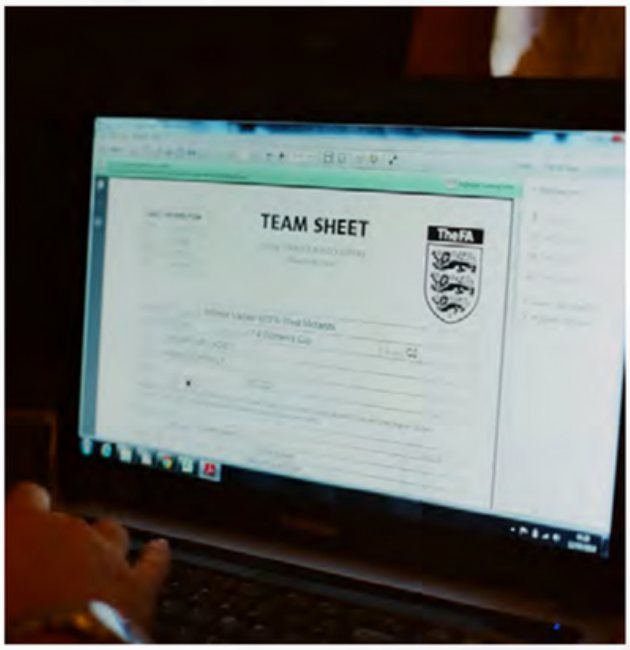
DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS AND CHILDREN (UNDER 18s)

In light of the Information and Commissiner's Office (ICO) Age appropriate design: a code of practice for online services published on 2 September 2020, The FAs guidance on Digital communications and children is under review. For more information about the ICO Age appropriate design: a code of practice for online services please visit - https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/key-data-protection-themes/age-appropriate-design-a-code-of-practice-for-online-services/

Whilst this review is undertaken we have retained guidance on communicating with 16 and 17 year olds in a position of trust role in football.

WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH 16/17 YEAR OLDS WHO HOLD A POSITION OF TRUST AND/OR RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN FOOTBALL PLEASE ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE.

- Signed parental/carer consent should be given prior to email, social networking and mobile phone communications with young people holding a position of trust. Ideally the adult(s) who will be communicating in this way should be named. The purpose for the communication should be made clear;
- Both parties to only communicate for the purpose of the identified professional role(s);
- Email and/or social media communications between the parties should copy in either the parent/carer or Welfare Officer, or both;
- Leagues appointing young referees to games must copy in another league official or parent/carer to their communications;
- Do not use language that is directly (or could be misinterpreted as being) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone in any communciation.
- If any inappropriate communication or content is shared between an adult and an under-18-year-old, this must be reported immediately to the Welfare Officer who will seek advice from the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and/or statutory agencies as appropriate.



DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS AND CHILDREN (UNDER 18s)

VIDEO CALLS WITH CHILDREN - SPECIFIC GUIDANCE FOR COACHES/MANAGERS

Online video calls are a great way for coaches/managers to keep in touch with players and other coaches, by providing training ideas, tips on keeping fit and skills challenges online. As a coach/manager, it's really important to keep appropriate boundaries in your digital space.

Please ensure you continue to apply the principles of your code of conduct and remember that as a coach/manager even when encouraging players/coaching online you remain in a 'relationship of trust'. Follow the procedures outlined below to help keep you and those you are supporting safe online.

Setting up

- Always work with groups, ensure you are inclusive when engaging with players;
- Wherever possible involve a second coach/manager or club official;
- All sessions online must be observable and interruptible;
- Where players are aged under 18, communications must go to parents/carers to accept or decline the player's participation.
- Are there any individual player circumstances which may mean their involvement may not be possible? How might you ensure they still feel included as part of the team/club?

The environment when using video facilities

- The setting for the background should be in a neutral area, avoiding anything inappropriate being heard or seen. Some apps may offer customisation of avatars, usernames and customised virtual backgrounds. What you may use for personal use may be inappropriate to represent your club – so think about this and make any changes, before contacting anyone;
- Do not host the session from a bedroom;
- The background must not be blurred or obscured;
- Coaches/managers and players must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household. Ideally other members of the household should not be in view when running your session(s).

Session content

- The purpose of the session and what it will involve must be clearly outlined to all involved;
- All communication provided must have an educational or supportive purpose, or both;
- Language must be professional and appropriate. Please ensure any family members or others in the background also behave appropriately, if it is not possible for them to be out of view, and for them not to be heard during the session;
- Under no circumstances should any part of the session be recorded as this may create a potential risk of hacking by child sex offenders accessing recordings of sessions. The National Crime Agency (NCA), the NCA has identified the potential for an increase in online child sexual abuse during the Covid-19 pandemic;
- The session should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.



Photography & Filming Guidance

POTENTIAL RISKS

INAPPROPRIATE TAKING AND OR USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS OR FILMING OF CHILDREN

Someone may set out to take inappropriate photos or film content in ways that are potentially illegal and harmful, such as:

- Children changing;
- Photos taken in the toilets;
- Using a camera at ground level to photograph up girls' skirts;
- Photos and film footage that appear ambiguous can be used inappropriately and out of context by others;
- Photos and film footage that can easily be copied and edited, perhaps to create child-abuse images or film footage;
- Photos and film footage shared privately online that can be re-shared, possibly entering the public domain on websites or social media (further information on this is available in 'Section 6: Safeguarding in the Digital World' of the safeguarding section on TheFA.com).

THE IDENTIFICATION OF, CONTACT WITH, OR GROOMING OF A CHILD

When a child's photo or film of that child is accompanied by significant personal information e.g. full name, address - it makes them more easily identifiable to third parties. This can lead, and has led, to children being located, contacted and/or 'groomed'. Even if personal details are kept confidential, details identifying the school or club, or their favourite sportsperson or team, can potentially be used to groom the child.

There's an increased risk of identification of, and contact with a child:

- By someone in circumstances where there are legal restrictions – such as if the child is in local-authority care or placed with an adoptive family;
- Where restrictions on contact with one parent following a parental separation exist e.g. in domestic violence cases;
- In situations where a child may be a witness in criminal proceedings.



COMMISSIONING OFFICIAL OR PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS* AND THE LOCAL MEDIA

If you are commissioning professional photographers* or inviting the media to cover a football activity, ensure you and they are clear about each other's expectations. The key is to plan ahead and communicate early on. Please follow the steps below.

- Provide a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour;
- Inform them of your club's commitment to safeguarding children;
- Establish who will hold the film and or photographs and for how long they'll be retained and/or used and what they intend to do with them, e.g. place on a website for sale, distribute thumb nails to the club to co-ordinate sales;
- Issue the professional photographer* with identification, which must be worn at all times;
- Clarify areas where all photography* is prohibited e.g. toilets, changing areas, first-aid areas etc;
- Inform the photographer* about how to identify – and avoid the taking of photographs and or filming – children without the required parental consent;
- Don't allow unsupervised access to children or one-to-one photo or filming sessions at events;
- Don't allow photo or filming sessions away from the event – for instance, at a young person's home;
- Inform participants and parents or carers prior to the event that a professional photographer* will be in attendance.



* Including filming

Photography & Filming Guidance (cont.)

WHAT TO DO WHEN PARENTAL CONSENT IS NOT GIVEN

Clubs and event organisers have a responsibility to put in place arrangements to ensure that any official or professional photographers* can identify (or be informed about) which children should not be subject to close-up photography or filming.

This could involve providing some type of recognisable badge, sticker or wristband, and/or a system for photographers* to check with the activity organiser and/or team manager to ensure it's clear which groups or individuals should not feature in photographs or on film.



* Including filming

COMMON SENSE CONSIDERATIONS TO ENSURE EVERYONE'S SAFETY

It's important to remember the majority of photographs and film taken are appropriate and taken in good faith. If we take the following measures we can help to ensure the safety of children in football.

DO:

1. Share The FA's guidance on taking photos and filming with everyone who becomes a club member (officials, parents/carers);
2. Ensure the club has written parental consent to use a player's photo and/or film footage in the public domain e.g. on the club website, Facebook page or in a newspaper article. This is essential in relation to point 3 below;
3. Ensure that any child in your club who is under care proceedings where there are legal restrictions, is protected by ensuring their image is not placed in the public domain. This can be done by using The FA's **Club Annual Membership Information and Consent Form**. See **Guidance Notes 8.2** for this form;
4. Ensure all those featured are appropriately dressed (a minimum of vest or shirt and shorts);
5. Aim to take pictures which represent the broad range of youngsters participating safely in football e.g. boys and girls, disabled people, ethnic minority communities;
6. Advise parents/carers and spectators that there can be negative consequences to sharing photos or film footage linked to information about their own or other people's children on social media (Facebook, Twitter) – and that care should be taken about 'tagging';
7. Establish procedures to respond to and manage any concerns, including clear reporting structures and a system to contact the Police when necessary.

DON'T:

1. Publish photographs with the full name(s) of the individual(s) featured unless you have written consent to do so and you have informed the parents/carers as to how the photo will be used;
2. Use player profiles with pictures and detailed personal information online;
3. Use an image for something other than that which it was initially agreed, e.g. published in local press when initially produced for a clubhouse commemorative picture;
4. Allow photos or film footage to be recorded in changing rooms, showers or toilets – this includes the use of mobile phones that record images;
5. Include any advertising relating to alcohol or gambling in photographs or film footage of children.

REMEMBER

- It's not an offence to take appropriate photographs or film footage in a public place even if asked not to do so;
- No-one has the right to decide who can and cannot take photos or film on public land;
- If you have serious concerns about a possible child protection issue relating to the taking of photos or film footage then call the Police. This action should only be taken where you believe that someone may be acting unlawfully or putting a child at risk;
- The land or facility owner can decide whether or not photography and or filming at football activities will be permitted when carried out on private land. However you need to make this known before allowing individuals access to the private property. If they do not comply then you may request they leave;
- Try not to use photos or film footage that include individuals wearing jewellery (as wearing jewellery whilst playing is contrary to the Laws of the Game as well as being a health and safety issue);
- That swimming as a social activity for football clubs presents a higher risk for potential misuse than football, so photos or film footage should:
  - Focus on the activity rather than a particular child;
  - Avoid showing the full face and body of a child – instead show children in the water, or from the waist or shoulders up;
  - Avoid photos and camera angles that may be more prone to misinterpretation or misuse than others.

If you are concerned about the inappropriate use of photos of film footage please report this to your County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer or to The FA Safeguarding Team via Safeguarding@TheFA.com. Click here for a full list of key contacts at County FAs.

* Including filming

Photography & Filming Guidance (cont.)

FILMING AS A COACHING AID

The FA advises that coaches using filming as a legitimate coaching aid should make parents/carers and players aware that this will be part of the coaching programme. Care should be taken when storing the film clips – see further guidance below.

Parental consent must of course have been given. This can be requested at the start of the season via The FA's **Club Annual Membership Information and Consent Form** – see **Guidance Notes 8.2**.



GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILMING OF EVENTS

At many events, organisers will wish to take wide-angle, more general photos and or film footage of the event, the site, opening and closing ceremonies, and so on.

It's usually not reasonable, practical or proportionate to secure consent for every participating child in order to take such photos or film footage, or to preclude such photography or filming on the basis of the concerns of a small number of parents.

In these circumstances, organisers should make clear to all participants and parents that these kinds of photos or film footage will be taken, and for what purposes.



Photography & Filming Guidance (cont.)

SECURE STORAGE

Photographs or film recordings of children must be kept securely:

- Hard copies of photographs should be kept in a locked drawer;
- Digital photos should be in a protected folder with restricted access;
- Digital photos and film footage should not be stored on unencrypted portable equipment such as laptops, memory sticks or mobile phones.

Club and Leagues:

- If you're storing and using photographs to identify children and adults for official purposes – such as identity cards – ensure you comply with the legal requirements for handling personal information;
- For guidance on data protection and other privacy regulations, visit the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website: ico.org.uk.



MISUSE AND MANIPULATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND OR FILM

An individual with bad intent may deliberately target a vulnerable child to take photos or film footage which may be uploaded to social media or shared with other like-minded individuals or groups motivated by sexual interest.

Occasionally, these photos or film footage are also used to threaten and force the child into unwanted, illegal sexual activity. Taking and sharing photos or film footage like this may form part of wider bullying of the targeted young person by other young people, motivated more by a wish to cause humiliation and embarrassment.

Even in the context of a shared joke among friends, without abusive intent, a young person taking and sharing inappropriate photos or film footage may be committing a serious offence and risk criminal prosecution.



Photography & Filming Guidance (cont.)

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

Whether it's general club activities or when attending an event all club officials, volunteers, children and parents/carers should be informed that if they have any concerns regarding inappropriate or intrusive photography or filming (in terms of the way, by whom, or where photography or filming is being undertaken), these should be reported.

Reports can be made to the:

- Event organiser or another official;
- Event Designated Safeguarding Officer;
- Club Welfare Officer;
- County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer;
- The FA Safeguarding Team via safeguarding@TheFA.com

There must be a safeguarding procedure in place to ensure that reported concerns are dealt with in the same way as any other child-protection issue. Concerns about professional photographers* should also be reported to their employers.

To report potentially unlawful materials on the internet please contact:

The Internet Watch Foundation

E: report@iwf.org.uk

T: 01223 237700

Fax: 01223 235921

W: iwf.org.uk

* Including filming

In writing this photography and filming guidance, The FA has drawn from advice provided by the NSPCC CPSU. You can find this advice at: thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/topics/photography



The above documents can be found **here** or by clicking on the images.

DBS Guidance

Disclosure & Barring Service Guidance

WHAT'S THE FIRST THING MY CLUB SHOULD DO?

WHAT'S THE FIRST THING MY CLUB SHOULD DO?

This work should be carried out by your Club Welfare Officer (CWO), who can access their club's safeguarding information via The FA's online Whole Game System portal.

To access the portal click here or follow this link wholegame.TheFA.com/Account/Login.

You will need your FA Number (FAN). If you are new to your role you can create or retrieve your FAN on the Whole Game login page. For more information on Whole Game click on the 'Help' tab once logged on.

WHO NEEDS A CHECK?

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

These roles could be managing, training, coaching and 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.

By children, we mean anyone under 18. Anyone performing these roles MUST obtain an Enhanced DBS Check with Children's Barred List 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 eligible for a DBS check, 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. If those eligible don't have an in-date, FA DBS Check in place, youth football will not be able to use them in their vital and valued role – and no-one wants that.

ACT NOW TO ENSURE YOUR COACHES AND MANAGERS HOLD AN IN-DATE, FA-ACCEPTED DBS CHECK BEFORE THE SESSION STARTS.



Disclosure & Barring Service Guidance (cont.)

HOW LONG DOES A DBS CHECK LAST?

Three years. A DBS Check is a snapshot in time and therefore need to be renewed – ideally before the current one runs out to avoid any gaps and making them non-compliant and unable to be safely involved.

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.



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.

APPLYING FOR A DBS CHECK ONLINE

When you apply for – or renew – a DBS Check online, your Club Welfare Officer (CWO) will still need to see your original ID documents. They can verify these online. If your club isn't already registered to use The FA's online DBS Check application service, please contact The FA DBS Unit on **0115 969 4618** or via email to: FAchecks@TheFA.com.



Disclosure & Barring Service Guidance (cont.)

DO YOU NEED A NEW FA DBS CHECK IF YOU ALREADY HAVE A CURRENT FA DBS CHECK, BUT HAVE STARTED AS A VOLUNTEER WITH ANOTHER GRASSROOTS CLUB?

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

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, i.e.:

- It is has been registered for the DBS (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 DBS Check.



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 reapply every three years.

To take advantage of this you will need to:

- Register your DBS Check with The Disclosure and Barring Service(DBS);*
- Inform The FA DBS Unit, who administers the DBS Checks. They will charge a one-off £10 administration fee.

***You must register your DBS Check with the DBS update service within 19 days of Issue. Once registered for this service, The FA will make annual checks on your DBS Check status for as long as you have active eligible role in football.**

For more information and guidance on The FA's DBS Check policy, the DBS update service and FA DBS Check lifetime checks please visit: TheFA.com/footballrules-governance/safeguarding/criminal-records-checks



Who at your Club is eligible for a DBS Check?

Not all roles at a Football Club require an individual to have a DBS check. Please see below the following information and guide to DBS checks:

Eligible roles for an FA DBS check:

POSITION/ROLE	NOTES	ELIGIBILITY FOR A DBS ENHANCED DBS CHECK?	REASONS FOR ELIGIBILITY	IS IT REGULATED ACTIVITY & ELIGIBLE FOR DBS ENHANCED DBS CHECKWITH CHILDREN'S BARRED LIST?
Football Coach working with under-18 players (this includes those working in open-age adult football with 16/17-year-old players)	Includes all coaches, whether they have assistant in title or not	Yes	Unsupervised; teaching, training and instruction, caring for and supervising	Yes
Football Team Manager working with under-18 players (this includes those working in open-age adult football with 16/17- year-old players)	As above	Yes	Unsupervised; teaching, training and instruction, caring for and supervising	Yes
Club Welfare Officer	Work through role with under-18s	Yes	Unsupervised; teaching, training and instruction, caring for and supervising, advice & guidance on well being	Yes
Under-18 Chaperone: Travel, Trips, Tours and tournaments	e.g. tour with overnight stay for under-18s	Yes	Caring for or supervising and overnight	Depends on frequency and supervision if not overnight
Regular Club Driver only for children (not private arrangement between parents)	Depends whether driver is alone with under-18s as part of driving responsibilities	Yes	Unsupervised caring for or supervising	Depends on frequency and supervision
Host Family	But not if private arrangement between families.	Yes	Unsupervised caring for and overnight	Yes
First-aider/medic working with under-18s	Weekly involvement with football team	Yes	Treatment and therapy	Depends on frequency
Referee (youth football only)	Including all referee mentors, observers and coaches under Level 4	Yes (Enhanced)	Criteria as per coaches	Yes (Barred list Check)

Roles that are NOT eligible for an FA DBS check:

ROLE OFTEN REQUESTED BUT NOT ELIGIBLE	REASONS	IMPORTANT NOTE
Club secretary	Not coaching, teaching or instructing, caring for, or supervising, advising or guiding on wellbeing, not driving for the organisation, or providing first aid on a frequent basis	Those holding these roles may be eligible for an Enhanced DBS Check if they have involvement within other areas of football activity - where their role does involve caring for or supervising children and young people. **Example:** Mrs Ball is chairperson of Wyhampton FC and is also the under-13 assistant coach. As chairperson Mrs Ball is not eligible for a check, however she is eligible for an Enhanced DBS Check with children's barring list check for her coaching role, whether referred to as coach or assistant coach. As such, a check should be completed for her role as coach but not chairperson.
Treasurer		
Chairman		
Parent helper/rep		
Clubhouse manager		
Groundskeeper		
Caretaker		
Photographer		
Website administrator		
Social network monitors and managers		
Youth section administrator		
Parent running the line		
Youth forum membership (meetings)		
Players (including captains)	Playing is not regulated activity	

For further information on The FA's DBS Checks process:

- Refer to the FAQs section of TheFA.com via TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding/the-right-people---recruitment-crc
- Email: FAChecks@TheFA.com
- Tel: **0115 969 4618**

DBS Update Service

A step by step guide

Did you know that you only need to apply for a DBS check once?

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

Firstly individuals must:

- apply for their FA DBS Check as normal through the Club
- pay the DBS Check volunteer fee
- get their identification verified.

Once their certificate has been processed and is clear, the individual will receive a copy of this. They must then:

- Register their FA DBS Check with **The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**
- Inform The FA DBS Unit, who administers the DBS Checks. They will charge a one off £10 administration fee: **FAChecks@TheFA.com** , tel: 0115 969 4618

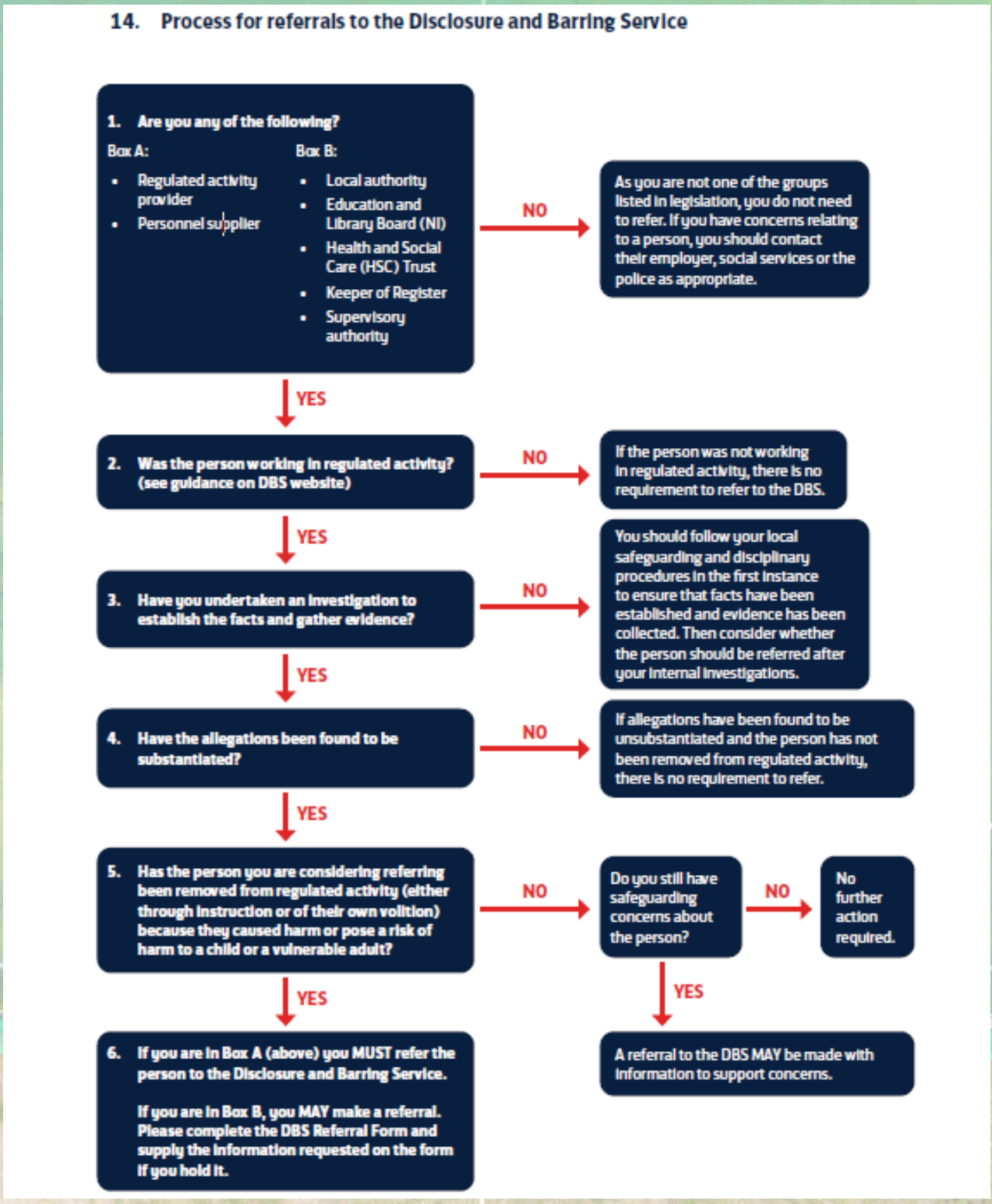
Individuals MUST register their DBS Check with the DBS update service within 19 days of Issue. The cost of this is free to Volunteers. This check MUST be an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check with Children's Barred List.

Once registered for this service, The FA will make annual checks on your DBS Check status for as long as you have active eligible role in football.

For more information and guidance on The FA's DBS Check policy, the DBS update service and FA DBS Check lifetime checks please visit **The FA Downloads Directory** and search for DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE CHECKS Guidance 3.2

DBS Referral Process

Sometimes, an individual at your Club may become a danger to children and young people (CYP). In these circumstances, they will normally be removed from all football related activity and contact with CYP. It may be necessary to also refer to the individual to the Disclosure and Barring Service to prevent the individual from working with children in the future. Your County DSO will be able to guide and advise you in these circumstances. Below is a flowchart to outline the DBS Referral Process.



DBS FAQ

Q. How do I process a DBS check through WGS?

A. To process DBS Checks through WGS, firstly you have to initiate a person's DBS application on Club Portal before they can proceed. There's a tuition page available here for how to do this here Simply log onto Club Portal, select your official, under 'official roles' select 'assign role' and click on 'Safeguarding' & 'DBS Applicant' followed by 'confirm'.

Each of the applicants for whom you've initiated DBS checks will then need to log onto their Whole Game System and process their application – they do not receive an automated message at this point as yet, so you will need to tell them to log in and proceed.

Once logged in to WGS and on their 'Home' section, they should see a 'My DBS' tab at the bottom of the left-hand side.

Once clicked, each applicant should see 'your team' alongside a green 'Select' button. Once the 'Select' button is pressed, this will initiate an automated email from First Advantage with details of how to progress their DBS Check.

At this point as the Club Official you will be able to see the status has changed to 'Application Started'.

The applicant will then need to follow the links on the automated email to log their application through the First Advantage Group system and submit for verification by a club verifier. There is a tuition video available here.

A club verifier will need to log in to First Advantage and verify the application.

Q. I need to renew my DBS check, as a CWO how can I start the application process?

A. You can initiate your own DBS check as a CWO by carrying out the following steps - simply log into your MyAccount section of Whole Game and change your email address to an alternative one from the one you use for verification (if you have one). Once you have done this you should be able to complete the process. Remember to log back in afterwards and change it back once the check is complete. You will then need to ask someone at your Club who is also a DBS verifier to carry out your ID checks. Alternatively, you can contact your CFA DSO to arrange to visit Suffolk FA offices to have this done for you.

Q. A DBS verifier at our Club has left, do I need to inform First Advantage?

A. Yes, forms are available to complete on our dedicated Teams channel. Once completed, these are to be emailed to FAverifiers@fadv.com. You must inform them of any verifiers who have left or joined your Club.

DBS FAQ (cont.)

Q. I need to become a verifier so that I can check DBS applicants ID and process their check?
A. To be added to your Club as a named verifier or update the main contacts details, email your DSO who will send you a form to complete and email to FAverifiers@fadv.com and ask to be added. Once confirmed, you will then be able to carry out ID verification checks.

Q. I started a DBS application a few months ago and didn't complete it, this has since been 'withdrawn' but is still showing on WGS so I can't start a new one.
A. Contact your CFA DSO who will clear the old application down for you to allow you to start a new one.

Q. An applicants DBS check is showing as 'complete' on First Advantage but isn't pulling through to WGS or Club Portal?
A. There may be several reasons for this - please contact FAChecks@TheFA.com or your County DSO.

Q. I don't know what my Club PIN is to log in and complete DBS checks?
A. Either, ask your Club Secretary for this information or alternatively, contact your CFA DSO who can provide this for you.

Q. I completed my DBS check weeks ago and still haven't received any information or updates?
A. As CWO you should be able to check the status of an applicants DBS check by logging into First Advantage. If the check shows as 'with DBS', this means that it is currently with the Police. This process can take up to 90 days and sometimes, checks can be caught up in the system. First Advantage will automatically chase any checks that have reached this 90 day period. Please therefore wait 90 days before contacting FAChecks@TheFA.com

Q. My DBS has been completed, however I am yet to receive my certificate in the post?
A. Please allow up to 2 weeks for a certificate to be received through the post.

Q. Someone at my Club has two FAN numbers and WGS it isn't recognising their DBS Check?
A. Contact your CFA DSO and request that the two FAN numbers are merged or de-duped.

Q. I've got a new Coach starting for my Club, what qualifications do they need?
A. Coaches need to have a DBS check as a minimum. However, it is good practice for them to also complete the following which are all available via the Bootroom: Introduction to Coaching Football (4 week online course, £160), Safeguarding Children (SCC, 2 hours online, £30) and IFAIF - Introduction to First Aid in Football (2 hours online, free). If you want to apply for your England Accreditation (see more information in this pack), Youth teams must have at least one coach or manager with the Introduction to Coaching Football per team, with in-date Introduction to First Aid in Football (IFAIF) and Safeguarding Children Course (SCC).

DBS FAQ (cont.)

Q. We are changing over CWO at the end of the season, what qualifications will the new CWO need?

A. All Club Welfare Officers must have: a DBS check, Safeguarding Children Course (see above) and Welfare Officers Course (2 hours online, £25)

Q. I've already got a DBS on the Update Service, do I need to apply for a new one?

A. If your DBS Check is an Enhanced Disclosure with children's barred list, this should be transferable to your FAN and you will not have to complete a new one. To confirm this, simply email FAChecks@TheFA.com with details of your certificate and update service subscription. There is a one off admin fee of £10 payable to FA Checks for transporting this.

Q. Our Club has an Open Age team and would like to sign some players aged 16 & 17 year old. Is this allowed and are there any other qualifications or checks needed?

A. If the club are looking to sign on U18's players it is important that the following roles (identified managers/coach/assistants/physios) have an up to date DBS check.

Safeguarding & Threshold Guidance

What is abuse?

What is abuse?

Abuse is defined as a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It includes acts of commission (such as an assault) and acts of omission (situations where the environment fails to prevent harm). Abuse may be single act or omission or series of acts or omissions.

The FA Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures describes five types of abuse; neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and bullying.

Neglect: is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or physiological needs; for example food, warmth and clothing, or emotional needs for attention and affection. It occurs if children or young people are left alone or inadequately supervised or where they are exposed to danger, injury, or extreme weather conditions.

Physical abuse: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, and burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to children or failing to prevent these injuries or illness from happening.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware what is happening. The activities may include physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. This includes the use of sexually explicit language and jokes and exposure to pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional abuse: is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may include conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved; inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. These may include pushing a child beyond their development capability, as well as over-protection or limiting the child's social interaction. It may involve the child witnessing the ill-treatment of another; or serious bullying causing children to be constantly frightened or traumatised and can be inflicted by other children as well as adults.

Bullying: is deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft) verbal (e.g. racist, sexist, or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating individuals from activities and social acceptance of their peer group, constant taunting, shouting, and screaming threats and gestures)

If you suspect that a child is being abused or a child/young person makes a disclosure to you, contact your County DSO. If you believe the child or young person to be at immediate risk of harm, contact the Police or Suffolk Social Care (Customer First). Contact details can be found at the back of this pack.

Best Practice vs Poor Practice

Here are some examples of best practice and poor practice. Poor practice incidents can normally be dealt with by the Club in the first instance. However, if this poor practice is consistent or severe or you have further concerns, despite addressing this, please report these incidents to your County DSO or contact them for further advice.

Best Practice – Poor Practice - Abuse



Examples of Best Practice	Examples of Poor Practice
Parents on the side-line encouraging whole team performance	No drinks for players during training session
Coach is qualified and first aider is in attendance	Coach and spectators on the side-line of a youth match screaming abuse at players
Coaches working together and offering constructive feedback to each other	Putting players through training which is excessive for their stage of development
Coach reacting positively to mistakes and using these as opportunities for learning	Parents encroaching onto the field of play to 'have a go' at the referee or players
Coaches respecting the referee's decisions in a match even if they go against their team	Demeaning initiation rituals
Coach adopting a fair selection policy in line with club constitution	Encouraging players to continue playing when they have sustained an injury.
Allowing players to wear additional clothing (e.g. tracksuit, bottoms, gloves) for every match in cold weather	Coach shouting at the referee when they 'miss' a foul
Use of Respect banner to designate supporters' areas	Player with asthma not having their inhaler to hand during training
Club displaying emergency action plan in club house	Players wearing jewellery or un-taped rings on pitch
Club taking action when a referee is verbally abused and harassed by a group of their players	Injured players being treated by unqualified personnel
Club that values fair play before winning	Transporting a seriously injured player to hospital by car rather than ambulance
Qualified coaches who train children appropriately	Adult and Under 18 referees sharing the same changing room
First aider who makes sure that the first aid kit is fully stocked	Abusing players by text or social media

Safeguarding Threshold Guidance: Low Level Concerns

What can you deal with at Club level and when do you need to contact your County Designated Safeguarding Officer?

The following is a handy guide, please note however, that it is not an exhaustive list, but it should give you an idea of the type of behaviour which constitutes a **low-level concern**. Your County FA DSO keeps a log of all poor practice incidents and low level concerns so don't forget to report these for monitoring purposes.

Examples of LOW LEVEL CONCERNS – Usually investigated by Club Welfare Officers

- Spending excessive time alone with children (NB: This behaviour could lead to there being serious concerns and any cases involving this type of behaviour should be discussed with The FA SCMT)
- Not adhering to guidance when transporting children including travel abroad
- Failure to provide effective supervision for coaching sessions which should be properly planned
- Putting performance over the wellbeing and safety of players
- Having a win at all costs mentality and failing to be gracious in defeat
- Lack of respect for other individuals, such as match officials, opposition coaches, players, managers and spectators and failing to accept a match official's decision (this may be dealt with by way of on field disciplinary proceedings but may fall short of being dealt with in this way)
- Having favourites and not treating all children fairly and equitably
- Allowing rough and dangerous play, bullying, the use of bad language or inappropriate behaviour by players
- Overtraining and exerting undue influence over players
- Using punishments that humiliate or harm children
- Not taking time to explain coaching techniques and ensuring they are understood by all players
- Condoning rule violations by players and not adhering to the laws and spirit of the game
- Not holding required FA qualifications for the role being carried out
- Providing one to one coaching without any supervision or the presence of other adults
- Inappropriate use of social media - any sexualised communication must be referred to The FA SCMT
- Allowing children to discriminate on the grounds of religion, race, gender, social class or lack of ability
- Failure to encourage children to accept responsibility for their own performance and behaviour
- Engaging in, or tolerating, offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour
- Failure to challenge low-level concerns by others
- Failure to record incidents or accidents
- First aid being administered without others being present other than in an emergency
- Not informing parent/carer of serious medical incidents and/or not referring to medical professionals
- Not having access to a telephone to be able to immediately contact emergency services if necessary
- Not working as part of a team to ensure the safety of children in their care
- Failing to address the additional needs of disabled players or other vulnerable groups
- Allowing confidential information to be shared inappropriately
- Failure to respect and listen to the opinions of children and consider the rights and responsibilities of children
- Failure to display and promote consistently high standards of behaviour and appearance
- Smoking, consuming alcohol and/or being under the influence of drugs during coaching sessions/ in regulated activity with children

Some of the examples listed above can lead to abusive situations and so need to be carefully considered, such as inappropriate use of social media. Clubs should monitor this very carefully and ensure that all involved are fully aware of what is considered to be appropriate and what is not when using social media, particularly when photographing matches, social events and other club-based activities.

IF IN DOUBT SPEAK TO YOUR County FA DSO.

Safeguarding Threshold Guidance: Abuse Concerns

What can you deal with at Club level and when do you need to contact your County Designated Safeguarding Officer?

The following should give you an idea of the type of behaviour which constitutes an **abuse concern** both for children and Adults At Risk (AAR). These must always be referred to your County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO).

Examples of ABUSE – Always refer to County FA DSO

- **Neglect -** A child's basic physical needs are consistently not met, or they are regularly left alone or unsupervised.
- **Physical Abuse -** A child is physically hurt or injured by an adult, or an adult gives alcohol or drugs to a child or young person.
- **Sexual Abuse (Contact) -** An adult or peer uses another individual (child, young person or Adult) to meet their own sexual needs. This involves inappropriate sexual contact. This also includes Sexual contact between Individuals in a Position of Trust role with children under the age of 18.
- **Sexual Abuse (Non-Contact) -** An adult or peer uses a child or young person to meet their own sexual needs. Whilst there is no direct sexual contact, the victim may experience significant emotional harm.
- **Emotional Abuse -** Persistent criticism, denigrating or putting unrealistic expectations on a child or young person.
- **Bullying -** Persistent or repeated hostile and intimidating behaviour towards a child or young person.
- **Non-Sexualised Inappropriate Contact** - An adult has had online communication with a child or young person over social media which is not sexualised however may be indicative of grooming.
- **Poor Practice Concerns** - that practice has consistently fallen below expectations, despite your intervention, for example, over training, failing to have appropriate protocols in place, shouting, swearing.
- **Self-Harm** - There are concerns that a young person or adult in a position of responsibility is engaging in self-harming behaviour, which is believed to be placing children or AAR at risk.
- **Substance Misuse** - An Adult or Young Person is misusing substances such as alcohol or drugs whilst in a Position of Responsibility or has criminal offences relating to substance which require investigation.
- **Other -** The concerns result in child or young person being at risk of harm, but the abuse is not captured by any of the above definitions.

Examples of Abuse that ADULTS AT RISK may experience – Always refer to County FA DSO

- **Domestic Abuse -** Including psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. This includes 'honour'-based violence.
- **Discriminatory Abuse -** Defined as individual experiencing abuse due to race, gender or disability or any of the other protected characteristics of the Equality Act, 2010.
- **Financial Abuse -** Financial Abuse can present in many ways. Financial abuse can refer to as Someone taking or misusing someone else's money or belongings for their own gain; Harming, depriving or disadvantaging the victim; or Controlling someone's purchases or access to money.
- **Self-Neglect -** Defined as an individual not looking after their own personal hygiene, health or surroundings or hoarding.
- **Organisation Neglect -** Concern including neglect or poor practice in a care setting.
- **Modern Slavery -** Defined as slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

IF IN DOUBT SPEAK TO YOUR County FA DSO.

Club Safeguarding Visits

Club Safeguarding Visits

Each season, a sample of Clubs will undergo a Safeguarding Visit from the County FA. This will include a 'desktop visit' and a visit in person, where will observe training and/or matches where possible across a sample of teams. Where any improvements can be made, the Club will be issued with an agreed action plan of tasks and completion dates to ensure you remain compliant.

Amongst other things, we will be reviewing your Club with regards to all aspects of Safeguarding, including:

- **Policies & procedures**
- **Training requirements**
- **DBS checks**
- **Social Media pages incl. your section for young people**
- **Codes of Conduct**

These visits ensure that all Suffolk FA affiliated clubs are following the FA's Safeguarding guidance and keeping everyone who is involved in football, safe from harm and abuse.

You will be given notice of your visit, but the following are some examples of what will be asked to your Club Officials e.g. Managers:

- **Where is the First Aid Kit kept?**
- **Are you aware of the clubs safeguarding policy?**
- **Do you have an anti-bullying policy? If so, do you share it and with whom/how?**
- **Do you have Respect Codes of Conduct in place? Do you use them? How are they shared and with whom? Are there sanctions or rewards in place for breaching or adhering to them? If so, what kind of sanctions or rewards do you use?**
- **How do you organise and risk assess travelling to away games? What do you have in place for this?**
- **How do you communicate with your Under 18 year olds?**

Here are some examples of what will be asked to your Players:

- **Why do you play football?**
- **Do you feel safe in football sessions?**
- **If you have any worries who can you speak to? Do you know who to go to for help, advice and support at your club?**
- **Do you get to have your say in the club - if so how?**
- **If you could change one thing about your club what would it be?**

Here are some examples of what will be asked to your Parents/Carers:

- **Do you know who the Club Welfare Officer is?**
- **What would you do if you had any concerns about your child/another child/someone's practice at the Club? Do you know how to escalate your concerns if needed and to whom?**
- **Do you feel that your children are safe at the club? Are you aware of the club's safeguarding policy?**
- **Are you aware of the club's Code of Conduct?**

Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

Youth Football

16-17 Year Olds: Do your young players know their rights?

More information can be found **here** or by clicking on the image below.



How to Ask an Adult for Help

For more information, please visit
Childline.org.uk

HOW TO ASK AN ADULT FOR HELP

If something is bothering you, there's an issue you can't fix on your own, please speak to an adult you trust. Asking for help isn't always easy but Childline have some great tips for you that may help.

Take a moment to check out the tips below or simply visit Childline here.

TOP TIPS FROM CHILDLINE:

- Choose someone with whom you feel safe;
- Plan what you want to say;
- Make sure it's a good time to talk and that they aren't distracted;
- Remember, you have control over how much you tell someone;

  you don't have to say everything if you don't want to;
- You can ask them before you say anything to keep what you've said private*.

Sometimes people have to pass things on to keep you safe, they need to tell the people that can help you. Talk to the person that you are telling if you are worried about this.

**Different professionals (like doctors and teachers) have different rules about keeping something they've been told private or confidential. Sometimes they have to pass on certain things, and sometimes it's down to their own personal decision.*

If you're worried about confidentiality and what can be kept private, you can ask someone about it before you tell them anything. Most professionals have a responsibility to tell you their policy.

If they're worried about your safety, some adults have to tell someone else. This is so they can help you in the best way.

Listening to the Child's Voice

Why is it important to listen to the Child's Voice at your Club?

It is important that your children and young people (CYP) have a say in your Club - because it is also their Club. Without your players, your Club wouldn't exist.

Children and Young People should feel that they can talk to you about the little things so that they approach you with the big things when needed.

You may want to consider using the following to and engage with CYP in your Club:



- **Youth forums**
- **Questionnaires**
- **Tournament feedback**
- **Training and general Club feedback quarterly**
- **Suggestion box**
- **Exit survey when leaving the Club**
- **Quarterly chats with Coaches/Managers**

England Football Accreditation

England Football Accreditation

WHAT IS ENGLAND FOOTBALL ACCREDITED?

England Football Accredited is the new framework for League and Club accreditation, and replaces The FA Charter Standard.

It is an opportunity for The FA and County FAs to recognise all Leagues and Clubs who raise the bar and set the tempo for football to thrive in England. It enables us to work with our League network to offer modern competitions that meet the needs of today's game, while simultaneously creating maximum opportunities for everyone who enjoys the game to participate. Regardless of background, ability, skin colour, gender, sexual orientation or age: we unite everyone and strive to give the very best of ourselves.

As an accredited League or Club, you will automatically be transitioned on to the new England Football framework.

It's there to keep things accessible, sustainable and safe, helping you to successfully run football off the pitch so that football is great on the pitch. Day by day, week by week, season after season: the very best footballing experiences for you and for everyone.



WHAT DOES ENGLAND FOOTBALL ACCREDITED LOOK LIKE?

No matter how big your League or Club is, if you have England Football Accreditation, it shows that you're making a huge difference to your community:

Together, you offer all players – whether male and / or female and / or disability players – of all ages the opportunity to fully access the best of football in well run, high quality, safe and sustainable Clubs, and fit for purpose League competitions.

Your infrastructure is sound, robust, efficient and effective. It centres around the Respect standards and behaviours needed to make football in England something we can all be proud to be part of.

Accreditation is also a clear signal to your community that you value the importance of being sustainable and built to last off the pitch.

That you want the very best for everybody: your players, coaches, spectators, volunteers, and officials. Everyone counts. Everyone is valued.

As England Football Accredited Leagues and Clubs we will unite and work together to offer more opportunities for everybody – regardless of ability, background, gender or colour of skin. We'll create more opportunities to play and enjoy football to the highest possible standard that we can achieve. We will work and push forwards together: united in our love of football.

England Football Accreditation (cont.)

CLUB PATHWAYS RAISE STARS

On-pitch and off-pitch criteria is the foundation to providing safe, respectful and inclusive pathways and environments for the game of football in England.

In addition, we recognise Clubs that provide one or more of the accredited player pathways, either for male, or female, or for disability players.

The star that a club achieves and is then recognised for, demonstrates that they have football teams within their set-up that support the three accredited player pathways. It helps us to align the relevant support and services you need to become the best version of your Club.

So, where do the teams your Club offers sit on the new accredited player pathways?

Clubs currently can affiliate teams as young as U7s through to open age and Veterans in FA sanctioned competitions. The accredited player pathways are a minimum of what we will recognise as a 'player pathway' to create more opportunities and give more people the chance to play the game by 2023/24. Wherever you sit across the one, two or three stars of accreditation does not take away from the quality of experience you provide your players, spectators and volunteers, but it recognises and champions you for the opportunity you give for everyone to participate across the male, female and disability game.

Some Clubs may already be able to deliver across one, two or three of the Accredited player pathways. Others may not. That's okay. We're all growing and improving together. And by striving to be the best we can be, we can ensure more opportunities and pathways are provided for everyone, thanks to accredited Clubs across the community.

Some Clubs may want to collaborate and formally link in partnership to create more opportunities for people to play football.

The Club Partnership Agreement and Guidance can be found here.

ACCREDITED CLUB ★
PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL

To be a one star Accredited Club, you must:

Offer a minimum of one affiliated male or female or disability team at any age group playing within an FA sanctioned League competition.



1 male team at any age

OR



1 female team at any age

OR



1 disability team at any age

England Football Accreditation (cont.)

ACCREDITED CLUB ★ ★
PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL

To be a two star Accredited Club, you must:

Offer a complete accredited player pathway for either male or female or disability football, all playing within FA sanctioned League competitions.

In addition, offer a minimum of one team at any age group from an alternative pathway.



Offer at least 1 team in at least 8 of these age groups

U7	U8	U9
U10	U11	U12
U13	U14	U15
U16	U18	

*Must have U21 or OA
** Max of 2 years between age groups

AND



1 female team at any age

OR



1 disability team at any age



Offer at least 1 team in at least 4 of these age groups

U10	U11	U12
U13	U14	U15
U16		

*Must have U10 or U16
** Max of 2 years between age groups

AND



1 male team at any age

OR



1 disability team at any age



Offer at least 1 team in at least 2 of these age groups

U8	U12	U16
OA		

AND



Female specific disability team at any age

OR



1 male team at any age

OR



1 female team at any age

England Football Accreditation (cont.)

ACCREDITED CLUB ★ ★ ★
PART OF ENGLAND FOOTBALL

To be a three star Accredited Club, you must:

Offer the complete accredited player pathway for both male and female whilst offering a minimum of one disability team at any age group, all playing within FA sanctioned League competitions.

MALE



Must have at least 1 team in at least 8 of these age groups

U7	U8	U9
U10	U11	U12
U13	U14	U15
U16	U18	

*Must have U21 or OA
** Max of 2 years between age groups

FEMALE



Must have at least 1 team in at least 4 of these age groups

U10	U11	U12
U13	U14	U15
U16		

*Must have U10 or U16
** Max of 2 years between age groups

DISABILITY



Must have at least 1 disability team at any age

TRANSITION

We understand the last two seasons have been really tough for Leagues and Clubs across the country. There are many Clubs among you who have not been able to retain or develop new teams during this time. Given the situation we have all had to face, that's to be expected.

So, that's why we are recognising Clubs in terms of how many teams they may have up to the end of the 2023/24 season.

We will work with these Clubs through their County FA to develop these teams over the next three seasons. During this time, their accreditation level will remain as long as all the other criteria are met.

As existing FA Charter Standard Leagues or Clubs you will be automatically transitioned to become England Football Accredited Leagues and Clubs.

You will already achieve most, if not all of the following eligibility criteria. With any changes, we will support you in achieving the criteria for validation from November 2022.

Clubs that are within 3 teams of meeting the 3 ★★★ accredited player pathways will be recognised as a 3 ★★★ Accredited Club.

Clubs that are within 2 teams of meeting the 2 ★★ accredited player pathways will be recognised as a 2 ★★ Accredited Club.



England Football Accreditation (cont.)

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Opportunity

England Football Accredited is open to both Leagues and Clubs. The following Leagues and Clubs are eligible to become England Football Accredited:

- National League System steps 1 - 6
- Step 7 feeder Leagues
- Women's pyramid Tier 3 and below
- Grassroots Leagues and Clubs

Leagues

All accredited Leagues are recognised as an 'England Football Accredited League'.

Clubs

All accredited Clubs are recognised as either a 1★, 2★★, or 3★★★ 'England Football Accredited Club'. The star a Club is recognised as, denotes the football provisions a Club offers on the pitch and how they are structured.

All Leagues and Clubs must achieve the eligibility criteria to become England Football Accredited.
The criteria for England Football Accredited is in addition to the requirements for League sanction and Club affiliation.

More information on England Accreditation can be found by clicking on the images above or by visiting **Englandfootball.com**

Wellbeing Resource Directory

Suffolk FA's Wellbeing Resource Directory

Finding out what support is available is often difficult, and it is easy to become overwhelmed with information in our time of need.

Suffolk FA and ThriveSafe have joined together to bring you this resource directory – containing the details of both Local and National support groups and organisations.

Our aim is to reach as many adults, children and young people as possible and provide them with access to a range of help and support across a variety of areas - from mental health and family carers to housing, family support and substance misuse.

This QR code provides a link to all the support that is available and can be shared with all members of your Club. So feel free to spread the word by posting it around your Club, on your Website and Social Media pages.

Useful Contact Details

Useful Contact Details

Suffolk FA Designated Safeguarding Officer
Hayley Chart
hayley.chart@suffolkfa.com
safeguarding@suffolkfa.com
07572 107791

Suffolk FA CEO and Senior Safeguarding Lead
Richard Neal
richard.neal@suffolkfa.com
safeguarding@suffolkfa.com
07903 842747

FA Safeguarding Team
safeguarding@thefa.com
0800 169 1863

Suffolk MASH - Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (Customer First)
0808 800 4005 - report concern
0345 606 1499 - professional consultation line

LADO - Local Authority Designated Officer
lado@suffolk.gov.uk

FA Checks (for all DBS related queries)
FAChecks@TheFA.com
0115 969 4618

NSPCC
help@nspcc.org.uk
0808 800 5000
https://www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline
https://www.childline.org.uk
0800 1111

The Source - Information and advice for young people in Suffolk
https://www.thesource.me.uk

Kooth - support for young people
https://www.kooth.com

CEOP - reporting online abuse/concerns
https://www.ceop.police.uk