



Suffolk FA

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Suffolk Football Association Recruitment Pack

Designated Safeguarding Officer

April 2026

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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining Suffolk FA



This is an exciting opportunity to join a forward-thinking charitable organisation that will innovate and lead to grow the game of football in a way that supports local communities. We want to enable and help provide opportunities to spread the reach of the game to those that don't normally get the opportunities to play. Our strategy focusses on the principle of 'Driving the Local Game' and the word local is at the heart of everything we do.

With over 306,000 people playing football regularly in Suffolk, the game's ability to reach many corners of the county brings a unique opportunity to make a true difference to local communities. Generating £267.8m of social value each year to Suffolk, we have an aspiration to make a true difference to people's lives and help transform the county through increased physical activity rates, improving health and wellbeing opportunities and building fantastic partnerships.

Suffolk FA is ambitious in its aspirations to not only grow and develop the sport but to support the clubs, leagues, volunteers and partners who are integral to making the game happen on a day to day basis. Having a strong relationship with everyone that is integral to the game and being seen as the trusted partner and an enabler is vital to our success.

We are looking for people that are ambitious, hard working and can demonstrate innovation and creativity in their approach, to help us meet the needs of a modern world and a modern game.

We look forward to hearing from you about this great opportunity.

About Us

Suffolk FA is the governing body for football in Suffolk and is part of the affiliated County network for the Football Association. Suffolk FA is also a registered charity with a role and remit to promote, develop and support participation, promote the game and support the health and wellbeing of the people of Suffolk.

Formed in 1885 it has led the governance, operations and development of football for 140 years. The organisation, however, is modern and thriving and became a registered charity in 2021. The organisation is responsible for supporting the 300+ clubs in the county, leading the development and growth of football across the grassroots game, growing participation and developing referees and coaches. It is responsible for supporting volunteers to be some of the best in England at providing opportunities for everyone wanting to engage in the game.

It is also a key stakeholder in Suffolk, responsible for leading key infrastructure work, being a key partner with health, local authorities and the business community. We use these relationships to help leverage significant funding into football and the county. Examples of this are development of Football Facilities Plans, ensuring local places have great sports facilities, coordinating funding applications to the Football Foundation and other funding partners and leading safeguarding training and DBS checks for the thousands of volunteers that deliver football in Suffolk.

Our vision is 'A Thriving Local Game' and we work across our whole football community and other partners to make this happen. Equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of what we do and this is underpinned by strong safeguarding.

Football is at the heart of what we do and we use this to help transform communities and lives.



Please [click here](#) to find out more.



Our Values

At Suffolk FA, our values guide everything we do. We are **Inclusive, Team-focused, Respectful, Open, Empowering, and Innovative**. We expect all colleagues to model these behaviours and to act with integrity, fairness, and accountability in their role.

Safeguarding Commitment

Suffolk FA is committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk. Due to the nature of this role, the successful candidate will be required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check through The FA DBS process. The possession of a criminal record will not necessarily prevent an applicant from obtaining this post, as all cases are judged individually according to the nature of the role and information provided.



Equality & Diversity Statement

Suffolk County FA is committed to promoting equity within the organisation and encourages applicants from all backgrounds, culture, beliefs and experiences to apply for this role, regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnership.



Disability Confident

Suffolk County FA prides itself on being an employer that is committed to supporting candidates with disabilities throughout its recruitment process and supports any employee with a disability. If you require any reasonable adjustments to support your application, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



About the Role

Designated Safeguarding Officer

We are looking for an experienced and knowledgeable Designated Safeguarding Officer to drive the organisation's safeguarding function and deliver Suffolk FA's safeguarding responsibilities and duties.

The Role

The Designated Safeguarding Officer role is a vital and important role that is responsible for delivering Suffolk FA's safeguarding function. The role will ensure that all safeguarding concerns are managed and resolved, liaise and work directly with the FA to ensure all case management is delivered in a timely and fair manner and support the team of Child Welfare Officers across the county. This role is key to ensuring children and adults at risk are kept safe when playing and engaging in football and making sure clubs and leagues are delivering in a safe and effective manner.

You will:

- Support delivery of Suffolk FA's Strategy 2024 -2028 'A Thriving Local Game' and the FA Grassroots Strategy 2024-2028
- Manage Suffolk FA's safeguarding work, in line with legislation, FA safeguarding policy, procedures, regulations, standards and guidance
- Manage safeguarding and child and adults at risk protection concerns in a timely manner and in line with FA requirements and guidance
- Significantly contribute to implementing and maintaining The FA's Safeguarding 365 Standard for County FAs and driving safer practice and culture in grassroots football
- Support the adoption of FA technology systems across grassroots football
- Comply with FA rules, regulations, policies, procedures and guidance that are in place from time to time

What we're looking for:

- Someone with a strong background in safeguarding
- Strong organisational skills and an ability to manage multiple workloads at once
- Clear communication skills and the ability to build meaningful relationships and partnerships
- A strong understanding of safeguarding legislation and safeguarding case management
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and implementing this into their work
- Understanding and where possible experience of working with volunteers

What we can offer

- A great environment to make a difference to local football with the governing body of the grassroots game here in the heart of the County
- A varied and exciting working life including flexible working arrangements
- Access to high-quality training, networking and personal development opportunities
- Opportunities to progress your career across the network and wider sector
- An Employee Assistance Programme
- A competitive workplace pension scheme
- Other benefits



Role Specification

Role Title:	Designated Safeguarding Officer
Reports to:	Football Operations Manager
Location:	Hybrid working with a mix of office based at Suffolk FA offices in Stowmarket and home working
Working hours:	21 hours per week -some evening and weekend work is required
Salary:	£16,044 pa (pro-rata salary)
Contract type:	Permanent

Responsibilities

- Operationally lead the implementation and delivery of safeguarding within Suffolk FA, being accountable for relevant areas of The FA's Safeguarding 365 Standard for County FAs
- Support the Senior Management Team and take a dynamic and strategic approach to safeguarding delivery within Suffolk FA, raising awareness and providing organisational support and direction to colleagues
- Work with the Chief Executive Officer to provide the Board with regular reports on safeguarding activity
- Work with The FA Safeguarding Case Management Team (FA SCMT) to refer child abuse and adults at risk concerns to The FA, acting in line with the relevant FA safeguarding policy, regulations and guidance
- Record all safeguarding concerns on The FA's CLUE system and ensure all data is securely retained in accordance with FA regulations, policies and data protection legislation
- Manage all safeguarding poor practice concerns and complaints referred to Suffolk FA with a focus on timeliness and outcomes and line with FA policy, regulations and guidance
- Provide training, support and guidance to clubs and leagues on how to manage safeguarding complaints and concerns effectively, with a focus on timeliness and outcomes and in line with FA policy, regulations and guidance
- Work closely with the FA Shared Safeguarding Service to ensure safeguarding compliance across the grassroots volunteer network
- Ensure Suffolk FA is compliant with safeguarding legislation e.g. Data Protection/ GDPR 2018, Children's Act, Protection of Freedoms Act (Criminal Record Checks), the Government's 'Working Together guidance 2018' and any other legislation or statutory guidance that may be introduced
- Identify, develop and maintain strong relationships with key local safeguarding stakeholders



- Strategically manage effective Club Welfare Officer networks; liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officers, Local Safeguarding Partnerships, Local Safeguarding Adult Boards, Children's and Adults' Social Care Services, Police Child Protection Teams and support club welfare officers (youth, adults and disability teams) to be compliant with safeguarding legislation, FA safeguarding policy, best-practice guidance and education programmes
- Manage a diverse workload being able to prioritise work according to risk and timeframes, providing regular updates to the line manager on progress against your work programme
- Maintain strong links with key FA staff and attend national FA safeguarding events and CPD courses to ensure knowledge and skills are maintained and updated
- Work with colleagues to address poor behaviour and raise standards in grassroots football, promoting fun and safe football environments and creating a culture that lives and celebrates safer working practice across Suffolk FA's activity and grassroots football

- Co-ordinate safeguarding visits, spot checks/ audits on clubs throughout the season to ensure they are compliant with the records they have submitted to Suffolk FA and to check on the culture and safeguarding practice
- Co-ordinate and deliver CPD events for Club and League Welfare Officers
- Ensure that any individual helping with any Suffolk FA event involving children and adults at risk is suitably DBS-checked, trained and understand their responsibilities at the event
- Work with colleagues to embed safeguarding and equality throughout Suffolk FA and grassroots football
- Provide the highest level of customer excellence to support volunteers across all FA Technology systems
- Execute tasks as required in order to meet Suffolk FA's changing priorities





Person Specification

Key skills and experience required.

Essential

Qualifications

- Safeguarding qualification and/or relevant experience in a child protection, safeguarding, or welfare role

Skills

- A child-centred approach and the ability to maintain this perspective and apply common sense
- Clarity about what constitutes low-level concerns, poor practice and abuse and how to manage cases effectively
- Ability to deal constructively with people's emotions (e.g. upset, distress, conflict, animosity)
- Capacity to handle confidential data/information sensitively.
- Ability to promote safer practice and the importance of safe and fun football environments
- Outstanding team-working skills
- Exceptional communication, interpersonal and influencing skills
- Effective prioritisation and time-management skills
- Competent in the use of IT, including Microsoft Office applications

Desirable

- Completion of recognised Designated Safeguarding Officer training at Level 2&3

- Effective presentation and facilitation skills.
- Ability to de-escalate heated and challenging situations.
- Experience of interviewing children and or adults in relation to allegations

Essential

Knowledge and Experience

- Knowledge of current safeguarding legislation, policy and practice relating to children and adults at risk
- Experience of working in a designated safeguarding role
- Experience of writing reports and compiling case related evidence and information
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of inclusion, equality and anti-discrimination
- Working knowledge of the roles of statutory agencies in safeguarding children and adults at risk
- Experience of implementing policies, protocols and guidance
- Knowledge of the structure and partner organisations within football, nationally and within the County FA locality

Desirable

- Knowledge of The FA's Grassroots Football Strategy
- Working knowledge of current FA systems
- Knowledge and understanding of diverse faiths, communities and cultures
- Understanding of the effects of various conditions that affect children such as, but not limited to, ADHD and Tourette's syndrome
- Knowledge and understanding of working with volunteers

Values (The job holder will be expected to understand and work in accordance with the values and behaviours described below)

- Demonstrable experience of inclusivity in everything that you do
- Demonstrate how teamwork is a part of the work you do
- Demonstrable examples of where you have respected someone in your line of work
- Demonstrable experiences of where openness and integrity has been at the forefront of what you have done
- Demonstrate how you have empowered others to find solutions and tackled problems
- Show how you have been innovative in the work you do

Enhanced DBS Check required

Clean, full driving licence required

YES

YES



How to Apply

To apply, please send your CV and a covering letter of no more than 2 pages outlining how you meet the person specification and how your values align to the organisation's values.

Your CV and covering letter should be sent to **Andrew Wilesmith, Chief Executive Officer** at andrew.wilesmith@suffolkfa.com

If you wish to have an informal discussion about the role please contact **Andrew Wilesmith** at andrew.wilesmith@suffolkfa.com /07903 842747

Closing date: Wednesday 22nd April 2026 – we are doing a rolling application and interview process so we may close applications early if the right candidate is found before the deadline date. We urge candidates to get applications in as early as possible.

Interviews: Interviews will be on a rolling basis

Equality and Diversity

Suffolk FA promotes inclusion and diversity and football is a sport that includes people from a range of diverse communities. We welcome applications from a diverse range of communities that reflects our football community. If you have any additional requirements or need any adaptations to the application process due to a disability in relation to the recruitment or interview process, please let us know.





Suffolk FA

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@SuffolkFA #AThrivingLocalGame

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